

THE OXHILL NEWS



December 2006

DECEMBER 31

Is, of course, New Year's Eve. At least, it is now, in England, and on the Christian calendar. It is also the Feast day of St Silvester I, Pope, St Melania the Younger, and St Columba of Sens. There is a wonderful cathedral at Sens. You should go there sometime.

On December 31st in 1687 the first Huguenots set sail from France for the Cape of Good Hope, where they would later create the South African wine industry with the vines they took with them on the voyage. Trust Frenchmen to pack vines on a long journey. In 1695 the window tax was imposed in Britain, which resulted in many being bricked up. Some of them still are. In 1891 New York's new Immigration Depot was opened at Ellis Island, to provide improved facilities for the massive numbers of arrivals. Recent newspaper reports suggest that US airport staff are trying to reverse the trend. The chimes of Big Ben were first broadcast in 1923, and the farthing ceased to be legal tender in 1960. It had been in use since the 13th century. I will offer a slight shade of odds that the new penny does not last as long.

1720: Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender, was born in 1720 and Henri Matisse in 1869. Anthony Hopkins followed in 1937, Ben Kingsley in 1943 and Donna Summer in 1948.

Notable deaths on this highly suitable day are rather thin on the ground. John Flamsteed ceased stargazing in 1719 and Gustave Courbet, whoever he was, stopped painting in 1877. Malcolm Campbell died in 1948 and Rick Nelson in 1985, but that seems to be about it. Going out with the old year has not been fashionable.

Editor

JANUARY ISSUE

Please could I have all copy for the January issue by Midnight on Thursday, 28th December? 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 News is currently set in Garamond 10 pt, with headings in Lucida Sans Unicode 14 pt bold. This may, of course, change, possibly without warning.

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

Whisky, the guardian of Church Lane, Oxhill. See inside for further details.

Editor

OXHILL GARDENING CLUB

During November the Oxhill Garden Club welcomed Mrs. Cropley whose interesting talk was entitled "Trees and Shrubs in Smaller Gardens. Mrs Cropley began by providing a plant list, which for many of us helped greatly, alleviating the need for some of us to dig deep for our school day Latin (excuse pun). The plants, shrubs and small trees which Mrs Cropley talked about, and showed on her very professional slides were those she felt would be suitable in the smaller garden and she certainly chose many with rather different colouring to those normally seen on fairly common species.

At the beginning of December a trip has been arranged to Birmingham Botanical Gardens, where for a few days in early December, the gardens are lit up and open to the public. The Club's annual Christmas Meal is to be on the 15th December at the Peacock and the first meeting in the New Year will be on the 18th January given by Gillian Hawtin from Flower Thyme in Kineton and entitled 'Winter Colour in your Garden'.

Anne Nethercleft

WI NOVEMBER REPORT

Ann Nethercleft brightened the evening by constructing a Christmas arrangement before our very eyes. Before the meeting she had laid out the conditioned flowers and foliage, mechanics and sundries. She explained as she worked and gave information and hints. It was surprising to find that she had learned her skills in just 3 years through courses, practice and competition.

Two very pleased members won Ann's arrangements in the raffle.

Pauline Beare, from County, was welcomed to the AGM. She answered questions about increased subscription and the new publication WI Life, which all members will receive from February.

The new committee was appointed, with June Wreford as president.

It was agreed that we should carry out a community project in 2007 (Our 90th anniversary year)

Lyn Hicks brought back memories of events of the past year in her annual report.

Rosemary Brown gave a delightful report of the Autumn Council Meeting, recounting one of Bunny Camplione's less saucy jokes.

B.J. Keep

ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH, OXHILL

DECEMBER SERVICES

All are warmly invited to our services

Sunday 3rd	Advent I	9.30am	Holy Communion (ML)
Sunday 10th	Advent II	8.30am	Holy Communion (ML)
		6.30 p.m.	Evensong (ML)
Sunday 17th	Advent III	9.30a.m.	Christingle Service (ML)
Wednesday 20th		7.30 p.m.	The Village Carol Service (NM)
Sunday 24th	Christmas Eve – Advent IV		
		11.00a.m.	Family Crib Service and Baptism (NM) please note time.
		11.30 p.m.	Midnight Mass at Tysoe (ML)
Monday 25th	The Nativity of our Lord – Christmas Day		
		10.00am	Christmas Communion (ML)
Sunday 31st	Christmas I	10.30a.m.	United Benefice Communion at Whetcote

CHURCH DECORATIONS

The Christmas tree will be decorated on Saturday 16th December in readiness for the Christingle Service. If you would be able to help, please contact me.

Decorating of the rest of the Church will be done on the following Monday and Tuesday, 11th and 12th. Again, if you can offer help with this we would be very pleased to hear from you.

Carol Fox, 680223

ST. LAWRENCE EVENTS

The PCC was very sorry to have to cancel the proposed concert by the Stratford upon Avon Operatic Society, and hopes that many of you will be able to come to the Christmas Carol Evening on Tuesday 12th.

Please see elsewhere in The News for more details on this event.

Carol Fox

OXHILL VILLAGE HALL



*Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch
Will be held at the Village Hall on
Monday 11th December 2006
12.30 for 1 p.m.*

The invitations are being sent this week. If you are not on our list but would like to come please contact Ray on 01295 680850.

The fire brigade have been notified!!

The Quiz night last month was 3 hours of competitive laughter. It was just a pity a few more couldn't make it.

Ray Dagg, 680850

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Tuesday 12th at 7.30

St. Lawrence Church

Tickets £6 adult, £4 under 16

available from Lilian Welsby

01295 680468

NATURE NOTES FOR DECEMBER

The month of Christmas or in Gaelic, An Mos Marbh – the dead month. The 21 December is the winter solstice and also the Feast of St Thomas the Apostle:

*St Thomas grey, St Thomas grey
The longest night and the shortest day*

He is the “doubting Thomas” who questioned the resurrection and is the patron saint of carpenters and masons. All over England, poorer women and children went “Thomassing” on this day for Christmas “goodenings”, especially wheat for frumenty and flour for Yule bread.

While walking down Main Street the other morning I was surprised to see a Pied Wagtail moving ahead of me. Although a common bird I don’t see them very often in Oxhill. The bird’s smart black and white plumage of summer turns a greyer tone in winter – sort of “shop soiled”. It has a typical wave-like bounding flight and when in flight utters a brisk cheerful double note ‘chissick chissick’. Apparently a prominent ornithologist, interviewed on radio, said his pet name for the Pied Wagtail was the Chiswick Flyover because of its habit of leapfrogging past you as you walk, calling loudly.

The Pied, Grey and Yellow Wagtail are all often referred to as Water Wagtail, but the Pied Wagtail is the least restricted to water, particularly where it has adapted to an urban or suburban way of life. However, they are attracted to areas where there is water; gravel pits, reservoirs or park lakes. They also seem to be attracted to car parks perhaps because of large puddles after rain storms, and I have often watched enthralled at them picking dead insects off parked cars. On occasions I have also observed them flying aggressively at reflections of themselves in car mirrors or windows. I assume they think they are chasing off competition for their larder of insects:

*Little trotty wagtail, he went to the rain,
And tittering, tottering sideways he near got straight again
He stopped to get a worm, and look’d up to catch a fly
And then he flew away ere his feathers they were dry*

John Clare

Great excitement in the Moore household, when a female Goldcrest (*Regulus regulus*) alighted on to a branch inches away from the window of the summerhouse. This diminutive bird, together with the Firecrest, is the smallest bird to be found in Britain.

Barely 9 cm in length, many of its colloquial names reflect its size: Wood Titmouse, Golden Wren, Thumb bird, and Tidley finch. As we watched we could clearly see its head markings if lemon yellow (male, bright orange yellow) offset by a line of black. These birds are predominantly creatures of conifer forests and plantation. You hear them before you see them, and in fact you rarely see them as they favour tree tops and will flit from tree to tree in search of spiders, insects, and their eggs and larvae. Like the tit family they are quite adept at feeding upside down. The song is a rapidly repeated high pitches 'sisi' ending in a squeaking twitter. I have heard them several times this year in and around Oxhill, but only once, many years ago, seen them. Being insectivorous and so small, they are extremely susceptible to severe winters and in the past their numbers have on occasion been severely decimated.

When buying bird food, always try and buy several different mixes so you are catering for the grain eating, fruit eating, and insect eating birds. The number of Goldcrests has happily now increased more than tenfold since the late sixties, so let's hope this continues, and now the leaves are off the trees, you may get to see one.

When ordering your turkey or goose for Christmas, bear a thought for one Reginald de Cornhill, who on 17 December 1213, was ordered to start preparing for King John's royal Christmas feasting. The enormous grocery list included "*twenty bogsheads of wine, costly, good and new, both Gascony and French wines*" also "*200 head of pork, 1000 chickens, 500 pounds of wax (?), 50 pounds of pepper, 2 pounds of saffron, 100 pounds of almonds, good and new, 100 ells of linen cloth to make table cloths*". The requisition concluded "*Ye shall send thither 15,000 herrings and other fish, and other victual as Phillip de Laugeburgh shall tell you*". One would imagine Reginald was mightily please he wasn't footing the bill.

Have a jolly Christmas.

Grenville Moore

SUCCESS STORY

I am delighted to report that a very good home has now been found for the stray cat I reported in the last issue of the News. Ruth Mercer has kindly taken it in.

Doris Roll

NOTES OF THE OXHILL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14TH NOVEMBER 2006 AT 8.00 P.M. IN THE VILLAGE HALL

Apology received from David Hill.

The meeting was chaired by Tom Heritage and attended by Gwyneth Adams, Carol Taylor and Hugh Rowse.

MATTERS DISCUSSED

Transfer of Hospital Services

A letter had been received from Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals stating that their aim is to provide high quality and safe services for all within the budgets given. They hope to provide more diagnostic procedures and operations, and to develop services for older people at Horton Hospital. They also hope to put further investment into the Emergency Dept. but face considerable difficulties in sustaining some of the other services on a 24-hour basis. The impact of this affects their ability to provide in patient paediatric care, in patient gynaecology, out of hours surgery and trauma. They propose a children's day centre, a midwifery-led unit and to increase the number of day case gynaecology procedures and to carry out more planned surgery.

Coventry & Warwickshire Acute Services Review replied that their final report will be produced at the end of December.

A letter received from John Maples, M.P. informed us that following a meeting with the Chief Executive of Warwick Hospital, he was assured that apart from out of hours emergency surgery transferring to the University Hospital Coventry and some paediatric work, no further reduction of services would apply. Warwick Hospital will remain a District General Hospital. They do however have a funding deficit and various ways of tackling this are being discussed.

Planning

- Appeal being made against decision to refuse single storey extension at Appletree Cottage.
- Permission granted for a larger conservatory at Bark Booth
- No objections were raised for extension at rear of The Old Church House
- No objections were raised for extensions at Willow Brook
- No objections raised for replacement of cement capping and infill panels at The Hollies

Finance

The Parish Council would continue to support the Oxhill web site – annual fee £13.53.

Proposal to licence Livery Yards

Under the new Animal Welfare Bill anyone who runs a Horse Livery Yard will require a licence. A Livery Yard is a business of providing a range of facilities, supervision and service intended to care for a horse in return for reward or financial gain.

Possible Rural Cinema Scheme

Stratford District Council is considering the implications of implementing a rural cinema scheme. We have asked the Village Hall Committee if this is something they would be interested in pursuing. Perhaps you would let us know if you have any views on such a scheme.

Age Concern – Free Legal Advice Over 50's

Age Concern in partnership with Ollerenshaw Solicitors are pleased to announce the introduction of a new free Legal Advice Clinic for over 50's. Wills and Enduring Powers of Attorney for Age Concern introductions will be at reduced fees.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 9th January 2007 at 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

Angela Kean, Clerk

SEASON'S GREETINGS

Season's greetings to everyone in Oxhill who remembers Carol, Joan and James Clark.

You might be interested to know that James has qualified for the Australian National Under 17 Water Polo Squad (he's only 15!), and may get asked to play for the Australian team in Europe next year.

Carol Clark

**CHILDREN
IN DISTRESS**

**Annual Coffee Morning
Saturday December 2nd**

10.30 a.m.

Brailes Village Hall

ALL WELCOME

ANN WHITE

Ann passed away at Myton Hospice on 6th October 2006 after a courageous battle with cancer. Ann's literary and musical requests for her funeral were included in well-attended celebration of her life at Oakley Wood Crematorium on Tuesday, 17th October, led by Oxhill's newly appointed priest-in-charge, Canon Nicholas Morgan.

After the service, a reception was held at the Ettington Park Hotel, which was a favourite place of hers.

The family and I thank you for your support and messages of sympathy. Your kind donations to Cancer Research UK, in Ann's memory, totalled in excess of £1650.00.

Mike Druce

VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING

Do come along and have a cup of coffee and a mince pie on Thursday 7th December from 10.15a.m. at Oxbourne House on the Whatcote Road.

All very welcome – if you need a lift, please let me know!

Posy McDonald 688202

CAGNEY & LACEY LIVE ON

Oxhill villagers can sleep soundly in their beds knowing that their very own version of Cagney and Lacey – with a touch of Lassie – are keeping watch on the streets of Oxhill.

In the early hours of Sunday morning three men set off a security light and were spotted carrying boxes at the top of Church Lane. Cecilia phoned Heather and with Lassie – sorry Whisky – leading the way went to the top of the lane where they found an unlocked red car without occupants. Cecilia went to telephone the police, leaving Whisky to guard Heather, but heard him barking while still on the 'phone. She kept the police on the phone and went to help Heather who had confronted the mystery three, who claimed to be delivery men (it was 5.15 am!).

They dropped the second lot of boxes they were now carrying and made a quick getaway. The police are continuing their investigations.

A warning to those who may try and emulate the threesome!

If Whisky hadn't been around there would have been no chance that either of the ladies would have left the house and at least some stolen goods recovered. So remember villagers, especially those of you who complain about barking dogs, that they are letting you know they are on the case. It is very likely that these three had been around the village before in daylight identifying their likely targets, preferably dogless.

Also, should anyone be offered wine and spirits on the cheap, be wary of the source, especially if the wine is of a superior type and not the usual supermarket brands. Cagney and Lacey have expensive tastes!

FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS **Remembering** with thanksgiving

November 17th Thomas Hedley, aged 86

Nicholas Morgan

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Hello,

I read your web page on the history of Oxhill Methodist Church with great interest. I am related to William Geden from Tysoe, and was fascinated to see that he was the founder of the Methodist movement in Oxhill. I know that William's son John (1793 - 1872) was a Methodist minister for 55 years, and served in 21 circuits throughout England between 1817 and his death.

John's obituary includes the statement: "He was the son of Methodist parents, and received a wise and holy training".

I would be very grateful if you could let me have any further information about William. If it is of interest to you, I would be pleased to send the information I have on his son John.

Thanks and regards,

Howard Fall

[Our Historian will soon be in touch with Howard. Ed.]

THAT VOLCANO ON THE COVER

Dear George,

Greetings! I am sorry for the delay in giving you information about the volcano. Here are the details:

The name is Volcán Santa María, called "gagzanul" by the local Mayan people, which means naked mountain. It is an active volcano, 3,772 metres high and about 15 kilometers from La Antigua de Guatemala, which was the ancient capital of Guatemala.

I hope you and Gwyneth are keeping well,

As ever, Russen (Thomas)

VICARAGE NOTES

Christmas greetings

On behalf of myself and Sirpa, Martin and Sue, may I wish all our readers a very happy and peaceful Christmas, and extend a warm invitation to the special services this year at St.Lawrence's. The charity we are supporting at the Carol service this year is "Farms for City Children" and I hope to have a small display at the back of Church.

Thought for the month

Popular carols and Christmas songs abound, many of which we sing at the different services and seasonal celebrations. Mediaeval carols often tell the story of the life of our Lord from his birth to his passion, just think of the words of "The holly bears a berry". More recent carols may well include a prayer for peace. The great Finnish composer, Sibelius, set a number of 19th century poems to music, including "En etsi valtaa loistoa, en kaipaa kultakaan" by Topelius, which being translated (!), is:

I do not seek for glory, I do not seek for wealth,

I ask the light of heaven and peace o'er all the earth.

When Christmas comes, our God is nigh, his joy will lift our hearts on high,

Not glory or the rich man's wealth, but peace o'er all the earth.

That prayer must surely be echoed around the world.

Communion at home

It is a privilege to take communion to the home of anyone too infirm to come to Church, please contact me to sort out a time.

God bless,

Nicholas Morgan, 01608 685230

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEA

Buy annual membership of Compton Verney, a unique gift offering unlimited entry to Compton Verney exhibitions and prior notification of all events.

Membership can be bought at 2006 prices until 15 December.

In addition, membership offers unlimited entry to six collections permanently on display.

Cost: £20 individual membership; £37.50 joint membership; £45 family membership. To buy call 01926 645500.

HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKS

Parents of young children can take advantage of a free home safety fire check before the Christmas celebrations begin – a time when homes are statistically most at risk.

For the last three years Warwickshire fire-fighters have been carrying out free home fire safety checks for the elderly, infirm and otherwise vulnerable members of society. To continue this theme, Stratford fire-fighters are currently offering this free service to parents and carers of the youngest members of our community.

For more information contact Stratford Fire Station - Tel. 01789 293271

Doug Netherclefi (VLO, Oxhill)

REFUSE COLLECTION ARRANGEMENTS

There are Bank Holidays coming up at the end of the month, as well as certain other festivities. This means changes to the arrangements for our refuse and recycling collections.

Collections in Oxhill over the Christmas/New Year period will be:

Thursday 28th December	Refuse, paper, glass, metal, garden waste
Thursday 4th January	Refuse only
Wednesday 10th January	Refuse, paper, glass, metal, garden waste

Editor

FROM THE PRODUCTION STAFF

Gwyneth and I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

In particular we would like to offer our most grateful thanks to all our loyal contributors, without whom there would be no News, and to that stalwart band who monthly trudge from door to door on delivery duties. Thank you, all of you.

George & Gwyn

WHAT'S ON IN OXHILL

December

Friday 1st		Garden Club - Trip to Birmingham Botanical Gardens
Monday 11th	12.30	Village Hall - Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch
Tuesday 12th	7.30	St. Lawrence Church – ‘A Christmas Carol’
Thursday 14th		Garden Club – Christmas Dinner, The Peacock
Wednesday 20th	7.30	St. Lawrence Church – Carol Service

January

Tuesday 9th	8.00	Village Hall – Parish Council Meeting
Thursday 18th	7.30	Village Hall - Garden Club - Winter Colour in your Garden

SEEN IN A BANBURY SHOP

Our hourly rates for repairs are:

If we just do it	£30
If you watch	£40
If you help	£50
If you laugh	£60
If you tried to do it yourself	£100



Just a few of the strange(?) creatures that roamed Oxhill recently

