

THE OXHILL NEWS



No. 409
December 2008

COMPUTER CLASS IN WHATCOTE

Further to my notice in the November Oxhill News, I have received this information from Mick Green at Stratford College.

COMPUTING FOR THE TERRIFIED

St Peter's Community Centre, Whatcote

Starts: Wednesday January 7th 2009 (for 10 weeks).

Time: 2.00 p.m. – 4.00 p.m.

Fees: £75 (special offer – two terms for price of one – Spring and Summer terms)

Tutor: Jean Bunn

Enrolment: Apply to the College, Student Services on 01789 266245.

Or e-mail at college@stratford.ac.uk.

Enrolment forms can be downloaded from the college website:
www.stratford.ac.uk

Minimum number of students: 6

I have had 4 enquiries so far so hopefully we can find another 2 people to ensure that the class is viable.

If you wish to enrol please contact the College direct.

Sue Price

JANUARY ISSUE

Please could I have all copy for the January issue by Midnight on **Wednesday, 24th December**? Yes, I know it is Christmas Eve. I just think it will be easier for you to get it done before Christmas than afterwards. It does mean that I will have to work over Christmas, but I will not be alone. If you normally prepare your material using a computer, it would make my life easier if you could submit your offering in electronic form, though paper is, of course, fine. My 'official' e-mail address is **news-editor@oxhill.org.uk** if you wish to send me stuff that way.

George Adams, 680286

COVER PICTURE

A view of the festivities at the Indian Evening in the Village Hall on Hallowe'en, showing the newly decorated walls to good effect, not to mention the new mood lighting. Photo by Judy Badger.

Editor

OXHILL VILLAGE HALL

NEW YEAR'S EVE EVENT

Join us at Oxhill Village Hall on December 31st for a fabulous evening.

From 7.30 p.m. you will be greeted with a complimentary glass of wine or beer/lager.

From 8.00 p.m. you have the chance to sit down and enjoy a choice of a hot meal and dessert accompanied by suitable mood music.

At 10.00 p.m. the tempo shifts up a gear and you can dance through to Midnight to the sounds of the Sixties and Seventies.

At Midnight, the New Year will be welcomed in with traditional music and a complimentary glass of Champagne.

Some time after Midnight you can slip away home knowing that you have welcomed in 2009 in grand style.

All of this for the new price of £17 per head.

We have reduced the price from the original £20 per head because we listened to Villagers concerns about their pets being frightened if there was a major Firework display and consequently we have dropped this from the night's programme.

Tickets are going fast but can be obtained from Gaynor van Dijk (680349) or Derek Harbour (680676) up until 12 December, when we will have to close the list.

Derek Harbour

WEEKDAY WALKERS

There is only one walk in December as follows:

Friday 12th December

This is a 4 mile circular walk with 375 feet of ascent from Shenington, finishing for lunch at "The Bell Inn". We will leave Oxhill at 10:00 a.m.

Please contact Jim Saxton 01295 680613 or saxton@tiscali.co.uk before Thursday prior to walk.

VILLAGE HALL CLEANING ROTA

Week beginning Monday:

December 1st	Una & Jane
December 8th	Dot & Judy
December 15th	Gwyn & George
December 22nd	Angela & Gaynor
December 29th	Julie & Keith

Una Hill

ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, OXHILL

SERVICES IN DECEMBER

All are warmly welcome

Sunday 7th	Advent II	9.30 a.m.	Holy Communion (ML)
Sunday 14th	Advent III	8.30 a.m.	Holy Communion (ML)
Tuesday 16th		7.30 p.m.	The Village Carol Service (NM)
<i>(Please note date change)</i>			
Sunday 21st	Advent IV	9.30 a.m.	Crib and Christingle Service (ML)
Christmas Day		9.30 a.m.	Christmas Communion ML)
Sunday 28th	Christmas I	9.30 a.m.	Family Service (NM)

THE PARISH SHARE

What is it and why do we have to pay it?

Of all the money we have coming in for the benefit of St Lawrence's, nearly 40% goes out to the Diocese as the "Parish Share". This was just over £7,000 in 2007 and will be a little more this year, which is about £2,500 less than the average across the deanery. At the moment the method of allocating share to each parish is being reviewed, so we can expect a change shortly.

So why do we hand over all this money? The answer is simply to support the work of the Church in the Diocese of Coventry. Most of it covers the provision of clergy (stipends, housing and pensions) and the rest goes towards a wide variety of costs ranging from youth work to administration.

If you would like any more information do please contact the PCC Treasurer James Synge on 01926 641010).

TALGARTH MALE VOICE CHOIR

Once again we had a lovely evening, with a great variety of songs and soloists. It is always a pleasure to listen to, with over seventy people filling the church. Thank you all for your support.

Thanks to Diana and Carol for your help in getting food for the choir before the concert.

Over £360 was raised for Church funds, and it was nearly 1 a.m. before the choir left the Peacock – a very nice way to end the evening.

Lilian

FREE

Wooden front door, approximately 78" x 33", with locks

Angela Kean, 680441

OXHILL GARDEN CLUB

The monthly meeting of the Garden Club was held at the Village hall on the evening of 20th November.

The Speaker was Mr. John Roberts of Leamington Spa who cheered up a dark and cold evening with his colourful slides illustrating the Flora & Fauna of South Africa. Many of the flowers in our gardens are species of those which swathe the landscape of S.A. John's tour covered just a part of this vast country, an area four times the size of England and Wales!

Garden Club Christmas Party

The Party will be held on Thursday, 11th December at 7 p.m. and the venue will be "Medway", Green Lane. Our thanks to Ann & Jim Saxton for offering their home for the event.

Visits

Members and friends are invited to accompany the Radway Garden Club on their three-day visit to Sussex in July. They will visit four Gardens, including Great Dixter. Staying at the Best Western York House Hotel, Eastbourne, the cost will be £169.00pp. Those interested should contact Mrs Myrtle Knight on 680555.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the Club will take place at the Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, 15th January, 2009. The Speaker, Mr. David Smith, will describe "A Country Life Remembered". Non-members are always welcome.

Reg Gethin

SHIPSTON HOME NURSING

I am in need of a replacement for the wonderful Sonia Baker to organise the Plant Sale. Would you, or perhaps you and a friend be interested in taking on the running of this established and satisfying event, which regularly raises £2000 for SHN?

You would be required to co-ordinate and ensure the smooth running of the Plant Sale in conjunction with me, Rebecca Mawle, head of fund-raising for Shipston Home Nursing.

If you feel you could help us, please contact me on 01608 674929, or just email rebecca@shn-fundraising.co.uk.

I look forward to hearing from you!!

Rebecca

STOP PRESS

The Heart of England Foundation has just made available a grant of £5,000 to have damp proofing installed at the Village Hall. It was done about 30 years ago but seems to have worn out! Hopefully the work will be done early in the New Year – and without damaging the new decoration!

George Adams

NOTES OF A MEETING OF OXHILL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 11TH NOVEMBER 2008 AT 8.00 P.M. IN THE VILLAGE HALL

All Councillors were present.

MATTERS DISCUSSED

Planning

Permission had been granted for the following applications:

Greenfields: rear extension incorporating bedroom, studio and ensuite bathroom

Struan: rear extension to kitchen and to form new living room

Gateways: fell conifer

Duckpool Barn: pollard willow

Church House: all weather ménage with new fencing and change of use from agricultural

Brookside: reduce maple tree crown by 50%

Application withdrawn at Church Farm for change of use of isolation unit for physiotherapy treatment and exercise room.

Refusal of application at Stonecroft for use of cottage for residential Groom.

An application had been granted for a wind turbine at Newborough Farm in Pillerton parish. Although this application impacts on Oxhill we were not informed of its submission. We have asked the District Planning Committee to inform us of procedures adopted and to amend them in future.

Finance

The annual audit for year ended 31 March 2008 had been completed and an unqualified audit opinion given. The fee of £58.75 had been paid.

Highways

Gilks Lane has been surface dressed. The cattle grid in Nolands Road had been repaired and the pothole by the Village Hall junction had been filled in.

There have been a number of road traffic accidents in the vicinity of Hogwood Farm on the A422. Letters would be sent to the Chief Constable and to Warwickshire County Council urging immediate action to prevent further deaths and injury on this stretch of road.

Footpaths

There has been a review of way marking public footpaths to standardise and improve the discs and to remove unauthorised marked routes.

Sand Bags

Empty sand bags are available from the Clerk, 680441. At present I have 80 available but more can be obtained given notice of requirement.

Beech Tree

The iron railing around the Beech tree on Beech Road has grown into the tree. Niall Conway has agreed to remove the railing where possible.

Resignation

Hugh Rowse tendered his resignation from the Parish Council due to family commitments. We thank Hugh for his valuable service over the last few years. A new member will be co-opted in the New Year.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 20th January 2009 at 8.00 p.m. in the Village Hall.

P.S.

Since the above meeting information has been received regarding the Government White Paper "Pharmacy in England: Building on strengths – delivering the future" which is due for discussion. One section of this White Paper is on the potential threat to rural dispensing surgeries. The Parish Council have written to the MRI Community Pharmacy Policy Committee who are heading this discussion and to our MP John Maples with our real concerns and the affect such a decision would have on rural communities

Angela Kean, Clerk

NEWS FROM THE PEACOCK

This year seems to have flown past so quickly; we can't believe that we will soon be celebrating our first year here. On the theme of celebrations we are pleased and proud to announce that we were runners up in this years Coventry and Warwickshire Food Awards in the Best Dining Pub Category. What makes these awards so special is that they are judged by an independent body, Quality in Tourism, and are not reliant on us taking advertising in a publication; they judge on all aspects of the business from hanging baskets and loos to the food and service. We would like to thank all our staff for helping us achieve this in just 10 months of trading.

Forthcoming events at the Peacock are Village Coffee Morning on the Wed 3rd Dec and lunch on 17th Dec.

We will of course have a delicious Christmas fayre menu running from December 1st for lunch and evenings, with a special candle light supper on Dec 6th. Over Christmas we are open for food on Christmas Day (Bookings) and Boxing Day Curry Lunch, then as usual.

We shall be continuing our fund raising for Air Ambulance all through December with a Super Raffle which will be drawn on Quiz Night on Sunday 21st December and a presentation of the cheque at our New Years Eve Buffet and Disco Party (tickets £15).

We would like to thank you all for your support during the last year and look forward to seeing you over Christmas and New Year.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and New Year,

Yvonne and Pam

NATURE NOTES FOR DECEMBER

Dark December has now come, and brought with him the shortest day and longest night. He turns the mist-like rain into ice with the breath of his nostrils; and with cold that pierces to the very bones, drives the shivering and homeless beggar to seek shelter in the deserted shed Even the houses with their frosted windows have a wintry look, and the iron knocker of the door, curved with hoary rime, seems to cut the fingers like a knife when it is touched.

Chambers Book of Days, 1864

It seems the only highlight of December is the Christmas celebrations, bringing with it Christmas decorations. Holly and ivy have been the mainstay of decoration since at least the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when they are mentioned in many churchwarden's accounts, although ivy was viewed with some suspicion and care must be taken not to let ivy be used alone, or even predominate, as it is a plant of bad omen and could prove injurious. There are records dating back to the 17th century that mention decoration using laurel, box, bay, and rosemary. But care must be taken not to bring in yew, the tree of the graveyard, into your house because superstition has it that if you do you will have a death in the family before the end of the year.

During these long grey days my thanks go to Ruth Gibson who brought a touch, or should it be a flash, of colour into my mind. She reports that for several days over the last couple of weeks she has been watching a kingfisher perching on a statue at the side of her pond. One afternoon she drove her car into the drive, closely passing the perching kingfisher, garaged her car, and walked past it into the house without it attempting to fly away. Kingfishers used to be seen regularly darting along our brook, but for the last two years I have not managed to see one and was getting slightly concerned. Folklore has it that only the righteous ever see the kingfisher, so perhaps that's the answer! If you are lucky enough to see one, all you usually see is a lightning flash of brilliant azure blue, then gone. Also most people don't realise this little bird is no bigger than a sparrow and spends most of its time sitting quietly on a branch, just above the water line. However brief your sighting of a kingfisher has been, it will leave a lasting impression and a frequently a sense of joy and privilege.

In Greek mythology, Alcyone was the goddess of Life-in-Death and a manifestation of the moon goddess. She had the power to calm winds and protect seafarers from storms. Zeus drowned Alcyone's husband Ceyx, and Alcyone mad with grief plunged into the sea to die with her husband, but they re-emerged as Halcyon birds – kingfishers – who were able to charm the winds and waves into a state of calm, hence “halcyon days”. Thank you Ruth for giving me the lead to relate this charming myth.

We take our parish churches for granted, yet they mark out the countryside and towns in remarkable ways. Built to command respect and awe and draw the eye to the heavens, today they still form impressive landmarks. It has been proven that migrating birds use them as navigational points and it is said that the eye can travel the length of the country from tower top to tower top. They form an integral part of the nature of the land and our stone churches play host to more than a third of all lichens present in Britain. They provide nest sites to our barn owls (often called church owls),

kestrels, even peregrine falcons. Swallows and bats make a home in them along with bugs and beetles too numerous to mention. When we buried my father-in-law, a true countryman, the swallows nesting in the porch came in during the service and flew round the church over his coffin; he would have loved that. A very good book on church and churchyard wildlife is *God's Acre* by Francesca Greenoak (which may now be out of print, but I am sure second-hand copies can still be found).

So it is with sadness that I have to report to those of you who don't already know, that the wonderful imposing Victorian gothic lantern that hung over our church porch has been removed because it kept shorting the electrics throughout the church. The cost of bringing this beautiful lantern up to current electrical specification may be too much for the PCC, especially as they are having to renew the oil tank. It would be a great shame to lose this lantern. Surely we can raise whatever monies are needed to restore and reinstate this lantern.

Grenville Moore

STOUR SINGERS

Christmas Music 2008

Stour Singers' annual presentation of Christmas Music in St. Edmund's Church, Shipston takes place on Saturday 6th December at 7.30 p.m. The guest artist is the distinguished Australian baritone Simon Thorpe, and the singing is backed by the strings of the Cherwell Orchestra with Rachel Bird on keyboards.

The programme includes a pot-pourri of carols spanning 350 years from Michael Praetorius' *Omnis mundus jucundetur* of 1607 to Richard Rodney Bennett's *What sweeter music can we bring than a carol* written in 1968 for the Rt. Hon. Edward Heath. There are the familiar favourites too for everyone, e.g. *Good King Wenceslas*, *See amid the winter's snow*, & *O come all ye faithful*.

The 50th anniversary of the death of our great Cotswold composer, Vaughan Williams, during 2008 is marked by two of his works for choir, orchestra and solo baritone. First is *The Five Mystical Songs*, a contemplative piece befitting Advent, (with words by George Herbert) & the joyous *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*. The orchestra add their tribute too, playing his short, beautiful *Prelude* on the Welsh hymn-tune *Rhosymedre*. Add to all this Simon Thorpe's bass solos from Handel's *Messiah* and you have an unmissable antidote to the current global gloom!

Tickets £10 from choir members, R.Clarke, 27 High Street, Shipston & at the door. (accompanied children free.) For further information visit the website: www.stoursingers.org.uk.

GRAVE WREATHS & DOOR WREATHS

Made to order

Please let me know if you want one, and as soon as possible, please.

Lilian, 680468

VILLAGE HISTORY

Parish Meeting Books, Part II

In 1897, the earliest year recorded in the Minute Books, Oxhill was still electing two Overseers for the Poor. Candidates had ideally to be “substantial householders”, but in practice in small villages it was sufficient to be a ratepayer. Charles Taylor, the village carpenter and wainwright, served for many years, the other Overseer being chosen from a small and repeating number of names. It looks probable from those chosen that someone was elected from either end of the village.

The Overseers had originally been responsible for administering relief, but in 1834 these local powers were removed, and groups of Poor Law Unions were formed, with elected Board of Guardians, Oxhill being part of the Shipston Union. The village Overseers continued until finally swept away in the late 1920s, but were now mainly responsible for rate collection, together with a catch-all list of powers including the apprehension of wandering lunatics, the burial of dead bodies cast on shore, and duties connected with brothels, pawnbrokers, alehouses, censuses and fire engines. Not all these tasks would perhaps have been applicable within Oxhill!

There is only one reference to an elected Guardian from Oxhill, when Mr. W. Wood, from Windmill Farm, was chosen in 1926.

Bert Bloxham remembers Mr (Billy) Wood, who he says was short and dumpy, and a keen cricketer. He and Fred Shepherd at the pig farm (now Hogwood Farm) used to play cricket on a field of Fred's. Bert himself played once in the 1930s, as Fred and Billy were by then too old for it.

Mr Wood was also elected a “Rural District Councillor” (sic) in 1926. The Parish Meeting was in a long battle with the Brailes Rural District Council to build council houses on land that they held within the village. In 1926 and again in 1927 they were asked to build four houses, or if not four then two “on the south side of the village street.” In 1938 they still have not done so, and it was said that the government would only give a grant if the new houses replaced condemned ones. The “council” houses referred to must be the ones in Whatcote Road as Main Street runs North to South, and only Whatcote Road has a “south side”; also the other “council” houses at Peacock Cottages did in fact replace old condemned cottages, (known disparagingly as “Union Row”), and so would have qualified for the government grant. The Bloxhams tell me that Peacock Cottages were built pre-war, and that their own house was finished in 1944, built not in the end by the Council, but by the War Ag (War Agricultural Committees) for agricultural workers. Bert and Joy moved in as newly-weds in May 1944. Joy adds that they were not allowed the key before their wedding. How times change!

Ann Hale

WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE RESPONDERS

As you may have noticed our contact details now appear on the back page of the Oxhill News, so you will always know where to find it in an emergency.

If a medical emergency happens, FIRST CALL 999

This starts the Ambulance coming to you. Any time, day or night, please still call us using the number 07977149317; we will come, and be with you long before the Ambulance arrives. If I'm not home Barbara could be, but as volunteers we cannot guarantee always to be at home and available.

We are also happy to treat MINOR, non life-threatening, FIRST AID injuries.

Many of you have already registered your willingness to help should an emergency happen to our community or Country, and, if our emergency services become stretched, having a community spirit to fall back on would be extremely helpful to us all. We all could have some thing to offer should we have to fall back on our own resources. Your name and contact details are kept by me and would only be used should the need arise. I would be happy to discuss my thoughts behind this any evening. Please call me at home on 01295 680644, Email, viper@viperrecovery.co.uk.

Our own Air Ambulance Service is based out of Coventry, that's 4 minutes flying time to us. It's been to us a few times this year already. It totally relies on charity, your charity!

A very happy, safe and Healthy Christmas to you all,

Mick & Barbara Shepard, 3, The Leys, Oxhill, CV350QX

TYSOE C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PRODUCTION

Thursday December 11th at 2 p.m.

The Special Performance for Senior Citizens will be the Foundation and Key Stage 1 production, with highlights from Key stage 2.

A bus service for this event is kindly being provided by Mr. C. Hopkins of Smithy Garage, Tysoe and pick up times are as follows: -

Oxhill Turn, Tysoe	1.15 p.m.
Whatcote	1.22 p.m.
Oxhill, Village Hall	1.27 p.m.
Radway	1.38 p.m.
Ratley	1.45 p.m..

WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

DECEMBER

Wednesday 3rd		The Peacock – Coffee Morning
Saturday 6th	10.30	Village Hall – Coffee Morning
Tuesday 9th	10–10.30	Village Hall – Mobile Library
Thursday 11th	2.00	Tysoe School – Christmas Production
	7.00	Garden Club Christmas Party
Friday 12th	10.00	Weekday Walkers
Monday 15th	12.30	Village Hall – Senior Citizens' Christmas Lunch
Tuesday 16th	7.30	St. Lawrence Church - Carol Service
Wednesday 17th		The Peacock – Village Lunch
Sunday 21st		The Peacock – Quiz Night
Wednesday 24th	23.59	Copy deadline for the News
Wednesday 31st	7.30	Village Hall – New Year's Eve Party

JANUARY

Wednesday 7th	2.00	St. Peter's, Whatcote – Computing classes start
Thursday 15th	7.30	Village Hall – Garden Club
Tuesday 20th	8.00	Village Hall – Parish Council Meeting

VICARAGE NOTES

Thought for the month

May I wish everyone a very happy and peaceful Christmas. Despite the ever present problems at home and abroad, I hope that a simpler focus on the Christ child will help folk to enjoy what should be a very special time. There is, of course, a warm welcome to the services at St. Lawrence's.

Carols and music abound at this time, from the plainly crass to the wonderfully inspiring. May the words we sing or hear help us on our spiritual road to Bethlehem, and may we in some small way reflect the light of our Lord.

What can I give him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.

If I were a wise man, I would do my part, yet what I can I give him ... give my heart.

(Christina Rosetti)

Best wishes and God bless,

Nicholas Morgan, 01608 685230

ACCIDENT and MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

FIRST CALL 999

THEN CALL

Ambulance Responders

MICK & BARBARA SHEPARD

07977149317 Mobile / 01295680644 Home

3, The Leys, Oxhill, Warwick, CV350QX