

The Oxhill News



February 2005

They start with Feb

Actually, as far as I can discover, very little starts with Feb.

February, obviously, the second month in the (Gregorian) year.

Feblesse, which is the Spenserian form of feeble.

Febrile, relating to fever, being feverish.

Febricity, feverishness itself.

Febricula, a short-lived fever.

Febrifacient, something that makes you have a fever.

Febrifuge, something that makes a fever go away.

Then there is Febronianism, which is a religious doctrine antagonistic to the claims of the Pope and asserting the independence of national churches.

And that seems to be about it. No famous people. No infamous people. Rather boring, really. Let's hope for better things in March.

Editor

March issue

Please could I have all copy for the March issue by Midnight on **Thursday, 24th 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** if you wish to send me stuff that way.

George Adams, 680286

Cover Picture

This month shows a view over a snowy Prague from the castle grounds, taken in February 2003.

For those who remember the January cover, the imposing building was the Nidaros Dome, in Trondheim.

Editor

Christmas Pudding Sales 2004

Once again a big "thank you" to our regular and new customers for helping to make a handsome profit of £510.53p towards St. Peter's Church funds.

198 puddings were ordered and every one sold. We will be happy to take your orders once again when we recommence later in the year.

A happy and peaceful New Year to you all.

June Wreford, Secretary to St. Peter's Parochial Church Council, Whatcote.

Oil Cooperative

There was an item on "You and Yours" on Radio 4 last week about the village of Burbage and how the residents had set up a bulk buying co-operative for oil (now looking to do something similar for other services).

The residents interested gave their names and then negotiations were undertaken with the various oil suppliers to find the best deal.

The deal they got not only gave each resident a percentage off the normal price but commission (of around £500 pa) was put to local community projects. The residents phoned their orders to the supplier in the usual way so there wasn't much admin for the organiser.

If the Oxhill residents (and nearby homes) would be interested in signing up to a similar arrangement I would be prepared to investigate the options available and we can agree how to proceed.

What I should think I will need are details from each interested household of their:

Name/s, address, email and contact telephone no.

Rough annual oil consumption,

Who their supplier is (so I can include them in the research)

Any other useful info

Carol Bowler - Applegrove, Whatcote Road. 680279

caroloil@cairdb.fsnet.co.uk

[May I suggest that anyone interested contacts Carol direct? I have already informed her that a very similar group operates from Kineton and includes a number of Oxhill residents. Ed.]

Church Services in February
Church of St. Lawrence, Oxhill

Sunday Services in February

6th	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
13th	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion (First Sunday in Lent)
20th	6.30 p.m.	Shortened Evensong followed by AGM
27th	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion

Informal Midweek Worship – Thursday Evenings

3rd	7.30 p.m.	Celtic Worship
10th	7.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
17th	7.30 p.m.	Holy Communion
24th	7.30 p.m.	Compline

Do something extra for Lent!

Special services for Lent are happening around the Shipston Deanery on Tuesday evenings at 7.45 p.m., looking at some big contemporary issues through the eyes of some of the most significant teachers of Christian history.

Venues for the meetings will be:

February 15th	Tysoe,
February 22nd	Stretton-on-Fosse
March 1st	Newbold-on-Stour
March 8th	Long Compton
March 15th	Idlicote
March 22nd	Sutton-under-Brailes
	Holy Communion with the Bishop of Coventry

Jill Tucker

Thank You

I wish to thank all my friends and neighbours for their cards and letters of sympathy on learning of the death of my husband Victor and for all their kind offers of help and support.

Bette Bench

Oxhill Festival Choir

We shall be singing again on PALM SUNDAY, which this year is Sunday, 20th March. The service is at 6.30pm, so we shall be singing Evensong. Anyone who would like to come along is very welcome to sing with us. Rehearsals will take place as follows:

Friday, March 4th, 7.30pm, at The Old House

Friday, March 11th, 7.30pm, at The Old House

Friday, March 18th, at 7.30pm in the Church.

Looking forward to seeing you then.

Jill Tucker 680663

Church Flowers

Thank you to everyone who helped decorate the Church for Christmas, to those who gave greenery and also those who helped to remove all decorative articles and flowers after the New Year.

As Lent approaches I will be planning the new Flower Rota to start at Easter. Thank you to all who helped with last year's Rota and who participated in and supported "Flowers in Church". If there is anyone not on the Rota who would like to be, please phone me on the number below.

I have had a suggestion that we have two successive weeks on the Rota so that flowers can maybe last for two weeks, with some attention. This seems to be a good idea which I will implement.

I am still planning to invite a "flower arranger" who can give us some ideas (and confidence) to manage the altar and other flowers. I hope to arrange this for April time when there are more flowers about, so watch this space.

Carol Fox

01295 680223

NATURE NOTES FOR FEBRUARY

The month of Purification, in Anglo-Saxon Solmonath, the month of cakes, now offered to the gods. The first day of February is also St Bride's day whose Pagan namesake and predecessor was the Celtic goddess Brigit and her feast day known as Imbolc is the Celtic feast of Spring's awakening. On this mystic day adders were believed to abandon their winter lairs and the oyster catcher (bird) – called in Gaelic Gille Brighde, “the servants of Bride” – made their appearance bringing Spring with them. Well, I'm sure no self-respecting adders would venture out on the cold days we are experiencing at the moment, but February/March is when they usually start to come out of hibernation, and on a warm sunny spring day they can be seen basking in groups. I have seen grass snakes around Oxhill, but never an adder, although we did meet a walker two summers ago who had seen one basking on the footpath across the large arable field behind Back Lane. Don't be frightened of adders; they are more frightened of you and in most cases will be long gone before you arrive. They can sense vibration and movement. They do have a poisonous bite, but there has been no death from an adder bite in Britain for over 20 years, and the only vulnerable people are the very young, the very old, or those already in poor health.

Talking of Spring, the Corvid family (crows, rooks, jackdaws, ravens, jays, magpies and choughs) are generally the first group of birds to start mating and pairing. Crows, ravens and rooks start displaying during January and February. When walking down Church Meadow recently my eye was caught by a group of Carrion crows and I saw three birds break away from the group and start twisting, diving and soaring in typical mating behaviour. Two of the crows locked their feet together and with wings flapping began a downward tumble and as they neared the ground they released their claws and flew off together making a “kaah, kaah, kaah” noise. I have read that ravens have been seen doing this mating performance, but never crows. These three birds I am sure would have been last year's birds, two male and one female, as once a partner has been found and the birds paired, they stay together for life. Even when not performing their mating display they are well worth watching because outside courtship, I believe they are the only group of birds that actually play in flight, giving us some spectacular aerial displays. They are also certainly one of the most intelligent group of birds. In certain parts of London crows have been noted standing on the pavement around traffic lights. They fetch walnuts from the parks and put them on the road. The cars crush the nut shells and when the lights turn to red, the crows hop out and pick the kernels from the crushed shells, retreating when the lights turn green.

Tradition has it that 14 February is the day that birds begin to pair off and this seems to have been the reason why this day has become the festival for lovers. Certainly the two Saints Valentine commemorated this day have nothing to do with romance.

“Oft have I heard both youths and virgins say
Birds chose their mates, and couple too, today
But by their flight I never can divine
When I shall couple with my Valentine”

Herrick: *Hesperides* 1648

Grenville Moore

TSUNAMI APPEAL

The tragic events in the Indian Ocean on December 26th will remain in our memories. To be so suddenly left alone losing husbands, wives, sons and daughters as well as being homeless, losing all one's possessions and without readily available food and drinking water to us in the Western world is quite incomprehensible. Talking to Colin Locke on New Year's Eve, he told us that he had just been to the 55,000th funeral at Oakley Wood since it opened in 1971, some 34 years ago and here we were listening to news reports of at least 150,000 dying in one day in this disaster. To put this into perspective, the crematorium would have to continue to operate at a similar capacity for over 92 years to cremate all those lost. This really brought home the size of the devastation.

The local community of Tysoe, Whatcote and Oxhill and Stour Valley all turned out in force on Saturday 15th January to support a Coffee Morning. We are delighted to announce that we raised £1,440.15, which has been sent to the disaster appeal fund. We had so many items donated, but please be assured that anything left over has either been taken to the Red Cross, or passed to other events being held in the future to raise funds for this cause.

Very many thanks to all who donated items and supported this event.

St. Mary's and The Methodist Church & Stour Valley FWC

NOTES OF A MEETING OF OXHILL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 11th JANUARY 2005 AT 8.00 PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Apologies received from Stephen Hackett. All other Councillors were present.

MATTERS DISCUSSED

Planning

Permission had been granted for the following:

Pitched dormer to the front at Barnacre

Two storey pitched roof extension at Short Meadow

Re-roofing of the Old Carpenter's Shop

Appeal was dismissed to extend onto agricultural land at the rear of Wixey Transport.

Finance

It was agreed to pay the shortfall of £186.62 for publication of the Oxhill News for the previous 2 years.

Precept for the year 2005/2006 was discussed. The system of collecting subscriptions for the Oxhill News was proving unsatisfactory with only 50% of households contributing. It was agreed to fund this totally at an estimate of £400 thereby avoiding the need to do door to door collection. The Village Hall would be supported by donation towards capital expenditure projects up to £800. The cost of keeping the churchyard mowed and the land adjacent to the Village Hall at round £600 and £300 respectively would be included in the budget, and also the estimate of £450 for admin, insurance, audits, etc. Taking into consideration the above, a precept would be requested of £2,600 for the financial year April 2005/March 2006.

If you have a view on Parish Council expenditure, or anything else for that matter, please let us know. The Annual Parish Meeting, which this year will be held on 12th April, is also a good opportunity for you to have your say.

Highways

Two further temporary road closures are due during the period 24th January to 31st March. One section is from Priors Lea Farm, just past the Pig Farm, to the bridge junction on the way to Kineton, the second is from this same junction back to the A422 junction at Hardwick Cottages.

Road signing of the present repairs was considered misleading and in some cases dangerous. The Highways Department would be contacted in this regard.

On a positive note, the Highways Department did respond quickly to cleaning up the verges of Green Lane and sweeping the road following Water Board activity prior to Christmas.

Postal Service

This service has improved with the majority of delivery before noon. For mail required at an earlier time there are two services available:

Call and Collect (from Kineton). This service is free after 8.30 a.m. A charge is made for collection before this time.

Time Delivery. You select a 15 minute window for the majority of mail to be delivered. The cost of this service is £2,612 per annum.

Parish Paths Partnership

This is a national incentive run at county level to encourage community interaction in the management of the rights of way network. If you would like to be part of a volunteer group and take an interest in the management of the paths in your area let us know. Grants are provided for tools and equipment; help with bigger projects; organisation of walks; provision for display boards; producing leaflets etc. If you enjoy walking the footpaths you can also help to keep them maintained.

Policing

We have been informed that Sergeant Warren Ayres has been attached to the Shipston Constabulary to oversee certain operations in the area.

The Warwickshire Hunt

Following complaints, The Master of Hounds would be notified of the unacceptable galloping of mounted horses along the footpath on Main Street during their meeting on Saturday 8th January.

Refuse Collection

Several complaints had been received that no refuse was collected between Christmas and the New Year. The District Council would be contacted as to their intentions for 2005.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 8th March 2005 at 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Angela Kean, Clerk

Parochial Church Council Meeting

There will be a P.C.C. meeting on Thursday February 10th at 8.00 p.m. at Church Farm, preceded by the Holy Communion service in Church at 7.30 p.m.

Jill Tucker

W I REPORT – JANUARY 2005

Happy New Year to you all. I hope that it will be a peaceful and enjoyable year for everyone.

Our Vice President, June Wreford opened the meeting and informed us that three of our members, Ann Beeny, Josie Hurst and Angela Gethin were all now out of hospital and on the mend. They are recovering well and hope to be back at WI in the next few months. Lyn Hicks, Secretary, then read the minutes of the last meeting.

Our guest was PC Nick Stephens from Stratford Police and his official title is Community Safety Officer (formerly Crime Prevention Officer). His special subject is distraction burglaries and he informed us that there had been about 25 of these in the locality since October 2004. He has done a lot of research on this problem and had some very simple solutions to help prevent them occurring.

Do not let ANYONE into your home if you do not know them. Any unsolicited caller can be a potential burglar.

ALWAYS keep your back door locked during daylight hours. 85% of burglaries are carried out by back door users.

Have a peephole and a chain fitted to your front door and NEVER open the front door without the chain being in place. It is not really necessary to put the door chain on when you go to bed because most people put the door lock on or bolts into place, but it is very necessary to use the chain during the day.

ALWAYS interrogate your caller and ask for ID, ask them to post it through the door. If you are not happy with the ID or do not recognise it, then ring the utilities company involved or the police otherwise to see if there is any one working in the area. DO NOT take the telephone number from your caller. They just might be telling fibs!!

Personal alarms put by the front door are also a good prevention, as they make so much noise it would scare off any potential thief.

Always ring and inform the police of any bogus caller you are not happy about, as this is the way that the police can build up a profile of the thief and hopefully catch him before anyone gets hurt.

PC Stephens then changed the subject to handbag theft, especially in supermarkets. Always hold onto your handbag and if possible, wear over your shoulder. Do not put into the trolley or hanging from the back. Check your handbags and only take with you what you will need. Those sentimental items in your handbag do not need to go with you every time you go to the shops, but it will be very painful if they get stolen. The only things you will really need are a purse hopefully with not too much cash (and with only one credit card if you have one), your keys and a hankie. Everything else should be cleared out

Finally, PC Stephens wound up the evening by saying that every door should have a lock, every window should have a catch, every external door should have two locks, and that a burglar alarm and nowadays CCT cameras can also be very useful.

He was more than willing to visit anyone in the village that would like to know more about keeping themselves and their property safe. Call Stratford Police and leave a message for him and he will ring you back.

This was a very informative talk and gave us some useful tips, and also quite a few laughs with his jokey manner. He also very kindly brought along some personal alarms which he asked to be used as raffle prizes, so some of our ladies now have very noisy personal alarms. I won't say which ones!

Our refreshments were provided by Mrs A Evans, Mrs M Swift and Mrs T Matthews. Thank you very much ladies.

Don't forget that Keep Fit will be in the Village Hall on Thursdays at 10.30am. All welcome.

J. Batchelor



Gangsters and Molls
The Speakeasy & Casino night

Saturday 26th February 2005

This will be a themed evening with a running buffet, music and a charity casino which will include roulette and black jack tables.

Tickets are £10 per person, book early to avoid disappointment!

Call Ray on 680850 or Keith on 680654

Victor Charles Bench (1920 – 2004)

Victor was born, brought up and went to school in Bishop's Tachbrook. He joined the Army and served until 1946, reaching the very top of the non-commissioned officer tree. His time in the Army included service with the Chindits in Burma.

After the war Vic worked for the Ford Motor Company, and he and his wife Bette had one daughter, Davina. They moved to Oxhill in 1967, and Vic continued to work at Ford's until his retirement in 1967.

After retirement Vic pursued his many interests, which included his hobby of carpentry, carried out in his garden workshop.

He was a very popular man, as was well illustrated by the packed church for his funeral. The collection after the service raised nearly £600, which has been sent to the Tsunami appeal.

Ann Marshall

Those of us lucky enough to have known Vic, and to be asked to sum him up in a few words, would include words such as integrity, modesty and good humour. To these we would undoubtedly add duty, loyalty and common sense. Vic was a good citizen, he was good company, was a patient listener, and spoke with care and moderation. He was a fine man, and is celebrated by his many friends.

No-one, of course, ever spoke of Vic without Bette; finer examples of a successful marriage would be hard to find. Whilst we know that Bette has a loving family whose care and support is beyond value she will, we hope, understand that her many friends in the village are nearby and unforgetting.

David Hill

Oxhill Garden Club

It lifted the spirits on a blustery January evening to sit watching slides of choice herbaceous plants. The speaker was Graham White a lecturer at Moreton Morrell Agricultural college and he spoke with humour, a font of knowledge and thoughtfully provided a handout of all the plants discussed with their correct Latin names. Our next meeting is Thursday February 17th where Mr and Mrs Cole will speak on raising perennials from seeds.

Heather Brennan, Secretary

Revd. Douglas Jephson

Long-term residents of Oxhill will remember Revd. Douglas Jephson, who was the Rector here from 1971 until he retired in 1982. After retirement he and Betty, his wife, settled in Yorkshire, where he did supply work.

We have learned that he died just before Christmas.

Doug and Betty were very popular in the village, and we send our sympathy and thoughts to Betty and her family.

Editor

Well Done, Whatcote Village News

I would like to offer my congratulations to Sue Price, editor of the Whatcote News, on taking second place in the Communications category of the Warwickshire Rural Community Council Village Ventures competition.

Those of you who have not yet seen the Whatcote News should make an effort to do so – it is always an interesting read.

George Adams

Twenty-five Years Ago

Issue No. 81 was commendably short, as befits the shortest month. The next meeting of the Parish Council was announced, and Tysoe W.I. reported on its January meeting. Apparently the prize for best flower at the meeting went unclaimed, as no-one could find a snowdrop to enter.

Thanks were offered by Mr. Gill for the Senior Citizens Lunch, and the Tote winners for December were announced.

Editor

CAR FOR SALE

Are there any kind parents out there who would like to buy their

17yr. old son or daughter a useful little 1st. car?

If so, why not come and see my much loved

M Reg: 5Dr Midnight Blue Vauxhall Corsa?.

Which is utterly reliable,

Very well maintained and serviced,

In low Road Tax bracket,

With only minor facial abrasions.

Giveaway Price £1,395 (Official Price £1,500)

To view and further details [Myrtle Knight 680 555](#)

Is It or Isn't It?

At dinner the other evening we were discussing, as you do, the Berkleyan idea that things only exist when they have an observer. It's a little like the question of whether a falling tree makes a sound when there is no-one in the forest to hear it. Monsignor Ronald Knox put it like this:

There once was a man who said "God
Must think it exceedingly odd
If he finds that this tree
Continues to be
When there's no-one about in the Quad."

The response, from that well-known author Anon, came swiftly:

"Dear Sir, Your astonishment's odd;
I am always about in the Quad;
And that's why the tree
Will continue to be.
It's observed by, Yours Faithfully, God."

Editor

What's On in Oxhill

February

Wednesday 2nd 7.30 Tysoe Village Hall – W.I. Chinese Brush Painting
Saturday 26th Village Hall - Gangsters & Molls Casino Night

March

Wednesday 2nd 7.30 Tysoe Village Hall – W.I. Kineton in the First World War

April

Wednesday 6th 7.30 Tysoe Village Hall – W.I. Local Cheesemaking

May

Wednesday 4th 7.30 Tysoe Village Hall – W.I. Spring Show & Resolutions Meeting

Oxhill on the Map

The following letter took the honoured bottom right hand corner of the Times letter page on Friday, 14th January.

Charity begins

From Mr Antony Eastaugh

My wife helps out at a local Oxfam shop. The other day she put her handbag down momentarily, only later to find it missing.

Her shock at its potential loss was soon outweighed by the chagrin of seeing it in the window, priced at a mere £1.99.

Yours faithfully,

ANTONY EASTAUGH

Charity House, Oxhill, Warwick, CV35 0RH.



Excitement on Main Street

Excitement reigned on Main Street Oxhill on Thursday 27th January after Kirsty Cox was so unfortunate as to tumble down the stairs at The Old Bakehouse. Luckily she had her mobile phone with her, and a call to her partner Jonathan resulted in the Air Ambulance landing, somewhat gingerly because of the overhead cables, in Bill Gardner's field.

The helicopter was rapidly followed by the screaming sirens of police and surface ambulance and, after the front door was unceremoniously broken open by the police, Kirsty was whisked away to hospital and the street reverted to its normal sleepiness.

We are pleased to report that Kirsty suffered only bruising in the accident and was back at home and resting the same day.

The motto is, of course, that we should all ensure that stair and landing carpets are thoroughly fixed in place and provide no tripping areas.

Editor