

# THE OXHILL NEWS

April 2021 No. 557



*Heron on the bridge over the pond behind the church. Photo by Grenville Moore*

*Vanessa Druce, editor & Grenville Moore, consulting editor  
Email: [oxhill@btinternet.com](mailto:oxhill@btinternet.com)*



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## CLUB & GROUP CONTACT DETAILS

Carers4carers: kcarers4carers@gmail.com or tel: 07947 893504

Oxhill Village Hall: Jo Collings - Chair - 01295 680215  
Ali Sayer - Hall Hire - 01295 680451  
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

# GUESS WHO!

Did you guess the villagers in last month's Guess Who photos?

They were **Tim Groves**, age 11 with a poodle, **Margaret Rivers-Fletcher** on the boat and finally **Ed Morgan** in the child's car.

Which villagers do you think are in the month's Guess Who?



# AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF MY GREAT GREAT GRANDFATHER - HENRY ALLITT IN 1881

by Julian Spaul

Although I am not an Oxhill resident my ancestors lived in Oxhill from the 1700s until the early 1900s so I have a great interest in the village and have visited there many times over the years. I have in my possession various photographs of the village and a lot of information regarding my ancestors (principally the Allitts of Bog [now Springfield] Farm) but also their relatives (the Roses, the Gardners, the Heritages).

Here is an article of the death of my great great grandfather Henry Allitt who got caught out in the great snow storm of 1881, riding his horse home from Banbury Market, and froze to death. His body was found at the crossroads near Shenington Road.

*Julian has written that if anyone is interested in making contact please email him at: [julianspaul100@gmail.com](mailto:julianspaul100@gmail.com) ~ed.*

## OXHILL.

THE SHOCKING OCCURRENCE AT SHENINGTON.—Mr. Faulkner held an inquest on Saturday last, at the Bell Inn, Shenington, on the body of Henry Allitt, wool buyer, Oxhill, who was found in a field at Shenington the previous Wednesday morning. Mr. J. W. Shelswell, was foreman of the jury. Henry Allitt deposed: I am a wool buyer and live at Oxhill. On Tuesday deceased was with me at Banbury, and about four o'clock I saw him start home on horseback. He went down from the market to the Reindeer with me, and I ordered his horse. We were in the Reindeer for about half-an-hour before he started. He was quite sober when he started, and the horse is a perfectly quiet one. I walked home that night, but I could not see the turn leading to Shenington, and I went round by Edge Hill. The deceased was not at home when I got there, and I saw nothing of him until I saw his body to-day lying at this house. I heard of his death on Wednesday, about two o'clock. The deceased was fifty-six years of age. When we started from Banbury the weather was very rough and cold, and it was snowing very fast; but we did not think there had been such a heavy fall of snow. — William Chambers, farmer, stated: I live at Shenington, and have known the deceased for many years. On Tuesday last I was at Banbury, and started for home shortly after four o'clock. On the direct road from Banbury to Shenington the deceased overtook me. He was on horseback, and I was walking. When I got to my house

we parted company. The deceased rode on up the village, which is the proper road for his own house. I cannot make out that any person saw the deceased alive after this. It was a dreadful night. I hope I may never be out on another like it.—Henry Shelswell, Shenington, said: On Wednesday morning last I was up at my brother's field farm. This was about nine o'clock. Against the hay rick there was a saddled horse with bridle and halter upon it. I did not know who it belonged to, and supposing it had got away from some one, I ordered the carter to put it into the stable and feed it. The horse looked starved, and as if it had been out all night. There was a lot of snow about it. From the barn I went towards the shepherd, who was in a field just above; and near the gate, on the road, about eight yards on the Epwell side, I found the deceased. He was lying on his back with his legs partly covered with snow. He had his hat in one of his hands, and his right arm was held up, and was in a frozen state. His dress was unfastened, and he was quite dead. I should say he had been for some hours. Since I found the deceased's body I have ascertained that the horse I found was that of the deceased. I had the body of the deceased removed to the field barn, and there it remained until it was removed to this inn this morning. Around where I found the body there were no marks in the snow of anyone having trodden there. It was quite clear and undisturbed. I am most decidedly of opinion that the deceased was caught in the snowstorm which raged on Tuesday night, and was frozen to death. The deceased's body was not on the direct road from Banbury to Oxhill and he must have turned off the road on to the Epwell lane. The gate where I found the body was open, so that the horse could get to the field barn. The deceased's body, when I found it, was right on the top of a snowdrift, and the snow was nearly three feet deep.—Mr. J. H. Macgreal, surgeon, Alkerton: To-day I was called by the Coroner's warrant to examine the body, which has just been viewed by the jury, and which I believe to be that of Henry Allitt, of Oxhill. I have examined the body and cannot find any marks of violence upon it. I found the skin of the deceased of a very pale colour, with very great rigidity of the muscles, which clearly showed that the deceased died from severe shock to the system, caused by exposure to the cold.—P. C. Horne proved having examined the deceased's clothing, and in his pockets found 3s. 2d., a match box, some tobacco, and two paper memoranda, one of which he had the horse show awards on.—The jury returned a verdict of death from exposure to cold.

# Village Easter Activities for Children

We are planning to have an Easter Trail around the village between 2nd and 11th April. This will be similar to the letter hunts, which were stopped when the children went back to school. There will be certificates and prizes for everyone who completes the trail.



There is also going to be a treasure hunt for children of about 7 and above, over the same period. It will start at the village hall with clues to read giving information about the next point.

There is going to be a competition to make an Easter Garden – this can be made in a baking tray or similar container (google Easter Garden for inspiration). It will be judged by Jill Tucker (and helpers) on the afternoon of Saturday 3rd April. Please let me know if you are going to take part.

There is also a competition for the best decorated Easter Egg – see website below for templates which you can colour in or design your own patterns. The best entries will appear in next month's Oxhill News.

**Easter Egg Templates | KS1 Colouring Sheets (teacher made) ([twinkl.co.uk](http://twinkl.co.uk))**

Details will be posted on the Oxhill Village Community Facebook page and there will be posters up on the noticeboard outside the village hall.

Of course any adults who want to take part are very welcome to! Any questions please contact me on 07970 922352 or [ali.sayer@btinternet.com](mailto:ali.sayer@btinternet.com)

*Thanks  
Ali Sayer*



# Serendipity

Here are more wonderful viewing and listening recommendations from Douglas Netherclef.

George the Poet Podcast Episode 3.5  
[georgethepoet.com/podcast-library](http://georgethepoet.com/podcast-library)



*George the Poet*

The Bells of the Church of St George, Brailes  
[bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000j7hn](http://bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/m000j7hn)



*The Bells of Brailes*

Oxford Martin School  
[www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/videos/re-imagining-urban-mobility-after-covid-19/](http://www.oxfordmartin.ox.ac.uk/videos/re-imagining-urban-mobility-after-covid-19/)

Championing the Farmed Environment (CFE)  
Managing Hedges for Pollinators (Courtesy  
Warwickshire Rural Hub)  
[youtu.be/jXerwggw2TY](https://youtu.be/jXerwggw2TY)

2020 Virtual Edinburgh Fringe:

Wine Tasting [youtu.be/ljmLeE95Hec](https://youtu.be/ljmLeE95Hec)

The Interview [youtu.be/nHfp3wVA\\_-E](https://youtu.be/nHfp3wVA_-E)

The Tip [youtu.be/bturz50vcdc](https://youtu.be/bturz50vcdc)



*2020  
Virtual  
Edinburgh  
Fringe*

Enjoy!

*Douglas Netherclef*



*Oxford Martin School*



*Managing Hedges for Pollinators*

## MOTHERING SATURDAY AFTERNOON TEA



Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who supported our Mothering Saturday Afternoon Tea-in-a-box, either by ordering tea or baking and sandwich-making. I have received many wonderful, heart-warming compliments from tea eaters who obviously enjoyed the treat and appreciated the effort put in by the bakers.

The fantastic team of bakers and sandwich makers included Carol Fox, Carol Beasley, Lis Stuart, Sheila Wilde, Helen West, Liz Finlyson, Gaida Webb, Ali Sayer and Lucy Mercer, who was also a champion box filler. Thank you so much for all your wonderful

creations, help and support, and an additional thank you to Ali for decorating all the boxes. They looked splendid. Special thanks to top delivery girl Verity O'Donnell who delivered around the village.

Thanks to the generosity of Sarah and Mark, we had the use of the Peacock kitchen for preparation of the tea boxes and also as a collection point. It was very kind of you both to let us use the pub and very much appreciated.

*Ruth Mercer*







# SPRING IS HERE, BUT FOR THE LAMBS THE GRASS IS GREENER ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FENCE

*Photos by Katy Dowding*



## *Is it a Honeybee Swarm?*

If the ‘swarm’ is thousands of bees in flight darkening the sky or a grapefruit-sized or larger accumulation of bees clustered together – then “Yes”. Otherwise – “No”.

Most honeybee colonies swarm each year when the old queen leaves the nest with half of the bees to find a new home. Whilst scout bees search for a suitable nest site the rest of the swarm cluster around the queen, perhaps in a tree, somewhere near their old home where at least one virgin queen is waiting to hatch, mate, and be the new matriarch of that colony.

Unless disturbed, a cluster of honeybees is not a problem and, if accessible, your local beekeeper will be pleased to come and take them away to his / her local apiary. All other manifestations of bees – honeybees in chimneys or other inaccessible places, garden bumble bees in compost heaps, miner bees in the ground, tree bees in bird boxes, masonry bees in soft mortared brick walls – are of no interest to a beekeeper other than for the part they play in the wonderful world of nature.



No honeybee or variety of bumble bee is naturally aggressive if left alone. Be grateful that they have temporarily chosen your home as a ‘des res’ – all bee colonies die off in the autumn other than honeybees and even they will not survive as a colony for more than a year or two unless they are in a hive competently managed by a beekeeper.

A feral honeybee colony cannot be enticed out of its chosen home. It will not cause any damage to the fabric of a building and only in extremis should a pest controller be employed to eradicate any species of bee. Wasps are an entirely different matter.

In the months of April, May and June the British Beekeeping Association (BBKA) routinely receives a thousand telephone calls a week from less than knowledgeable members of the public who are gently (normally!) directed to the BBKA website [www.bbka.org.uk/help/do\\_you\\_have\\_a\\_swarm.php](http://www.bbka.org.uk/help/do_you_have_a_swarm.php) where there are pictures of bees, wasps and hornets for identification purposes. Should the so-called ‘swarm’ be exactly that (see beginning of article!), the nearest registered beekeeper(s) can be found by the simple expedient of entering the affected property’s post code.

*Douglas Nethercleft*  
*(Shipston Beekeepers) 07850 352905*



THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER SEES WORK OF THE ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS

## ROYAL OBSERVER CORPS

*by Grenville Moore*

A big thank you to all those who have sent personal articles to us. There seems to be a Russian theme at the moment which is absolutely fascinating and a real eye-opener.

Mick Shepherd's story on his service with the Royal Observer Corps I found extremely interesting, especially as my mother was with the ROC during WWII. She was based in Coventry with 8 Group. Her claim to fame was being featured in a book entitled *The Royal Family in Wartime*, in a photograph with Prince Henry the Duke of Gloucester looking over her shoulder.

She used to recall 'bringing in' and 'setting up' the thousand bomber night raids on Germany, and when all the formations were ready they used to go outside to watch them go. She said the sky was black with bombers as far as you could see, and the drone from the engines seemed to fill all the space around. She said there was a feeling



of excitement followed by a sadness of what they were about to deliver, and an even greater sadness plotting them home and realising how many had been shot down.

My mother Eileen, many in the village will remember, is the blonde bombshell on the right in both photos. She remembered with fondness (with a little too much fondness perhaps) the American GIs arriving with their trucks and taking all the girls to their base to dance to the Glen Miller Band, and they would all be returned home in a very gentlemanly manner with their gifts of nylons, chocolates, and cigarettes.

## TARGETING THE VULNERABLE AND ELDERLY

I had a phone call to say my NI number had been hacked and telling me to press 1. Wales came into the message somewhere. It is the latest scam targeting vulnerable and elderly. What a cheek.

*Gwyn Admas*





*Chernobyl's 1986 reactor explosion was the biggest nuclear disaster in history.*

## **APRIL 26<sup>TH</sup> THE 35<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE CHERNOBYL DISASTER**

*by Derek Harbour*

Another, but timely 'Russian' story and I think that it tells you a lot about that Country and why Peter Taylor is probably wise not to go to Salisbury (see Oxhill News, January 2021 edition)!

In the spring of 1986, we had a group of Russian Engineers at the John Brown Automation factory in Coventry completing tests on some equipment that we had made for a Russian customer. They stayed at a local hotel and were brought in each day by taxi, having stopped at the nearby newsagent to pick up a copy of the Sun newspaper for the scantily clad beauties on 'Page 3'.

One Monday in late April, the front page of the Sun had the lead article describing and showing pictures of the nuclear disaster that had happened at Chernobyl. The Russian engineers all lived and worked about 200km from Chernobyl so were quite worried by the story and the impact it would have had on their families. Our contract with the Russian automotive import agency, Avtopromimport, allowed for one telephone call home per week for the guys which they made each Saturday morning. This call had to be made through the Russian Embassy in London so that the calls could be monitored.

The Russian Team Leader came to see me and told me their concerns and asked if they could have an extra call that day to see if everything was OK at home, and naturally, I agreed. A call was booked but did not happen until sometime late that afternoon. When they finished their call, they were very bemused; their families at home said that they would have heard if such a thing had happened, it must be British propaganda against the USSR. Mrs Thatcher had not long since thrown 13 Soviet ‘diplomats’ out of the country for potential spying, so there were issues between the two countries. The engineers were clearly shaken, they had seen the report and photos in the Sun but their families were saying that they knew nothing – what were they to believe?

On the following Wednesday, two days later, Gorbachev announced to the world that there had indeed been an explosion at Chernobyl and that teams of volunteers were trying to stem the radiation leaks. Our Soviet visitors were shaken and just wanted to finish their task and get home. We were not completely surprised by the goings on but still amazed that the Soviets thought that they could suppress this news.

If anyone saw the programme on Channel 5 where Ben Fogle recently visited the site at Chernobyl, they will have learned that the people living close by were not told about what had happened until 36 hours after the event.



*Chernobyl. Last Day of Pripyat by Alexey Akindinov*

# ST LAWRENCE CHURCH, HOLY WEEK, EASTER AND APRIL



The hope and light of Easter Day are coming: the God of the impossible overcomes the worst that man can throw at him to bring new life and to give life. The simple statement, 'He is Risen' is breathtaking good news which is capable of transforming our lives. The joy of Christ risen permeates our lives, and makes us into an Easter People. So, on Easter Day we celebrate – and wonderfully (we trust!) can do so in person in our churches, see below. As you can see, we have a mixed economy over the Easter period – we are still Zooming quite a lot, so that everyone is included.

## **Holy Week:**

Monday, March 29 <sup>th</sup>	9.00 pm Compline, via Zoom
Tuesday, March 30 <sup>th</sup>	9.00 pm Compline, via Zoom
Wednesday, 31 <sup>st</sup> March	10.00 am Morning Worship, via Zoom 9.00 pm Compline, via Zoom

**Maundy Thursday, April 1<sup>st</sup>** 9.00 pm Compline, via Zoom

During Holy Week, we are resuming our practice of opening the church once a week for private prayer. So St Lawrence Church will be open on Wednesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> between 12.00 noon and 4.00 pm. During that time some stunning artwork by the children of schools across the Diocese will be on display depicting The Stations of the Cross – do go and see them if you get a chance.

From Good Friday onward, we are resuming in person services in our churches, some of which may also be Zoomed.

**Good Friday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>** 7.00 pm Tenebrae **In St Mary's Church, Tysoe**

**Easter Day, Sunday April 4<sup>th</sup>** 9.30 am Holy Communion **In St Lawrence Church, Oxhill**

Sunday, April 11<sup>th</sup> 9.30 am Morning Worship **In St Lawrence Church**

Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup> 9.30 am Holy Communion **In St Lawrence Church**

Sunday, April 25<sup>th</sup> 6.30 pm Evening Worship **In St Lawrence Church**

**Wednesday mornings:** during April we will be continuing to Zoom the Wednesday Morning worship at 10.00 am

## EASTER DAY

On this morning

let me see you  
in every stranger;

let us hear you  
in the whispered  
hopes of hungry children;

let us welcome you  
into our empty hearts.



*Thom M Shuman, Lead me into life with you.*



*Spring photos by Tricia Harbour*

## ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCHYARD – UPDATE

Many of you may not be aware but the costs of mowing the grass in the churchyard have been mainly met by a contribution from the Parish Council. The Parish Council have recently been advised that they may no longer continue doing so which leaves us with a difficult decision as it would be a challenge to fund it ourselves from Church Funds based on our current commitments.

It has been proposed that the churchyard is allowed to be an area maintained for the benefit of wildlife, which would be similar to the area on the north side. However when the area at the front of the church, was left to allow the plants therein to be categorised, objections were raised. Also the more recent graves in this area, which are maintained and visited regularly, would not be tended as they have been.



*Photo: Summer is Coming by Grenville Moore*

Therefore it was suggested that I would write to ask the opinions of the villagers on this subject.

So what do you want to see in your churchyard going forward?

Should the churchyard become a full wildlife area or should it be maintained in its current condition? What If it is the latter would you be interested in contributing towards the cost of so doing?

Please feel free to contact me with your views or one of the church wardens.

*Blessings,*

*George*

*Rev. George Heighton*

*Email [revgeorgeh@outlook.com](mailto:revgeorgeh@outlook.com)*

*Telephone 01295 680 201*

# MY FIRST

by Grenville Moore



We are starting a new feature entitled ‘**My First**’ and it can be your first anything, car, horse, bike, dog, even girlfriend/boyfriend (no smut please!). Nothing too long, but enough to convey your excitement at your first ..... I will set the ball rolling with my first car.

My first car was a second-hand 1961 cherry red Austin Healey ‘Frogeye’ Sprite. I was 17 and I thought I was the bee’s knees tearing about with the top down. I even went out and bought myself a pair of cavalry twill trousers and a Harris tweed jacket! The Sprites weren’t that fast, but they did hug the road well, and more importantly, the girls noticed you. However, within 18 months, through a friend who worked for a repossession branch of a finance company, I managed to acquire at a very low price a 1957 Porsche 356A coupe with gorgeous big red leather bucket seats, a fitted Blaupunkt radio, and it was pretty fast for then. It was quite rare in the UK and other owners would always flash and wave. I did have some fun with that car ..... unfortunately, it’s been downhill ever since.





# OXHILL COOKS

*by Ruth Mercer*

Easter will soon be here and my thoughts turn to baking Chocolate Nest Cake, a popular cake with children of all ages. This cake uses my oldest favourite chocolate cake recipe discovered when I was at university. Incidentally, it is only in the last few years that I have added two more chocolate cake recipes to my favourites list. The thing about chocolate cakes is that they can be a bit dry, and, if a cake is dry when it is freshly baked, it just gets drier with each passing minute. This cake won't go dry even after many days. It is a fairly deep, single layer cake, baked in a 9" round tin, although it will work in an 8" round tin if you leave it in the oven for a bit longer. There is no creaming the butter and sugar in this recipe and no chance of the mixture curdling, a definite plus in my book! I generally mix the cake in a stand mixer but have made it in a food processor in the past.

## CHOCOLATE NEST CAKE

### **For the rich dark chocolate cake:**

6 oz self raising flour

2 oz cocoa

¼ tsp baking powder

6 oz caster sugar

1 oz ground almonds (or desiccated coconut if you prefer)

4 oz hard margarine or butter

2 eggs

6 tbsp golden syrup

¼ pt milk

1. Grease and base line a 9" round tin (deeper than a sandwich tin) and turn the oven to 150 C, 140 C for fan ovens.
2. Place flour, baking powder, cocoa, sugar and ground almonds into a mixing bowl and stir together.
3. Add the hard marg / butter and rub into the dry ingredients until it resembles breadcrumbs.
4. Add the eggs, syrup and milk and beat well until smooth.
5. Pour mixture into tin and bake for 1 hour until firm to touch. (If cooking in an 8" tin, it will take 1 hour 10 minutes, or thereabouts). You can also check it with a cocktail stick by inserting it into the middle of the cake. It is cooked when the stick comes out clean.

6. Leave to cool in the tin for 10 minutes before inverting on a wire rack to cool completely.

### **For the Chocolate fudge icing:**

2 oz butter

1 oz caster sugar

2 oz plain chocolate

2 - 4 tbsp milk

8 oz icing sugar

1. Place the butter, sugar, plain chocolate and 2 tbsp milk into a small saucepan and heat gently until melted. (I do this in a Pyrex bowl in a microwave for 1 minute, but it is your choice!)
2. Stir in the icing sugar and beat until smooth. The icing is probably at the correct consistency for the nest cake now: if not, add some/all additional milk to get the icing to your preferred consistency. The full 4 tbsp will give you a very smooth icing that will run off the cake unless you place a band of paper around it.

Once the cake has been iced, and the icing is setting, make the nest mixture.

### **For the nest:**

2 oz butter

2 tbsp honey

4 oz plain chocolate

3 – 4 Shredded Wheat or 3

oz Mini Wheats, crushed

Mini eggs of all types!

1. Melt the butter, honey and chocolate in a small saucepan or the microwave, being careful not to overheat it.
2. Stir in the crushed Shredded Wheat, making sure all of it is covered in the chocolate mixture.
3. Pile the mixture around the centre of the cake and form a nest. Shape with your hands, gently pressing it slightly together.
4. Leave to harden before filling with mini eggs and decorating with chicks or whatever you have to hand.
5. **Take a photo of your masterpiece for next month's Oxhill News.**





# BBQ PARTY

Oxhill Village Hall

Saturday 3rd July at 5.30p.m.

The village hall committee plan to hold a  
“Breakout From Lockdown Party”

A family event with barbecue and games for  
the children.

Save the date!



# WILLIAM HERITAGE

You may recall in last month's Oxhill News we published a photograph of Old Church Farm in the 1930s and there were two children with a pedal car who were believed to be William and Nan Heritage. Well, much to my surprise I received a phone call from William Heritage to let the people of Oxhill know that he is still alive and well at the age of 95 and is now living in Bourton-on-the-Water, but sadly his sister Nan died about six months ago. It was a delight to hear that old Warwickshire accent, almost lost now. We chatted for a while and one of the little anecdotes he told me about was The Old House (now belonging to Jill and Colin Tucker) which was unoccupied then. The ground floor was full of building materials and the first floor was full of chickens, and he said there was one particular big rooster that sat in the window all day and pecked at the glass and crowed when anyone went past.



It was a pleasure and an honour to speak to him.

*Grenville Moore*

## OXHILL COMMUNITY FACEBOOK GROUP

The Oxhill Community Facebook Group is a wonderful place to catch up on local news, events, items to give away, ask questions, or simply chat. It is our “local group for local people”. If you haven't yet joined and would like to, please search for the ‘**Oxhill Village Community**’ on Facebook and then request to join.

~ ed



### Oxhill Village Community

Private group · 391 members





# Carers4Carers

Finding support through supporting each other

**Carers4Carers monthly meeting:** we are a self-help support group for carers living in Kineton, surrounding villages and rural areas. Membership is free and we offer a monthly newsletter and friendly telephone support. Our virtual coffee morning is now accessible by phone to those without internet access.

New and existing members are always welcome. Look out for joining instructions in our monthly email or contact the number below. Do take a look at our website [www.carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk](http://www.carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk), email us at [kcarers4carers@gmail.com](mailto:kcarers4carers@gmail.com) or call Gillian on 07947 893504.

*Best wishes*

*Lisa Barnett – Assistant Coordinator*



in aid of St David's Church Newbold on Stour with Armsco

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> May  
10 am - 12.30 pm

## Newbold Plant Sale

in St David's Churchyard

Refreshments      Raffle  
Great variety!      Great value!  
Card payment preferred

Plant donations greatly appreciated

Please contact Gilly Marsden 01789 459168  
Deliver to Church on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May 3 - 7 pm



Covid restrictions will apply



## POP-UP PLANT & PRODUCE STALLS

**SATURDAY 1st-8th MAY**

Pop-up Plant Stalls near you

Gardeners - please sow now ready to donate plants

**PLANTS & PRODUCE WANTED PLEASE**

Please deliver donations of plants to Fudge Ramsay at Burmington Grange or your village coordinator. Donations of home produce welcome.

Please see our website for a list of stall locations  
at [www.shipstonhomenursing.co.uk/events](http://www.shipstonhomenursing.co.uk/events)

For details of how to donate or volunteer to host your own stall - please contact Rebecca Mawle on 01608 674929

Fudge Ramsay 01608 680000 or Caroline Gunn 01608 663508



## WOT2GROW COMMUNITY ORCHARD

So Spring is on it's way, March starting mild but then ferocious winds and rain so hope we have a quieter April! The orchard has coped well with the weather and although we have a few weeks to go it looks like the trees are full of fat buds ready to burst into blossom and leaves.

As we have not had a hard winter the wildflowers are beginning to flower early which is providing food for the bees. All the hives are active on sunny days and out foraging in the orchard along with many bumblebees, lots of willow catkins along with the hazel displays also provide food for them.



*Apricot buds*



*Bees out and about*

Despite lock down the volunteers have pruned the blueberries and currants and started on the gooseberries. The broken trellis and honeysuckle by the WooWoo have been cleared and the cutting back of all the autumn raspberries has been completed!! A lot of work so thank you to all those involved.

If you are interested in coming along and helping out please contact one of us or via the web site and we can give you more information. If you become a member then you share in the fruit we harvest, this is one of the main benefits of being a member – free organically produced fruit in season!!

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](http://www.wot2grow.co.uk)



*The first 2021 dandelion*

## GILL STEWART'S TERRIFIC ARTICLE

Further to Gill Stewart's terrific article on the Stratford to Moreton Tramway in March's edition of the Oxhill News, Facebook users may be interested in the Time Travel Artist's recreation of a trip on the lost Stratford to Towcester railway line by ghost train. It can be viewed below.

*Dominic Connolly*



## GHOST TRAIN: STRATFORD-UPON-AVON TO TOWCESTER!

*A look at the lost line on the Stratford-upon-Avon and Midland Junction Railway! (Passing through Ettington, Kineton, Fenny Compton, Byfield, Morton Pinkney, Blakesley and Towcester) through animation and video.*

To view, go to : [www.facebook.com/Timetravelimages/videos/1932292753588603](https://www.facebook.com/Timetravelimages/videos/1932292753588603)

# LEYS FIELD DEVELOPMENT

It has been brought to the notice of your Parish Council that some people have been parking in the 'turning space' in Leys Field and this is quite worrying because if this continues, it could hamper the exit of Emergency Vehicles if they were to need to attend an address in the road and it will also cause problems for the Refuse Vehicles. Could we please ask all residents to ensure that none of your household or any of your visitors or tradesmen park in this area.

At our next PC Meeting on 13 April we will discuss whether we should be asking Warwickshire CC Highways to 'cross-hatch' the area with the words 'No Parking' included and if you wish to let us have your thoughts, the guidelines on how to join the meeting will be shown on the PC website or in 'hard copy' on the noticeboard by the Peacock.

*Thanks,  
Oxhill PC*



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## FRIDAY COACHING @ TYSOE TENNIS CLUB (Starting Friday 23rd April)

MINI RED STARTER	(4-5 yrs)	4 - 4.30pm
MINI RED / RED	(5-8 yrs)	4.30 - 5.30pm
ORANGE / GREEN	(8-10 yrs)	5.30 - 7pm

## SUNDAY COACHING @ TYSOE TENNIS CLUB (Starting Sunday 25th April)

TOTS GROUP	9 - 9.30am
YOUNGER & OLDER INDIVIDUAL GROUPS	9.30 - 10.30am

## EASTER HOLIDAY CAMP @ TYSOE TENNIS CLUB

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# A gardeners guide to... **Bird Nesting Season**



The nesting season runs from March to August - but some birds nest earlier/later



Nests are often well hidden, so you might not know they are there



Birds may be nesting in your trees, shrubs, ivy, hedges, nest boxes, under eaves and on the roof



All wild birds, their nests & eggs are protected by law - this includes gulls, pigeons & crows



Do not cut back hedges, trees and other vegetation during nesting season - this risks disturbing nests



Trim hedges once a year in winter if needed - this gives wildlife the chance to eat any berries



*Photo by Tricia Harbour.*

# BLACKFORD FAMILY HISTORY

*by Murray Duke, Ottawa, Canada*

My great grandfather Daniel Blackford was born in London in 1837, enlisted in the Corps of Armourer Sergeants in 1861, served in the West Indies, and in 1872 was assigned to the Canadian Militia in Montreal, where he eventually retired. Having traced his ancestry to Oxhill in the late 17th century, I realized that extending his lineage further back would require unravelling the genealogy of the many Blackfords who had lived in the village. The resultant public family tree (Blackfords of Oxhill) may be viewed on [Ancestry.co.uk](http://Ancestry.co.uk) and a short family history narrative has been added to the village website ([www.oxhill.org.uk/History/Blackford.htm](http://www.oxhill.org.uk/History/Blackford.htm)).



*Daniel Blackford (pictured above and right) in the uniform of an armourer sergeant of the First West India Regiment, circa 1865.*



*Daniel Blackford is wearing the uniform of staff quartermaster sergeant in the Canadian Active Militia, circa 1905. Although he had been discharged from the British Army in 1884, he re-enlisted in 1903 in the Canadian Forces (at the age of 66!).*

Blackfords resided in Oxhill for at least 400 years, from the early 16th until well into the 20th century and may well have been here in late medieval times. Baptismal and hearth tax records suggest they were the village's largest family in the 17th century. Moreover, Oxhill was the Blackford "epicenter" in Warwickshire, accounting for five times as many baptisms as any other parish. Their numbers declined in the 18th century, but in the meantime their progeny had settled across south Warwickshire and beyond.

By 1800, Blackfords had resided in at least 32 different parishes in the county, but only in Oxhill were they a continuing presence.

Blackford is not a common surname, held by perhaps 200 people in England in 1600, and likely originated with one or at most a few individuals when surnames came into common use. Parish registers indicate two principal Blackford clusters in 17th century England – the larger in the southwest, centered in Devon, and the other in south Warwickshire. The former is consistent with numerous medieval references to the de Blakeford family, but the origin of the Warwickshire cluster is uncertain. Several early 14th century documents refer to “Blakeford”, a locality near Dickens Heath in the ancient parish of Tanworth-in-Arden, which was linked to Robert de Blakeford in the 1262 Assize Rolls. (Blackford House, as it was known, was on the site now occupied by the Miller & Carter Steakhouse). However, whether the Blackford name arose independently in south Warwickshire or migrated from elsewhere remains an open question.

The *Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross* refers to John Blackford, a miller residing with wife Alice in Halford in 1479. In the mid-16th century, most Warwickshire Blackfords were living in the neighbouring parishes of Oxhill, Butlers Marston, and Halford. It stands to reason that the families in these parishes were related but precisely how is unclear.

It appears that all Blackfords born in Oxhill in the 17th and 18th centuries descended from John, a husbandman who died in 1604, through his sons Richard (1571-1642) and John (1576-1649). Both Richard and John became yeomen and freeholders. As was the custom, most of their land passed to their eldest sons, John (b.1602) and Anthony (1615-74), respectively. Primogeniture prevailed over subsequent generations and the heads of the two Blackford households remaining in Oxhill in the 1770s, Ben (1725-1800) and Anthony (1755-1815), were their direct descendants. While some younger sons remained in Oxhill, many settled elsewhere, some farming, others taking up a craft or trade.

John’s third son Daniel is mentioned in most historical accounts of the village. He served as quartermaster in the Earl of Northampton’s Regiment of Foot and was taken prisoner in 1644 during the siege of Compton Wynyates. Daniel became church warden and his epitaph in St. Lawrence Church has been widely quoted.

Mathew Blackford, a prominent resident of Stratford-Upon-Avon, was probably John’s fourth son. A maltster by trade, he served many civic roles in Stratford: Borough Highway Surveyor (1651), church warden (1672-73), alderman (1673), and mayor (1676-77).

Richard’s grandson Daniel (b.1636) apprenticed as a goldsmith in London, earning his freedom in 1664. Circumstantial evidence indicates Warwick clockmaker Anthony

Blackford (1639-1679) was likely Daniel's younger brother. Anthony was virtually unknown until 2007, when one of his clocks made £110,000 at auction. The latter's son Anthony (1680-1715) became a goldsmith in London.

Richard's great grandson John (1660-1731) married Elizabeth Potter of Over Tadmerton, Oxfordshire where her father William was an early leader of the Quaker community. He was fined for Sabbath-breaking, specifically riding his horse to a Quaker Meeting, was imprisoned twice, and had property seized regularly as a result of his refusal to pay tithes. John's brother Daniel Blackford (1666-1718) was a chandler in Oxford, and the latter's son Bonniwell (1703-69) apprenticed as a carpenter in London. John's second son (and my 5x great grandfather) William (1693-1768) was a master joiner in Chipping Norton: he inherited the Oxhill farm in about 1650 after his older brother's death. Similarly, William's son Ben, a cabinet maker in Worcester, moved to Oxhill in 1765, just prior to his father's death. Ben sold out in 1775, eventually settling in London, and leaving a single Blackford household in the village.

The Enclosure Law was implemented in Oxhill in 1797 and Anthony (1755-1815) relocated to Tysoe soon afterwards. His grandson John (1825-61) returned to Oxhill by 1850 and his descendants resided in the village into the mid-1900s.



*Clockmaker Anthony Blackford's 5ft 5in (1.55m) high 17th century, weight-driven timepiece drew plaudits and bids in equal measure when it turned up at auction at Bonhams' New Bond Street.*

*"Everyone who saw it fell in love with it," said Bonhams' specialist James Stratton.*

*Read more: [www.antiquetrade gazette.com/news/2008/the-stunning-clock-by-an-unheard-of-17th-century-maker/](http://www.antiquetrade gazette.com/news/2008/the-stunning-clock-by-an-unheard-of-17th-century-maker/)*



# The Way We Were

## AND THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN BLACKFORD HOUSE

*by Carol Clark*

Old photos of the village show a short terrace of two thatched cottages across the front of the site where Amberway now is, joining onto the Old Bakehouse at one end and onto a workshop at the other, situated roughly in front of where the garage at Blackford House now stands. As far as I can work out, the workshop was probably used by the Taylor family who then lived in Blackford House and were carpenters.



*Blackford House early 20th century*



*Blackford House about 1968*

You can just see the gable end of the workshop in this old photo (on left), and the taller gable of the cottage terrace behind it. Note Blackford House was originally built with an extra storey, which had to be removed at some point before my time because it was unsafe.

Originally the sites of Blackford House and Amberway were all one property. In 1934, the owner of Blackford House (Charlotte Prestidge) sold off the cottages and their land to Oliver Valender who then owned the shop and bakehouse. A corrugated fence was put up to separate the two plots (the corrugated fence is seen in the photo below). The two cottages were merged into one, which was rented to Mr & Mrs Harry Simmonds.

My parents bought Blackford House (then known as The Poplars) in 1953 after the death of Miss Prestidge, and my father used the workshop to park his car in. The workshop/garage was made of timber with corrugated zinc for the roof. It had an earth floor and also contained an old workbench and drawers full of the woodworking tools used by Dad's father, a wheelwright. As a young child I recall damaging more than one chisel by digging into the dry earth floor with it, and being suitably chastised.

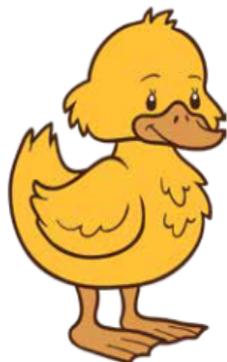
Over time, the cottage's condition deteriorated and at some point in about the late 50's, Mr & Mrs Simmonds moved out to one of the Peacock Cottages. One Saturday lunchtime some time later (unfortunately I have no record of the exact date, but I think around 1961) the Clark family meal was interrupted by a loud "crump"; the old cottage had fallen forward into the street, spreading thatch, stones and rubble all across the road. Lunch abandoned, Dad leaped into action, directing what little traffic came through the village at that time as well as clearing up as best he could. We kids weren't allowed to watch much of the subsequent action, so in my mind I now fast forward to "helping" Dad as he patched up the side of his garage which had been torn off by the force of the collapse. Plus I do remember riding my bike on the smooth surface of what would have been the worn kitchen flagstones, slaloming around piles of heaped up rubble as I went.

You can just see here our garage in about 1968 (right-hand photo on opposite page). Thinking about it, it's a wonder it survived as long as it did, and I'm not at all sure I'd have wanted to park a car in there!

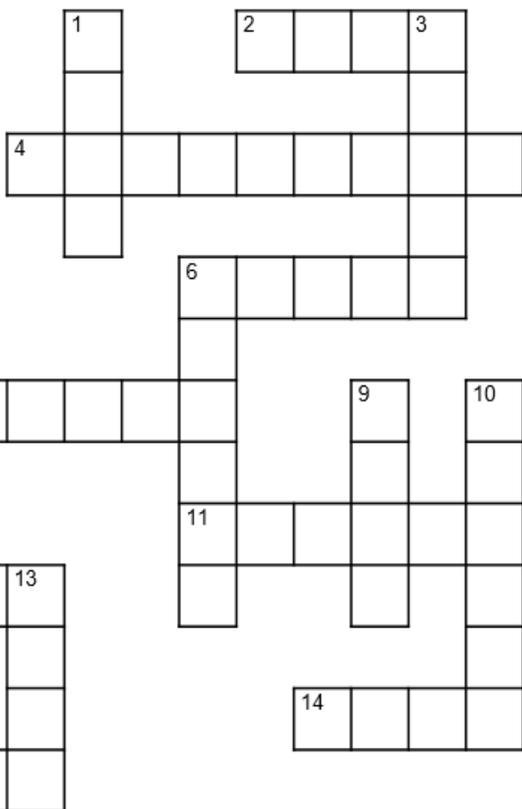


*Frank Clark circa 1961. Dad was a competent carpenter - in fact he could turn his hand to most things. It's quite likely there's still some of his stonework in the wall holding up the garden in Back Lane. That wall used to fall down at times too and we children were forbidden from ever playing too close to it on the garden side lest we caused a landslide!*

# Baby Animals



DIRECTIONS: Fill in the crossword puzzle grid with the names of each animal's baby. Use the word bank if you get stuck.



Across

- 2. Sheep
- 4. Crocodile
- 5. Fox
- 6. Dog
- 7. Duck
- 11. Eagle
- 12. Bear
- 14. Deer
- 15. Kangaroo

Down

- 1. Horse
- 3. Rabbit
- 5. Goat
- 6. Pig
- 8. Chicken
- 9. Cow
- 10. Cat
- 13. Human

## WORD BANK

BABY	HATCHLING
BUNNY	JOEY
CALF	KID
CHICK	KIT
CUB	KITTEN
DUCKLING	LAMB
EAGLET	PIGLET
FAWN	PUPPY
FOAL	

# CROSSWORD

## Across

1. View with a skew
5. Involuntary twitch
10. Tip, as a hat
14. Leave one's mark on
15. One of the Obama girls
16. Hendrix hairdo
17. Publisher of kids' books
19. Word before crazy or fry
20. "So \_\_\_!"
21. Record of hours worked
23. Stun gun
25. Blustery
26. Roll call mark
29. Flash of light
31. Advil target
32. Child-rearing
37. Stray, in a way
38. Economical
39. Pasture sound
40. Body of voters
42. City near Phoenix
43. Peculiar habit
44. Still packaged
46. Wear black, perhaps
48. Vocal cords, slangily
50. Former South African policy
53. Rose oil
57. It may be dominant
58. Satisfactory
60. Something pumped
61. Nautical hazard

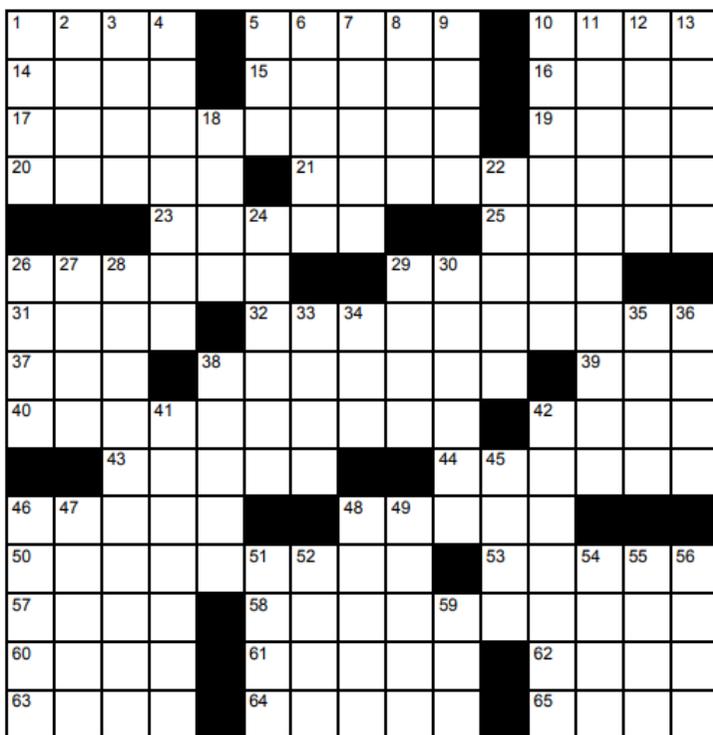
62. Threads in shreds
63. Quitter's word
64. How some things are contested
65. Outdated expletive

## Down

1. Numero uno
2. Eczema symptom
3. Yearning
4. Tailor's task
5. F.I.C.A. funds it
6. Sticky stuff
7. Moving about
8. Leveling wedge
9. Defensive spray
10. Debonair
11. Frequently

12. Type of rice
13. Milestone birthday
18. Ground beef option
22. Playground fixture
24. Foggy state
26. Cathedral nook
27. Get-out-of-jail money
28. Indispensable condition
29. 2010 remake, "True \_\_\_"
30. Suspect showcase
33. Gear-shift position
34. Car protector
35. Amount to win by
36. Prod into action
38. Prison stretch

41. Up-to-date
42. Frank topper
45. Shipshape
46. Orlando NBA team
47. "Don Giovanni", for one
48. Embroidered loop
49. Anagram of "ailed"
51. Greasy spoon fare
52. Say again
54. Alpine transport
55. Pond dweller
56. Take a breather
59. Tissue layer



**Crossword solution  
on back page**

# WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

## MARCH

Friday 23      13:15 - 13:30      Mobile Library, outside Village Hall

## PC MEETINGS

The date of the next PC Meeting is Tuesday, 13 April at 7.30pm. This meeting will be held virtually by Zoom. More details on how to attend, etc will be in the Agenda for the meeting which will be shown on the PC Website or a physical copy will be displayed on the Notice Board by the Peacock a few days before the meeting.

## 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@btinternet.com](mailto:oxhill@btinternet.com)

## Solution for Crossword

1	B	I	A	S	5	S	P	A	S	M	10	D	O	F	F	
14	E	T	C	H	15	S	A	S	H	A	16	A	F	R	O	
17	S	C	H	O	L	18	A	S	T	I	C	19	S	T	I	R
20	T	H	E	R	E	21	T	I	M	E	22	S	H	E	E	T
23	T	A	S	E	R	24	S	E	R	25	W	I	N	D	Y	
26	A	B	S	E	N	T	29	G	L	I	N	T				
31	P	A	I	N	32	U	P	B	R	I	N	G	35	I	N	G
37	S	I	N	38	S	P	A	R	I	N	G	39	M	O	O	
40	E	L	E	C	T	O	R	A	T	E	42	M	E	S	A	
43	Q	U	I	R	K	44	U	N	U	S	E	D				
46	M	O	U	R	N	48	P	I	P	E	S					
50	A	P	A	R	T	51	H	E	I	D	53	A	T	T	A	R
57	G	E	N	E	58	A	C	C	E	P	T	A	B	L	E	
60	I	R	O	N	61	S	H	O	A	L	62	R	A	G	S	
63	C	A	N	T	64	H	O	T	L	Y	65	D	R	A	T	

## BIN COLLECTION CALENDAR



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



April						
M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
			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		