

THE OXHILL NEWS

May 2023 No. 582



Janet Gardner, alongside her son, Nick, celebrates her 100th birthday at the Old Chapel.

Vanessa Druce, editor & Grenville Moore, consulting editor
Email: oxhill.news.editor@gmail.com Website: oxhillcommunity.co.uk

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARTICLE	PAGE
Happy 100th Birthday to Janet Gardner	3
Oxhill Garden Club Plant Sale	4
Bank Holiday Monday Litter Pick	5
Jotters South Warwickshire Writing Group	5
Oxhill Celebrates The Kings Coronation	6
Photo: Sunday Old Field Cottage	7
St Lawrence Church	8
Church Fundraising Celebrate Summer in Oxhill	10
Phil Brennan Wins Medals at the World Masters Athletics	11
Oxhill Village Hall	12
Extension of Whatcote Road Pavement	14
The Peacock Oxhill	15
Tysoe Tennis Club	16
Photo: Tony Wilde Completes London Marathon	16
In the Wilds: Huntsman Spider	17
Oxhill Cooks: Rhubarb & Orange Polenta Cake	18
Photo: One of Our Youngest Readers	20
50th Anniversay: Oxhill Village School in 1876	21
Wot2Grow Community Orchard	28
Stour Singers Handel's Messiah	30
Townsend Hall	31

CLUB & GROUP CONTACT DETAILS

Carers4carers:	kcarers4carers@gmail.com or tel: 07947 893504
Oxhill Village Hall:	Jo Collings - Chair - 01295 680215 Ali Sayer - Hall Hire - 07970 922352 email: village-hall@oxhill.org.uk
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
talkdementia.uk	Paul & Heather Dowler Tysoe 688376
Carer Support Service	email: talkdementia@mail.com Website: talkdementia.uk Tysoe Village Hall every Friday from 10am



HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY TO JANET GARDNER

Many of you will remember the wonderful two piece article that Vanessa wrote about the fascinating life of Janet Gardener who lived next to the Old Chapel. Janet is now in a home and doing very well and has just celebrated her hundredth birthday. Her family organised a lovely party at the Old Chapel to mark her 100 years and many of her friends and family enjoyed a delicious lunch. Janet was on fine form and yes....she received a card of congratulations from King Charles 111....how marvellous and we wish Janet many more birthdays.



Grenville Moore



OXHILL GARDEN CLUB

VILLAGE PLANT SALE

Friday 19th May – Old Chapel – 6.30pm

Just to remind you to make a note of the date and time and hope that you can bring along something from your garden or plants you have raised. Also any vegetables, fruit or garden tools which can be sold.

Its 'bring and buy' with all proceeds split between the Village Hall and the Church.

Cash, cheques or even I.O.U.s will be accepted.

*Peter Rivers Fletcher
Oxhill Garden Club*



BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY LITTER PICK

As part of the of the Coronation weekend Bank holiday Monday 'The Big Help Out' I am organising a village litter pick please come along if you are free to help out. Thanks to our team of regular litter pickers most of the easy pick-up litter is kept under control. However, when you look more closely there is quite a lot in the ditches and in the hedgerows. It would be great if we could get a team together to collect this.



I am happy to supply gloves, bin liners and there are a few litter grabbers available (although the Parish Council ones are currently unavailable as they are being stored with the rest of the village hall stuff). So, if you have your own or are able to borrow one, please bring it along.

There will be hot drinks and cakes for all volunteers afterwards.

I look forward to seeing you on **Monday 8th May 11.30 at Oak View, Green Lane.**

Let me know if you are coming either by text 07538865789 or email Lis.stuart@outlook.com so I can make sure there is plenty of cake!

(If it is unpleasantly wet will postpone until Saturday 13th)

A graphic advertisement for the South Warwickshire Writing Group. At the top, the text "SOUTH WARWICKSHIRE WRITING GROUP" is written in a hand-drawn, orange, sans-serif font. Below this, the word "JOTTERS" is written in large, grey, textured letters. The letter 'J' has a small illustration of a head with a brain inside. The letter 'O' has a small illustration of a skull. The letter 'T' has a small illustration of a feather. The letter 'E' has a small illustration of a pencil. The letter 'R' has a small illustration of a lollipop. The letter 'S' has a small illustration of a gift box. To the right of the word "JOTTERS", the text "Free, friendly & fun creative writing for adults" is written in a cursive font, followed by "SUNDAYS AT 10am, OXHILL" in a hand-drawn, orange, sans-serif font. At the bottom left, the email address "karenmacrae27@gmail.com" is written in a hand-drawn, orange, sans-serif font.



OXHILL CELEBRATES.....THE KING'S CORONATION

TIME TO HANG OUT YOUR BUNTING!

Thank you to those who have generously offered a venue for the Coronation Big Picnic Lunch. The decision has been taken to hold it on the field next to the Old Chapel by kind permission of Janet and Nick Gardner. Over the last couple of weeks, I have received many more reservations for pitches at the **Oxhill Coronation Big Picnic Lunch on Sunday 7th May**. We will be marking out pitches beforehand so it will make things simpler if we know you are coming and how many gazebos you are bringing. There's still time to let me know! As the ethos of the Big Lunch movement is about creating friendships, reducing loneliness and boosting community spirit, Jill and Colin Tucker will be hosting a table for those who might otherwise be on their own or who don't yet know anyone in the village. Please contact me to reserve spaces on Jill and Colin's table too.

The plan for the day is as follows:

10 am – 12 noon: Set up your gazebo, tables, chairs, picnic etc in the field next to the Old Chapel, not forgetting desserts/ cheese for the sharing table.

12 noon: assemble outside the Church to process up Green Lane and round the village to the picnic field. Fancy dress optional but definitely encouraged.

1 pm: start of picnic.

Afternoon activities: to include children's games, face painting etc

General information

- Please organise your table's starters and mains, then bring a dessert / cheeseboard to add to a sharing dessert table.
- Don't forget to bring everything you need – tables, chairs, crockery, cutlery, corkscrew, candelabra, etc.
- Parents are responsible for their children at all times.
- Dogs must be kept on leads and are the responsibility of their owners at all times.
- Please clean up and take home all your rubbish and that of your dog.

- No vehicles will be allowed to move on the field during the event. Please contact me if you need disabled access.
- It's never too early to get your bunting out so let's make the village look fit for a party!

All offers of help and loan of gazebos will be gratefully accepted!

Ruth Mercer

07400 615999

ruthc.mercer@btinternet.com



Sunday Old Field Cottage

A wonderful sunset taken from our garden.

Photo by Les Michelle Hardiman

ST LAWRENCE CHURCH

May this year is an extraordinary month: it begins with a Coronation, and ends with Pentecost: the birth of a new reign, and the birth of the church, both marked by an outpouring of God's Holy Spirit – his presence among us.

At the beginning of the month, we shall pray that the new King and Queen will know God's presence in their lives in the task that lies ahead of them: at the end, we claim his presence in our lives as we live out the tasks that lie ahead of each of us, day by day. Like the first disciples at that first Pentecost, we are all powerless without it.



There is a little booklet of Prayers for the Coronation at the back of the church – do please take one. In the final prayer these two strands come together in the prayer Celebrating Community:

Living God, you bring us
together in community
and teach us to love one another
as you have loved us.
May we be beacons of your light
in the communities
in which we are set,
that through truth,
justice and action
we may see your kingdom
come upon earth,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday, May 7th **Coronation Weekend**
9.30 am Holy Communion

Sunday, May 14th 9.30 am Morning Worship

Sunday, May 21st 9.30 am Holy Communion

Sunday, May 28th **Pentecost**
6.30 pm Evensong

Note that there will be no Wednesday Morning Prayer on Zoom until further notice.

Enjoy the celebrations! Jill



CHURCH FUNDRAISING CELEBRATE SUMMER IN OXHILL

We are planning an exciting event for the weekend of **June 10th -11th**. It will include the following:

- Sustainable (foam free) Floral arrangements in the Church which will be available to purchase at the end of the event
- Children's craft activity in the Church
- Refreshments served in the Old Chapel with plenty of delicious Oxhill baked cakes
- Produce stall
- Made in Oxhill craft stalls at the Old Chapel
- Demonstrations and talks
- Children's Treasure Hunt
- Classic Car display



Photo of St Lawrence Church by Steve MacRae

The event will run from 11am until 4pm each day and there will be a programme of talks and demonstrations across both days. This is a free entry event but there will be a charge for the treasure hunt.

We need your help, please!

- Can you bake a cake or biscuits for the refreshments? Oxhill has a worldwide reputation to uphold for the best cakes.
- Do you have anything you could donate for the Tombola? Tins of beans, bottles of whiskey and everything in between would be most gratefully received.
- Could you spare an hour or two to help with serving our delicious drinks and cakes?
- Have you any produce (jam, cut flowers, plants, fruit, vegetables) for the produce stall?
- Do you have a classic car or tractor that you would like to display?
- Have you got a scarecrow that could be put up in the churchyard?
- Could you volunteer to run the Tombola or produce stall for an hour or two?

Please contact me if you are able to help in any way.

Thank you in advance for supporting our village event and we hope it will be enjoyable for all.

Ruth Mercer

ruthc.mercer@btinternet.com

07400 615999

PHIL BRENNAN WINS MEDALS AT THE WORLD MASTERS ATHLETICS INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS



Phil Brennan on the podium receiving silver.

Excerpt taken from The Stratford Observer, 5 April 2023

STRATFORD-upon-Avon Athletic Club's masters athletes helped Great Britain to a fourth-place finish at the World Masters Athletics Indoor Championships in Toruń, Poland.

Britain placed an impressive fourth out of 55 nations in the medal table as hosts Poland topped the standings ahead of Germany, United States and Team GB.

Stratford trio Paula Williams, Phil Brennan and Paul Hawkins all competed for Britain Brennan also came home with a medal as he claimed silver in the gruelling 10k race in a time of 52 minutes 25 secs having narrowly missed out on bronze in the 3000m earlier in the Championships.

Despite being plagued by injuries in the build up to the competition, Brennan was still able to place fourth in the 3000m in a time of 15 mins 8.91 secs.

And just four days after winning silver in the 10k, Brennan competed in the half marathon in cold and wet conditions and claimed a hugely impressive bronze medal in a time of 2 hours 1 min.

Britain claimed gold in the half marathon team event which meant Brennan matched Williams' haul of a medal of each colour.

Brennan said: "It was an unforgettable experience to be part of the British team, make new friends and renew old friendships after four years."

*Aaron Sutcliffe
Stratford Observer*



From left to right: Paul Hawkins, Paula Williams (Javelin gold winner) and Phil Brennan



Oxhill Village Hall

What a brilliant time we all had at the ‘Quiz & Buffet’ event in March! Sixty Oxhillians showed off their genius, ate a delicious meal and enjoyed a few glasses of wine and beer. Unfortunately we were having too much fun to remember to take photographs so there are none to share with you — sorry! Huge thanks to Iain MacPherson for hosting the event, to Sue Philpott for putting together the questions and marking every sheet, and to each and every one of you who helped to prepare such an excellent buffet.

At the time of writing, we have our St George’s Day ‘Pies & Puds’ event ahead of us. A sneak preview at the list of options would have any foodie drooling so it’s bound to be a good night. We’ll report back in the next issue, and this time we’ll make sure to keep our cameras ready!



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The next event on the calendar is the **AGM on Tuesday, 16th May**. The meeting will run from **7:30-8pm** and doors will open at 7pm for a free glass of wine and some nibbles. Please join us at **The Old Chapel** to hear first-hand how the building work is going and more. As always, we would be delighted to welcome interest in joining the committee or getting more involved in Hall events in other ways. If you’d like to make a difference but can’t make the meeting, please get in touch with Jo Collings on itsjocollings@gmail.com or 01295 680215.



Oxhill Village Hall project manager at work



EXTENSION OF WHATCOTE ROAD PAVEMENT

Everyone who does laps of the village on foot will recognise the photo of the short stretch of Whatcote Road between The Sett and Orchard Close which lacks a pavement. I declare an interest in the subject as many of you will know that two of our grandchildren live in The Sett, as do two other children. In order to catch the school bus, which picks up lower down the road, they have to walk in the road for a short distance. At the moment they do so under parental supervision, but, as I discovered recently, even adults can be caught out too. As I walked up towards The Sett, I foolishly relied on my ears to assume that no vehicle was coming up behind me. Wrong!

Some people may want pavements around the whole of the village loop, but that would be a huge financial outlay that the highway authority (WCC) is unlikely to make in the foreseeable future. But it seems to me that this short stretch would be a start, and, with the known speeding problem in Whatcote Road, would go a considerable way towards improving primarily the safety of those who live in The Sett, but also, in a small way, the safety of all who walk round the village.

I have asked Councillor Chris Mills, our representative on WCC, to look into this matter and he has said he will attend the Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday May 23rd. In the meantime, I would really appreciate it if any of you who support my little campaign would make your views known either to me via email (gill@northside.em.uk) or face-to-face; to Councillor Mills (chrismills@warwickshire.gov.uk); or the Parish Council Clerk (oxhillpc@btinternet.com).

Alternatively, if you feel strongly (one way or the other) you could attend the Parish Council Meeting on May 23rd at 7.30pm.

*Gill Stewart,
Northside, Whatcote Road*



THE PEACOCK OXHILL

PROUD TO
SUPPORT



What a fantastic morning we had hosting our first charity breakfast on Saturday, 8th April, for Dogs For Good (www.dogsforgood.org)

We raised over £300 for such a great charity - thanks to all of the fab four legged friends (and their owners) who came along to support!

Here's just a few snaps of some of our furry friends from the day.





Congratulations to the Ladies B team on coming top of Division 8 of the Stratford & District Ladies Winter League. They had a magnificent 4 – 0 win in their last match against Warwickshire County Council with Jude Canning, Elaine Thorne, Nicki Campbell and Alison Sayer making up the winning team. Well done to all the girls who played in the team! The ladies A didn't fare so well this season and will be demoted to Division 5.

Both mixed teams have completed all their matches in the Banbury Town Winter League with the A team finishing 3rd in Division 2 and despite some really competitive play the B team unfortunately ended the season bottom of Division 3.

With warmer and drier weather, hopefully just around the corner, why not consider tennis as a very social and fun way to keep fit and healthy? Tysoe Tennis Club is committed to keeping our fees the best value in the area. With lots of opportunities for students, families and players of all ages and abilities, we would love to see you along at the club.

We regularly hold social tennis sessions (Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings) where anyone can come along and have a go-whether for the first time after a few years off!

Our annual subscription fees are:

- Junior £21
- Student £24
- Senior £80
- Family £160

Full detail at
www.tysoetennisclub.co.uk



Tony completed the London Marathon, thanks to everyone for the support and good wishes.
~ Sheila Wilde, [Oxhill Community Facebook page]



In the Wilds

Arachnophobia is probably the most common phobia in the world, with estimates suggesting that as many as one person in six suffers from it. I'm not one of them. I have to confess, however, that my close encounter with this **Huntsman Spider** in Australia scared the **** out of me. Much to Karen's amusement.

We'd driven into Port Douglas from our hotel on the edge of the rainforest. All seemed normal during the drive, but when I turned to open the door, a spider the size of my outstretched hand was staring right back at me. When natural curiosity took over from terror, I grabbed my camera from the back seat and risked getting out of the car. Unfortunately, this is the only usable shot I managed to take before the creature scuttled off to disappear into long grass. I like to think it hitched another lift home.

Huntsman spiders are very common in South East Asia and other tropical regions. They can grow up to 15 cm across and look ferocious (especially up close!). Their bites can be very nasty, but they're non-venomous. Like most arachnids, their diet consists mainly of insects and other invertebrates, but they don't build webs; instead they hunt and forage for their food. They are notorious for going into cars and have been found hiding behind sun visors or even running across the dashboard. I can only imagine the result if one had done that while I'd been driving!

Steve MacRae
(wordsmithed by Karen MacRae)

by Ruth Mercer

As I had some lovely young stalks of rhubarb growing in the garden, I was pleased to come across this recipe. The cake is gluten free so has been taste tested by the Consultant Editor who gave his Seal of Approval! The recipe is perfectly straightforward; although it called for soya margarine, I used block margarine as that's what I had. It would probably work just as well with butter. Make sure your eggs are at room temperature to avoid curdling the mixture.

RHUBARB AND ORANGE POLENTA CAKE

Ingredients

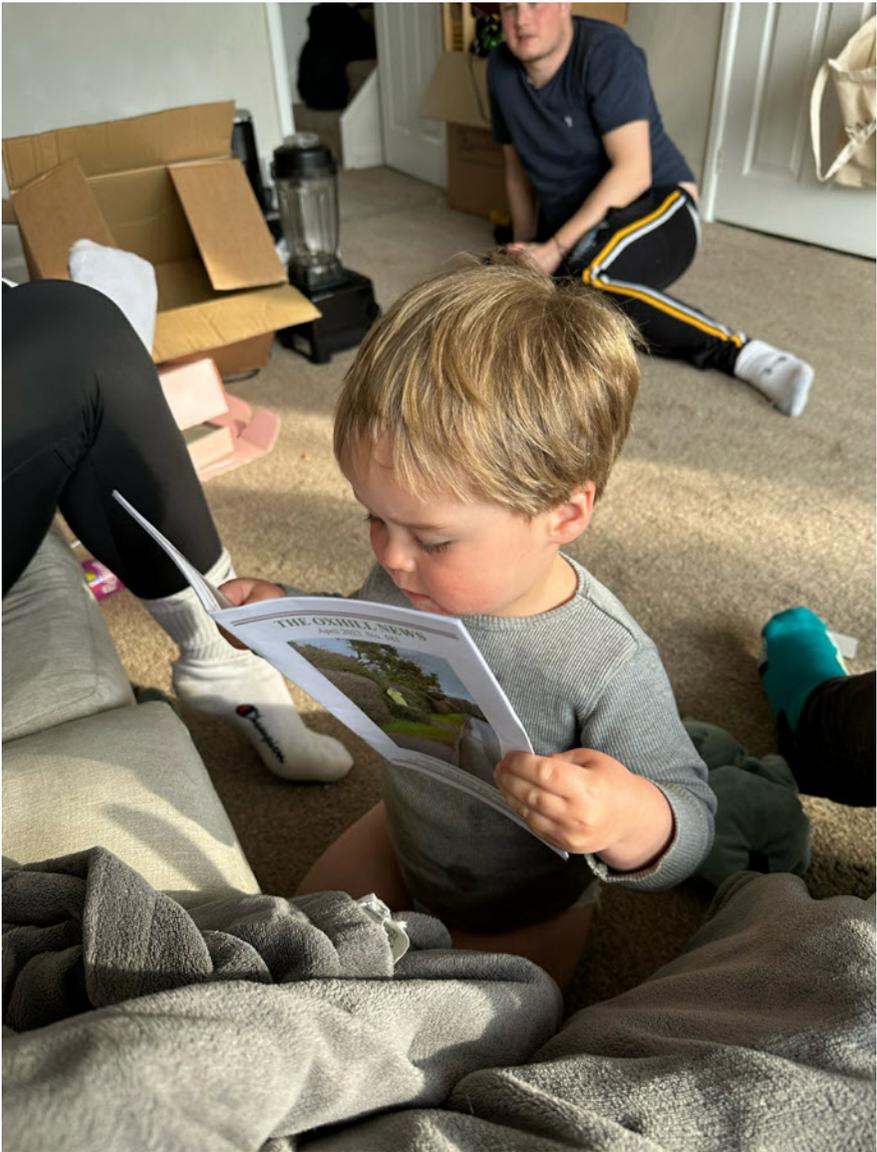
150 g hard margarine or butter, at room temperature or softened slightly in a microwave
200 g caster sugar
3 eggs at room temperature
150 g polenta
2 tsp baking powder
75g ground almonds
400 g rhubarb, chopped into 1-2cm pieces
1 large orange, zest and juice
1 tbsp granulated sugar
A couple of tablespoons of flaked almonds (optional)



1. Grease and base line a 9" round cake tin with baking parchment, or other suitable non-stick paper. Set the oven to 170C.
2. Cream the margarine, caster sugar and orange zest together until light and fluffy, then gradually add the eggs one by one, beating well between each addition.
3. Fold in the polenta, baking powder and ground almonds until combined.
4. Spoon half of the mixture into the base of the prepared tin. Arrange the chopped rhubarb on top, then cover with the remaining mixture.
5. Bake in the preheated oven for 1 hour.

6. While the cake bakes, prepare the topping by squeezing the orange juice into a bowl and adding the granulated sugar.
7. As soon as the cake is out of the oven, warm the sugar and juice mixture, then drizzle it over the top of the cake. At this stage, you can sprinkle flaked almonds over the top, if you wish.
8. After 5 minutes, remove the cake from the tin and allow to cool on a cooling rack.





ONE OF OUR YOUNGER READERS

Lucy Mercer's godson Kit, aged 2, enjoying the latest issue of Oxhill News. He lives near Stockport and Lucy sends a copy to his mum every month. They'll have to read it online when they move to Australia next month!

Ruth Mercer

50 YEARS

Carol Clark, our village historian, has sent us the articles and photos, printed in this month's anniversary issue, of two women who have contributed greatly to our village: Dorothy Unett, headmistress of the Oxhill School throughout WW2 and Betty Smith, founder of the Oxhill News in 1973.

~ ed.

" ENCHANTMENT AND DRUDGERY "

MRS. UNETT'S TEACHING EXPERIENCES

MR. DOROTHY UNETT, of Mayside Cottage, Chapel Street, Welford-on-Avon, a well-known contributor to the "Warwickshire Journal" on country life and customs, has just retired after a life time of teaching in many different schools. She ended her career in the country school at Oxhill, but had had experience of squalid out-of-date city schools, teaching infants in cottage homes, and Gypsy children. Mrs. Unett says, however, that she has learnt most from country children in out of the way places.

A brief summing up of her life's impressions, with many stories which illustrate the human side of teaching, will be given in a broadcast talk on Tuesday in the B.B.C. Home Service, entitled "The Long Chalk."

Mrs. Unett, who will talk about "the drudgery and enchantment of 40 years teaching in town and country," is a farmer's daughter and understands rural folk. She feels that more children are eager to learn, and where once there was repression, there is now self-expression.

In last month's issue (April 2023, page 18) we published extracts of the Oxhill School Log of 1939-1942, written by Dorothy Unett. Below is a photo of Dorothy Unett with her Oxhill school students in 1939. Dorothy Unett taught for 40 years in Warwickshire, as described in the Leamington Spa Courier article on the left.

In this issue we are going further back in time to 1876, when the Oxhill village school first opened. Both Betty Smith and Dorothy Unett refer to the school log book of 1876 in separate articles .

*Betty Smith, **When Education Came to Oxhill in 1876**, (Stratford Herald mid-1970s) gives broad yet comprehensive look into education in Warwickshire at that time.*

*Whereas Dorothy Unett, in the chapter **School Days in 1876**, in her booklet *Edge Hill Countryside* (publish date unknown) chooses extracts from the 1876 Oxhill School Log Book to give a sympathetic glimpse into the difficulties faced by the Oxhill school mistress of 1876.*

~ ed.



Oxhill School Warwickshire 1939. From left to right: Headmistress Dorothy Unett. Students: John Groves, Marjorie Blackford, Betty Simmonds, Jenny Simmonds, Wendy Gower, Sue Simmonds, Jack Harper, Betty Rouse, Bill Haines and (evacuee boy) Fred King.

When education came to Oxhill in 1876

by
Betty Smith

The Stratford Herald mid-1970s

JUST over a hundred years ago, in May, 1870, William Forster, the Liberal M.P., managed to get his Education Act through Parliament amid stiff opposition. Prior to this, only one child in seven in this country was able to go to any kind of school and then only those whose parents could afford to pay even the modest few coppers required by what used to be known as "Dame" Schools.

The standard of education obtained from these depended largely on how erudite the "Dame" was and how much she was prepared or even able to impart to her pupils. William Forster had campaigned bitterly against the long hours that children under the age of twelve had to work.

Of course, the measures that he advocated did not go down very well, most of the upper stratum of society firmly and honestly holding to the opinion that children should only be taught how to fill that rôle in life to which it had pleased the Almighty to call them. For most of the children of the labouring classes in the quiet villages of South Warwickshire this meant long hours spent in the fields from early frozen dawn onwards.

The day all too frequently began in an overcrowded cottage, brothers and sisters falling over each other as they hastily dressed and ate a spartan breakfast of bread and lard washed down with "tea-kettle broth" which

was made from burnt bread, and had the colour of tea, but not the taste. The diet was implemented in due season by the addition of berries picked from the hedge, or even raw turnips stolen from the field.

OXHILL SCHOOL

The Board School in Oxhill was opened in January, 1876, and cost £375 to build. The first Board was comprised of five well-to-do farmers and landowners, a Clerk to the Board, and the Vicar of the Parish, who held this seat by reason of his office.

There were thirty-three pupils from the small parish of about three hundred and fifty souls, but by the end of the year the number had risen to seventy-six. The school log books, right from the very first day, can be seen with other records at the County Record Office, and make interesting reading, giving a picture of Victorian and Edwardian School life so far removed from the present day.

Our first teacher was a Miss Mary Jane Clifton, who had been educated at Cheltenham Ladies' College under the indomitable Miss Beale. Reading between the lines in the log books, Mary Jane does not appear to be too happy. She often writes that the children are dull and backward, but could she reasonably expect much else from those children then? They

almost certainly had insufficient to eat, and little or no warm clothing. For a boy, sitting in a frosty field at first light, crows scaring, is hardly guaranteed to improve his grasp of the rudiments of arithmetic.

OBSTINATE

She writes of children staying away from school to see the hounds meet, and the fact that she was forced on several occasions to visit the parents to remonstrate. She also had to send children home frequently for coming to school "uncleanly dressed" as she puts it. She records frequently that she had to punish a boy for swearing, another boy for telling an untruth, and several punishments are recorded for obstinacy. On

one occasion, Mary Jane writes with horror in every drop of ink that she actually had to call in a Board member to deal with a boy who was stubborn. She does not, however, tell us what he was so stubborn about.

A hundred years ago the roads through the village were unmade, mere tracks, and there are frequent references to having the school closed temporarily because floods prevented attendance. The water actually covered the school floor to a depth of several inches on one occasion. The school building is sited not too far from our local river called in The Domesday Book "The torrent of Oxhill," although now it is no more than an overgrown brook, and this may have had some bearing on the constant references to flood. The school had only just opened after one watery session when Mary Jane fell ill, and it had to be closed again. Perhaps she caught a chill from wet feet.

MORALS

At least twice a week the children were all given a lesson on morals, first to the under sevens and then to the older children. Honesty, truthfulness and obedience figured largely in this, and especially obedience to those in authority over them.

The school inspector was a frequent and rather to be feared visitor, I think. The children were required to learn special songs for his visits, and he was expected to sit and listen to them, with how much pleasure is not recorded. The songs included "Home Sweet Home," "The Plough Boy," "The Farm Yard," "A Pleasant Day," "Lightly Row," "The Father's Return," "Welcome Lovely May" and similar tear-jerkers. However, by the end of the first year Mary Jane was able to record that the Inspector had been gratified by the good progress the scholars had made.

The Vicar at this time was the Rev V H Macy, and he and his wife visited the school several times a week, he to put them through their catechism and she to inspect the girls' sewing. They also brought along any visitors who happened to be staying with them at the time, and one has a mental picture of gracious ladies elegantly inspecting hemstitched handkerchiefs and patting small aproned girls on the head, with appropriate noises.

MONITORS

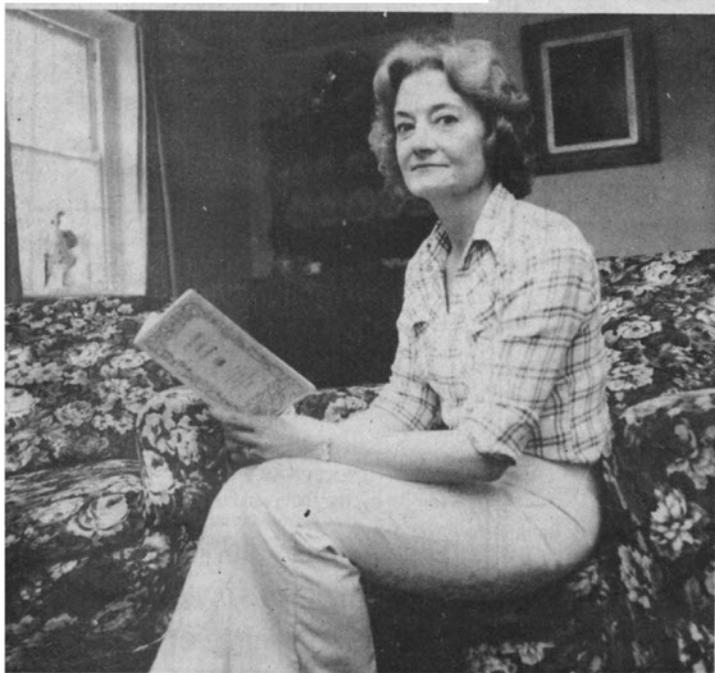
Four of the older girls were appointed as monitors at the rate of one shilling a week, to take it in turns to help with the younger ones. This would seem to have been very necessary if poor Mary Jane had to cope with the education of seventy-six children of assorted ages. The wonder is that she was able to teach them anything.

The log books continue up until just after the 1939-45 war when the school was permanently closed. The school in the next village of Tysoe was suitably enlarged and transport provided to take the children of the village there.

NOW

Oxhill village school building remains, virtually unaltered, although there are no floods now, and the playground is merely a park for half a dozen cars, instead of seventy-six pairs of feet. The main schoolroom has the crossbar-tee shaped roof beams and pointed windows, but one of the smaller rooms has been made into a kitchen by the addition of a sink and water heater. It was made over to the parish by the Education Committee and is now used as our village hall.

I don't think I believe in ghosts, but if I did I wonder if the pale ghost of Mary Jane Clifton, wet feet, poke bonnet and all, might be seen to glide across the deserted schoolroom one moonlight night. I wonder whatever happened to Mary Jane.



Betty Smith, Oxhill News founder and editor, article from the Statford Herald mid-1970s

School Days in 1876.

IN Oxhill Council School, Warwick, is an old Log Book beginning in 1876 which gives interesting glimpses of school-days of that time. Here are some of the details and entries (the comments shall be left to the reader).

The mistress had upwards of 50 children of all ages from four to fourteen. Her only help was a young monitress who was paid 1/- per week, and who seems to have spent much of her time in inventing fresh excuses for being absent.

The children must have been young hooligans for the book is chiefly a record of punishments such as

“ Punished four boys for using foul language.”

“ Caned three boys for playing truant.”

“ Chastised two girls for making grimaces.”

“ Punished a boy for obstinacy. He was so bad I had to call in a member of the Board.”

On another occasion the Vicar was fetched to give a hiding to a hefty reprobate ; while another irrepressible defied the schoolma'am, the Vicar, his parents, and the School Board, until they decided to make him leave school and he just stayed home.

As the book wanders on through the years there are other vicissitudes, some amusing, some pathetic. The worst trouble was the weather. We read

“ OCT. 8TH, 1880 : Could not open school as there was so much water in the room from the floods.”

“ NOV. 12TH, 1886 ; On Friday the room was flooded so the rule was somewhat relaxed.”

“ DEC. 10TH, 1886 : No school on Wednesday or Thursday, as part of the building blew down.”

The children attended very irregularly, some of the excuses being “ harvesting,” “ hay-making,” “ cowslip-gathering,” “ a tea-drinking,” “ seeing the hounds meet,” “ a sale in the village,” and so on.

In 1883 there are repeated entries concerning poor mites being sent home for weeks at a stretch for coming without their school money.

On July 18th, 1884, a valiant pioneer named Mrs. Summerton, walked in the Board Meeting and protested against home-lessons.

The Annual Examination was an ordeal. Not only did the children and "governess" have to face the dread H.M.I., but the Vicar, his wife, the School Board, and other visitors were asked to attend. However, once the grilling was over everybody was given a holiday to get over it.

The writing in this Log-Book is like copper plate, the entries are neatness itself, and there is not a trace of a grumble; but, between 1876 and 1900 there were no fewer than *nineteen* different mistresses taking charge in succession of this little school. True, some left to marry local farmers, but the others just couldn't cope, and no wonder.

When we think of the happy, pleasant days spent in Warwickshire schools nowadays, we give heartfelt sympathy and admiration for the schoolmistress of 1876.



Mrs UNETT .



WOT2GROW COMMUNITY ORCHARD

It really does feel like spring at the orchard! Mid April and the temperatures a little cool but the blossom are looking wonderful, as the damsons, greengages and plums are all in full flower along with the early pears and cherries and some perry pears!! All carpeted beneath with the usual golden crop of dandelions - not as many as each year goes by but still a wonderful source of food for the bees and insects. The apples are just showing the first tinges of pink so not too long before they join in as will the nectarines, medlar and quince.

The hedges and wild flowers are also coming into their own with hawthorn and blackthorn leading the way along with the beautiful cowslips.

The red and white currants, gooseberries and early blueberries are in flower too so hopefully a good harvest yet again from these bushes.

An exciting time to be out and about in nature and the orchard is a wonderful setting for everyone to enjoy.

If you would like to help out, perhaps learn new skills or help with events and get some great organic fruit why not contact us!

Find out more – contacts below or message us via the web site.

The Orchard is 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



Damson and dandelions.



Blackthorn



Snails like the wild prunus!



Cowslips

STOUR SINGERS

conducted by Richard Emms
present

Handel's Messiah

with

Natalie Montakhab *soprano*

James Neville *countertenor*

Matthew Minter *tenor*

William Burn *bass baritone*

and

The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Orchestra

Natalie Montakhab and Matthew Minter appear by arrangement with
Ann Ferrier Artists - Concert Directory International

Saturday, 13 May 2023 at 7.30pm
St. Edmund's Church, Shipston on Stour

Tickets £16 (accompanied children free)
Available online from Eventbrite or on the door

Please scan the QR code for the Eventbrite link:



www.stoursingers.org.uk



On a Roll

It's been two sell-outs back-to-back for our Traditional Jazz events: Tenement Jazz Band, followed by Tom "Spats" Langham's Hot Fingers. It looks like the message is getting out there on just how good these events are! At the time of writing, tickets are going well for King Pleasure and the Biscuit Boys in April, so maybe we'll achieve a hattrick!

All proceeds from our Traditional Jazz events go towards the long list of maintenance and improvements of the hall, so thank you for your support. Likewise, we love to see the hall being booked – our booking fees are very reasonable and they also go 100% back into the charity under which the hall operates (trustees of the hall give their time for free). Since last month we've had work completed to extend our storage facilities, we're progressing the replacement of an ageing gas heater for the main hall, and we're finalising an agreement for the purchase of a stage lift to provide 'access for all' to the stage. If you find yourself in Tesco's and get one of those discs for charity, think of us – every little counts.

We have a flexible facility for any occasion: Our main hall is 57FT by 46FT (excluding a large stage, also available), where 300 people can be accommodated in a theatre style layout and 200 people in a cabaret style layout, and our capacity is 400 people overall, useful for more standing style attendance for those dance-a-long music events – there'll be at least one of those from what we see of the Proms bookings this year, but more of that elsewhere! There's also a smaller hall 30FT by 26FT and a Servery area – all these can be booked together, or individually. There's a fully equipped kitchen, wifi, disabled access, and licensing to run a bar too! Many possibilities, e.g., weddings, recitals, plays, parties, concerts, pantomimes, meetings, bands, film nights (we have a screen, projector, and sound equipment), team building, clubs, exercise classes, etc. If that's sparked a booking idea, **contact us: info@townsendhall.com, 07514-704057.**

On the Trad Jazz front, next up is Tad Newton's Jazz Friends performing 'Basin Street Blues to Harlem' on Friday May 26th. It's going to be another good one! I had to look this up, but maybe we can achieve a 'haul' of sell-outs? Apparently 2 = brace, 3 = hattrick, 4 = haul. Tickets are £10, available from www.ticketsource.co.uk/townsend-hall, where you can bag your own table and seating, or for general availability seating from Clarke Electrical Services in town.

There's loads more going on: take a look at our website: www.townsendhall.co.uk, and follow us on FaceBook and Twitter for more.

Haydn Ward
Townsend Hall Trustee

WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

MAY

Sunday 7th	10:00 onwards	Oxhill Coronation Big Picnic Lunch
Monday 8th	11:30	Litter Pick, Oak View Green Lane
Tuesday 16th	19:00	Village Hall AGM , Old Chapel
Thurs 18th	14:00-14:30	Mobile Library, outside Village Hall
Friday 19th	18:30	Village Plant Sale, Old Chapel
Thurs	11:45-12:00ish	Awesome Coffee Van, outside Peacock Pub

PC MEETINGS

The date of the next PC Meeting is **Tuesday, 23 May, 2023 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 the village Notice Board, on the wall of the Peacock, 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.

	Food waste		Recycling
	General refuse		Garden waste

May 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	 5	6
7	8	9	10	11	  12	13
14	15	16	17	18	  19	20
21	22	23	24	25	   26	27
28	29	30	31			