



National flag of Haiti

February 2010

Your vibrant village magazine - delivered free to every home in the Tring Rural villages.



Haiti earthquake: appeal from the Bishop of St Albans page 6

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Hogmanay invasion alarms the locals

THE dramatic armed invasion of a quiet village pub by fearsome Scots patriot William Wallace frightened the life out of New Year revellers at the Half Moon. Several had to be revived with a large whisky after being shown what was in his sporran. Pub landlord Bob Findlay was nowhere to be seen during the disturbance, and it was left to Mrs Findlay to restore order. An alien mecha-noid visiting the pub said: "There's far too much weird stuff going on here tonight."



Picture: Colin Reedman

Danger of grounding: so that's what it means

EVER wondered what that road sign: "Danger of grounding" means? This illustration should be in the Highway Code. Reader Chris Reynolds captured the scene at Wilstone Bridge on 5th December while out walking with his dog, Franki. Possibly diverted by the road closure at Dixon's Gap, these limo passengers were well and truly

grounded. The driver knew what to do though and got everyone out. Relieved of their combined weight on the suspension, the monster limo was able to continue across the canal. Intending passengers should take note that they may be required to alight for canal crossings.

(Picture: Chris Reynolds.)



Special features:

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Readers' contributions are welcome. Send them in!

Beavers sing to family and friends

by Jo Woodbridge

IN November the 1st Wilstone and Long Marston Beaver Colony hosted an evening for their family and friends. After several weeks of practice, 17 Beavers gave a rousing rendition of their favourite songs. Some delightful songs were sung including "I've caught myself a baby bumble bee", "We are the Red Men" and "I'm going down the garden to eat worms". The Beavers particularly enjoyed the songs with the more gruesome actions. An appetising array of cakes and biscuits were served after the entertainment and £30 was raised for the BBC Children in Need Appeal. Well done!

Cougar (Jo Woodbridge)
Pink Panther (Sheila Moller)



Arctic scenes as temperature drops

Temperatures as low as minus 5 degrees Centigrade in January transformed the villages as these pictures show.

Right: Ice boat on the canal at Wilstone, by Melanie Williams.

Bottom right: Siberian scene at the reservoir, by Caroline Johnson.

Below: Sun setting at the Millennium Copse, by Melanie Williams.



Village News

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Extra colour this month

WELCOME to the first *Village News* of 2010, and thank you for all the items that you sent in for us to print. I was delighted to receive a great selection of pictures from readers - so much so that we have turned this into a 'colour' edition. (It was originally to have a black and white cover.) No expense spared!

Another editor wanted

We still need a volunteer to come forward to join the team of editors and help us produce the magazine this year. There is currently a vacancy for an editor as Caroline Beevers had to step down after completing the December issue. The commitment is to edit two or three editions per year, which is not too onerous. Full training is given, and there is back-up support from the rest of the *Village News* team. If you are interested in learning more about this prestigious appointment, do give me a call.

Phil Buchi, 01442 890599.

**Deadline for items for our next issue
 (March) is Thursday 18th February 2010.**

Village News is written, edited, produced and distributed entirely by local volunteers. Only the final printing is done by a commercial company. We aim to be local, interesting, informative, fun and a good read.

Let us know if we are not!

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Church services

**St Mary's Puttenham
 St Cross Wilstone and
 All Saints Long Marston**
*You are most welcome to join us at any
 of these services.*

1 February (Monday)

2.00pm All Saints Toddler Worship

7 February

10.00am Team Service with Confirmation
 at St John the Baptist, Aldbury
 6.00pm All Saints Evening Prayer
 6.00pm St Cross Evensong

14 February

8.15am St Mary's Holy Communion
 10.00am All Saints Holy Communion
 6.00pm All Saints Evening Prayer

15 February (Monday)

2.00pm All Saints Toddler Worship

17 February Ash Wednesday

10.00am St Cross Ashing

21 February

10.00am St Cross Holy Communion
 10.00am All Saints Morning Prayer
 6.00pm All Saints Evening Prayer

28 February

10.00am All Saints Holy Communion
 and Sunday Club
 3.30pm All Saints Evensong
 6.00pm St Mary's Evening Prayer
 6.00pm St Cross Evensong



Read Village News on line at:

www.tringruralpc.org.uk (Click on Village News)
www.wilstone.me.uk (Click on Village News)

What's on...

Diary dates...

Tring Rural Parish Council meetings (8pm)
The public are welcome to attend these meetings.
Wednesday 17th February, Puttenham village hall.
Wednesday 17th March, Wilstone village hall.

Saturday 30 January
 Tring Rural's Big Tidy Up: 10am Wilstone & LM v. halls.
Saturday 6 February
 "Pie & Jazz" 7.30pm. Cecilia Hall, Puttenham.
 Cabaret Club at Wilstone VH. 7.30pm. *(Sold out.)*
Tuesday 9 February
 WI: Extreme Ghana; an illustrated talk by Peter Bygate on the country and its butterflies. 8pm Victory Hall, LM. £3.
18, 19, 20 February
 LM Pantomime "Dick Whittington". See ad opposite page.
Friday 19th February
 An evening with Henry Blofeld and John Bly. Court Theatre, Pendley. £15. Presented by Tring Park Cricket Club.
Tuesday 23 February
 Social afternoon at All Saints church, 2pm to 3pm.
24, 26, 27 February
 Donizetti's "L'elisir d'amore". Aylesbury Opera Group. At the Court Theatre, Pendley. £15. *(In English).*
Saturday 20 March
 Tennis Club quiz night. LM Victory Hall. Tables of 8.
Tuesday 23 March
 Social afternoon at All Saints church, 2pm to 3pm.
Saturday 27 March
 Cheese and Wine Quiz. 8pm, Wilstone village hall. £10.
Saturday 27 March
 Tring Choral Society and Orchestra Easter concert. Rossini and Verdi. St Peter & St Paul Tring, 7.30, £11. 01442 824784
Tuesday 27 April
 Social afternoon at All Saints church, 2pm to 3pm.
Saturday 1 May (tbc)
 "May-Day" madrigals & breakfast 6:00am, Puttenham.
4 -8 May
 'Pirates of Penzance'. Vale G & S Society at the Court Theatre, Pendley, 7.30pm. £8 to £12.
Saturday 8 May
 "Horti" May Ball, at Cheddington VH. Tickets £35.
Saturday 29 May
 Jumble Sale, 2.00pm. Cecilia Hall, Puttenham.
Sunday 30 May
 'Paganini and a little Britten'. Tring Chamber Music. At St. John the Baptist, Aldbury, 7.30, £13. 01442 822732.
Sunday 6 June
 Wilstone fete: Hi Di Hi seaside holiday camp, from 12.30.
Sunday 20 June
 Marsworth Steam Rally.
Sunday 20 June 'Beethoven's Five'. Tring Chamber Music. Church of St Peter & St Paul, Tring, 7.30, £13. 01442 822732.

Tring Rural's Big Tidy Up Saturday 30 January 2010



A reminder that our Parish litterpick will take place on

Saturday 30th January, from 10am-12.00

provided no more snow arrives.

Please come along to Wilstone or Long Marston village hall and pick up your tabards, bags and litter pickers and get picking!

This year our event has been registered with 'The Big Tidy Up' national campaign, so the number of bags we manage to collect can be added to the 'tidy up o-meter' on their website: www.thebigtidyup.org
 Please contact Abby Fermont on 01442-825352 if you would like further details.

Saturday 7 August

Long Marston village show.

Saturday 25 September

'Mozart by Candlelight'. Tring Chamber Music. All Saints Church, Long Marston, 7.30pm, £13. 01442 822732.

Saturday 2 October

Jumble Sale 2:00pm. Cecilia Hall, Puttenham.

Saturday 30 October

Supper & Auction 2:00pm. Cecilia Hall, Puttenham.

Your local event details can be included here for free.

Wilstone Village Shop opening hours

Monday to Saturday: 7.30am to 1.00pm
 Sunday: 9.00am to 12.00noon.

Times for mobile library

Thursdays, fortnightly: February 11th and 25th.

Tringford (Piggeries Pine)	11.10 to 11.30
Wilstone (The Half Moon)	11.35 to 12.35
Astrope (Astrope Lane)	13.15 to 13.35
Puttenham (Church Lane)	13.40 to 14.40
Long Marston (Queen's Head)	14.50 to 16.20

... don't miss anything with our guide to local events! Free listings.

Pantomime Spectacular

Dick Whittington

By
Neil Gurney

At The
Long Marston Victory Hall

Ticket Prices: £6.00
Senior Citizens: £4.00
Children: £3.00

Thursday 18th February 8pm

Friday 19th February 8pm

Saturday 20th February 7.30pm
and Children's Matinee: 2pm

23rd
Production

Tickets From: www.longmarstonpanto.com; The Queen's Head, Long Marston; Wilstone Village Stores or Mead Farm Shop, Wilstone. Enquiries: 01296 661586

Haiti earthquake

An appeal from the Bishop of St Albans, the Rt Rev'd Dr Alan Smith



THE earthquake in Haiti on January 12th has devastated the country. Estimates of the numbers killed and injured are staggering. The urgent need to help survivors is evident in every news broadcast.

The offices of the UN, as well as those of some of the aid agencies, have been damaged, hampering the efforts of those best placed to spearhead the relief effort. The weak State, and their lack of resources are also making the task of rescue and reconstruction harder. The people of Haiti are our neighbours: Haiti is near the Diocese of North East Caribbean and Aruba, to which our Diocese of St Albans is linked.

I am, therefore, asking parishes, church schools and chaplaincies throughout the diocese to pray fervently and to give generously. Christian Aid and Tear Fund, both members of the Disasters Emergency Committee, have started appeals. Details of these may be found at:

www.christianaid.org.uk/emergencies and
www.tearfund.org/haiti.

In addition, Christian Aid has a telephone donation line:
08080 004 004.

Please join with me in this prayer for the people of Haiti:

O God, our refuge and strength, we hold before you the nation and people of Haiti, and pray for healing in the midst of tragedy and devastation. Give comfort to the homeless, the bereaved and the suffering, courage to survivors, wisdom to those who seek to help, and light to all who live in the shadow of death. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our rock and our salvation. Amen.

Alan, St Albans
15th January 2010.

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www.barkingmad.uk.com

Nature notes

by *Lawless Kenn*

No. 279: February

THE weather for certain is really moving and it's getting colder and snowier day by day so our focus turns on those busy, busy bees "the Beavers ". And as it so happens at this time of year our fur friends are well and truly at it, moving all over the place, putting down scents or routes as well as dam building and so we must think about them and wish them luck in pastures new. Wilstone's own Ann of Bay Leaves and Caroline of Engineering. The Beavers. *LK.*

Long Marston Parent & Toddler Group

DO you have a youngster who is not yet at school? If so, why not pop along to Toddler Group at the Victory Hall? We meet every Wednesday morning from 10am – 11.30am during term time and all children who are not yet at school, and their parents or carers, are welcome. There is always a craft activity for them to do and toys to play with, as well as somebody for you to talk to. So if you find yourself at a loose end and your children need to let off steam, why not come along. For £1.50 you can enjoy a morning of tranquility whilst the junior members of the family have fun in a safe environment.

Contact Sally Smith on 01296 661689 for further information.

Cheese and Wine Quiz

8pm
Saturday 27th March
At
Wilstone Village Hall
Come and sample Peter Kemp's wonderful selection of 6 cheeses and 6 wines to complement them from around the world.
Tickets £10 in advance from the Wilstone village shop and Meads farm shop.



CONCERT, 24th April 2010, 7.30 p.m.,

All Saints Church, Long Marston

The Ridgeway Chorale and friends will be giving a concert to raise funds for the Hospice of St. Francis, Berkhamsted. The choir will be joined by the 'Four-Tune Cookies', a group of talented instrumentalists, and by Colin Stevens, who will accompany various vocal pieces on the organ and keyboard. The programme will be made up of short items, sacred and secular, serious and funny – something for everyone to enjoy. Also we shall be celebrating, in song, the anniversaries of composers, Samuel Sebastian Wesley (b.1810) and Samuel Barber (b.1910).

For tickets – priced **£7**, (u 18's free) ring **01296 661071** or **01442 822915**. Refreshments served during the interval.



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LONG MARSTON BABY & TODDLER GROUP

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Wednesday mornings (term time) 10-11.30am
Victory Hall, Long Marston
£1.50 per child (50p additional children over 1 year)
Sally Smith: 01296 661689

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Our village shop proves its worth!

by Diane Crapnell

THROUGHOUT all the recent bad weather there was one bright spot for Wilstone and its neighbouring villages, the Wilstone Shop. No matter how thick the snow and tricky the ice, our newspapers were delivered and supplies of milk, bread, eggs and many other essentials were maintained. When it was very difficult for many of us to get out and about having that facility was a real bonus and, along with the great range of fresh fruit, veg and frozen goods at the Farm Shop, meant that we were in a better position than a great many others in the UK. Liz Faulkner, who runs the Wilstone shop said: "Whilst it has been difficult at times we've managed to keep everything going. I want to say an enormous thank you to Dave Henshaw, who delivers the papers, to all my suppliers who managed to get through even on the toughest days, and of course to all my customers for their continued support."

Not only did it have supplies but the shop also provided a great place to meet, chat and keep up to date on how everyone was faring, the road conditions and other vital information. It truly is proving its worth as a key centre for our community.

Its great to know that Christmas proved highly successful, with strong sales of locally produced turkeys, hams, Christmas puddings and mincemeat amongst the varied produce on offer. Let's hope our continued support will ensure it continues to be at the heart of our community for a great many years to come.

Would you like to help the shop? Liz and her husband Ron currently operate the shop 7 days a week; could you offer a few hours on a voluntary basis to help give them the occasional break? A few of us already do and it really is great fun, you get to chat to everyone and 'play' shop – what could be better! A few more volunteers would enable us to draw up a rota and ensure Liz and Ron get a regular day off. If you'd like to help, please let Liz know when you next call in.

Wilstone fete switches to Sunday Hi di Hi!

THE 2010 Wilstone village fete is to be held on a Sunday. This year the village will be transformed (organisers say) into a 1960's Hi di Hi seaside holiday camp on Sunday 6th June. Numerous practical reasons have caused the fete committee to give Sunday a try.

Further news will be given in later editions of *Village News* but remember to start sorting out any items that could be sold on the bric-a-brac stall, the tombola stall and if you are green fingered, start preparing some plants for the popular plant stall. Or at least when it is a little bit warmer!

Jill Walker, chairman of the fete committee, will be pleased to hear from anyone who would like to help with the Wilstone fete Hi di Hi seaside holiday camp. (01442 827891.)

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Thu	7.30 a.m.	Tring School Gym
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Black Poplars (yet again)

A few years ago it was possible to obtain funding to do some management work on our Local Black Poplars, in terms of pollarding and lopping. It is particularly hard to find funding possibilities at the present time, but there could be a glimmer of hope. I would like to try but cannot apply without knowing how many local owners of Black Poplars would make use of such help.

I would be glad to hear from you if you require financial help in this way and are concerned about the conservation of your trees, or any other Black Poplars that you feel need urgent attention.

The ideal time to work on the trees is before the middle of March so it could be that this year(2010) is too late but we could try. If not, next year. *Please let me know as soon as possible.*

Margaret Noakes

Tel: 01296 660072. Email: John.Noakes @btinternet .com

Long Marston Cricket Club

by Paul Dumbleton

NOT much happening at Marlins during the winter months as the very un-cricket like weather continues. Members enjoyed a Christmas lunch and get together on 13th December prior to the main festivities.

Preparations for 2010 are well under way with both First and Second XI's having newly elected captains for the coming campaign. Harry Bowles takes over the First XI helm under the watchful eye of Senior players Mike Lyons and Peter Toovey whilst Lee Beasley takes over the second XI as the club's plan to further develop the younger players begins to take shape.

Senior winter nets have already started at the Misbourne School and work is almost completed on the seasons fixture list.

The First XI play at Witney Mills in the first round of the Cherwell Senior cup on Saturday 17th April and after a few friendlies the league season gets under way on Saturday 8th May. Our First and Third elevens have away fixtures at Oxford & Bletchingdon Nondescripts and Aston Rowant respectively whilst the Second eleven league season gets under way with a home fixture against Great Brickhill.

Several representative games will again be held at Marlins during the summer. On Weds 2nd June the full national Minor Counties Cricket Association side take on Northants 2nd XI in our first venture into 'pyjama cricket'. The 50 over a side game will be played with a white ball, coloured clothing and black screens.

June 15th sees Hertfordshire over 60's take on Northants over 60's and on the 13th & 14th July the Hertfordshire and Oxfordshire development XIs do battle in the Tom Orford Trophy.

The first three days of August see our now annual Minor Counties fixture when Hertfordshire take on Staffordshire in the Minor Counties championship.

Paul Dumbleton

Sudoku Corner by Colin Moore

No 46 Easy

1			4	5	2		6	8
6	4							
	8	5	3	6		9		
	7		6				2	
				8	1		3	6
8				4		7		
3			8	2				5
	1				3		9	
			9			4		3

We will start the year with another easy puzzle but they become more difficult later. Concentrate on the centre and right hand columns. Start with 3 in the centre box and away you go.

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Local housing - a solution?

A NOVEL idea is being tried in Wilstone to address the need for low cost housing. The new dwelling is Eco friendly requiring nothing but water but a bit short on 'mod cons'. *Village News* was told by the developers, Spratt Enterprises, that: "It is only intended to offer a short term housing solution".



The new development under construction at the rear of Tring Road. (Photo: Spratt Enterprises.)

Better figures for the Horti at an entertaining AGM

FINE hospitality and a convivial atmosphere at the AGM of the Long Marston and Puttenham Horticultural Society (the "Horti") went a good way towards dispersing the usual gloomy feeling associated with venturing out to such events on an icy January evening in snowy Long Marston. Chairman John Kaye (yes, he's stuck with it for another year, by constitution apparently) pleasantly prods the assembly along approximately the right track and no one gets het up about points of order and other such nonsense. Instead the impressive job done for the villages by the Horti emerges from the often amusing reports from officers and organisers.

Treasurer Vicky Hayes produced a detailed portfolio of figures, analysis and year-on-year comparisons which a number of international banks would do well to emulate. Overall, the organisation significantly improved its financial position in 2009 with the end of year balance up by £900 on the previous year. There was concern that pantomime ticket sales in 2009 had been down on the previous year, and a major initiative to sell more tickets for this year's panto is about to begin. The May Ball had made a small loss, but this has not deterred the committee from staging the ball again in 2010.

(Continued on page 11)

Need an evening out? Come to the Half Moon for great food, choice of wines, and good beers.

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Evelyn is also a member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers.

Contact Evelyn Chapman
on
01908 502272 or
07743722926



(Continued from page 10)

The Long Marston Show proceeds were about 20% down across the board; an adverse weather forecast had not helped. Show Secretary Gillie Russell-Mann had so many other people to thank in her written report that she was forced to conclude in her final paragraph: "Well, *I* must have done *something*", though she could not recall what it was.

This year's programme of events produced and funded by the Horti will include:

- The Pantomime: Dick Whittington by Neil Gurney, 18th, 19th & 20th February.
- The May Ball (at Cheddington village hall), 8th May.
- The Long Marston Show, 7th August.

The dates of other events will be announced later. The Horti committee welcomes (and indeed needs) more help in organising and staging this extensive programme of events for the villages. If you can lend a hand then John Kaye would be delighted to hear from you. Phone him on 01296 662975.

(His number also appears each month on our 'Names and Numbers' page.)

Gazette use Vic's picture

Village News correspondent Vic Spratt sent us a great picture of the lorry on Dixon's Gap bridge which was published in the December issue. The people at the Gazette clearly know a good story when they see one and their Tring reporter, Jonathan Saunders, ran a follow-up in their 6th January edition. To go with an interview and photo with Parish Councillor Peter Foster, the Gazette really needed a picture of the lorry on the bridge of course, and they asked to use Vic's dramatic shot. Permission was given by Vic and the picture appeared with the Gazette feature, complete with a credit. Which gives this editor the opportunity to show it to you again!



The infamous Dixon's Gap incident (Picture: Vic Spratt)

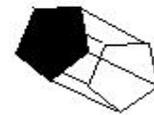
Wilstone Green armed robbery shakes village

LOCAL farmer Simon Mead was held at gunpoint by an armed gang who attacked him and tied him up during a raid on his home in December. A police investigation has so far not resulted in any arrests. Simon has now recovered from his ordeal, and is relieved that the rest of his family were out of the house at the time.

Herts Police have also been dealing with a small spate of burglaries in the Tring area over the Christmas period, including one in Long Marston. Householders are warned to be alert.

New leader for the Brownies

THE 1st Long Marston and Wilstone Brownies, who meet at Wilstone village hall, have a new leader. Rachel Mead, who has been Brown Owl for the last two years, stood down at Christmas. The job has been taken on by Claire Fordham who was previously assistant leader. Organisations like the Brownies always need more adult helpers and offers of help are welcome. Claire can be contacted on 01296 668088.



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Letters...

Winter paper boy

Dear Editor,

ON behalf of many of the Wilstone residents, I would like to say an enormous "Thank You" to our Paper Boy, Ron, for delivering the papers to our door every day.

Through rain, wind, ice and snow, whilst we lie snug in our beds, he has done a sterling job collecting the papers and trudging up our paths, never once letting us down. His lovely, friendly wife Liz has kept the pathway to their shop clear of snow and ice and greeted us all with her cheerful smile from 7.30am, thus providing a lifeline for many during the recent, snowy winter weather. How good it is to have a meeting place in the village again for a friendly natter. "Hip, Hip, Hooray" to them both I say.

A hibernating Wilstonian.

More berries please

Dear Editor,

As a keen walker around our villages, watching wildlife and especially enjoying the sights and sounds of the huge variety of birds which grace our fields, could I please ask our farmers why oh why do you have to give the hedges a 'number one'

haircut in the Autumn? If only the berries could be left on the hedges to provide food during the cold weather a higher proportion of most birds would survive. I appreciate that some times it is a case of having to get on the fields before they are too wet, but many of the hedges are tackled with a tractor driving along the roads to cut (or flay) them. In severe winters like this one the birds could coin a well known supermarket phrase "every little helps". Please listen to them before they disappear completely.

Grateful footpath walker.

Village shop super breakfast

Dear Editor,

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow. As I sat thoroughly enjoying my cooked breakfast of local sausage, bacon, free range eggs and fresh bread - all provided by the shop next door - I felt like I was on a snowy winter break. I pride myself as a girl who has eaten many a cooked breakfast. The one provided by Liz's shop in Wilstone comes highly recommended - especially at a time when, if you could have ventured out onto the snowy roads, you would have found Tesco and M&S out of milk let alone any 'luxuries'.

Thanks Liz for all your work to make a very usable and 'tasty' local store.

Maura and family

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Rachael Matthews

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Childhood recollections: the winter of 1981-82

by Damian Boyce

I RECENTLY asked the editor of *Village News* if I could maybe tell a tale of life in the village long before us kids had the gadgets and technology that are so common place in most households these days. Now don't get me wrong, I am a forty-one year old man (going on 18, I like to think) who can't live without his iPod, but still yearns for his carefree childhood. I grew up in Wilstone and still have fond memories of the times that we made our own amusement to see us through, what can only be described as a period of self learning. As winter is now upon us I want to share with you the following story.

The year is 1981-82 and us kids have all traipsed through the snow to assemble at the phone box to await the school coach to get us either to the Primary at Long Marston or the Secondary at Tring. As children we were told that if the coach was not there at nine then go home - it will not be coming. So we took that to mean that if we were not able to see the coach that it had not turned up. Having posted a trusty scout to keep a watchful eye on any signs of our unwanted transport we proceeded to back our way down the lane. By two minutes to nine we were off and running for a day of unabridged fun.

With snow at knee height, we kids were in our element. First stop was the canal. I doubt if that stretch of water has frozen over as thick as it did that year, as the winters are not what they were. That day about twenty or so of us had high tailed it from the collection point and on our travels came across a battered old kitchen table. How it became an ice hockey set I still don't recall, yet the legs became sticks, the molded features

became goals and any piece of timber left were used as pucks. We then split into teams and played against one another all morning, gliding across the ice in our shoes, laughing and hollering without a care in the world. We only ever scrambled for the bank when someone had strayed too close to the edges near the reeds and the sound of ice cracking was loud enough to scare us for a few minutes before we battled on.

When I look back at that time, I still see those smiling faces and how we made the best of what our surroundings offered us. In truth we were all lucky to walk away from what could have been a disaster waiting to happen. **For younger readers: don't play on the canal - we were lucky.**

Like any thing at that age we soon became bored of ice skating with chunks of wood and made our way to the steep banks of the reservoir, where a plastic sack obtained from Glasser's became a toboggan of speed. It also became a toboggan of: "I wish this bag was thicker, my butt and groin are killing me".

If you have read this and doubted that it actually happened, then I ask you to consider a time when the village was a world away from the everyday horror stories we see and read about in our daily lives. My tale may seem hard to believe, yet it is one of many I could regale of a place where friendships were formed and still grow. I will never again have the mind of a child on a cold winter's day, but if it snows tomorrow I will bloody well do my best to push back the years.

Bogus callers pose as police investigators

by David Mahon, Herts Police

Hertfordshire Police have issued a warning to all residents, especially the elderly, to ensure they never give their bank or personal details to people who cold-call them. Police have been investigating a number of incidents in the last month, including five incidents in one day (including one in Dacorum) where vulnerable people are being called on the telephone by someone claiming to be a police officer investigating a fraud on their account. (The originating telephone number is "withheld".) The victim is asked to provide their bank details, including pin numbers. On some occasions the offender, posing as a police officer, has attended the home address whereupon the elderly victim has handed over bank statements and credit/debit cards. These criminals seem to be preying on the elderly people and police are very keen to warn people that these callers are not legitimate.

Hertfordshire Police have issued the following guidelines to residents to prevent them from becoming a victim of crime:

- A police officer would *never* ask for your bank details and would not attend your address to take bank cards or statements.
- If people are faced with a similar call they should not hand out their personal information, including bank details.

- If you have received a suspicious call of this nature, contact police *immediately*.

- We'd rather you report it and the activity turns out to be innocent than not reporting it at all.

If you have any information about those committing crimes you can also ring us on 0845 33 00 222 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 to give information anonymously.

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Parish Council news

by Phil Buchi

Vacancy for a Councillor

Cllr. Kim Deathe has announced her intention to resign from the Parish Council. She is in the process of moving house to the North of England, and is currently living outside the parish. (This would make her ineligible to serve anyway.) Dawn Slade, Clerk to the Parish Council, told the January council meeting that the official vacancy notice would be posted within the next few days. In the meantime, if any local resident would like to express interest in becoming a Parish Councillor they should contact Mrs Slade on 01442 824138 for more information.

Leaking roof must be fixed

The receding ice cap which covered the Chiltern area has left behind a leaking roof at Wilstone village hall, Cllr. Peter Foster reported. Quotes for repairs have been obtained by the village hall committee, and the work was likely to cost around £5,000. The committee were able to pay part of the cost themselves, but asked for help from the Parish Council. Councillors quickly agreed that the roof must be fixed without delay. It was agreed to offer a grant of £2,000 towards the necessary

work, with an additional proviso that the village hall committee could make a further request to increase this if repairs proved in practice to cost more than initially estimated.

More light for Long Marston

The Parish Council is to proceed with the installation of an additional street light in Long Marston in the vicinity of the Queen's Head. This is in response to requests from villagers. Consultations had taken place with nearby property owners and the various authorities involved in such an undertaking, and the all-clear had been given. Street lighting in the villages is one of the responsibilities of the Parish Council, who have to pay for installation, maintenance, and the electricity.

Bridge work

More difficult even than getting this dentistry done on the NHS apparently, getting repairs done to the Dixon's Gap bridge owned by British Waterways, under the control of Herts Highways, is proving a predictably tedious task. The Parish Council are striving to at least get a timetable for action out of these agencies.

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New path-finder signposts up

Cllr. Jill Finlan, who has led the Parish Council's long-term project to improve local footpaths, announced that a new generation of signposts had been installed by Herts County Council at the request of the parish. The new signs tell you where the path goes, and how far it is - just like road signs do. (Earlier signs just had the rather brief legend "public footpath"; the equivalent on the roads would be a sign saying: "Road".) *See page 17 for a picture - this must be one of the best examples in the County!*

Other actions over the last five years have included replacing stiles with gates, removing stiles altogether where they are not needed to control stock, and improvements to the walking surface in some cases. Now there is no excuse for not getting out for that walk. You will even know where you are going without the need to study for a degree in orienteering.

Permission for The Boot

Noted that the most recent planning application for the late lamented Boot public house was granted by Dacorum Borough Council in December. Permission was given for a change of use to 'residential' and for alterations to the building to create two semi-detached dwellings. (Application number: 4/01596/09/FUL.)

Your Parish Councillors are:

Mr Michael Tomlinson (Chairman) 01296 661 311
 Mr Chris Griffiths 01296 668 257
 Mr Alan Winfield 01296 668 977
 Mrs Abby Fermont 01442 825 352
 Mr Nick Murrell 01296 668 190
 Mr Peter Foster 01442 825 282
 Mrs Jill Finlan 01296 661 716
 Vacancy

The Clerk to the Council is:

Mrs Dawn Slade 01442 824 138
 Email: clerk@tringruralpc.org.uk

The Village Warden is:

Mr Colin Reedman 01442 822 031

Parish Council website: www.tringruralpc.org.uk

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The agricultural story line...

by David Mead

Why, oh why Delilah?

WHY oh why Delilah? I suspect she knew the answer and I'm confident Tom Jones knows exactly why he does it, but I've no idea why anyone volunteers to stand on a stage in front of friends and neighbours and tries to utter words that are trapped in the brain and refuse to come out. Teresa gives words of comfort, telling me the tale of Bill Milsom on the stage in Long Marston's hall performing in Blyth Spirit with his legs visibly shaking. Bill was a farmer from Red House Farm who had been volunteered to replace Geoff Reeve, a proper film director. On one occasion the rehearsal was down Potash Lane at Red House Farm. All the actors arrived clutching scripts to be greeted by a yapping fox terrier. Everyone patted the dog and entered. Mrs Wooley arrived and gently moved dog to one side with foot. Rehearsals began, all went well. Time to go, until Mrs Wooley discovered her coat had been shredded. The only one damaged. Poor Bill felt obliged to buy a new one. Elaine Dean, a star of the show, tells me the show was a great success and that they were invited to put the show on in Tring. Eunice Hall, the lady from Long Marston who has been on a successful fitness campaign walking miles around the parish, played Madam Arcarti. Phyllis Proctor, Sylvia Gregory, David Jennings were among the cast. Another production, remembered because the scenery fell down, was The Importance of Being Earnest. So I'm meant to feel better listening to these tales. I wish I could move the calendar on so that the cabaret night on February 6th was moved to the past.

A drama of a much more serious nature happened just before Christmas. Jenny, Jessica and Alex were in Milton Keynes doing last minute shopping. Simon was making lists in his kitchen when 5 men burst in. With a gun at his head they took the hard earned money, leaving him tied up. The house was sealed for forensics so they spent the night with us. Tanner, the Labrador, was left with the evidence including some pasta spilt in the commotion. I've heard no news. I gather there was a similar break-in at a farm shop in Cambridgeshire.

I would like to congratulate Vanessa and her helpers who put on a wonderful evening for Hazel's 90th. The theme was war-time and many were dressed accordingly, Dad's Army etc. John Seaton rose to the challenge preparing a wonderful spread including one or two wartime dishes. We sang, with song sheets, some of the old favourites. I don't think I was the only one who felt proud to stand and sing: "There'll Always Be An England". The lady on the stage, in WRAAF uniform, sang and acted as master of ceremonies. Congratulations Hazel!

We've been invited to Ben Reeves 90th. There will be a tale to tell in the next edition. And then it's Film Night and then it's Cabaret Night, "Oh Lor"!

New signposts will give direction to your walks

NEW footpath signposts have begun to appear around the parish as part of a long term project by Tring Rural Parish Council and Hertfordshire County Council to improve access to our public footpaths. The project has been led by Parish Councillor Jill Finlan.

Earlier actions have included replacing stiles with gates and removing stiles altogether where they are not needed to control stock. The new signs tell you where the footpath goes, how far it is, which county you are in, and the footpath number. This is much more use than the previous legend: "public footpath".

This major footpath junction is on Watery Lane between Wilstone and Astrope, from where you can access the entire world, it appears. (Picture: Village News.)



SNOËL

by Andy Ashwell

YOU may remember that there was an inordinate amount of snow around Christmas, but because it didn't actually snow on Christmas Day, I don't think that we can officially say that we had a White Christmas. Nevertheless, White Christmas or no White Christmas, there was still plenty of snow around and, although a potential nightmare for commuters, it can be great fun for kids. However, in order to make good snowmen, it has to be the right kind of snow. I know that this may sound like a feeble excuse from Network Rail, but if the snow is too powdery then it just won't stick together and rolling snowballs becomes nigh on impossible.

The first snowfall was a bit too powdery and was good for nothing other than icing-up the roads and depleting the council's grit stocks. The later snowfalls were much better and, in the absence of any grit, were also perfect for preventing Mummy from getting to work. Florence and I were therefore able to spend many hours happily building snowmen while Mummy 'happily' cleared the path and driveway. Her impressive efforts didn't go to waste as we were able to mould the mound of her labours into a very impressive snowman.

Now that most of the snow has melted, I am just a little concerned about all the little piles of debris – the stones and lumps of coal that we used for buttons and eyes – that remain at the site of every ex-snowman that we built, and what they will do to my lawnmower come the spring.

Unfortunately, it wasn't just Mummy who couldn't get to work. The binmen were also thwarted by the icy conditions and failed on several occasions to collect the embarrassingly large mountain of 'empties' that was stacked-up on our driveway. This sorry eyesore was not the result of weeks of occasional, recreational drinking, but the sad remains of my over-imbibing in-laws' Herculean efforts to eat and drink us out of house and home during two very long days over Christmas. In fact, the timing of the snowfalls meant that this pitiful display of their gluttonous excesses remained on show to alarm passers-by for almost two weeks.

When the snow was at its worst, we started to run low on essential supplies and the only thing that we seemed to have in abundance was birdseed. This was mainly thanks to Grannie who had given Florence three giant-sized birdfeeders for

Christmas. We already had two moderately-sized affairs that, until recently, had inhabited a remote corner of the garden. However, earlier this year we moved them to the tree outside the kitchen window so that Florence could watch the birds stuffing their faces while she stuffed her own.

Before Grannie's gifts arrived, the number of birds visiting our tree had stabilised to a small, colourful bunch of regulars who quaffed around half-a-birdfeeder of food a day. Since then the number (and variety) of feathered visitors to our tree has increased substantially – and so too has our birdfeed budget. I



Florence & the right kind of snow!
(Photo and cartoon by Andy Ashwell.)



can't deny that it is lovely to sit and eat breakfast while watching the colourful feeding frenzy taking place outside the window, but I do get a little jealous of the birds as they tuck eagerly into their tasty, premium-grade nosh while I munch lethargically through my unappealing, 'own-brand' muesli. At times, especially when squirrels and pheasants turn up to join the party, I do feel as if I am catering for most of Long Marston's ravenous wild-animal population.

The upshot of all this heightened avian activity, as far as my lawn is concerned, is the enormous increase in the amount of birdseed that is now scattered on the ground below the tree. I didn't realise quite what messy eaters birds were, or how far the spilt seed spread, until the snow arrived and highlighted the millions of wind-blown seeds that are now scattered as far as the eye can see.

I know that I'm no Bill Oddie, but I am now much better at
(Continued on page 19)

Hazel Dobrotka at 90

FAMILY and friends of Hazel Dobrotka celebrated her 90th birthday in January with a lavish party. Guests had been instructed to adopt a wartime theme, and there were some impressive outfits on show. Captain Mainwaring and Pte. Pike were at the door to greet arrivals and there were songs from the '40s from a blond in WRAAF uniform. Hazel said that her secret of good health was some advice her mother had given her: drink a glass of whisky now and again. Guests raised over £200 for the Air Ambulance in lieu of presents, and Hazel would like to thank everyone for making this a great event.

Right: Hazel with her four grandchildren, Stephen, Tammy, Jemma and Darren. (Picture: Phil Buchi.)



Ben Reeves at 90

BEN REEVES filled the village hall with his many friends to celebrate his 90th birthday, also in January. A picture of sartorial elegance himself, the party guests looked a very glamorous lot - the ladies even more so. A fine three piece band with a lady singer up front played every sort of music you could ask for, and some snappy footwork to the Cha-Cha-Cha and Jive was seen around the dance floor. (Chuck Berry himself would have been pleased with the guitarist's rendition of 'Johnny be good'.) Daughter Carole Weedon organised the party, and eventually stopped looking worried as it became clear that all were having a fantastic time.

Left: Ben Reeves with his daughter, Carole Weedon. (Picture: Phil Buchi.)

Horti votes to continue sponsorship of Village News

AT the January AGM of the Long Marston and Puttenham Horticultural Society members voted to continue sponsorship of *Village News* by paying £300 to reserve advertising space if and when they need it. Editor Phil Buchi said: "It is great to have this financial support from a prominent local organisation. Although 80% of our costs are met from advertising revenue, we depend upon sponsorship and grants for the rest. The

Horti have sponsored *Village News* for a number of years now, and we appreciate their help." The LM&P Horticultural Society have long ago diversified their activities and now run a range of community events. Though their main event is still the Long Marston Show, in 2009 they also staged the pantomime, ballroom dancing lessons, a May ball, children's bike ride, summer walk, and carols around the Christmas tree.

(Continued from page 18)

bird identification than I was a few months ago. For instance: I used to struggle to tell the difference between a collared-dove and a pigeon; now I struggle to tell the difference between a blackbird and a chough. More embarrassingly, though – thanks to Mummy's ornithology coaching – even Florence has started to beat me at the identification game. Now the only way that I can outsmart either of them is to have my laptop next to me with it logged-on to the RSPB bird-identifier website; even then it's a close-run thing.

Coincidentally, the RSPB just happen to be doing a bird survey during the weekend of the 30th and 31st of January so, as a bit of friendly father-daughter bonding, Florence and I will be having a bird-ID face-off to see who really is the best. If you are also interested in being outsmarted by your kids (or in helping the RSPB with their research) there is a downloadable form on the RSPB website: www.rspb.org.uk/birdwatch. Happy twitching.

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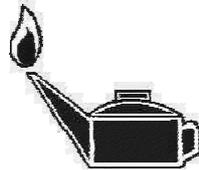
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Police bulletin by PCSO Thomas Montgomery, Herts Police

Hello and Happy New Year to you all.

WE hope that the New Year has started off well for you all. Now that the snow has gone things seem to be returning to business as usual.

You will have probably noticed several pot holes in the road, caused due to the weather. Please be careful whilst out driving/riding as we have had reports of vehicles receiving damage as a result of driving over these. Any pot holes spotted should be reported to Hertfordshire Highways by visiting their website www.hertsdirect.org or calling them on 0300 123 4040.

Crimes for the beginning of the year have started off low however, we have already suffered from a burglary and a few attempts in the villages and though this is down on last year we still need to keep up our guard.

- Lock all windows/door
- Don't leave valuables on display
- Report any suspicious incidents to police

Sheds/Garages/Outside storage areas

Please ensure that where you have any items of value stored in outside areas, that they are kept locked and secure and out of sight. Sit on mowers and items such as leaf blowers, electrical tools are a potential target for thieves. Likewise any valuable items left in your vehicle are potential targets, so items such as Satellite navigation systems, Laptops, mobile phones and purses/wallets should never be left in vehicles unattended.

With the beginning of the New Year the Neighbourhood team are already completing their diaries for the year to include initiatives against under age drinking, anti social behaviour, speeding motorists and theft from motor vehicles.

Should there be a particular concern that you think we may be able to help with then please contact us at the Neighbourhood team office. You can contact us several ways either by visiting our website at www.herts.police.uk, or on our non-emergency number 0845 33 00 222. We hold regular weekly surgeries at Tesco, London Road, Tring between 1-2pm where we are available to talk, and offer crime prevention advice.

And two really useful websites for getting potholes fixed!

by Caroline Beevers

THE increased traffic through the village and the recent poor (!) weather has caused a certain number of large potholes to develop, some in some very dangerous places.

I read about a web-site www.fixmystreet.com where you can report faults and this information is passed straight to the relevant council. I reported the one on the corner opposite the cottage on the 10th January and it was fixed on the 13th. I had an e-mail from Herts County Council that gave me a tracking reference so that I could monitor its progress.

With any problem on the roads do not assume someone else has reported it - using the previously mentioned site or www.potholes.co.uk is a very easy and effective way of getting things done.

The pothole outside our cottage was particularly nasty as it was on a blind bend and would have caused a lot of damage to a pedal cyclist or similar who encountered it.

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Mid-winter report from the Prairie Dogs

by Ed and Alfie

WOW folks it is cold, cold, cold out here on the prairie, our lowest night temperature -48°C and day -34°C this year before the end of November. The locals told us it was on its way because the Snow Geese were flying over us in their thousands. We used to marvel at the flocks of Canada Geese coming into the Wilstone Reservoir, but this armada is something to behold. For days they were flying across our land on their way from the Arctic wastes to the Mexican border area. That is an awful lot of miles on a pair of flapping wings. We will be looking out for their return journey because hopefully this bleak, white winter will be over by then.

When the snow first started we were all very excited to be able to gallivant about and roll in the snow. But after a few days it had got deeper and deeper until my short legs found it very difficult to make headway in the stuff. It also packed into my paws and made them very sore indeed. This, as you can see from my picture, was overcome by wearing my 'snow boots', all well dressed canines out here wear them, makes life so much more comfortable when walking around my estate. Mind you, since I have been dug out of a few snow drifts, I have decided the best place for a gent of my advancing years is indoors on the sofa. Let the youngsters have the fun out there in the cold, barren wastes of the prairies. They come in and tell me their exploits of chasing Goffers and Jack Rabbits. Alfie does find that his snow boots do tend to fly off when travelling at speed, great disadvantage when your nose is edging closer to one of these speedy Jack Rabbit's tails. He has never caught one yet but full marks for trying. Dufuss, our new friend, he should be good at hunting in the snow because he is so white in colour you just don't see him when he sits still, but there again that's not too often. His last little game, which neither of us two got involved in, was to empty the laundry basket and individually spread the contents all over the house. He is like that, before it was paper wrapping, he said was practice for opening his Christmas presents, because we told him that once a year we have a Christmas tree indoors with presents under it for us, but we have to show our Mums

and Dads that we can unwrap our own presents - and theirs if we get the chance!! I was nearly lucky enough to get a preview of one present because I happened to accidentally knock it off the tree, just about to pounce on it to do a quick bit of crafty unwrapping when I heard a voice from on high "Don't you dare, leave that present alone." So, what ever, a good, well behaved dog like me did as I was told! Worst luck.



Alfie, Ed and Duffuss at home.

Christmas Day was on the doubtful list as our daddy human was away the previous week, down Texas was, and had to make it home in front of an enormous snow storm coming up through the States. Luckily for all of us he made it home on Christmas Eve to everyone's relief as we all enjoyed our dinner of scrumptious Alberta beef.

Now the festivities are over it's back to routine; that for me is a quick visit to the loo and back in to the sofa. Occasionally I take a visit to the Horses Barn, that's when the path has been cleared for me, to see how they are. They love this snow stuff, but only for a couple of hours at a time, when they can gallop around kicking and squealing in their field. Then it's back to the barn for a warm up and a good rub down. Since Miss Nina has had special winter shoes fitted she can get around without the snow balling in her feet. So when the wind drops enough not to cut you in half, wind chill drops the temperature by another six degrees (-10°C we are told) off she goes with Beau on a lead rein for a bit of road work. Anything off road and



Now this is some real snow.

(Pictures: WB)



Snow boots are essential, says Ed.

(Continued on page 23)

Recipe page

by Anna Ashwell

Simple bread recipe

There is nothing quite like the smell of freshly baking bread and if you have never made bread before, I would urge you to try this incredibly simple recipe. It has come from one of Florence's children's cook books and I have made it many times and it has never failed.

Ingredients (makes 12 rolls):

- 450g **strong** white bread flour
- Teaspoon of salt
- 2 teaspoons of dried easy-blend yeast
- 300ml warm water (which has been boiled and allowed to cool)
- 2 tablespoons of olive or vegetable oil

Method:

- Sift the flour and salt into a bowl, then add the yeast and stir it in.
- Make a hollow in the middle of the flour and pour the warm water and oil into the hollow.
- Stir everything together to make a soft dough.
- Put the dough onto a floured work surface and knead it for 10 minutes. (There is no need to use a specific technique for kneading. Just push the dough around until it is smooth, soft and elastic).
- Put the dough into a bowl and cover it with cling film. Leave it in a warm place for about 1½ hours until it is about twice its original size.
- Put the dough on the floured surface again and knead for a further minute.
- Divide the dough into 12 pieces and roll into balls.
- Place them on a greased baking tray (leaving spaces between to allow them to expand)
- Leave the rolls to rise in a warm place for a further 40 minutes.
- Bake at 220°C for 12-15 minutes

To vary this recipe you can add herbs and spices of your choice to the dough before you add the liquid.

Because homemade bread does not contain any preservatives it is best eaten on the day of baking, and particularly delicious straight from the oven.

Sudoku solution No 46

1	9	7	4	5	2	3	6	8
6	4	3	1	9	8	2	5	7
2	8	5	3	6	7	9	4	1
5	7	1	6	3	9	8	2	4
9	2	4	7	8	1	5	3	6
8	3	6	2	4	5	7	1	9
3	6	9	8	2	4	1	7	5
4	1	8	5	7	3	6	9	2
7	5	2	9	1	6	4	8	3

(Continued from page 22)
they

are up to their bellies in snow. Dufuss got to go one time but as the block, as we call it, is six miles long he gave up on that idea a bit quickly and sleeps it out with us two. Just to explain the block system; the land in the prairies is divided up by range roads and each block is two miles long north to south and one mile long east to west, and not a tree or hedge to be seen unless there is a homestead, then the trees screen the house to give protection from this cutting wind. There are not many homesteads near here, the nearest being half a kilometre south and the next six kilometres to the south-east.

That folks gives you some idea of winter life on the range. More for you when we come out of hibernation in the

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Keep your New Year's resolutions

by Jazzercise

IT'S the annual challenge. Who has broken their New Year's resolution after one day? After one week? After one month? After all, nobody actually makes their new year's resolution into a reality, right?

Perhaps this year you have a resolution that you really do want to keep. You aim to drop a few pounds, start working out, stop smoking, eat more greens, remember relatives' birthdays, or finally write that novel you've been talking about. Can it be done? Absolutely! Here are a few suggestions for keeping your New Year's resolutions.

Be Realistic – The first step to turning your New Year's resolutions into reality is setting realistic goals in the first place. Competing in a triathlon in March isn't probable if you've never donned a pair of trainers before. But, walking a mile every day is quite possible. Start with the attainable goal, and then go for the triathlon next year.

Make a Plan – Set a plan to meet your goal and be specific. What does "losing weight" or "healthy diet" really mean? Dropping 10 pounds? Eating three green vegetables per day? Determine exactly what you want to do, and then keep a log of your progress.

Make a Back-up Plan - Whatever your goal, think about possible blocks to that goal, then come up with a back-up plan. If your New Year's resolution is to walk a mile every day, be prepared for rainy weather or sick kids staying home from school.

Think Positive – Psychologists use a term called "self-efficacy." When you truly believe that you can achieve your goal, you're more likely to actually do it. Positive thinking

will keep you going, even when you face obstacles.

Gather a Support Group – Tell your friends and family about your new goal. Ask a friend to join a daily group fitness class with you or invite your colleague to the Health shop. Consider joining a formal support group, but don't let that substitute the vital support that you need from those who see you every day.

Keep Track of Your Progress – Measure your progress on a regular basis. If your goal is to lose weight, then weigh yourself daily. An 18-month study from the Weight Control Research Centre in America, found that participants were 82% more likely to keep the weight off when they weighed-in daily. Whether your goal is weight loss, increased fitness, better nutrition, smoking cessation, or anything else, keep a record and measure your progress often.

Reward Yourself – Set small benchmarks along the way to your ultimate goal and reward yourself each time that you meet the mark. If you go three days without smoking, then indulge in a massage. If you work exercise into your schedule every day for a week, then book a pedicure. These rewards will keep you motivated along the road to your final goal.

Jazzercise can help you keep some of your New Year resolutions and can give you long term results in fitness, health and looks. Keri Donnellan's Jazzercise classes run in Wilstone, Tring, Halton and Aylesbury and offer you morning, evening and weekend classes, so you have plenty to choose from to find a time that suits you! Take a look at www.jazzclass.co.uk or call 07900 987230 to find the class for you.

Dance party Thriller

by Jenny White

A dance party at Wilstone village hall was organised in December by the local dance teacher Ann Wright for her pupils, many of which come from Wilstone. The picture shows some of her younger pupils doing a 'Thriller' routine. (Can you recognise Wilstone's very own Lydia Kemp?)

Great fun was had by all as we stumbled through a number of dances such as The Waltz, The Rumba, The Jive, The Cha Cha and The Salsa.

(Picture: Jenny White.)



Weird object still puzzling pub's best brains

December's item from *Lawless Kenn* 'Weird object stumps pub's best brains' (page 9) has created much debate in the local hospitality, and numerous replies. Here is one letter that is actually printable, and some further enlightenment from *Lawless Kenn*.

Dear *Lawless Kenn*,

IN reply to your request for information regarding the "Weird Object" featured in the November's issue of *Village News*. I would like to put forward my thoughts on what the object might be. Without having been able to physically or visually study the object face-to-Object, my observations are therefore based entirely on your photograph, excellent though it is.

First of all, did Ben Nevis of Reeves perhaps bring it back from the Normandy Landings and recently rediscover it lurking in his drawers (chest of that is), then to confound and test the IQ of his mates in the pub? Your article suggests that the "Object" is some sort of a glass object. My theory is that it is probably the result of a carelessly discarded beer or other bottle containing alcohol, idly tossed into a bonfire by a pleasure

seeker at a Guy Fawkes firework party, or maybe into a bonfire on which some one was burning garden rubbish, or some other fun occasion many of which occur in this neighbourhood. The bottle then melted and fused into a glass "Weird Object". This is not a scientific answer to the conundrum or a very exciting one and so, how about the solution to the puzzle that Her Indoors came up with. She tells me that she saw a similar object dug up by Lancaster John's dog Looey who lives in the Bungalow round the corner.

Of course this doesn't actually explain what the "Object" is, but these theories are the best we can come up with, without further examination. Regards,

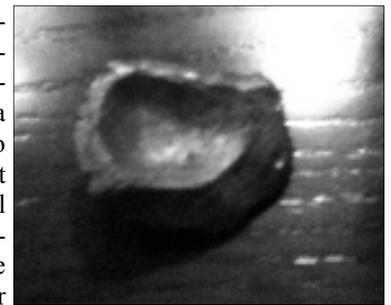
The Old Vic and Her Indoors, c/o The Long Table, The Half Moon, Wilstone. (Most Wednesdays.)

More thoughts on the Weird Object from *Lawless Kenn*

AS a follow on to the article in the December issue of *Village News*, yours truly has been approached by the commanding forces of the WLMP to add some more information which may help put to bed the Weird Object Debate which so far has stumped the highest brains in and around our village. Having received many responses by phone, email, letter and general conversation I feel it only proper to let readers know the article is not related in any way to the Normandy landings and it most certainly was not discovered in Ben Nevis of Reeves drawers. Nor is it the remnant of a Wine or Beer bottle found in the vicinity of the Half Moon (that infamous watering hole and fine food establishment in Wilstone). It was suggested that maybe the object was collected possibly by welly boot on Horatio's drive back from Plymouth - for as it so happens he often stops off near the Jurassic coast, and you can never tell what gets stuck in your wellies. Also it is in no way connected to Pheasant or Sheep bits and bobs unearthed in the vicinity of the Sundryland district on New Road, even though Dah Vid of Old Roker has sworn on his bottle of Newkeycasty Ale to have seen the former Queen of Wilstonia wearing a similar object on her garments whilst exercising her mares. I have also ruled out Airfix kit remnants as well as ironing out wax images as from information received through Eric de Claptonia. I was also asked what DCI(ret'd) Reedman was doing in the field near Wilstone Bridge with a metal detector some weeks ago, and was that related to the find? And the answer is a most definite: "No". Last but not least it has no connection with any of our local farms and what they discard. This object was found or discovered and not purchased and neither has Liz any intention of patenting it and selling it in her store in a Wilstone badge or brooch form.

Many theories were put to bed when I visited the Half Moon on a recent Friday and was approached by hers truly, demoted assistant innkeeper Yan of Totting Sundryland in the presence

of the former Queen of Wilstonia and two local Pitstonerians of Evertonian descent. Sadly John le Camera was not available again to photograph the incident as it was Film Night in the hall which also engaged the services of Crisps person of the year and many of the Tiller Girls. Yan who stated whilst in command, her premises are cleared daily of any such debris and at which point she handed me my second by hand letter in plain envelope marked (attn. c/o The table by the Toilets). This letter moves along similar lines as mentioned above but also asks on behalf of his Her Indoors the following question: "Is it some identical object to that which John of Lancaster's dog Louis dug up some time earlier? If so maybe its part of a find." Who knows? Another suggestion was to ask Louis's owner would he be willing to wear a miner's hat complete with lamp in order to assist Louis search. I am attaching two photos in this month's issue so possibly this will encourage more response as Plymouth historian Professor Phillandorous Buchasie is also most anxious to find an answer. According to his Her Indoors, Magdaleana de Bucci, Horatio is at his wits end to resolve this dilemma and she is well and truly suffering. And lets all be honest; Mag-



Very weird. Two more views.



(Continued on page 28)

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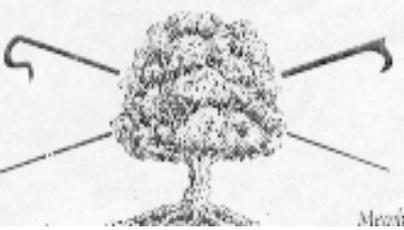
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The Puttenham Page

compiled by Christine Rutter

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Please change the date in your diaries.

WI News

The Long Marston and Puttenham WI continue to meet on the second Tuesday evening of each month at the Victory Hall, Long Marston.

Interesting local walks are organised twice a month starting from the Hall at 10am on the first and third Tuesdays. Craft evenings are also held each month.

A new President, Lynn Foster, was elected along with a new committee at the end of last year and they are hoping to attract new members to swell the numbers. The next three months have open meetings which anyone can attend.

On February 9th, Peter Bygate will be giving an illustrated talk entitled ‘Extreme Ghana’ about the country and its butterflies. This will start at 8pm. If you would like to come along the cost is £3 to include refreshments.

theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Weird object (Continued from page 26)

daleana cannot take much more (walking) stick. She feels it would be so nice to say Hip Hip Horay to all of this nonsense about this article. As a gesture and knowing how Horatio felt about his loss, a moat is in the process of being erected in his front garden as a reminder of Buccaneering days past. What a gesture. It is however hoped it will not be used as a watering hole for local pets. Also whilst on the subject of pets it has

come to pass that we are well and truly blessed to have a talking dog in our village. This fact can be verified by our very own Dog House Pet Historian, whose other half will be only too pleased to take enquiries via:

the Table by the Toilets, on Friday's. Please take a closer look at the two photo's and using imagination try to visualize what the Object might be and then contact the Village News so minds can be put at ease. Let's suss it out.

LK.

Local names and numbers

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PCSO Emma Lennox 0845 33 00 222

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Changes or additions? Contact the Editor.

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Deadline for the next issue is

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Read *Village News* on line at:

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From the Vicarage

by Rev'd Jo Wetherall

Will it ever change?

THE snow seems to have been here forever.

It causes such disruption, even something as simple as putting out the rubbish creates an expedition; coat, boots, gloves are the minimum required to get to the road where a bloated rubbish bin has waited expectantly for the past few days for the roads to clear and the hard pressed “bin men” to arrive.

Doing anything outside of the domestic has multiple complications, some of us have simply stopped trying, events and meetings are being cancelled right left and centre, some of them unnecessarily, but who knows what the sky might throw at us next?

Will it ever change?

Yes, of course it will perhaps even by the time you read this the snow will have gone revealing the first snow drops bravely appearing followed by the green rabbit ears of daffodils pushing their way out of the earth.

When we are going through real difficulties in life they feel never ending and enormous, we are inclined sometimes to give up on trying to achieve a kind of normality, but always things change and signs of hope appear.

My Dad isn't much of a philosopher or a “touchy feely” type, but once when I was going through a really painful time he said: “Give it two years, your life will be different”.

Two years !

He might as well have said fly to the moon, but actually it was some of the soundest advice he has ever given me. It put everything into a time frame – this thing really wouldn't last forever and it would take on a manageable scale in my life. The grief I was feeling at the time didn't simply disappear like melting snow, it still touches me occasionally, but after two years my life really was different. I suppose you could say snow drops and daffodils began to appear.

I have taken Dad's advice on several occasions since. When something felt overwhelming and it has always helped. I suppose it gives me an achievable goal and helps me to look for signs of change, signs of hope.

Psychologists tell us that one of the keys to human happiness is to have goals in life which reflect our values and use our strengths and abilities. The other significant elements to happiness are to have wide and deep relationships with friends and family and to have a meaning in life, a belief in something bigger than yourself - from religion, spirituality or a philosophy of life.

This has certainly been my experience in life, my deepest and happiest moments have come through achieving my goals, from being with family and friends and for me these have always been part of the expression of my Christian faith.

As we look forward to the Spring I pray you too will find relationships, goals and a meaning to life that will bring you happiness and help you bring life's challenges down to size. Will it ever change?

News from All Saints

*Wishing all our readers a very happy New Year
from All Saints.*

We were delighted to have so many families, of all ages, visiting our Church over the Christmas season. The Nativity presented by the Sunday Club was lovely and we all enjoyed Doris' special birthday cake following the service. Everyone took part in the Crib Service, from collecting the figures and animals and placing them in the Nativity scene to making the paper 'prayer' chain and then at the Christmas morning service we welcomed several other families and family members. A big thank you to Rev Jane Bannister for leading all of these.

Sunday Club. Don't forget we meet at 10am on the fourth Sunday of the month. (See 'Services' on page 3 of Village News.)

Toddler Worship. 2 – 3pm on the first and third Mondays – again see 'Services' on page 3.

Social Afternoon. 2 – 3pm on every fourth Tuesday in the month, in Church. Do join us for a cup of tea and a chat. Everyone welcome.

Mothering Sunday. 14th March at 10am. We hope you will join us for our special service.

Church cleaning. Is there anyone out there who would like to help us with this? Volunteers please to Carole Harrison.

Carole Harrison 01296 668526

Ice breaker at Little Tring

by *Chris Reynolds*

THE winding hole area at the west end of the Wendover Arm of the canal at Little Tring is very exposed - and unlike the rest of the canal there is no water flow. This means that the two narrow boats that were moored there (Weston Lady, registered at Aylesbury, and Iona) were well and truly frozen in - the ice being at least four inches thick. In fact I photographed them on 15th January - when there was still snow on the ground - and was passing over the bridge the following day when I noticed Weston Lady had moved. So I went to photograph the fun.

The technique used was to run the narrow boat at the ice which cracked for about five or ten feet. The boat then reversed and a boat hook was used to push the loosened ice to one side. The process was then repeated. Progress was far faster under the bridge (where the ice was much thinner), and then slower when it reached more thick ice beside two further moored narrow boats. I didn't wait much longer (it had taken nearly an hour to progress perhaps 50 yards) but the ice



Steady as she goes through the pack ice. (Picture: Chris Reynolds)

between the bridge and the pumping station was thinner than the other side of the bridge - and the canal was ice free at the New Mill beyond the pumping station.

VILLAGE VIEW

BY JOHN PAINTER



First term

by Mrs Sarah Winter

FIRSTLY may I introduce myself. I am Mrs Sarah Winter, new head teacher at Long Marston Primary School. I have been in post since September and I am an avid reader of the Village Newsletter. I know how important being part of a local community is and how privileged the children of this village are being able to live and learn in such a caring community. Since I have started I have been overwhelmed with parent's supportive words and impressed with how much the school is involved with the life of the village. As the new head teacher of the school I truly want this to continue and, if possible, extend these community links even further.

So to start the ball rolling, I thought the village might like to know some of the events the children have been involved in recently. Every year the Friends of the Village hold their Autumn Fair to raise money for the school. This is an exciting event and the children enjoy being involved. So much so Class 5 design and make games for children (and adults) to play at the Fair. This raises a lovely pot of money and gives the children lots of opportunities for learning such as maths, art, DT and social skills. Here in the picture (top right) one group is busy with their advertising campaign! As you can see from the pictures the children and staff put together two fantastic productions at Long Marston Village Hall in December. The first (centre picture) was performed by Classes 1,2 and 3 entitled Christmas With The Aliens. The second (bottom, right) was "pantomimesque" called Cinderella Rockerfella and Classes 4 and 5 sang their socks off and acted their hearts out! The performances were truly enjoyed by all.

I hope this has given you a taster of life here at school. We are pleased for visitors to come and see us or if anyone wants to volunteer their talents to support the children, we would love to hear from you. In the future I hope you will read more about our events and other ways we have supported the community. Thank you for your continued support.

Sarah Winter – Head Teacher.



Snow pictures!

THANK YOU to all our readers who sent in snow pictures for this issue of *Village News*!

Melanie Williams took these two splendid examples.

Left: Lucas and Talia are having great fun on their snowmobile.

Right: The frozen Aylesbury Arm of the Grand Union Canal.

