

THE OXHILL NEWS

November 2022 No. 576



“With all my love and kisses. From your sweetheart, Rachel”
Christmas card sent by Rachel to Toni. Read more on page 16.

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The Peacock Pub	01295 688060
Tysoe Tennis Club:	Club Secretary: Carol Spencer email: carol.spencer234@hotmail.co.uk
Warwickshire Mobile Library:	01926 851031
WOT2Grow Community Orchard:	Liz Atkinson (680045), Paul Sayer (680451), Sue & Mike Sanderson (688080) www.wot2grow.co.uk

**If you would like to list your club or group in the Oxhill News
please send details to oxhill.news.editor@gmail.com**

In the Wilds

by Steve MacRae



Rainbow Bee-eater, Cairns, Australia, July 2013

My long-suffering wife is all too aware that my sudden yell of “STOP!” is my way of asking her nicely to pull in because I’ve spotted something interesting. On this occasion, we were driving in Northern Queensland when something glinted at me from behind a billboard. One emergency stop and a quick reverse later, I was creeping towards the billboard with my camera. Much to my surprise, the Bee-eater turned towards me rather than flew off and I was able to get lots of shots before spending several minutes admiring this beautiful, exotic bird.

Interestingly, members of its extended family, the European Bee-eater, have been spotted more and more frequently in the UK over the past twenty years. This year, they successfully raised chicks in a disused quarry in Norfolk. No one can be 100% certain why they’ve spread northwards, but our old friend climate change is considered to be a major factor.

Tysoe Wildlife presents:



IMAGES BY KELLY AND KATHY BÜSCHER FROM PIXABAY

FARMLAND BIRDS



**By Mike Pollard,
Banbury Ornithological
Society,
7pm on Thursday,
3rd November
in St Mary's Church, Tysoe.**

THE FLIGHT OF THE



Or 'ONE MAN IN A BOAT'

by Peter Taylor

Part one – a dead Seagull and a Cunning Plan.....

I've always agreed with Ratty in 'The Wind in the Willows' that 'there's nothing half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats'. As a young lad living in Wallingford on Thames, I often saw people pottering up and down the river doing exactly that. Their boats were frequently powered by smokey little outboard motors, made by a company called 'British Seagull'. Being - in the parlance of the day - 'a mechanically-minded boy' I always wondered how they worked, so finally, as a lockdown project, I decided to acquire one to find out.

In spite of their somewhat hubristic claim to be 'The best outboard motor for the world', the likes of Honda and Yamaha proved them wrong and they went out of business in the early '90's, so anything I found was likely to be in a bit of a state. But a brief trawl on Ebay revealed a large choice, and a few days later I was in possession of a dented and rusty Seagull 'Super Century' with a seized engine. It had obviously been laid up for years but in spite of the rust it came apart quite easily, and I set to work examining its inner workings



This compact, versatile engine has performance in plenty . . . light in weight, it's docile enough for a 12 ft. dinghy, yet quite suitable for hefty boats. Like all Seagulls, it revels in work, all day and day after day, with the minimum of attention and service. Horse-power category 3-4.5 Weight 35 lbs. (bracket stripped). To suit 16" free-board. Reduction gear ratio 10/35. Propeller 9" diameter, 5-bladed Hydrofan. Long shaft model, plus 6", available.

and bringing it back to life. To my amazement I then discovered that the company still existed, making and supplying replacement parts - they were based on the Thames, coincidentally just a couple of miles downstream from my erstwhile home of Wallingford! I soon found myself there with a shopping list of arcane sundries, having taken note from the parts catalogue that the Amal carburettor had both a small tickler and a large tickler.

As the rebuild progressed, the obvious question began to form in my mind – what am I going to do with it when its finished? What I really wanted was emulate those happy-go-lucky boaters I remembered from childhood, and potter about on the Thames. Even better, why not explore the whole river, starting as close as possible to its source? Maybe I could go all the way to London? How long would it take? Where would I stay? How much fuel would I need? The more I thought about it, the more questions arose and the more exciting the prospect seemed, but there was a fundamental problem – I hadn't got a boat.

Buying was out of the question on cost grounds, but who would hire a boat to a lone explorer who wanted to attach his own motor and disappear for a week? Well – one step at a time, let's at least form an outline plan for the trip first.

Having swotted up with various Thames guides and the Environment Agency website (the EA is responsible for the river), a number of things became apparent. Firstly, the Thames ceases to be navigable to anything bigger than a canoe about one mile upstream from Lechlade, so that looked like a good starting point. Secondly, a number of the locks have campsites, charging about £10 a night. Thirdly, even the fairly deserted upper reaches frequently pass within walking distance of a pub. So the practicalities were covered. But I still hadn't got a boat....

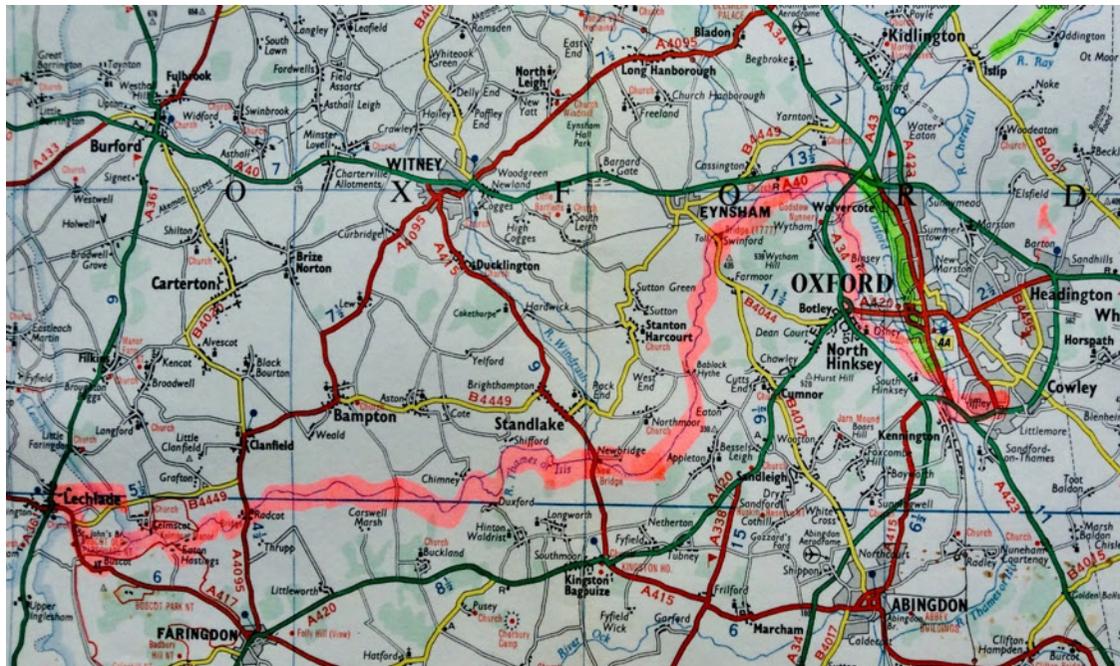
There comes a time when guidebooks and websites have told you all they can and you need to do some real world research, so one morning I set off for Lechlade for a look around. Parking by the river I found Lechlade Marina, owned and run by a very helpful chap called Ian Lindsay. I explained my plan to him, but beyond offering me a derelict dinghy lying on its side in a hedge, he couldn't really help. But by the bridge I found an operation called Cotswold Canoe Hire. In addition to canoes, paddleboards and pedaloos, I spotted 4 or 5 rowing boats that looked to be about the right size. The young lad manning the office told me that they normally hired them by the hour, so I would need to email the owner of the business if I wanted one for a week. I also worked out pretty quickly that £40 an hour for a week was going to bust the budget. But maybe the owner would negotiate.....

A quick look at their website revealed the owner to be one Edith Cameron 'MD and chocolate lover'. I sensed an opportunity, emailed her with my plan and arranged the delivery of a box of chocolates. A couple of days later she replied, thanking me for the chocolates and saying she would be delighted to hire me a boat for a week. She seemed quite taken with the plan and offered a vastly discounted rate that was so cheap that she

asked me not to tell anybody! Never has a small box of chocolates proved such a good investment..... So now I had a motor and a boat and an outline plan – the adventure was beginning to take on a life of its own!

Nicholson's 'Guide to the River Thames' says that journey time in hours is roughly (number of miles + number of locks / 3). On this basis I certainly wasn't going to get to London in a week even if I trailed the boat back, so in spite of being reluctant to take the common-sense approach I settled for a round trip, reckoning that I could get somewhere beyond Oxford and back again in 6-7 days. Iffley Lock looked a good target, so that became my planning assumption. According to the map, that rate would also get me within reach of a pub every lunchtime and a pub or campsite each evening, assuming 4-5 hours travelling a day. The round trip would be about 70 miles, so I reckoned I would need about 20 litres of petrol and 2 litres of 2-stroke oil, plus tools, spares, a tent, mattress, sleeping bag, camping stove, wet-weather gear, changes of clothing, rope, a boat hook, mooring pins and a mallet – oh, and a lifejacket! The boat was 10 feet long.....

So – I agreed a departure date with Edith, booked the campsites & pubs, and gradually assembled my kit. A boathook was made from a Red Horse hayrake handle, and a tent bought from Halfords end-of-season sale for £23. My daughter Lydia gave me a lifejacket for my birthday and Carol said she'd send me with a sandwich. The Seagull was ready to fledge, port of embarkation Lechlade wharf.....



Stay tuned for the next month's instalment of the Flight of the British Seagull or One Man in a Boat. ~ ed.



Tom Horbury, completed the 26 mile London Marathon in 5hrs 49min. Tom wrote on his Facebook page:

“London marathon - completed it mate 👍

What an experience, from the friendly runners, to the crowds and the NOISE of the crowd was out of this world!

Would like to thank my friends, family, customers for supporting me on this journey, so far we have raised £1700, but there is still time to donate!”

Search Tomos Horbury on the Just Giving website to donate to Tom’s charity: MIND.

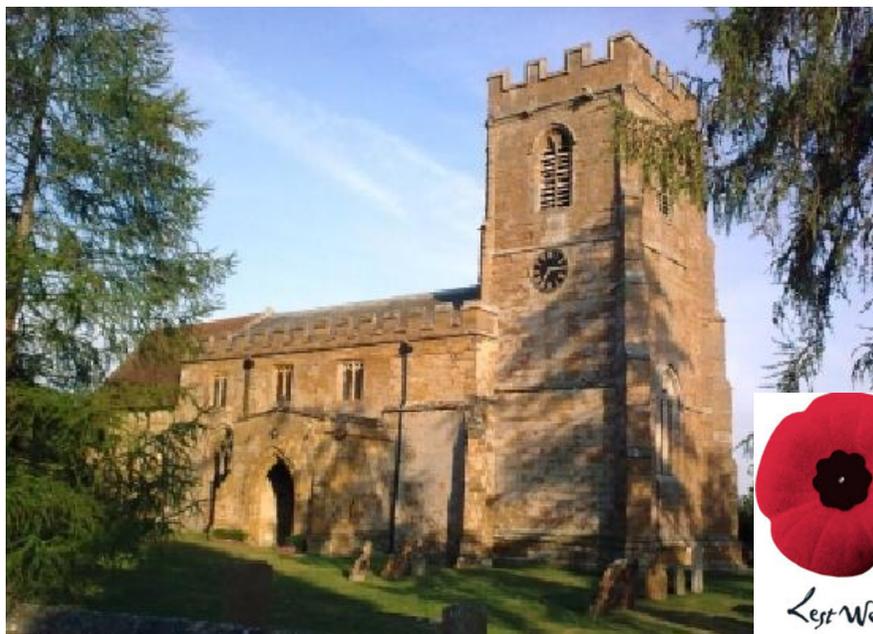
ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH IN NOVEMBER

November is the Season of Remembering: we remember those we have loved and lost, whether recently or many years ago, and we remember formally the horrors of war, and the loss of life or the devastating consequences of war on those who survive. Tragically, this is not just something from the past: warfare and aggression continue, as the conflicts in Ukraine and across the world testify. So alongside Remembrance, we pray for peace, and pledge ourselves to work for it in whatever way we can.

Then, as November comes to and end, we enter Advent: into our world of challenge and distress, sadness, joy and confusion, God sends his Son, as a symbol of his unconditional love for us. He comes as child, sharing it all with us. The year is coming full circle.

Wednesday, November 1st is All Soul's Day, and for those who would like to take the opportunity to remember a loved one, there will be a service of 'In Loving Memory' in **Tysoe Church at 6.30 pm**

Sunday, 6 th November	9.30 am Holy Communion	George Heighton
Sunday, 13 th November	Remembrance Sunday 3.00pm Service of Remembrance	Jill Tucker
Sunday, 20 th November	Christ the King 9.30 am Morning Worship	Jennie Rake
Sunday, 27 th November	First Sunday of Advent 6.30 pm Evening Worship	George Heighton



Just when

Just when
we expect you to
arrive
with anger streaming out
of your ears,
you come
to sit next to us
listening to our darkest
brokenness:
to sweep up the ashes
of every broken
hope,
refining them
into the chalice of wonder.

From Just When, Thom M Shuman, in Winter, ed Ruth Burgess.



Finally, a reminder that filled Shoeboxes should be handed in by November 4th: if you have very kindly done one, please leave it either in the Church, or the rear porch of The Old House on Back Lane.

Blessings, Jill

ST LAWRENCE CHURCH EXTRA!!

Church Big Clean. December 3rd at 10am

Hi Oxhillians. Christmas will soon be here and we look forward to your support on December 3rd to spruce up the church with its annual Big Clean. A little while ago a couple of pigeons invaded the church (door left open) and they made quite a mess. Some good people cleaned up as much as they could but the pigeons left some trade marks high up on the wall above the chancel arch!! So if anyone who is able to cope with heights and possesses a long ladder could come along and help us out we could restore the wall to its pristine whiteness. For those new to the village the church was completely painted by Charles and Nadia McCall about 5 years ago (?) and it has looked beautiful ever since. Let's keep it that way. Coffee and cake will be laid on to reward your efforts!

Crib Service. December 18th at 3pm

We are planning a service which we hope children will come to and enjoy. Sunday before Christmas. I believe something of special interest is being planned that the children can participate in. So put the date on the calendar. Again refreshments will be served. Look forward to seeing you there. (it will be a warm church. The heating will be on! The Christmas tree will be all lit up)

Finally,

The Carol Service this year will be on Wednesday 14th December.

This year it should be back to normal with we hope a full church pre pandemic!! 7.30 pm.

Carol Fox



OXHILL CHRISTMAS ADVENT WINDOWS

It's that time of year again!

We would like volunteers to decorate their windows for the Oxhill 2022 Christmas advent windows.

Last year we had an amazing array of windows throughout December, which brightened up the village and gave us all a good excuse for an evening stroll.



You can see last year's windows on the events page of the Community website Oxhillcommunity.co.uk There is no need to be religious or arty and there is no 'theme', the aim is for each window to be a surprise as it is revealed.

If you

- Live in a house that has a window that can be clearly seen from the road without people coming onto your property.
- Are happy to keep the window illuminated each evening after it is 'opened' until Christmas.
- Are interested in participating or are prepared to act as a standby in case we have problems recruiting enough people
- Please let me know:
- Your name and address
- Your email address and preference you have about days and any dates that are not possible.

Please be aware that a list of addresses and dates will be available in the Oxhill News, face book page and on the notice board. No names or email addresses will be shared without your permission. I look forward to hearing from you.

Lis Stuart

07538 865 789

Lis.stuart@outlook.com



OXHILL ART GROUP



Oxhill Art Group will start again on Thursday 27 October 2022. We will meet from 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm in the Old Chapel. This is an informal group where you can learn some new skills, work on a new piece, or complete a work in progress. Beginners are very welcome as are more advanced artists. We usually run for six to eight sessions and the cost for each session is £15.00. There is no obligation to attend all sessions.

Please contact Grenville Moore

01295 680664 – mobile 07968 789968 – email gren.moore@gmail.com

THE PEACOCK OXHILL

HAPPY Halloween



Sleepy Hollow Halloween display by Lynsey Cleaver.

OXHILL PROGRESSIVE SUPPER

What a lot of fun was had on Saturday 8th October by fifty-four Oxhillians, both new and been-here-a-whiles!

After a drink or two at the Old Chapel, we split into groups and headed off to various houses around the village for starters and then onto different houses for main courses. Talk over dessert at the Old Chapel was full of praise for the amazing cooks we have in Oxhill, and how we must do this again.

A big thank you to all the hosts who provided the French-themed starters and main courses and to everyone who helped with setting up and clearing up. It was great team work - I couldn't have done it without you!

Ali Sayer



Pantomime time is nearly here - oh no it isn't!



One of the highlights of the winter is a trip from Oxhill to the last night of the pantomime at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry. The panto is written and directed by Oxhill resident Iain Macpherson (also known as Iain Lauchlan), who stars as the pantomime dame! This year his daughter Morna, who also lives in Oxhill, is performing in the show too.

Ian has reserved 100 tickets for the performance of **Jack and the Beanstalk** at **7pm on Saturday 7th January, 2023**. As in previous years, I am planning to organise a coach/coaches to leave the village about 5.30pm and arrive in time for a drink at the theatre before the performance. We would get back to Oxhill around 10.30pm. The cost of the panto tickets will be approximately £29 for adults and £26.50 for children. The cost of the coach is not yet known but it is likely to be more than last year (last year the coach was £5.50 a seat & £3 for children)



Please contact Ali Sayer on 07970 922352 or ali.sayer@btinternet.com if you would like tickets for the panto and if you would use the coach.

OXHILL VILLAGE HALL

The fun stuff

All events to be held in The Old Chapel until the Village Hall renovation is complete.

Curry Night, 12th November

Enjoy a three-course meal, our extremely reasonably priced bar, and great company for £20 per head.

Seniors' Christmas Lunch, 13th December

You are cordially invited to enjoy turkey and all the trimmings - all you have to do is let us know you'd like to come. Cash donations are always welcome.

Beer & Bubbles, 16th December

Party in your glad rags while you enjoy two drinks and canapés for £15 per head. The bar will be open all evening for a few glasses more...

The important stuff

Have you bought a brick yet? Anyone donating £50 or more to the Village Hall Renovation Fund can have their name added to a commemorative plaque to be displayed inside the new and improved hall.

If you've very kindly made a donation of any size and pay tax in the UK, please could you complete a gift aid form so we can claim an extra 25% from the government? John McKail has the forms, but you can ask any of the committee members to get one for you.

CONTACT DETAILS

To book a spot at an event: Ali Sayer on 07970 922352 or alisayer@btinternet.com

To come to the Seniors' Christmas Lunch: Jo Collings on 01295 680215 or itsjocollings@gmail.com

To buy a brick or get a gift aid form: John McKail on jmckail@btinternet.com, or speak to any of the committee (Jo Collings, Ali Sayer, Sue Philpott, Sarah Bracher, Rachel Beesley, Steve and Karen MacRae, Dominic Connolly)

We continue with Part 2 of the story of beloved villager Toni Costa, as told by his son, another wonderful villager, Joe Costa. Part 1 was in last month's October issue, which can be found on the village website: OxhillCommunity.co.uk ~ ed.



Toni, Rachel and baby Rosa followed a few years later with baby Joe.

REMEMBERING MELUCCIO ANTONIA ‘TONI’ COSTA

Joe, your family lived at Herd Hill Farm for many years and then came to Oxhill?

We came to Oxhill in 1976. Our first house was where Thelma lives in Beech Row. Then we moved to 3 Peacock Cottages, then 1 Peacock Cottages and finally we moved just across the road to where I am now.

Herd Hill Farm has the big farmhouse and to the side there was a small extension. We had that bit. We also had the two attic rooms over the big house when myself and my sister got older, but we only had one bedroom and it was split in half. Mum and dad had one half and we had the other. One sitting room and a little kitchen. That's all we had when we first lived there, but lots of people lived like that.

When my dad left Herd Hill Farm and came to live here, he applied for a job at the pig farm up by the main road. He lasted about two months. He didn't like that, so he left and went to work on the Warwickshire County Council, repairing holes in the road. He loved that job because he could talk to people.

On the side, he used to do hedge laying and fencing. He would cut no end of hedges. He loved traditional hedge laying, which he was good at. If he found a bird's nest, he would make sure it wasn't disturbed.

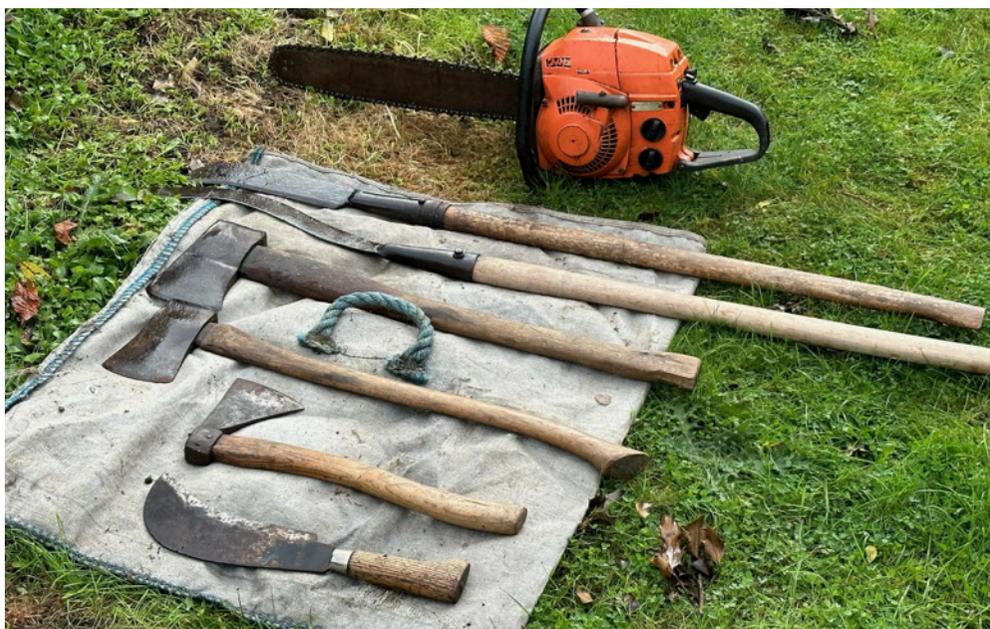
He also used to go to two or three people around the village doing gardening. And any trees that were coming down he was there like a shot. We had five big elm trees out of Eve Whaley's garden. I was only a kid when he said, "Come on, we've got to get shifted."

I said, "You must be joking." Anyway, we done them and had the lot out in the weekend. He was a hard stickler for work.

When did your father die?

He died in the eighties. I left school in '81 and I think it may have been about '89 when he passed away, because I was working at Hutsbys at Ettington. The police went to Mr. and Mrs. Rolls, who used to live in the bungalow at the end of the street. They were looking for me. Mr. And Mrs. Rolls said, he's at Hutsbys in Ettington. So Reg Rolls, God rest his soul, came over, picked me up and said, "You've got to get to Warwick Hospital, Your dad's ever so ill." Then my dad took a turn for the worst and died of bronchial pneumonia. He was 66 or 67, but he was a heavy smoker.

When he was at Herd Hill Farm, Mr. Fox paid so much money a week, because we had a tied cottage [A farm cottage can be tied to the job. If you lose the job, you lose the cottage]



Toni's hedge laying tools. The small axe was forged to Toni's specification at an ironmongers in Kineton. Toni wanted a lightweight axe to make fine cuts that are difficult to do with a heavier axe.

and then my father was paid the rest in cigarettes. He gave 200 Players cigarettes to my dad, Mr. Fox and Andrew Hooton, the tractor driver had Senior Service cigarettes, which were non tipped. And then Neddy, the old tractor driver, had Woodbines. So Mr Fox used to go on a Thursday and buy 200 Players for the old man, 200 Woodbines for Neddy and then 400 Senior Service.

That was from Thursday to Thursday. Mr. Fox went to market on a Thursday. He used to sit in the car and send his wife downtown. Her first job to go and get the cigarettes for the blokes.

When we left there, I think dad was on about 30 pounds a week.

What was your dad like as a dad?

He was very hard. He taught us right from wrong. He would teach you some things, like he taught me to drive the tractor as well as Timmy Groves, but you had to do it right the first time. If you tried and got it wrong, he'd give up with you. He hadn't got no patience. It had to be done right straight away. If you'd done something wrong, you got punished. That's why we turned out fairly good, me and my sister, because we were punished.

Is it true that he taught you how to go poaching?

No. One scenario, we had some friends come over from Leicester. They had a fish and chip shop in Leicester. They used to come over once a month in the summer holidays and bring



Rachel Costa enjoying a holiday in Italy

all the family to have a big picnic at Herd Hill Farm. They used to go around with the guns, have a barbecue and bring homemade wine. Dad was okay on that. Joe, the father of the family, had been a POW with my dad.

So, this one day, two of the sons of Joe, said to my dad, "Hey Toni, we got some brand new 12 bore guns." They got them out of back of the BMW, all in these lovely cases and put them together. And they said we can shoot anything. He said righty-ho and put some cans up on the top of the bench. There they were pop, pop, pop, pop, but they missed a couple of times. Anyway, dad got his gun up in the back of the tractor. It was a real old 12 bore and one barrel was shorter than the other - he had cut a little bit out with a hacksaw because it had rotted.

He said to these boys, "Righty ho, you think you can shoot? I'll show you how to shoot better." He let both barrels of his gun off and he just took these cans off in one shot.

I said, "What bullet you got in there then?"

And he said, "Oh I make them me self." He actually made his own cartridge and what was in it, I don't know.

He was an excellent shot. You'd look down the field and see a pheasant, just bobbing its head about, and suddenly he'd give it a barrel and you'd think he's miss that, but he'd got it. That was only source of meat we had, pheasants and rabbits and what have you.

He remained friends with a couple of POWs, such as those who went to Leicester. They were all Sicilian. There were two brothers in Combrook, from another part of Sicily, who were POWs at Ettington Park with dad, at the same station. They went to work in factory in Stratford. They didn't want to go back when they were liberated.

The two brothers who came over from Sicily had met two sisters from Sicily, so they sent money back to get the sisters here. They all got married, the Pirissie families. Two brothers married two sisters.

Did he keep in touch with his siblings?

He did. One of his sisters came over with her husband and lived at Morton Morrell. Sadly, her husband only lived for about five or six years of being over here. He was killed at the Bowshot Crossroads on the Fosse. He had a little moped and the car hit him and killed him outright. So unfortunately my auntie had to bring up three children on her own at Moreton Morrell. She's passed away now. She had the same as my dad, bronchial pneumonia. She was heavy smoker as well.

The rest of his family were still in Sicily. One had a fruit and veg business and one had a bed breakfast or a hotel business out there.

Do you speak any Italian?

Only two words, si and gracias. Yes and thank you. It gets me by.

I'm surprised you didn't pick up any Italian because your father's POW friends must have been speaking in Italian.

Yeah. We used to go and visit different families on a Sunday afternoon and they all started off in the lingo and myself and my mother didn't know a word. We used to sit there a bit gobsmacked, but the families wanted us to speak in English so they could learn words.

Your father learned English while he was here?

Yes, he was very good at picking things up, languages and everything. He was sort of self-taught. He worked in a brick factory when he was in his youth and he had never touched a cow or sheep in his life. They had no livestock out there. It was just gardening and things like that. So he actually learned milking cows when he came to this country and he loved it.

He loved animals. That's why he went for this cowman's job. It was a cowman's job at Herd Hill Farm and livestock person for sheep as well. And he just took to it. That was his thing.

It was a good life, you know. We had a hard life, but it was good.



That's how I remember Toni. He would spend all day in the garden and if he spotted anybody coming, he'd lean on the fence. And he had this lovely Italian Warwickshire accent. ~ Grenville Moore

*Here are the words from a lovely letter sent to Rachel from Percy Sewell after
Toni's death.*

6th December

Dear Rachel,

It goes without saying, how very sad we all were when Toni died. I hear that he had been in hospital a number of times recently but I still refused to believe that he would not get over his illness.

Through pure chance, involving a discussion on hedge laying, I met Toni and asked him to do some hedging six years ago. Little did I realise that a couple of hundred yards of hedging would result in such a close friendship.

He was a marvellous character, whose life seemed to span a century – he had a wonderfully wicked sense of humour, a fascinating eye on the past and was, without doubt, one of the most genuine and honest people I have ever had the privilege of knowing.

Through the few years of talking, arguing, gossiping, shouting and thinking with each other, I have learnt a tremendous amount from him. What makes things so much sadder with his passing is that he is totally irreplaceable, obviously of course with you, but also with everybody who knew him; - he was one of the old brigade – that special breed of person of whom this modern and greedy world is so sadly lacking. I will miss him dearly and my mother, David, Mark and the girls likewise feel the same.

As I said before, if there is anything whatsoever that you need, please just ring me.

On behalf of all the Sewell family,

God Bless and Good Luck.

Yours ever,
Percy

BURLAND HOUSE
OXHILL
WARWICK
CV35 0RD
Tel: Tysoc 210

6th December,

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CHURCH FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE

QUIZ NIGHT

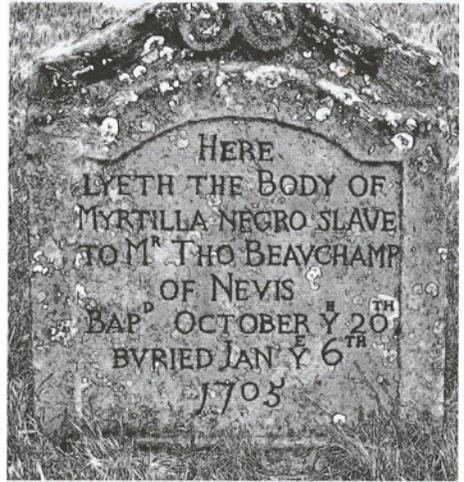
On October 15th, teams gathered in the Old Chapel to take on the challenge of our quiz. We were extremely fortunate to have secured the services of a very professional Quizmaster who certainly made the evening very entertaining. The supper during the break was well received. As the quiz went into the final round, two teams were battling for first position, one from Wellesbourne and Stratford and one from Oxhill. In the end, the Oxhill team was victorious. Congratulations to Gill, Sue, Belinda, Tricia and Derek! The best result was that the evening raised over £660 for maintaining the Church. Thank you to everyone who supported the event.

These events are a team effort and I want to thank Carol, Carol, Gaida, Lis, Sue, Lucy, Alice and Maureen for all the cooking as well as setting up and clearing the Chapel; Jerry and Jon for table shifting, washing up and bar duties; Alice for poster design. There would be no events like the quiz without this hardworking team. Lastly, a massive thank you to Iain Macpherson for being an excellent Quizmaster, giving up his Saturday evening and bringing his own PA equipment too. It wouldn't have been half as good without him.

Ruth Mercer
ruthc.mercer@btinter
net.com
07400 615999







Myrtilla's grave in village graveyard (left). Enhanced view of inscription (right).

JOHN HALES DELVES INTO THE BEAUCHAMP FAMILY & MYRTILLA

Myrtilla's grave is one of oldest surviving graves of someone of African descent in Britain. Although the inscription states that she was the slave of Thomas Beauchamp, the church's burial records describe her as "a negro girl of Mrs Beauchamps". The grave was restored in 1969. The grave was given Grade II listed status in 1988.

The Beauchamp family had sugar interests in Nevis [Caribbean Island], and it is presumed that when the family relocated to England, Myrtilla moved with them as a favoured servant. Little is known about her, and further research is ongoing.

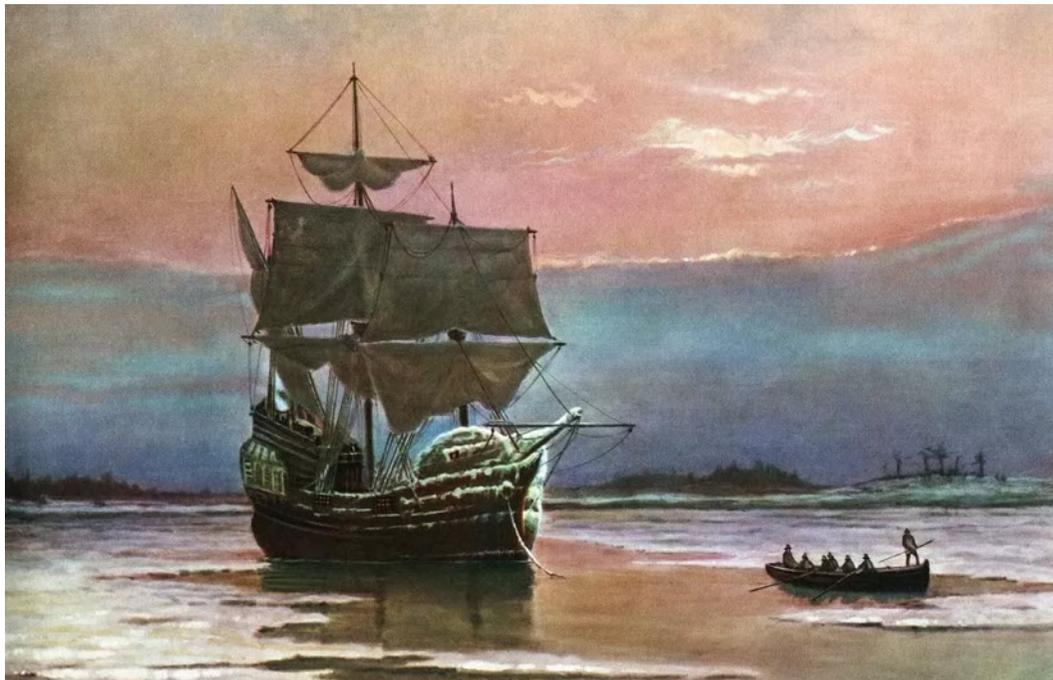
~ Remi Kapo, journalist and author

John Hales has written two earlier articles about Myrtilla (Feb 2022), the Meese Family (May 2022) and their connection to Oxhill. Interestingly, the maiden name of Mrs Beauchamp, who brought Myrtilla from Nevis to Oxhill, is Meese. John's previous articles can be found under the News tab on our village website: OxhillCommunity.co.uk

In John Hales latest article, he looks at two lines of the Beauchamp family with North American trading interests. And as John writes,

"I believe I show Thomas Beauchamp on the island and a namesake of Myrtilla owned by Beauchamp's partner. The source of the name Myrtilla is I hope interesting."

~ ed.



The Mayflower, in American colonial history, is the ship that carried the Pilgrims from England to Plymouth, Massachusetts, where they established the first permanent New England colony in 1620. The Mayflower was chartered by a group of English merchants called the London Adventurers. John Beauchamp was one of the four London Adventurers.

BEAUCHAMP FAMILY & MYRTILLA

by John Hales

John Beauchamp [1592-1655] was a merchant and investor in the Plymouth Pilgrims in 1620. He did not go to America, but one of his sons, Edmund, is known to have gone to Maryland and a cousin Edward went to Salem, New England.

Edmund Beauchamp was sent to Somerset County, Maryland, by Gov. Charles Calvert in the spring of 1666 as a ‘person well qualified to exercise the office of clerk of court for the entire Eastern Shore.’

In 1668 Philip Calver obtained from Virginia recognition of the boundary for Somerset County. This is likely to have put Philip Calver in regular contact with Edmund Beauchamp, at a time when Henry Meese, Nicholas’s brother, was still in North America. Calver was married to a daughter of Walter Wolsley whose wife Mary was a daughter of John Beauchamp, of the Mayflower, so there is a second connection to the Beauchamps. It

Edmund Beauchamp in his will speaks of himself as “weaver, of London.” He was in Maryland by 1665 since in that year he assigned fifty acres of land to William Smith. He was sent to Somerset County, Maryland, by Governor Charles Calvert in the spring of 1666 as a person well qualified to exercise the office of clerk to the court. This local court “entertayned” him on this high recommendation with the hope that he would carefully discharge the duties of so responsible an office. The letter from this court to Governor Calvert is under date of July 3, 1666. For a short time Edmund Beauchamp occupied the office of clerk of court for the entire Eastern Shore, but on August 22, 1666, Somerset County was established and from that time with the exception of a few months, he was clerk of Somerset County until his death in 1691. I have seen the records which he made and agree entirely with the estimate made by Clayton Torrence, author of *Old Somerset on the Eastern Shore of Maryland* (p. 333): “Anyone who has occasion to make careful study and investigation of the records of Somerset Court from its beginning throughout Beauchamp’s years of service as clerk will fully realize the care and thought which this early worthy bestowed upon the duties of his office. A more splendidly kept set of records of court proceedings and deeds cannot, we believe, be found elsewhere during the early colonial period. He was a veritable master of his craft.”

Excerpt from ‘The Beauchamp Family’ by Stith Thompson, published 1954

is likely Edmund Beauchamp knew Henry Meese who was in Somerset, Maryland from the mid-1650s, given their proximity in the 1660s.

Edmund Beauchamp baptised a Thomas Beauchamp in Maryland the 26th December 1670. This is too late for the Beauchamp of Nevis, and this Thomas marries and dies in America. Thomas though is a family name of the Beauchamps.

John Beauchamp [financier of the the Mayflower] has also sons John and Richard whose careers and progeny are unaccounted for on the Cosgrove family history which gives John’s birth as 1615 and Richard’s as c1633. What happens to them is unclear. There are interesting but ultimately frustrating leads the John and Richard are American merchants

Records of a meeting March 13th 1659/60 Virginia, it was ordered that:

‘John Beauchamp, merchant, be permitted to carry his Indian boy into England, Provided that at the county court in Charles Cittie Countie he make it appeare that he hath the consent of the said Indian boy's parents soe to doe.’

This journey is so close to that Thomas Beauchamp will later take with Myrtila his enslaved girl, to England that it is hard to avoid the idea that it is a precedent for Myrtila's voyage.

There are land grants to John Beauchamp in 1664 and 1666.

John Beauchamp is also the assignee of a lease from Elizabeth Gonning of the Sugar house, January 28th 1666, with Isaac Swift. In 1667 recorded as Beacham he is involved in an agreement to assign the Sugar house to William Smith and James Jauncy.

From 1666 Richard Beauchamp is involved in the Sugar house and in January 1672 receives an assignment of the Sugar house, and again with a lease for a year of the Sugar House, 1676 Aug 24 from William Swift.

Richard Beauchamp also imported tobacco from Virginia at a time when Henry Meese was actively doing the same, in 1677-78, with a total of 22000 lbs of tobacco imported.

The will of Richard Beauchamp, buried August 28th 1706 in Mortlake, shows his close connection to Edward Colston the executor of the will. Both lived in Mortlake. His will also shows he had a son, William, and a great nephew, John, son of a nephew John, who had predeceased him. Given the habit of naming sons after fathers, it is reasonable to think he had had a brother John. This brother could be the father of Thomas of Nevis.



Sugar House Bristol, “now much altered, was once an important sugar house, used to store and process imported sugar from the Caribbean. In the 17th century sugar was a luxury item but in the late 18th century it was enjoyed by an increasing number of people to sweeten tea and cocoa. It was also used in the production of rum.

The increased demand for African slaves was due to this popularity of sugar in the 18th century. By the second half of the 18th century Bristol was specialising in processing the raw sugar which came from the plantations in the Caribbean.”

~ Discovering Bristol

Caribbeana.

JAMES BEVON of Island of Nevis, esquire. Will date 18 Nov. 1720. To my daur. Henrietta B. £1,000, also a negro woman, Maria and her sucking child Dorinda, a negro man called Charles, a negro boy Cato, a negro girl Amarilles, a negro woman Dido and her 3 children Myrtilia a girl, Dover and Billy, boys, also maintenance until marriage and £32 annuity till then. To my grandchildren, the daughter (s) of Richard Abbott jun. and Elizabeth his late wife, named Elizabeth Frances and Anne 12,000 lbs. of muscovado sugar each. To my sd. granddaughter Elizabeth, a negro girl Coelia and to my sd. granddaughter Frances, a negro girl Rose and to my sd. granddaughter Ann, negro girl Abbo. To my nephew Alexander Rive who now dwells with me 2,000 lbs. of muscovado sugar yearly while on my estate with maintenance, etc. and a negro boy Cumberland. To Lieut.-Col. Richard Brodbelt in fee a piece of land with house, formerly belonging to Osborn Jones, dec. in Charles Town, Nevis, adjoining land late of Mr. James Walkers deceased and the land late of Thomas Eayres, also dec. and fronting with the land or street behind the house of Joseph Jorey esq. and backwards to the watercourse. To John Dasent, a minor, son of John D. esq. of sd. Island my share of land at Saddle Hill which was by Deed of Gift given by my mother-in-law Judith Jones since dec. to Thomas Beauchamp and myself equally. My servant Mary Sheppard to serve out 5 months and then be free. My son James B. to be ex'or and to him rest of estate. My friends Lieut.-Col. Brodbelt, John Dasent esq. and James Simonds to be guardians of sd. daur. Henrietta B. during her minority. If Island be taken by enemy sd. son and daur. to share equally and be ex'ors and above legacies void. Wits.: Joseph Herbert, Maurice Healy, Moses Jones.

Probate 31 Aug. 1722 by James B. son and ex'or. (152, Marlborough.)

Caribbeana: Being Miscellaneous Papers Relating to the History, Genealogy, Topography, and Antiquities of the British West Indies

Excerpt pictured above is the will of James Bevon, business partner of Thomas Beauchamp. Interestingly, Bevon declares that "My servant Mary Sheppard to serve out 5 months and then be free."

THOMAS BEAUCHAMP IN NEVIS

There are not obvious birth records for him. There are two Barbadian late 17th century Thomas Beauchamp marriages and two burials.

In 1677-8 in Nevis Thomas Beauchamp has 2 white men, 2 white women, 15 negro men 14 negro women and 11 negro children. Thomas Beauchamp is recorded twice in volume 3 as present in 1677-8 and 1707-8

Solomon Beauchampe has 1 white man and 1 white woman, [page 70, 76 volume 3 Caribbeana.]

James Bevon, a future partner, is not listed as an inhabitant in 1677-8.

There is a reference in Oliver's Caribbeanna within the notes on the will of James Bevon to his partnership with Thomas Beauchamp 1720. The reference must be to Thomas Beauchamp senior. Bevon says 'my share of land at Saddle Hill which was by deed of gift given by my mother-in-law Judith Jones since deceased to Thomas Beauchamp and myself equally. 'Perletta Beauchamp has land at Saddle Hill, as well as Whitehall and Mountain crop.' [See excerpt from the Caribbeana on previous page]

Bevon's age is a guide as to the age of Beauchamp. The lack of other reference to Thomas Beauchamp could be a sign he is dead.

Bevon's will makes gifts of slaves. In particular 'to my daughter Henrietta B £1000, also a negro woman, Maria and her suckling child Dorinda, a negro man called Charles, a negro boy Cato, a negro girl Amarilles, a negro woman Dido and her 3 children Myrtilla, a girl; Dover and Billy, boys. Dido is a woman with a daughter Myrtilla. This is fifteen years after the death of Myrtilla in Oxhill, a generation on. It is hard to believe that this Dido is not a close relative of the Myrtilla who came to Oxhill and died so shortly after in the unaccustomed cold of an English winter, a sister, even a daughter. But names are determined by the masters.

MYRTILLA'S NAME

Myrtilla comes from the medieval Latin *Myrtilla*. There are literary sources for Myrtilla's name. English ones but ultimately Italian ones.

Isabella Andreini wrote *La Mirtilla* in 1588, the first ever play published by a woman in Italian.

Myrtilla could be seen as a response to *Pastor Fido* by Guarini, with the central male character Myrtillo the faithful shepherd. The characters include, Silvio, and his pursuer, Dorinda, whose intrigues serve as a dramatic sideline to the main plot in *Il Pastor Fido* concerning the ill-fated lovers Amarilli and Mirtillo.

That these plays are the ultimate source for Myrtilla's name is shown by the will dated 18th November 1720, of James Bevon on Nevis He bequeathed slaves with names from these two plays Dorinda, Amarilles as well as a Myrtilla, as well as the more usual Cato and Dido .

La Mirtilla is a proto-feminist play. Julie Campbell wrote of La Mirtilla:

‘whereas in Aminta, Il pastor fido, and even Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream “heroines are threatened with rape, murder, and loss of reputation until they are rescued by a hero, a judgment by a patriarchal figure, or supernatural intervention,” something quite different happens when a woman takes up the pastoral (xviii). In La Mirtilla women are strong, wise, and full of agency ‘ ~ Julie Campbell

It is some reversal then to make such a woman, strong, wise and full of agency into a slave.



Corisca and the Satyr by Artemisia Gentileschi from a scene in the play Mirtillo.

Countdown to Christmas

So much going on in the countdown to Christmas! Get your tickets and the dates in your diary!

- Friday 18th November, we have booked Washington Whirligig – the clue is in the name, Whirligig by name and by nature! New Orleans through to driving mainstream jazz, swing and blues.
- Saturday 3rd December, back by popular demand, Cotswold Events have booked the hall for The Birmingham Blues Brother's.
- Sunday 4th December, our very own Shipston Town Band have booked the hall for their Christmas special.
- Friday 17th December, we have booked the Carl Sinclair Quartet for our own Christmas special - get in quick when we release tickets for this one! Carl is right up there as a professional pianist, vocalist and entertainer with songs for everyone that'll get you dancing and singing along!

As previously noted, all the proceeds from bookings and events at the hall, go towards the charity under which it operates. For events the charity's trustees' book, proceeds are targeted at specific projects, not least an investment in a stage lift to provide access to the stage for all – and, thanks to our event attendees, we're getting close!

As a charity, we welcome all the support we can get - please take a look at <https://localgiving.org/charity/infoattownsendhallcom/> and if you can spare a little something, it would be very welcome to help keep us going.

Take a look at www.townsendhall.co.uk for more. From here you can see everything else going on at the hall including clubs and sports. For events the trustees put on, you can also bag your own table and seat from www.ticketsource.co.uk/townsend-hall, or for general admission from Clarke's in town.

WOT2GROW COMMUNITY ORCHARD



What a crop of apples and pears this year! A bumper harvest even though most of the apples are a little smaller than usual. They are however very juicy and with good flavour despite the long dry and sunny summer and completely delicious.



The first commercial juicing produced over 100 bottles of pasteurised juice with a good balanced flavour – we await the second batch which has also been sent off and expect it to be even better with more varieties in the mix. To pasteurise it ourselves is a long and hard business as we have to use small equipment and the effort is very great so using a commercial operation is wonderful and much appreciated by our members!

Apple Day was a great success, see separate item and photos, and the weather was glorious!!!

The signs of autumn are all around the orchard as the perry pear trees drop their fruit and the dessert pears leaves are turning a beautiful colour! But still plenty of apples and pears and cider apples still to come as well as medlars and a few quince.

Find out more – use the contact numbers below or message us via the web site.

The Community Orchard is just behind the allotments on the Shenington Road in Tysoe.

Liz Atkinson (680045), Paul Sayer (680451), Sue and Mike Sanderson (688080)
website www.wot2grow.co.uk



WOT2GROW APPLE DAY

Apple Day at the orchard on Saturday 8th October was a wonderful community event with record attendance, including some holiday makers who just happened to be passing by! The weather was glorious, and adults and children alike had a great time chopping, crushing, and pressing apples to make some beautiful fresh juice. Everyone also enjoyed drinking the results! The refreshments stall was very popular with the home-made cakes – mostly baked with orchard ingredients including apples (of course), damsons and hazelnuts – disappearing very fast.

Our community orchard is a fantastic place for wildlife, and for providing all of us with local, organic food. See www.wot2grow.co.uk for more information and how to join. New members are always made to feel very welcome and you can enjoy plenty of orchard produce for a small joining fee.

Allison Aves



Kinton Amateur Dramatic Society

presents

Daisy pulls it off

by Denise Deegan

**23rd, 24th,
25th & 26th
November 2022**

**Kinton Village Hall 8.00pm
Doors Open 7.15pm Bar Available**

Tickets £7.50 Card Payment Preferable

Tickets via kads.org.uk or tel: **01295 680487**

"Daisy pulls it off" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals Ltd.
on behalf of Samuel French Ltd. www.concordtheatricals.co.uk



MADE IN OXHILL POP-UP ARTS & CRAFTS SHOP

The **Pop-Up Arts and Crafts shop** will open on **Saturday 26th November** between **10am and 2pm**, and on **Sunday 27th November** between **10am and 1pm** at **The Old Chapel**. There will be many stalls selling gifts, bags, artwork, cards, knitted goods, cushions, home produce, wood creations and much more, all produced locally. Please come along and have a look around. Tea, coffee and homemade cakes will be served all day long. You might be able to do all your Christmas shopping without leaving Oxhill and support local entrepreneurs at the same time!

If you would like to donate items for the home produce stall or can bake a cake for the refreshments, you can deliver them to me beforehand or the Chapel during the event. All donations would be most welcome!

Ruth Mercer
ruthc.mercer@btinternet.com
07400 615999

MADE IN OXHILL

ARTS

CRAFTS

Pop Up **SHOP**

**26TH-27TH
NOVEMBER**

SATURDAY: 10AM-2PM
SUNDAY: 10AM - 1PM

THE OLD CHAPEL, OXHILL
TEA, COFFEE & CAKES

GIFTS
CARDS
BAGS
CUSHIONS
ARTWORK
KNITTED GOODS
ALPACA GOODS
CHRISTMAS
DECORATIONS
AND MORE!

WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

NOVEMBER

Thurs 3rd	14:00-14:30	Mobile Library, outside Village Hall
Thurs 3rd	19:00	Tysoe Wildlife Presents, St Mary's Church, Tysoe
Sat 12th	19:30	Currt Evening, The Old Chapel
Thurs 24th	14:00-14:30	Mobile Library, outside Village Hall
Wed 23-26	20:00	KADS Daisy Pulls It Off, Kinton Village Hall
Sat 26th	10:00-14:00	Made In Oxhill Arts & Crafts, The Old Chapel
Sun 27th	10:00-13:00	Made In Oxhill Arts & Crafts, The Old Chapel
Every Thursday	11:45-12:00ish	Awesome Coffee Van, outside Peacock Pub

PC MEETINGS

The date of the next PC Meeting is **Tuesday, 8 November, 2022 at 7.30pm**. This meeting will be held in the Old Chapel. The Agenda for the meeting will be shown on the PC Website or a physical copy will be displayed on one of the village Notice Boards, a few days before the meeting.

If you want any request to be included for consideration at the above meeting please send details to the Clerk (oxhillpc@btinternet.com) at least 10 days prior to the meeting to ensure that it is included on the publicly visible Agenda.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OXHILL NEWS

The editors welcome any pictures, photographs, drawings, poems, puzzles, recipes, announcements or items of local news for possible inclusion in The Oxhill News. Submissions must be received by the 15th of each month for publication in the following month.

Please email: oxhill.news.editor@gmail.com

BIN COLLECTION CALENDAR

Check the date on the calendar to identify which bins go out for collection.



November 2022				
4	F			
11	F	R	W	G
18	F			
25	F	R		G