

THE OXHILL NEWS

March 2021 No. 556



Welcome to the World Little Freddie 

Freddie George Groves was born in 19th December 2020. Weighing 7 lbs 6 oz.
The 4th generation of Groves in Oxhill.

Vanessa Druce, editor & Grenville Moore, consulting editor

Email: oxhill@btinternet.com

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email: village-hall@oxhill.org.uk

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Tysoe Tennis Club: Club Secretary: Carol Spencer
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Warwickshire Mobile Library: 01926 851031

WOT2Grow Community Orchard: Liz Atkinson (680045), Paul Sayer (680451), Sue
& Mike Sanderson (688080) www.wot2grow.co.uk

GUESS WHO!



This petrol head now has a yellow car.

Did you guess the villagers in last month's Guess Who? The cover photo was of **Jane Moore**, and the photo of the man on the horse was **Grenville Moore**.

Can you guess this month's selection of villagers?

Next month we reveal who they are.

Do you have any photos of yourself or another villager that you would like to share in Guess Who? If so, please send your photos to oxhill@btinternet.com

TEN YEARS IN THE BUNKER

by Mick Shepard

In the Second World War there was an organisation called, The Royal Observer Corp. They stood on the tops of high buildings to give information of the enemy planes flying in to bomb us. After the Second World War was over, another one started, this war was called The Cold War and it was fought in a different way entirely, with the threat of nuclear weapons. The Royal Observer Corp was a branch of the Royal Air Force and after the Second World War, made a massive change from working on the tops of buildings to working 60 feet underground. Starting at the beginning of the Cold War 827 nuclear underground bunkers were built across the country. Each bunker had a deep underground cable communications system, linking it to much larger control bunkers. The purpose of these bunkers was to gather information and intelligence in the event of a nuclear attack on our country.

The organisation was staffed by full time and part time personnel. I joined up as a part time member. At the time, it was an organisation that the general public was told little about and even less of the bunker locations. Personnel were equipped and run by the Royal Air Force and some involvement from a Government department called The Home Office. Our daily work uniform displayed no insignias of who we were. We had an RAF dress uniform but had little occasion to wear it.

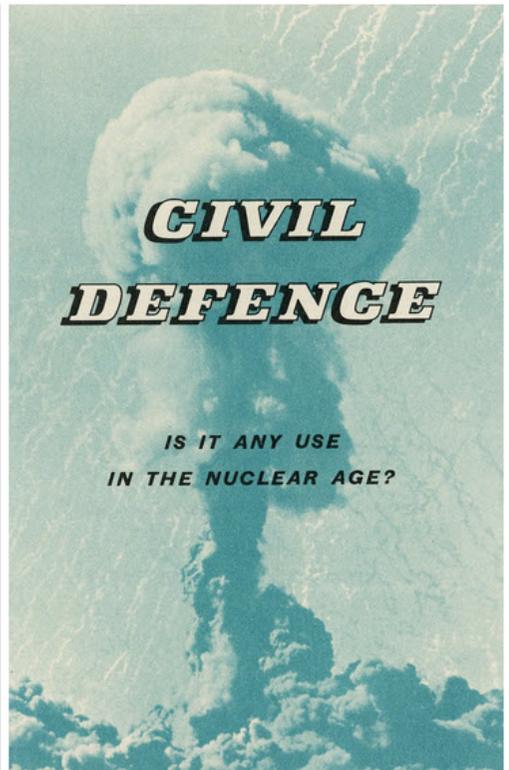
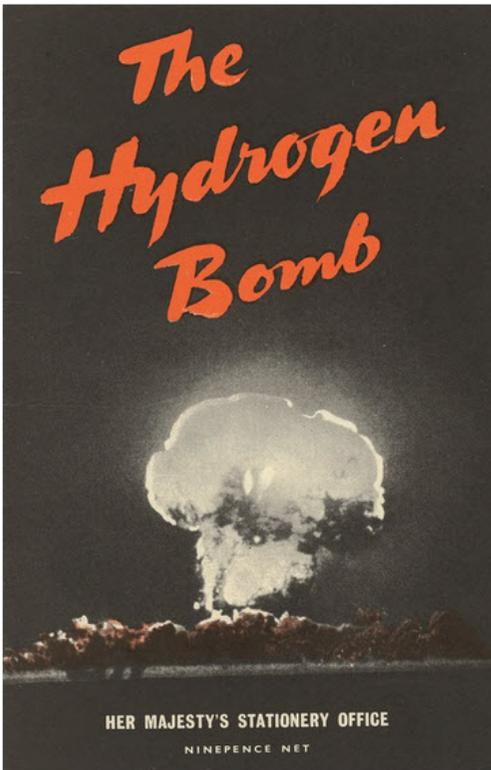


RAF Upper Heyford, Oxfordshire

How I found out about this organisation I cannot recall. I lived in Brackley, Northamptonshire. My bunker was located on the outskirts of Brackley. At the time RAF Upper Heyford was a strategic American Nuclear Bomber Air Base which was only five miles down the road and played a significant role with my own bunker due to how close

we were. The Ban the Bomb organisation had protest camps around RAF Upper Heyford, also there was the ever present threat from the IRA, so security was always a top priority. RAF Heyford closed down years ago, but RAF Croughton linked to it at the time, is still fully operational. My part time duties involved training at least once a week and one weekend a month staying in the bunker from Friday to Sunday afternoon with further training. In a year I was promoted to be an instructor and the following year I was promoted again to be in charge of my bunker. So my part time role often was more than part time. Living close to the American Air Force Base, I often had to attend meetings there and also was invited to nights out. Being able to wear my dress uniform to go to the base made a nice change. I also never bought a drink or a meal there, they said my pounds were no good there. I never argued.

In order for us to do our job we had to be down in our bunkers with the hatch sealed long before the bombs came in. So as the political situation changed and an anticipation of war unfolded, there were coded messages given out by the BBC and we had leave home at night so as not to alert the general public as to what was happening. It came close twice and I was very pleased to see the world as I left it when we were stood down and I came back out of my bunker. "Just another exercise," I told friends.



British pamphlets from the 1950s

In the event of a nuclear attack and our bunker surviving (being so close to Heyford that was always in doubt), our role was to get as much information as possible, by crude photos, then constant radiation readings. After a period of time our role changed and extended, still reporting constant radiation levels, but also coming out above ground. Should radiation be low enough we were to look around and assess the situation, but not be seen, becoming spies in our own country. If you thought too much about this aspect of the job, you could not have done it.

Paperwork work came through regularly to fly out on trips with the RAF usually on transport planes, to bases like Gibraltar and other bases around the UK. I was not a good flyer, so always offered these trips to my crew. I said my crew came first, but they never knew that I did want to go. Going to Heyford Base was just fine for me. I did ten years and only retired when our government, in its wisdom, closed the organisation and shut down all the 827 nuclear bunkers. I had many interesting times in developing different types of equipment that would fit down a shaft in the ground. The access to the bunker was only the size of a man hole cover.

My most significant memory of my 10 years in the service, was being presented to Her Majesty The Queen at RAF Bentley Priory. This meeting happened in the middle of the Cold War and the IRA Terrorist situation, so due to the security, I could not tell anyone I was going or even that I had been.



RAF Upper Heyford, late 70s/early 80s.

RIP PICKLES



Pickles has given us all a great deal of love, affection and happy memories. Sadly, we had to make the difficult decision to have him put to sleep on Saturday [January 30th].

For those who have been in the village for some time, will have no doubt seen our lovely cat "Pickles" at some point in his 18 years.

Born in 3 Beech Road, he decided he was going to move to #4 and live with us at six weeks old along with his brother, Chutney. Having young children in the house, he decided he couldn't cope with the noise so he moved in with Dot at Amberways for three years or so, the lure of a quieter life and fresh prawns! He gave Dot a great deal of comfort in her final years and when she had to leave her house to go into care, Pickles came back through our cat flap as if he had just been out for a walk!



A fantastic hunter, often bringing us "presents" so we could see what he had been up to.

Sadly missed.

Happy Hunting Pickles 

Neil, Angela, Lucy, Alexander, Matthew



ST LAWRENCE CHURCH

Sadly, for the time being, there are still no services in church, the PCC having decided that their primary concern was for the safety of the congregation. Along with everyone else, we await further announcements from the Government!

But, of course, although the doors are closed, the church as a fellowship is open, and we continue to Zoom our services, Sunday at 11.00 am and Wednesday at 10.00 am.

We are now in Lent, reflecting the forty days that Jesus spent in the wilderness at the start of his ministry. This year many of us feel as though we too are in a wilderness. When he was there, Jesus was nourished, fed and sustained by His Father. May this be a time for us to discover anew what it is to be nourished, fed and sustained by God: to slow down and think things through, especially in the light of all that has happened this last year, and be reminded again of God's love for us. May the God who raised Jesus from the dead transform us by the knowledge that each of us is a person known and loved by Him.

This is the season

This is the season of waiting,
of tipping on the edge of life:
a seed planted in furrowed soil,
but will it grow?
Staring at earth, pondering its riches,
nostril earth-scented in morning dew.
Waiting.....

This is the season of risk,
watching as the seed turns, shivers, cracks.
Praying the precious root will find purchase,
and not be found.

This is the season of patience,
nourishment and care.
What will follow will be
bright colours, flowers and taste,
the giddy harvest.
For now, in quiet, we find peace.

Now is a season of prayer,
of waiting and relying,
of knowing the future is in the Creator's hands.



Photo by Tricia Harbour

Forces beyond our
control
nurture the seed if we let them.
This is when we depend,
and are taught to depend.

A green tip will push through the earth,
and we can say:
we waited,
we took the risk,
we were patient,
we prayed,
we depended.

Kira Taylor, Spring, ed Ruth Burgess.

Blessings, Jill Tucker

TWAM

Tools with a Mission

TWAM is still operating even in lockdown and we are still collecting tools. For those who don't know, TWAM is a Christian charity. We collect unwanted tools, refurbish them and put them in to Trade Kits, e.g., Carpenter, Car Mechanic, Tailor's Kit. We then ship them out to third world countries to go to training centres.

Individuals nominated by their village or suburb attend a residential 6 months course to learn a trade. On completion of their course, they are gifted a Trade Kit and they return to their village or suburb to apply their trade and support their family.

To see what tools we require go to twam.uk/donatetools
If you have tools or a bible, please contact me, a formal collector for TWAM.

Jim Saxton

Tel: 07748 324934

Email: jimsaxton@btinternet.com



Building and Carpentry



Sewing and Knitting



Computers and IT

TYSOE W.I.

There will be an abundance of sunflowers to look forward to come the summer in WI member's gardens as February's monthly bag contained the seeds for a sunflower growing competition.



One of our members Pam McLeod celebrated her 90th birthday in February.

April is the month for our members to renew the membership, although we still don't know when we can hold meetings again, we are all supporting each other and the committee have worked hard to deliver a "Meeting in a Bag" each month.

For more information follow us on Facebook, visit our webpage www.tysoewi.com or email: Tysoew.i.1917@icloud.com



QUIZ ON 12 FEBRUARY

Another great 'no pub, pub quiz' quiz night organised by Matt Tofts - huge congratulations to last month's winner Linda Heritage and to this month Katy & Stuart. Great fun - hope to see you all next time!

Katy Dowding

Serendipity

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

The Salvation Army

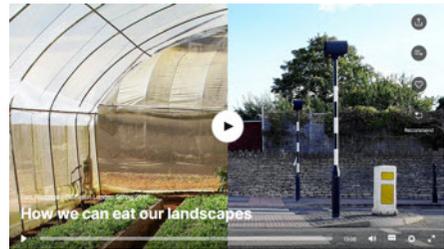
www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQKkv0Y9OKo



The Salvation Army

TED Talks – Pam Warhurst

www.ted.com/talks/pam_warhurst_how_we_can_eat_our_landscapes



TED Talks – Pam Warhurst

Jason Buck Storyteller Beautiful Vasilisa

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IvVDUADCqUU

North Yorkshire Moors Railway No.92214

Gauging Run

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjQagvqqcHc



Russian story: Beautiful Vasilisa

The London Cello Orchestra The Swan

www.youtube.com/channel/UC5Rgar-xeLO_eemoHrqKzjw

Enjoy!

Douglas Nethercleft



The London Cello Orchestra



North Yorkshire Moors Railway

AFTERNOON TEA FOR MOTHERING SATURDAY

We might not be able to celebrate Mothering Sunday as we should like by going out for Sunday lunch or afternoon tea with our families, but Oxhill has all you need to make your weekend special. The bakers of the village are uniting to bring you a full **afternoon tea in a box**, (with or without Prosecco, but you will need to make your own pot of tea) on **Saturday 13th March** and the Peacock will be offering their usual high quality Sunday roast on Sunday 14th March.

We want to ensure that everyone gets the tea of their dreams so we have devised a points system where you can choose what makes up your ideal tea. Do you prefer more sandwiches or more cake? Do you love scones and want more? Pick from the list to make up 8 points and personalise your tea! Please reserve your tea ASAP by filling in the booking form and returning it to me with payment before Monday 8th March. Late bookings might be possible after that date but choice could be limited. There is room on the booking form to order tea for up to 3 people but feel free to ask for additional forms or print one from the Oxhill Community Facebook Page.

Teas can be collected from the back of The Peacock between 1.30pm and 3pm on Saturday 13th March, or can be delivered to your door. Please indicate your preference on the booking form.

All profits from the Afternoon Tea will be donated to the upkeep of Oxhill Church. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Ruth Mercer
ruthc.mercer@btinternet.com
07400 615999

**MADE IN OXHILL VIRTUAL
CAKE STALL**



Thank you to everyone who has ordered a cake from the relaunched Virtual Cake Stall and a huge thank you to all the fabulous bakers. Cinnamon buns are proving especially popular: Lucy is booked to bake them most Saturdays! We will continue to run the cake stall throughout March and into April. Please call or email me if you would like to order a cake (or buns!).

Ruth Mercer
ruthc.mercer@btinternet.com
07400 615999

MOTHERING SATURDAY AFTERNOON TEA ORDERING FORM

£10 per person to include items equalling 8 points, some examples below:

Example 1: 4 small triangle sandwiches, 2 scones with jam and clotted cream, a large slice of cake and 2 small cakes

Example 2: 8 small triangle sandwiches, 2 scones with jam and clotted cream and 2 small cakes

Example 3: 4 small triangle sandwiches, 2 large slices of cake and 2 small cakes

Gluten free options available on request!

	Points	Tick choices for Tea Order 1	Tick choices for Tea Order 2	Tick choices for Tea Order 3
Sandwiches: one portion of 2 small triangle sandwiches				
Cheese and pickle	1			
Smoked salmon and soft cheese	1			
Ham and salad	1			
Cucumber and soft cheese	1			
Two scones with jam and clotted cream	2			
Large slice of cake:				
Chocolate fudge cake	2			
Victoria sponge	2			
Fruit cake	2			
Coffee cake	2			
Carrot cake	2			
Small cakes:				
Flapjack	1			
Fairy cake	1			
Millionaires shortbread	1			
Chocolate brownies	1			
Shortbread	1			
Lemon drizzle	1			
Optional Extras!				
Bottle of Prosecco	£8			
Mini bottle of Prosecco 20 cl	£3.50			
Total cost (please pay with order)	(£10 / 8 points)			

Name	
Address	
Contact No. and email address	
Home Delivery / collect from the Peacock?	

Please return completed form and payment to Ruth Mercer at Struan, Whatcote Road or email ruthc.mercer@btinternet.com

TO RUSSIA WITH TIGHTS

by Derek Harbour

Everyone has heard about the fictional story/film 'From Russia with Love' but this is a true story prompted by the stories from Peter Taylor and Reuben Connolly.

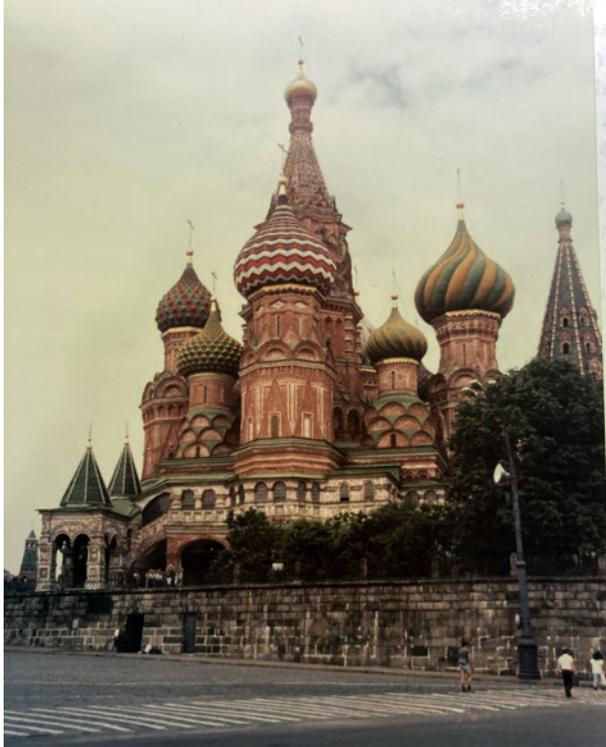
I worked for the company, John Brown plc, from 1985 to 1992 and ran their Automation business in Coventry where we made Robotic/Automated Systems for the car industry, like Jaguar, Rover, etc. We also made Systems for export and due to the long heritage of our parent company working in Russia, this included providing Systems to that Country.

My stories take place earlier than Peter or Reuben's, in the mid-80's when Russia was a very different place to what it is today. I have several experiences that might make interesting re-telling, but I am just including a few here.

When we went to meet our 'customer', the Automotive Industry import agency, Avtopromimport, we used the John Brown office in Moscow as a base. When packing for the flight there were some necessities that you had to pack, as follows:

The bottom layer of your packing included a plug for the bath and several Mars Bars as the Hotels often did not have anything edible for Breakfast, the next layer may have

been pairs of Jeans as these were items of currency, then there would be a layer of Ladies Tights for the Office Secretaries as they were not easily available in Moscow. The next layer would possibly be French Lingerie for the Car Plant Manager's mistress, the next layer would be Windscreen Wipers for the cars that they made as they were frequently stolen and the 5 year plan had not allowed for this, next would be your own clothes and on the very top would be a couple of copies of Playboy for the Border Guards at Sheremetyevo Airport to gleefully confiscate.



St Basil's Cathedral in Red Square. Photo by Derek Harbour taken on his visit to Moscow.

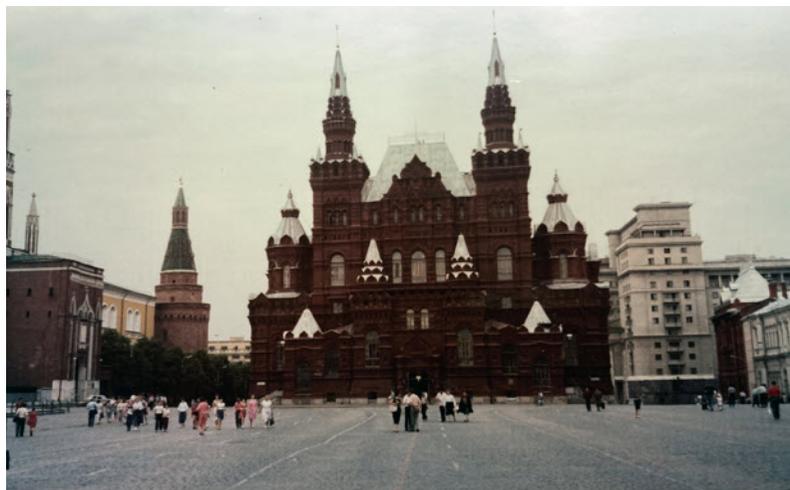
For the Moscow Office, we were permitted to hire our own Secretaries but drivers for the cars were provided by the Soviets and were always believed to be part of the Kingston Gas Board, slang for the KGB. We were always careful when travelling to and from meetings with Avtopromimport to never discuss tactics or how we really felt that the meeting had gone, we just talked about football.

When you went out in Moscow for a meal, to get good service, you always closed the Menu, when it was given to you and instead asked what their speciality was. This was because there were so many shortages that they seldom had what was on the menu and by closing it you saved them the embarrassment of admitting this. Instead, by showing your understanding, you would get a ton of caviar and some delicious, very cold Vodka for a very small price.

My direct boss was based in Rhode Island in the US and came to Moscow on one occasion to meet our key customers. We invited them to the Metropole Hotel, where foreigners were allowed to stay, for Dinner one evening. My boss was a wine expert and asked for the Wine List, which was huge. He thumbed through it carefully studying all of the details and finally selected a wine and vintage that he knew to be good. He told the translator about the wine and how wonderful it was and he, in turn, told our guests. My boss then called over the Sommelier and told him which wine he wanted. The Sommelier closed the wine list and called out to his colleague 'Red' – they only had Georgian wines.

Prior to my first visit to Russia, I was part of a team from John Brown that hosted a visit from Mikhail Gorbachev to the JB Head Office. At the time of the visit, he was the Trade Minister but tipped to become the new Soviet Leader. He met with Margaret Thatcher and in addition to John Brown, he visited a few other companies. He was scheduled to come to the office on a Sunday between precisely 10.00am and 12.00pm. The day before the visit, the offices were closed and the Police went through the entire building with sniffer dogs.

For such an important visit, the various parts of John Brown that were to be involved, had to rehearse our presentations and a local University Professor of Russian Studies was present to



*The State Historical Museum, near Red Square.
Photo by Derek Harbour*

ensure that we did not make any errors in translation. We produced a ‘Slide’ presentation with 2 screens, one to show the English words and the other to show the Cyrillic language equivalent, as well as various pictures of installations that we had in Russia. We had a strict 2 hour window for the presentation.



Lenin's Tomb in Red Square, backing onto The Kremlin.

Photo by Derek Harbour

Our first rehearsal was on the Tuesday before the visit and being quite nervous, all of the presenters tended to gabble and we finished ahead of time. What were we to do? I mentioned that I had a video of our systems that had a Russian voiceover from a Russian lady who lived in Coventry. The John Brown MD said ‘Well play it and we’ll see if it is suitable’. So I started playing the video but very quickly the London Professor jumped

in and said “You can’t play that, the woman doing the voiceover has a Peasant’s accent, you can’t show that to Gorbachev”. So I switched off the player but I kept the video cassette in my briefcase.

We were due to rehearse again on the Thursday and we were all asked to add more material and to practice speaking more slowly to avoid the gap in proceedings. Thursday came and we all had more material but we still spoke at 90 mph, though the gap was smaller. It was agreed that if we just all spoke a little slower, everything would be alright on the day.

Sunday at 10.00am, all of us dressed in our smartest suits, with company ties, shaved and deodorised to within a whisker of our lives, we welcomed Mr Gorbachev and his party. The presentation started and we all did our bit, all too fast, so we finished too soon. I offered the video to be played and the JB MD reluctantly decided to play it to fill the gap before Gorbachev was to be whisked away. As the video started, I felt a sense of foreboding. I was clearly for the chop as soon as this was over and my promising career would soon be over. Watching the video, Mr Gorbachev smiled and turned to his translator and mumbled something. The translator turned to my boss and said ‘Mr Gorbachev wishes to congratulate you on your research, in finding someone to do the voiceover from the area of Russia that he is from’. The JB MD smiled modestly and I quietly looked forward to a few more years working for the company.

TOM FROM THE REALLY AWESOME COFFEE VAN

I did a short interview with Tom, from the Awesome Coffee Van. He's become part of the village with his hugely popular Thursday morning visits and a villager suggested that we find out more about him. ~ ed.

Why did you start your coffee van business? I had a chauffeur business for 10 years and I wanted to do something different, where I didn't have to shave every day. I also wanted to make money from coffee instead of spending it. I've had the van for 2 years now, in fact, I just had my 2nd anniversary yesterday [27 January 2021].

Have you have any interesting experiences at the van? A woman collapsed at the coffee van a couple of weeks ago. She had a heart attack. She saw the price of the coffee. Four of us helped her. We called the ambulance who came to save her. Her heart was beating at 220 beats per minutes, so they shocked her with a defibrillator to get her heart rate down. Now she is convinced I saved her. She tells me that every Wednesday when I take the van to her stop.

What are your future plans? Not to go bankrupt! This village has staved off bankruptcy so far.



Tom and his Really Awesome Coffee Van stop up outside the Peacock every Thursday at 11:30ish . Tom has a selection of coffees, teas, hot chocolate and hot and cold snacks.

NATURE NOTES FOR MARCH

by Grenville Moore

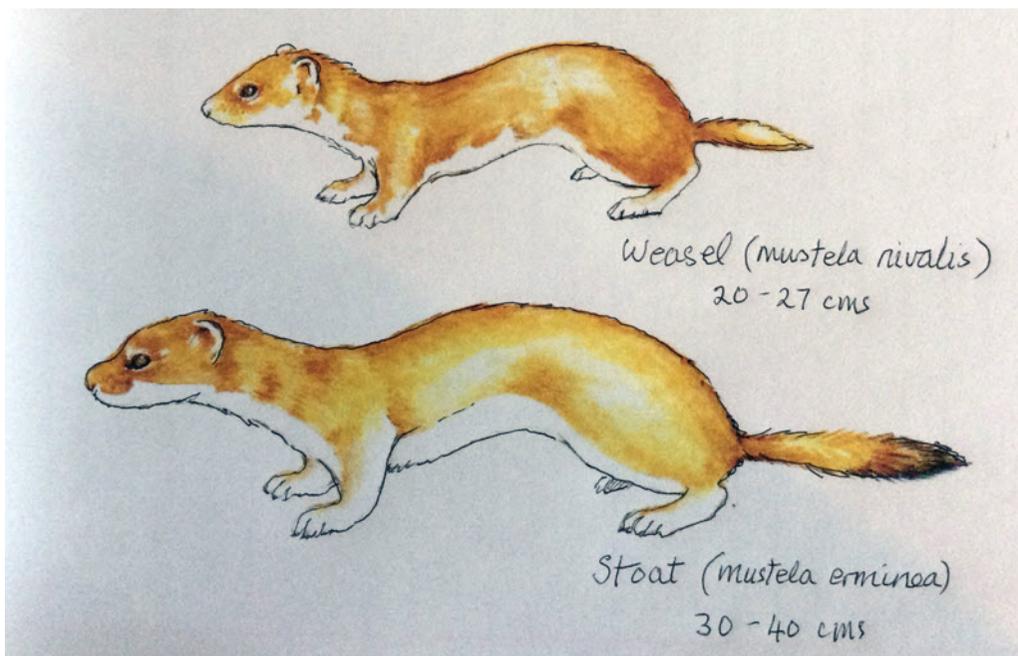
In the Spring a further crimson comes upon a robin's breast
In the Spring the wanton lapwing gets himself another crest
In the Spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished cove
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love

Tennyson, 1841

Look out for the mad March hares as they go through their comic dancing and boxing associated with courtship. Early badger cubs may be seen leaving their setts later in the month. Hedgehogs, too, now emerge from their winter quarters and become more active. Hibernating butterflies will be seen emerging: tortoiseshell, brimstones, and even peacock and one or two red admirals can be seen on a sunny day.

Frogs, toads and newts will start to appear in our ponds. On several occasions in the past we have had a smooth newt marching across our living room floor heading in the direction of our pond. They hibernate under our flagstone floor, and of course we do give them a lift up to the pond.

Just after Christmas I watched a weasel hunting round our patio. He must have spent a good half hour 'weasling away' investigating every nook and cranny. Their main



Drawing by Grenville Moore

food source being mice, voles, and rats, and they would also readily take a rabbit and certainly birds and their eggs should the opportunity arise. Since I saw this one, I have had a couple of other reports from people seeing them in their gardens and on both occasions I was asked, stoat or weasel. A stoat is stout (large) and a weasel is wee (small), and the stoat has a black tip to its tail. The stoat turns white in winter and the pelts were used for the peers of the realm's ermine robes, which are white fur with black dots. Fortunately the trims on peers' robes now are made from artificial fur. The total body length of a weasel is 20-27 cm and the larger stoat is 30-40 cm. They tend to be the same colour, reddish brown or grey brown, both have white underparts. The stoat has a characteristic bounding gait with an arched back, whereas the weasel's movement is often quicker and flatter to the ground. They are both from the *Mustela* family, which includes the polecat (which has been seen in Oxhill), pine marten, ferret (a hybrid) and American mink. Badgers and otters are also part of this group. Talking of otters, a single otter was seen very recently dropping down into the brook (the Oxhill Torrent).

Back in history weasels were viewed with suspicion and mystery: *They hold opinion in England that if they meet with a weasel in the morning, that they shall not speed well that day. There is nothing in this beast more strange than their conception and generation: for weasels do not couple in their hinder parts, but at their ears, and bring forth their young at their mouths. Yet it is certain that they have places of conception under their tails: and therefore how it should come to pass that their young ones should come out of their mouths, I cannot easily learn,*

Edward Topsell, *History of Four-footed Beasts*, 1607

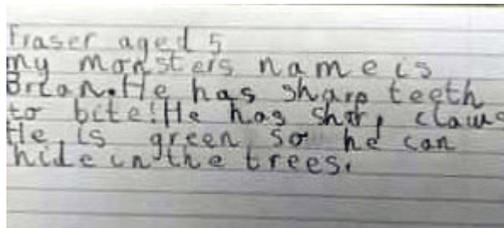


Photo by Tricia Harbour

MONSTER COMPETITION

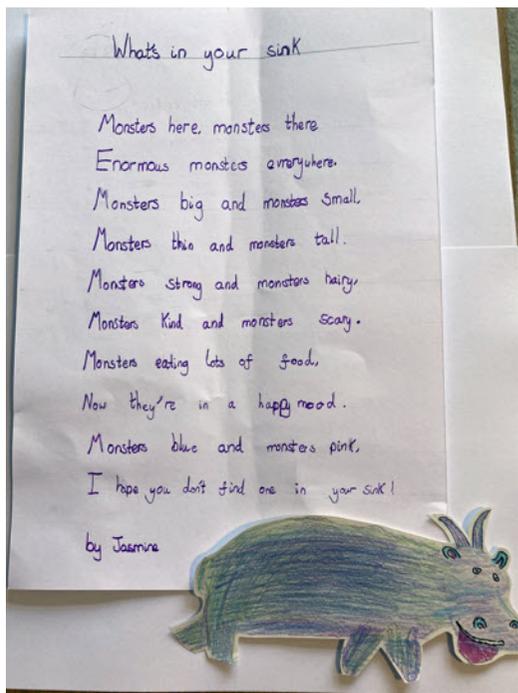
Well done to all the children for their contributions to the monster competition - the entries were so good that it was difficult to pick out any winners. Everyone who entered will get a small prize but star awards go to Sophie, Fraser and Jasmine!

Ali Sayer



My monsters name is Brian. He has sharp teeth to bite! He has sharp claws. He is green so he can hide in the trees.

Fraser, age 5



What's in your sink

Monsters here, monsters there
Enormous monsters everywhere.
Monsters big and monsters small,
Monsters thin and monsters tall.
Monsters strong and monsters hairy,
Monsters kind and monsters scary.
Monsters eating lots of food,
Now they're in a happy mood.
Monsters blue and monsters pink,
I hope you don't find one in your sink!

Jasmine, age 9



Elsie Jordan, age 6



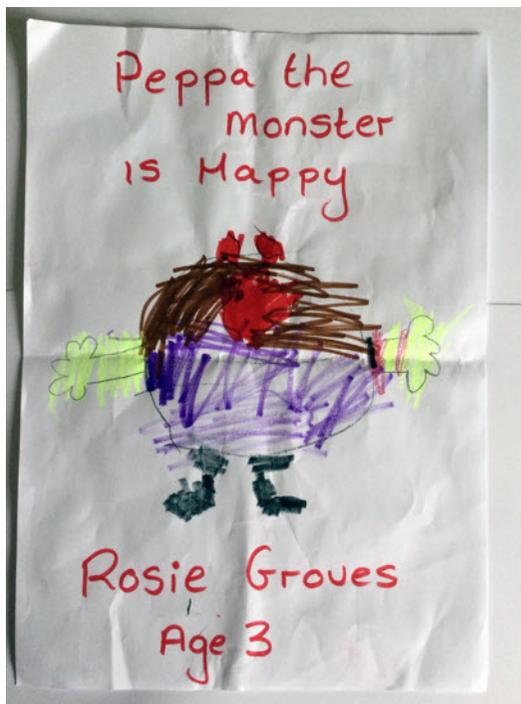
Lillian Jordan, age 6. Her monster is called Hannah.



Emma, age 2. Her monster is also called Emma



Ellis Groves, age 5. He writes Libby the monster is kind.



Rosie Groves, age 3. She writes Peppa the monster is happy.



Arthur Fawcus, age 7. His monster is called Bob.



Leah Merrick, age 8



Hayden Merrick, age 11



Summer, age 6, Her monster is called Pickles



SPRING CLEAN

I was riding my bike down the Oxhill Road the other day when I came across a chap with armfuls of rubbish he had collected by Kirby/Burland. A car drew up and helped load it into the car. What a hero.



Several of us have been doing litter picking in Tysoe. As there are loads of us out walking at the moment, wouldn't it be great if we all took a small bag and an old pair of gloves and picked up a bagful of litter on our way back home.

Jude Canning



GREEN WASTE COLLECTION – AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

As of 1st April 2021, Stratford District Council will no longer collect green waste bins unless you have paid for a subscription of £40 per year. If the annual subscription does not appeal but you like to dabble in the garden over the course of the year, then why not call on Thomas Fox Landscaping to dispose of the waste? We offer a green waste collection service and have been operating a composting facility at the farm for the past 18 months, producing good quality mulch (also available for sale).

How it works

- Call or email the office on 01295 680691 or office@thomasfoxlandscaping.co.uk
- Choose your bag size: 48cm x 48cm x 48cm (small) or 90cm x 48cm x 48cm (medium)
- We drop your bag off
- Fill it with green waste (grass cuttings, leaves, brash etc)
- Call the office to arrange collection

Prices

- 2x small bags for £5.00 delivered and collected
- 2x medium bags for £10.00 delivered and collected

Please note: We will not collect bags that have been used to dispose of food, dog waste, plastics or other recyclables.

DRAFT PRECIS OF MINUTES OF OXHILL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on 12th January 2021

Minutes of last meetings

The minutes of the meetings of 9th September and 10th November were approved.

Matters Arising

Dog fouling signs – The footpath signage will be upgraded.

Church Farm Enforcement – This is ongoing.

To consider a request from Oxhill Village hall for heating and electrical work

It was agreed this work could be done but it does not fit the use of CIL funds. Total cost is £1416.00.

Public Participation Session

A member of the public spoke about the setting of the precept. There was an increase of 25% in 2018/19 and 4.99% in 2019/20. Councillors are elected representatives of the village and are able to make decisions about spending. The precept was increased in 2018/19 as a professional clerk was employed. There was another increase the following year as Parish Councils are encouraged to build up their reserves and more is expected of them.

To discuss falling trees within the loop

More falling branches have been noticed approaching the Manor. Highways are surveying roadways to look for ash die back. The contact details will be forwarded by Cllr Feilding.

To receive feedback from the Footpaths Action Group and discuss first aid training

A registered first aider is required and has to be present if a group are undertaking maintenance jobs for WCC. The cost is £180.00 & VAT. The course will be booked.

To receive an update on speeding

The Parish Council own a speed camera and have been testing it out. A monitoring exercise will be carried out in the Spring with a view to pressurising the police to give permission to use a mobile sign.

To receive an update on the new website

The aim is to have a community website that is a one stop for the whole village. Currently the Parish Council are paying for two websites at a cost of £79.04 each plus domain names. A new website which would be accessible to all would cost £120.00

annually plus a domain name charge of £5.99. Thanks was given to Cllr Stuart for all her work.

To discuss a Climate Action Plan

A draft action plan had been circulated and organisations are linked into the plan. To be discussed at the next meeting.

Planning

The following applications had been received:

- 20/02356/FUL, *Proposed replacement single storey extension to rear and small infill to side of garage at Appletree Cottage, Blackford Way.* Granted by SDC.
- 20/02430/FUL, *Single storey garden room extension and enlargement of existing opening to form access link at Church House, Church Lane.* Withdrawn.
- 20/02972/FUL, *Retrospective installation of a Ground Source heat pump situated with a modular plant room building and associated below ground pipework array at Oxhill Manor, Beech Road.* Supported by PC.
- 20/02775/FUL and 20/02776/LBC, *Extension of existing fence and erection of gate at 2nd existing vehicular access to property, repointing of external stone work, installation of wireless security system at The Old Post Office, Main Street.* Supported by PC.
- 20/03373/FUL, *Proposed extension and alterations to Short Meadow and Short Meadow Cottage.* Supported by PC.

Finance

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£151.19 to TEEC (website)

£646.00 to Tysoe Childrens Group (newsletter printing)

£1001.44 to Hewins Timber Ltd (oak for bus shelter)

To set the precept for 2021/22

It was agreed to set the precept at £11,025.00 (the same as the previous year).

Current bank arrangement

It was agreed to apply for online banking as remote meetings will be in place for a while longer.

Cllrs Reports

Water quality issues in the village have been fixed.

Cllr Rivers-Fletcher spoke about sewage which was smelt on Whatcote Road. A note was put on the Facebook page. Severn Trent have been out twice and the fault is at the pumping station at Whatcote. This is an ongoing situation.

DRAFT PRECIS OF OXHILL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held 9th February 2021

Matters Arising

Church Farm Enforcement - This is ongoing and the Parish Council will continue to communicate with SDC.

Leys Field – Discussions are ongoing with SDC about the wildlife buffer zone.

Bus Shelter - The wood has arrived and the bus shelter will be installed late February/March.

Report from Cllr J Feilding

Local Elections will take place on 6th May. SDC are short of people to man polling stations. Expenses are paid. A lot of CIL money is going towards cycleways in Stratford.

Climate Change Action Plan

The action plan was circulated and adopted. It is a working document and will be put on the new village website.

New Website

The domain name is available but the website is not ready to be launched yet. This is work in progress.

Update on the defibrillator

It is 3 years since the defibrillator was installed. Training was carried out initially which 12 people attended and is due again. New pads are needed and the battery will be checked. Advice will be sought from WALC about online training courses.

To discuss an alternative to the use of green bins

The green bin charge comes into force in April. NCC can supply 3 food waste caddys per household and they would be collected with the recycling bins. Composting could be considered to reduce green bin waste. The grass contractor will be contacted to ask for ideas.

To discuss access to HGV's along Main Street - restricting access for 7.5t+ vehicles

This matter came up when highway work was done in the village. Main Street is narrow but if HGV's were diverted they would use Green Lane. This is not ideal as

its narrow and not gritted. The edges of the roads are breaking up which Highways are aware of. A 20mph speed limit would be ideal.

Update on Planning

The following applications had been received:

- *Pre-application consultation proposed telecoms installation by Clarke Telecom.* The Parish Council are supportive of the proposal but disagree with the siting of the mast. It is too large and not acceptable in a rural location.

Action: The Parish Clerk to send a reply before Thursday 11th February.

- *DISCN/00760/20, Discharge of condition at Auchneiven House. Change of stonework.* Supported by PC.
- *20/02972/FUL, Retrospective installation of a ground source heat pump situated within a modular plant room building at Oxhill Manor.* Granted by SDC.

Financial Report

The following payments were approved under statutory powers:

£60.00 to WALC, Training Course for the Chair

£19.76 to L Stuart (website)

Councillors Reports

Dog poo was discussed. A leaflet drop and free dog bags were discussed but felt not to be worth pursuing.

A first aid training course for the Footpath Action Group will be booked soon.

Date and Time of next meeting

Tuesday 9th March 2021 at 7.30pm

The Way We Were



The Old Church Farm believed to be photographed in the 1930s (above) and photographed February 2021 (below). Photo above courtesy of Julian Spaul.



OLD CHURCH FARM PHOTO



The children (enlarged from the photo on the left) are believed to be William & Nan Heritage.

Julian Spaul who sent us the Old Church Farm photo writes: 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 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).

I am happy for the Oxhill News to share (or publish) my email address for anyone that is interested in making contact.

email JulianSpaul100@gmail.com

OXHILL GARDEN CLUB

Your editor Vanessa wanted something on gardening tips for the News, and I explained that most of us are just enthusiastic at best, rather than being experts. However, in the hope that the following might encourage others to contribute something better, here is a bit of my own recent activity.

Broad beans are one of the first vegetable crops that you can begin sowing and I have never had the guts to do this before the Spring. However, this year I have sewn some indoors in an old washing up bowl using old loo roll inners filled with compost. These are really useful because you can just plant each one without disturbing the roots. The cardboard just decomposes with time. You can use this technique anytime. The ones in the picture were sown in January.



PLANT SALE UPDATE

Our usual village plant sale is in May and we are guessing that this will be able to go ahead. Like last September's event this will be to help raise funds for the Village Hall.

We do hope that a lot of you will be raising extra plants for this. More details to follow.

Peter Rivers Fletcher

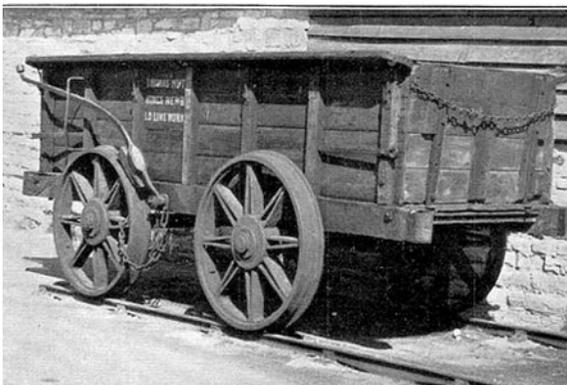
HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

THE STRATFORD TO MORETON TRAMWAY

by Gill Stewart

Ask people “What was the first railway built in England?” and they would say it was George Stephenson’s Stockton to Darlington Railway, which opened in 1825. It might surprise you to know that we have “in our backyard” the remains of a line which is an almost exact contemporary of that more famous achievement. What’s more, if you know where to look, you can see its route. Our landscape is, in itself, a historical document, which reveals much of what has gone before, and although much has been lost, we can still trace the line of the Stratford to Moreton Tramway. The most visible and accessible

reminder is the Tramway Bridge across the Avon in Stratford, but elsewhere there are other less conspicuous clues to its existence, and during the first lockdown, Roger and I took advantage of the spring weather to explore the route, cycling to wherever the line intersected a public road or path. In doing so, we found long stretches where the line swept across open fields, sometimes in cutting and sometimes on embankment, and identifiable by a double row of hedges and scrubby land in between. We also found four Crossing Cottages; a Wharf Farm and a house called The Old Wharf near Ilmington (no water in sight, but a term that seems to have been carried over from the canals), and another wharf at Newbold-on-Stour; the site of Stretton-on-Fosse Station; and an Old Junction Cottage.



An old Stratford to Moreton railway tram now preserved in Stratford upon Avon.



William James (Father of the Railways) 1771 – 1837

The origins of the tramway lie in the vision of one William James, who was born in 1771 in Henley, and trained as a lawyer. By 1797 he had become rich managing the estates of the local gentry, and had acquired a limestone quarry at Wilmcote and a coal mine at West Bromwich. He therefore understood the need for improved methods of transporting minerals to market.

By 1808, his thoughts were already turning to the creation of a national network of railways for both passengers and freight. He wanted to build them wherever they were required not just for goods but for long-distance passenger traffic too. In this respect he differed from George Stephenson who saw railways primarily as a means of moving coal from mine to docks.



Cottages on A3400 adjacent to Newbold Wharf. The tramway ran behind these buildings (indicated on map below) and along the line of the trees beside the Shipston Road. The railway was owned by a canal company so they used the canal term 'wharf' instead of 'goods yard'.

At that time, the Avon was navigable downstream from Stratford to the Severn at Tewkesbury, but otherwise the town was isolated from other forms of transport, apart from stagecoaches, but these were not suitable for the mass movement of either goods or people. Although James was instrumental in securing the completion of the Stratford-on-Avon Canal in 1816, he remained convinced that the future lay with railways, and devised the idea of a railway from the canal basin in

Stratford via Moreton to Oxford and onward to London. Even at this early stage, James wanted goods and passengers to be hauled by steam locomotives. By 1820, he had completed a preliminary survey from Stratford to Oxford. But he needed a local ally in Moreton, and in the House of Lords.

Enter Lord Redesdale; benefactor of the Redesdale Hall in Moreton and owner of Batsford Park. He saw that a link to the canal at Stratford would reduce the price of coal which hitherto had been brought from the Black Country pits via canal to the Severn at Stourport, and thence by river to Evesham and by road from there. Redesdale became a supporter and investor in James's vision.

To cut a long story short, in May 1821, Royal Assent was given to a bill authorising the construction of the Stratford-Moreton Tramway, including a branch to Shipston. The Act did not explicitly refer to the mode of traction to be used. James's intention had always been to use steam locomotives and he assured a shareholders' meeting in July 1821, that this would be feasible. This did not happen in his lifetime but that's "a whole other story!"



An 1887 Ordnance Survey map showing the tramway passing Newbold Wharf Cottages (photo above). The cottages are circled in red and the tramline, beside the cottages, is indicated with a red arrow.

Work on building the line began at the Stratford end in about 1823, but by 1825, the



The horse and cart were used to transport goods. Beyond the wagons can be seen a loading gauge and a platelayers hut. Photo 30 September 1921.

company needed a further Act to raise new capital and renew the original authority to build a branch line from Darlingscott to Shipston. But this 1825 Act explicitly banned the use of steam locomotives on the 6 miles of line south of Stratford where it was to run alongside the turnpike (aka A3400) as far as Newbold-on-Stour. The threat to buildings in Alderminster being set on fire by sparks from the locos was regarded as unacceptable. Shortage of money always dogged the construction of the line and slowed down the work, so the tramway did not open, using horse-drawn wagons, until September 1826. The Stockton to Darlington line had opened in September 1825, earning its place in the history books.

Unsurprisingly, the branch to Shipston terminated in what became Station Road. It opened in February 1836, an event celebrated

by a dinner at The George Inn. The 1825 Act required that wherever the line crossed a turnpike road, such as the Fosse Way, it should be carried under or over the road by means of a tunnel or bridge. The Company disregarded this requirement, built a level crossing across the Fosse Way and a Crossing Cottage, which still stands a few metres south of the crossroads where Darlingscott Road crosses the Fosse [see photo on opposite page]. Another level crossing took the main line across Fosse Way near Stretton-on-Fosse, adjacent to the site of Stretton Station.

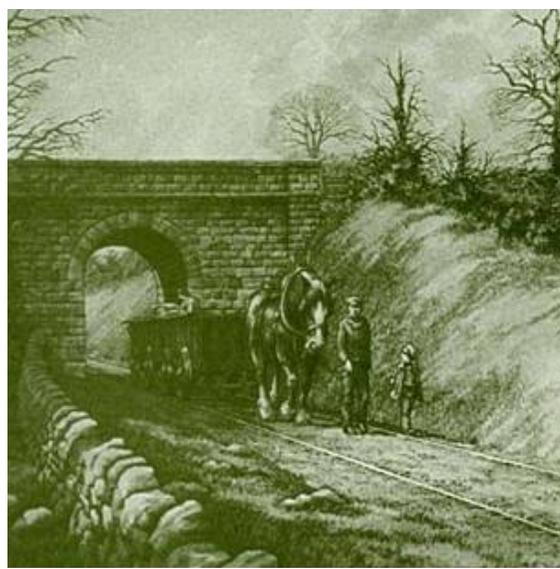
James's hopes of using steam power came to nought and passengers sat on a wagon adapted to be horse-drawn. The horse would pull the wagon along flat stretches and up any inclines, but the question then arose of what to do with the horse on the downward slopes of the line. One of the horses was called 'Jumper' and I quote from a source ("The Stratford and Moreton Tramway" by John Norris, published by the Railway and Canal Historical Society) recounting a journey undertaken in about 1877.

"We now arrive at a very important point of our journey –Ilmington Junction- where we branch off the main tram line onto the Shipston branch, down a steep gradient by Blackwell Bushes. We pull up. The driver gets off, unhooks Jumper out of the traces, brings him round to the rear of the truck, and shunts a pebble against the front wheel. Jumper seems to be putting himself in position for something. All at once Saunders lets the tail-board down, and to my amazement Jumper bolted up into the truck with the agility of a cat.

Says the driver, 'Don't you move Mr Phelps. As soon as I a' shifted the pebble and put the points right we shall begin to move'. Our truck began to move at a snail's pace.

Saunders jumped on the nearside and I was on the offside, and Jumper was in the middle of the truck with his head high up in the air. The truck began to go faster. Jumper put his forelegs out an inch or two, so as to take a better standing. We were now going at a fast pace down the incline. Jumper stood up as firm as Ilmington Church tower.

All at once in the distance we saw impediments on the line. Saunders found his brake wouldn't work in consequence of our terrific speed. We got near enough to see it was a farmer with a donkey and cart, and a calf in it a baa-ing (sic), and her mother the cow was jumping about on the line after her calf, and the farmer was trying to get the donkey, cart and calf down the embankment off the line, but the moke wouldn't move an inch. The crash was coming but all at once Farmer Cropper of Darlingscott was equal to the occasion. He lifted the tail of the donkey and away went the donkey, cart and calf down the embankment. The cow happened to get out of the road".



Cover illustration from 'The Stratford and Moreton Tramway' by John Norris

By the 1840s the country was in thrall to Railway Mania, and one of the proposed new railways directly affected the Tramway. The Oxford, Worcester and Wolverhampton Railway (OWWR) was to pass through Moreton, obliterating the Tramway terminus and goods yard, which was on the supermarket site formerly occupied by Budgens, now the Co-op. Eventually the OWWR was incorporated into the GWR, which only began to run steam-hauled services between Moreton and Shipston in 1889, the tramway having been improved to accommodate steam engines



'Crossing Cottage' on Fosse Way.

The main line north to Stratford was abandoned in 1904, as, by that time, the town had other rail connections. Passenger services between Shipston and Moreton ceased in 1929, and the last freight service ran in 1960. Since then the line has disappeared in many places, but there are still clues in place names and the landscape. Anyone wanting to know more about the places on the line could look at warwickshirerailways.com where there are numerous historic photographs and plans of stations and other features.

OXHILL CHURCHYARD

Several people in the village and elsewhere have recorded data about our churchyard, but it is not all in one place. Following on from a similar project that I helped with for the Kineton churchyard and extension back in 2010, I decided during lockdown to do the same for Oxhill.



A website is created that will hopefully cover as many churchyards as there are interested people to populate it. Each churchyard has three databases (DB) which are all related to each other:

1. Burial Register DB – This lists all the details entered into the register going from 1568 to the present day, it references each person on the Memorial DB – (missing 1908 to 1984 can't get access to County Records Office) there are a staggering 1462 registered burials.
2. Memorial DB – This lists what is physically inscribed on the memorial together with details about the stone, size, type, condition etc. It references to the Burials DB and the Memorial Names DB.
3. Memorial Names DB – lists all the people mentioned on the memorial, which helps those tracing family tree to establish family links.

I hope to complete all databases by end of February, for those who wish you can view this data at: churchyards.uk/oxhill

The next part of this project is really waiting on Lockdown to finish since we need to work in pairs, there are two aspects:

1. Churchyard map – there is no map at present so we will be creating one showing position of every memorial visible.
2. Memorials – The memorial DB is based on a survey conducted in 1989, we need to locate all the memorials and also add the stone information. Additionally, we need to record all the additional memorials that we find. Take a photograph of the memorial to add to the DB.

Following a post on Oxhill Facebook I have some volunteers but if you are interested please contact me on 07748324934 or jimsaxton@btinternet.com

Finally, I wish to thank the following Mike Collins; David Freke and Carol Clarke who have assisted me so far.

Jim Saxton



WHEN LIFE GIVES YOU PARSNIPS, MAKE CURRIED PARSNIP SOUP.

Recently, we were very fortunate to be given some delicious parsnips, grown by master gardener Patrick O'Donnell, freshly dug from his plot. My first thoughts were of curried parsnip soup and that's exactly what I made with them. Last week I managed to pick up more parsnips for 24p a bag, priced to clear, so more soup was made and greatly appreciated in the sub-zero weather! This recipe is quick and easy and keeps happily for a few days, even if you forget to put it in the fridge.



- 1 oz butter
- 1 ½ lbs parsnips, coarsely chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 large garlic clove, crushed
- 2 tsp mild curry powder (I use medium)
- 3 pints vegetable or chicken stock (I use 4 Knorr vegetable stock tablets in 3 pints water)
- Salt and black pepper
- 7 fl oz single cream (or more stock to be healthier, or natural yogurt)
- Fresh chives to garnish

Serves 6-8

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan, add the onion, parsnips and garlic and cook gently for about 5 minutes until the onion is softened but not coloured, stirring occasionally.
2. Stir in the curry powder and cook for 1 minute. Pour in the stock and bring to the boil, stirring. Cover the pan and simmer for 20-25 minutes, until the parsnips are tender.
3. Purée the soup until smooth using a stick mixer, food processor or liquidiser. Afterwards, heat gently to warm through, stirring constantly, then taste before seasoning as appropriate.
4. Stir in the cream and continue to heat but don't let the soup boil. Garnish with chives, if you have some.



Photos taken in and around Oxhill by Tricia Harbour



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 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 carers4carersonthefosse.org.uk, email us at kcarers4carers@gmail.com or call Gillian on 07947 893504.

CARE COMPANION

Care Companion is a website that has been developed to support unpaid family carers. Created by a team of researchers at Warwick Medical School and guided by people with many years of caring experience, it's part of the support package offered to Warwickshire carers.



Imagine a family member or close friend has just received a life-changing diagnosis. You may be given little information. Where do you start? If you go to a search engine, such as Google, you can just go round in circles. How do you know what to look for or whether the information is trustworthy?

Care Companion is a secure site offering a unique, personalised experience for carers looking for additional help, advice and support. After registering with the site and completing a brief questionnaire, any subsequent searches for information return resources unique to them. It is possible to use the site without registering but the user will not then benefit from the personalisation.

There are over 1000 entries in the carefully curated resources library and more are continually being added. A diary for appointments and follow-up information can also be used as a journal; an address book keeps details of useful contacts in one place. Finally, a mood monitor makes suggestions for actions, especially if low moods are continually recorded.

Care Companion can be viewed at carecompanion.org.uk.

To ensure Care Companion serves carers' needs effectively, a research study, funded by the National Institute for Health Research, is being carried out. It doesn't matter how much carers have used the site, every view is important. The team are looking for carers to take part in a 20 – 30 minute interview, by phone or video link, at a time convenient to themselves. To find out more, please contact Veronica Nanton at V.Nanton@warwick.ac.uk.

Gillian Grason Smith

PILLERTON GARAGE WILL STOP NEWSPAPER DELIVERY FROM 27TH MARCH 2021



Over the last few weeks delivery times from our wholesaler have gone from about 5:15 a.m. to about 6:30 a.m. This means we are unable to deliver newspapers and be back in time to open the Garage at 7:30 a.m. We shall therefore be stopping our delivery service from 27th March 2021.

Thank you for your custom
Pillerton Garage

In case you are looking for another newspaper delivery service, Smith's Newsagents in Banbury delivers to Oxhill. Contact them on their website: smithsnewsagents.co.uk or phone 01295 268499

~ ed.

NEWSPAPER DELIVERIES

Many of you will know that Wickhams [Pillerton] Garage are giving up newspaper deliveries from the end of March. There are about 20 households currently using this service.

Although Smiths of Banbury are happy to take on any of these deliveries, the cost has nearly doubled. The Tysoe shop, which already sells newspapers, is happy to deliver to Oxhill a single batch of newspapers if there is anyone who would be prepared to do the household deliveries. This could mean an income of £100 per month for somebody happy to do this, based on Monday to Saturday deliveries. If there is someone who would be interested, please can they contact me for further details of this potential scheme.

Peter Rivers Fletcher
680396
rfn364@btinternet.com

TYSOE & DISTRICT RECORD

If any new residents in Oxhill (or indeed existing ones!) would like to subscribe to the Tysoe Record, which is a publication similar to the Oxhill News, please email Liz Finlyson lfinlyson@live.co.uk, with your name, address and postcode. It is a monthly publication which will be delivered to your door and currently costs £2.50 per annum, but I believe that this may shortly be increased to £5.00 per annum.



Thank you, Liz

DOG MESS

Dog mess is an eyesore and a health hazard. There are currently approximately 67 dogs in Oxhill and every owner has a legal duty to clean up after their dogs when out in a public space including all footpaths and if your dog is in a neighbour's garden. There is an on-the-spot fine of £80.00 rising to £1000.00 if taken to Court. We have had several instances of a large dog messing on pavements around the village (sorry for having to show photographs but we do need to make the point). There has also been an instance of a smaller dog going into a private garden and messing. If your children take the dog out, please make sure they have poo bags with them, and if you are walking with a friend and your dog is lagging behind, please check that it is not leaving its calling card. If you see someone's dog doing this, then politely tell them and if they don't comply, then report them either to a member of the Parish Council or the Editors of the Oxhill News. Let's make Oxhill a pleasant place to walk around.

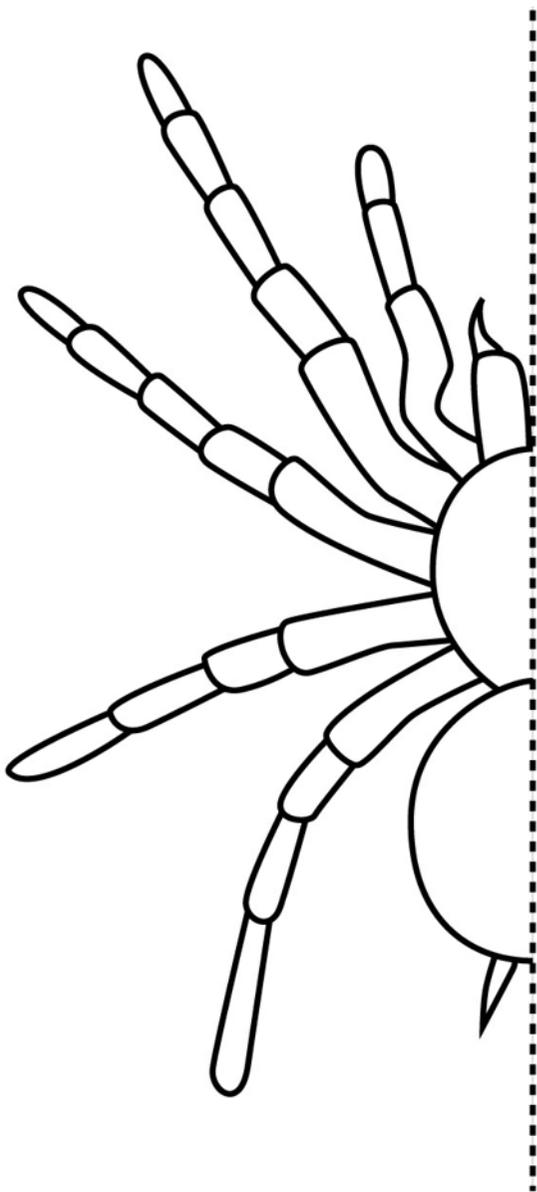


Symmetry Colouring Page

Draw the missing side of the picture by copying the side that is already drawn.
Then colour it in!



Symmetry Colouring Page



WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

MARCH

Friday 26 13:15 - 13:30 Mobile Library, outside Village Hall

PC MEETINGS

The date of the next PC Meeting is Tuesday, 9 March 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

Thank you for all of your contributions to the Oxhill News. Some months we have more articles than we can fit into the Oxhill News, so unfortunately, we must publish them in the following issues. We thank you for understanding and hope you will continue to send us your wonderful articles.

The editors welcome any stories, memories, photographs, drawings, poems, or announcements 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

BIN COLLECTION CALENDAR



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



March						
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	31				