



Village News

March 2015

Your independent village magazine - produced and delivered free to every home in the Tring Rural villages entirely by local volunteers.

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Ian Nicholls as Pumpkin Pete

Campaign group launched as Tring Rural is left out of superfast broadband world *by Phil Buchi*

NOT one property in the Tring Rural villages will be able to get the benefits of superfast fibre broadband if current plans of telephone network operators are not changed. So two concerned residents, Chris Cobb and Graham Thorpe, have launched a campaign group to get better internet services for the villages in Tring Rural parish. To begin the campaign they are conducting a survey to provide evidence of local demand, and they need everyone to take part. The survey is online at the new campaign web site www.tringrural.wordpress.com, but if you can't complete it online the form is also reproduced in this edition of Village News. Chris and Graham need the information quickly, so the closing date for responses is 15th March.

(Continued on page 14)

Pumpkin spy makes veggies stew in beanstalk battle *by our man at the bar, Luke B. Hynde-Yew*

WELL. Where do you start? 'Jack and the Beanstalk' was the title of this 28th (yes, 28th) panto production for the LM&P Horti by the incomparable Mr. Neil Gurney. There were plentiful helpings of vegetables in the opening scenes as Dame Dolly Daydream (Alan Munt) explained: "I was going to be an arable farmer, but I came a cropper". Your reporter was not entirely clear where the very orange - and inflated - Pumpkin Pete (Ian Nicholls) fitted in, but his ambition to become a spy was not perhaps entirely suited to his unconventional appearance. Fortunately Fairy Spud (Serena Williams) was on hand to sort out a better

(Continued on page 19)



Baddies Nimbus (Chris Hodges) and Drizzle (Vanessa Iley) disconcert Goldy Tops (Sally Smith) and Dopey Dick (Terry Veal). All panto photos by John Kaye

Special features

- Andy's tale 26
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We depend on readers' articles and pictures. So let's have them!

Some of the features in this month's edition....



What's this at the tennis club? See page 21 to find out what's been going on (Picture Lee Nash)

How much?

Re-construction of Andy Ashwell's accident; see page 26 if you are brave enough to find out more
(Picture by Andy Ashwell - no actors were harmed during this re-enactment)

Small flowers raise big money
Find out how much on page 23
All pictures John Noakes



Early Irises



Yellow snowdrops



Yellow and black crocuses



*Jo Ramirez and Chris Mann take a classic Jaguar on a drive in the country.
Find out where they went on page 24. (photo credit Guy Loveridge)*

Village News

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WELCOME to your March edition of the Village News. Before the end of the month we will have had the equinox and there will be more light than night. To celebrate this we have four pages of colour this month, highlighting the wide range of things that have been going on.

There are many articles about enjoying the outdoors, in many different forms, including some reports from last year, to hopefully inspire you to challenge yourself to do something different this year.

For amusement, the story on page 29 comes recommended by the editing team who were laughing as they read it.

Have you got a copy of Publisher 2003?

We are willing to pay £40 for a copy of Publisher 2003.

We need your help, please see page 12 and dig in the backs of cupboards to see whether you have a disc to sell.

***The next edition will be for April 2015 and
 the deadline for items is:
 Thursday 19 March 2015***

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 at

St Mary's Puttenham St Cross Wilstone and All Saints Long Marston

You are most welcome to join us at any of the services.

1 March

10am All Saints Morning Prayer
 6pm St. Cross Evening Prayer

8 March

8.15am St. Mary's Holy Communion
 10am All Saints Holy Communion
 6pm All Saints Evening Prayer

15 March

10am St. Cross Holy Communion
 10am All Saints Morning Prayer
 4.30pm All Saints Worship for All

22 March

10am St. Cross Morning Prayer
 10am All Saints Holy Communion
 3.30pm St. Mary's Evensong

29 March (Palm Sunday)

10am St. Cross Worship for All
 10am All Saints Worship for All



St. Cross, Wilstone.

See page 4 for an explanation of the new pattern of Services at St Cross services beginning March 15.

Read Village News online at:
www.tringruralpc.org.uk (Click on Village News)
www.wilstone.me.uk (Click on Village News)

What's on...

The Small Church with a BIG heart

St Cross. Wilstone is preparing for
A new Pattern of Services.

Beginning with a special service for

Mothering Sunday March 15th

There will be a service at **10am every Sunday**

Our regular monthly pattern will be

1st Sunday 10am Family Service 6pm Evening Prayer

2nd Sunday Sunday Worship

3rd Sunday Family Communion with organ and hymns

4th Sunday Sunday Worship

5th Sunday Sunday Worship



Worship for All

All our 10am services will have aspects that involve children and there will be activities provided for them. We will have a variety of music and songs and aim to include songs our children are singing at school. We are creating new service books to help us provide the right service for the people who come.

Reverend Didier Jacquet will be leading our services regularly sharing the care of St Cross and the Wilstone Community with Reverend Jo Wetherall.



Friends of Tring Reservoirs

Friends of Tring Reservoirs

Annual General Meeting

Friday 17th April 2015, Wilstone Village Hall, at 7.30pm.

All are welcome, both members and non-members.
(Only members can vote at the AGM.)

Refreshments will be served and there is no charge.

Our guest speaker, wildlife photographer Chris Ward, will give us an illustrated talk on wildlife in and around our wetlands.

Further information from www.fotr.org.uk

Diary dates...

Tring Rural Parish Council meetings (8pm)

The public are welcome to attend these meetings.

Wednesday 4 March Wilstone village hall .

Wednesday 1 April Wilstone village hall .

Saturday 7 March

Peace exhibition. Tring Community Centre, 10am - 3pm

Wednesday 11 March

St. Cross Lent Lunch. Wilstone village hall, 12 noon - 2pm.

Friday 13 March

LM Cricket Club: quiz night at Marlins.

Saturday 14 March

Wine and canapés with a quiz. Wilstone village hall, 8pm

Friday 20 March

The hundred-foot journey - Wilstone Film Night. Wilstone village hall, doors open 7.15pm

Saturday 21 March

Tennis Club Quiz Night. LM victory Hall 6.30 for 7pm meal.

Wednesday 25 March 1pm

Village community library lunch. Cheddington village hall.

Thursday 26 March

WI Easter Fling. Long Marston victory hall, 3 - 5.30pm

Saturday 28 March

Tambourine Jerk. Wilstone village hall, 7.45 - 11pm.

Friday 10 April

Paddington - Wilstone Film Night. Wilstone village hall

Friday 17 April

Friends of Tring Reservoirs AGM. Wilstone village hall, 7.30pm

Sunday 26 April

Long Marston Tennis Club open afternoon, 2pm.

Friday 1 May

May Day madrigals and breakfast. Puttenham, 6am

Saturday 9 May

Jumble sale, Puttenham, 2pm start

Sunday 10 May

Ashridge Estate spring plant fair, 11am - 4pm.

Friday 29 May

Cecilia Tea Rooms, Puttenham, 3 - 5pm

Tuesday 2 June

At Long Marston Cricket Club, 1.30pm start.

Spitfire 60+ 1st XI County championships

Hertfordshire 60+ v Hampshire 60+

Sunday 7 June

Wilstone Village Fete and Fun Dog Show

Times for mobile library Route 72

Thursday fortnightly: 5 & 19 March, 2 April.

Tringford (Piggeries Pine) **11.00 to 11.20**

Wilstone (The Half Moon) **11.25 to 11.55**

Astrove (Astrove Lane) **12.50 to 13.15**

Puttenham (Church Lane) **13.20 to 13.45**

Long Marston (Queen's Head) **14.00 to 15.15**

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

Sunday 14 June

Midsummer Picnic. LM recreation ground, 1pm.

Sunday 21 June

Marsworth Steam Rally - Startops Farm, Marsworth.

Sunday 28 June

Wilstone Open Gardens, 2 - 5pm

Tuesday 14 July

At Long Marston Cricket Club, 11am start:

ECB Second XI trophy - Unicorns v Leicestershire 2nd XI.

Wednesday 15 July 11.00 start

At Long Marston Cricket Club, 11am start:

ECB Second Trophy - Unicorns v Yorkshire 2nd XI.

Saturday 1 Aug

Long Marston Village Show - incorporating flower and produce show.

Sunday 16, Mon 17, Tues 18 August

At Long Marston Cricket Club, 11am start all days:

Minor Counties Championship - Hertfordshire v Suffolk.

Friday 11 September

Cecilia Tea Rooms, Puttenham, 3 - 5pm

Saturday 3 October

Jumble sale, Puttenham, 2pm start

Saturday 31 October

October supper, Puttenham

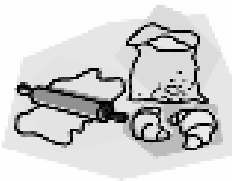
ST.CROSS

Lent Lunch

Wednesday 11th March

12 noon—2 pm

Wilstone village hall



LONG MARSTON DOG TRAINING CLUB

Victory Hall, Long Marston

Long established friendly club, catering for all dogs.
Any age: puppy through to pensioner.

In addition to pet dog training we offer the
Kennel Club Good Citizens Dog Scheme and the
APDT Good Companion Awards.

Monday evenings (except Bank holidays)
from 7 p.m. onwards.

Contact Evelyn Chapman on 01908 502272.

www.longmarstondogtraining.co.uk



Evelyn Chapman 00624

Tambourine Jerk

Live @ Wilstone Village Hall

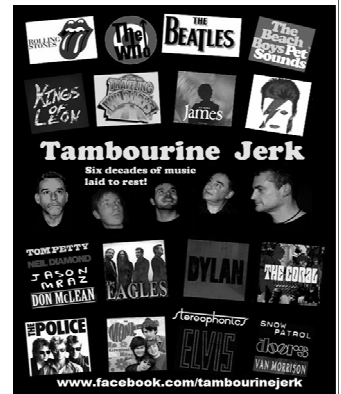
Sat 28th March 2015 7.45pm-11pm

**Tickets can be purchased from February from
Wilstone Village shop priced @ £8.00**

For one night only Tambourine Jerk will be rocking out the village hall with 40 of the best pop and rock songs from the last six decades of music. Their set will take you on a sonic journey from fifties Rock 'n' Roll right through to 21st Century pop classics.

From The Beatles to Bowie, The Rolling Stones to Snow Patrol, Neil Diamond to the Kings of Leon. There is something for everyone from disillusioned teenagers to silver surfers!

**There will be a
licensed bar on the
night.**



**Sunday 28 June
Wilstone Gardens
Open 2pm to 5pm**

**Visit many delightful gardens,
allotments and village folk.**

Enjoy tea and cakes on the lawn with friends.



Community Shop Wilstone opening hours:

Monday to Friday: 7.30am to 2.00pm

Saturday 7.30am to 1.00pm

Sunday: 9.00am to 12.00 noon

Peace exhibition in Tring Community Centre

THE Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, would like to cordially invite you to our Peace Exhibition at Tring Community Centre, Silk Mill Way, Tring, HP23 5EP on 7th March 2015 from 10am to 3pm, with a VIP Reception at 11.30am. Entry is free.

At the moment the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire and the Mayor will be attending. We are also expecting many other Influential Dignitaries and Guests and local press.

Free refreshments will be served throughout the day, please confirm to Karim Hayatt, Regional Events Co-ordinator on 07943 745084, if you can attend.

We look forward to hear from you soon.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK is holding Peace Exhibitions in all parts of the United Kingdom. The association is one of Britain's oldest established Muslim communities.

The aims of the Peace Exhibitions are:

- To show the 100 year record of good service that the Ahmadiyya Muslims have of faithfully serving the nation.
- To use our message to spread peace and harmony between the diverse peoples of this country. This is really important in the current times of hardship that most people are going

by Karim Hayat

through. The tough times are ongoing and it is essential that communities come together to get through this.

- To allow the voice of the law abiding, true Muslim to be heard in order to support the government in combating extremists who use the good name of religion to achieve their inhumane and evil objectives.
- Also, the misconception people have regarding Islam.

For further information, please see the following websites:

Muslims for Peace www.muslimsforpeace.org

Love for All, Hatred For None- An official website of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community UK
www.loveforallhatredfornone.org

Give Bowls a Go!

Open sessions for you

Tuesdays at 2pm

Fridays at 6pm

May to September



CHEDDINGTON BOWLS CLUB, your friendly local Club, is for everybody - all ages, beginners to experts.

Our Open sessions are an ideal opportunity to get to know bowls and refine your skills. Come with trainers or flat, soled shoes. We will supply the rest.

Cheddington Bowls Club, The Recreation Ground, High St.

Call: Nigel on 01442 824 679 or Sue on 01296 668 772

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JAZZERCISE

CHEDDINGTON VILLAGE HALL

Monday 7.00 pm
Tuesday 9.45 am

PITSTONE MEMORIAL HALL

Wednesday 7.30 pm

WILSTONE VILLAGE HALL

Monday 9.30 am
Tuesday 6.00 pm Lo
Wednesday 9.30 am
Thursday 9.45 am Lo
Friday 9.45 am
Saturday 9.30am

Other classes available in Tring, Halton, Aylesbury and Weston Turville

www.facebook.com/JazzerciseBucksBedsHerts

07900 987230

Follow Long Marston Cricket Club at
www.pitchero.com/clubs/longmarstoncricketclub/

Wilstone Community Shop

At the heart of our community

We aim to serve the community by:

- Keeping prices fair
- Offering a wide range of goods and services
- Stocking home-made and local produce
- Being a place where people like to shop and volunteers like to work.



Dates for your diary



Fairtrade Fortnight
23rd Feb – 8th March

Introducing new products and some lines discounted.



Great British Pie Week
2nd – 8th March

Name a Pie competition
A newly invented pie, made by a Wilstone resident, needs a name!!

Breakfast in a Bag

Mothering Sunday 15th March – Go on, give her a treat

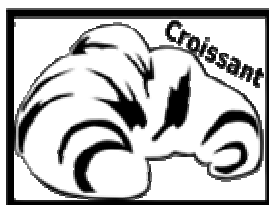
Spoil the Mother(s) you love - pick up 'Breakfast in a Bag'. Choose from either croissant, pain au chocolat and home-made jam, or a smoked salmon & cream cheese bagel. Both with freshly squeezed orange juice. There's no limit to the number of bags you can have, so why not join in the treat with your own bag? Just £5 each.

We will open early on Mothering Sunday so you, or the children, can come and collect the bags in time for breakfast. We will also be selling bunches of daffodils, chocolates and Mother's Day cards.

So that we can make sure everyone who wants Breakfast in a Bag can get one, and everything is fresh, please place your order no later than 8th March.

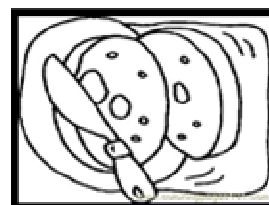
You can either pop into the shop, telephone us on 01442 891167, or email us at info@wilstonevillageshop.org.uk to place your order.

Option 1



- Croissant
- Pain au chocolat
- Homemade jam
- Freshly squeezed orange juice

Option 2



- Smoked Salmon
- Cream cheese
- Bagel
- Freshly squeezed orange juice

Advertising feature placed by Wilstone Community Shop Ltd.

Ashridge Estate spring plant fair by Jane Poole

THE annual Spring Plant Fair run by the Friends of Ashridge raising funds for the National Trust at the Ashridge Estate will take place on Sunday 10th May 2015, 11am till 4pm at the National Trust Ashridge Visitor Centre, Monument Drive, Ringshall HP4 1LX and parking is free of charge. There is no entry fee.

Come along and support this event which brings together local residents and expert private growers from the county. It is an ideal opportunity to purchase an excellent choice of quality plants for a worthy cause. Please contact The Friends of Ashridge Estate (details below) if you too can donate spare plants from your garden or if you wish to become a grower for the Spring Fair.

All donated plants from the public will raise money exclusively for the upkeep of the Ashridge Estate. This includes maintenance of the mobility vehicles and access paths, and fence repairs and improvements. The volunteer team accept any number or variety of plants - most commonly we receive perennials, grasses, and shrubs. Vegetables prove especially popular and we would like to encourage those with a greenhouse to grow things for us, for example, tomatoes, runner beans, squashes or courgettes. The trick is to get the timing right! We also would like to receive more unusual or prized plants such as peonies as the better the plant, the more we can charge! We ask that the plants are healthy and established in clean pots and come clearly labelled including name, colour and size. It is a real bonus if the plant is in flower, but if not, a picture or photo helps to inform the purchaser of its qualities.

The Fair is run entirely by Friends of Ashridge volunteers, and is able to raise thousands in funds for essential works at Ashridge and the upkeep of the estate. Ashridge is ours to enjoy and needs to be continually nurtured with the right

resources to ensure that such a beautiful, ancient site of natural woodland is preserved for future generations. Please come along and contribute to the annual Spring Plant Fair, either as a grower or purchaser, or both!

There is a lively commercial sector supporting the event with small nurseries from the local area representing all three counties in which Ashridge is situated. They will be selling unusual hardy perennials, specialist clematis, border plants, roses, herbs and more. All stall-holders kindly donate some of their proceeds to the Friends of Ashridge Estate. The fair is situated at the National Trust Ashridge Estate Visitor Centre, Monument Drive, Ringshall, HP4 1LX

To donate any plants, become a grower or to find out further information, please contact John Cartwright on 01442 864 984. Last date for plant donations is Thursday 7th May 2015. Pots and compost can be provided. Assistance can also be provided with potting up and transportation. Please give generously.



Members of the public browsing the plant selection at a previous fair

Cheddington Library Lunch

The next Library Lunch will be held on Wednesday 25th March at 1pm in Cheddington Village Hall. The speaker will be Edwin Rye, former BBC Gardener of the Year talking about "Colour in the Garden". A two course lunch with vegetarian option, is included. Tickets are just £15 each, available from the Library in Ivinghoe or by phoning Linda on 01296 668582 or Janet 01296 668341. All proceeds support the local library.

Many thanks.

Janet, Secretary
Beacon Villages
Community Library.

www.bvcl.org.uk

General enquiries:
info@bvcl.org.uk

01296 387890.

Committee enquiries: secretary@bvcl.org.uk

Opening times:

Tuesday 2pm - 5pm

Wednesday 10am - 12noon

Thursday 2pm - 5pm

Friday 2pm - 7pm

Saturday 10am - 1pm

Red Nose Day 13th March 2015

I'm Keri Donnellan and will be involved this **Red Nose Day** to raise cash and change lives both here in the UK and across Africa.

I am taking part in the Comic Relief Danceathon at Wembley on Sunday 8 March - 6 hours of dancing with 2000 dancers !

And I could really use your help to get as many sponsors as I possibly can. Please sponsor me on my Red Nose Day Giving Page today, it's instant and secure and will help make the world of difference to people's lives. Thank you so much for your support!

To sponsor Keri who runs the **Jazzercise** classes at Wilstone village Hall just enter the following into your browser address bar:

<http://my.rednoseday.com/sponsor/keridonnellan>

Wilstone Film Nights

FRIDAY MARCH 20th



8pm Friday March 20th. Doors open 7.15pm Licenced bar. Tickets £7 available from Wilstone Community Shop



From our reporter at the Parish Council meeting

Flood actions

HERTS County Council has responded to the comments made by the Parish Council on the official Long Marston flood report. The Parish Council had asked for attention to be focused on recommendation 6: modification to the road level at the end of Chapel Lane. Councillors and residents feel that this is the most practical and cost-effective action that could be taken. The road level goes up right at the end of the lane and in February 2014 this prevented flood water on the roadway escaping downstream, with consequent backing up all the way to the war memorial. If the end of Chapel Lane was levelled off, then flood waters spilling onto the lane from the brook would have somewhere harmless to go and would not cause a problem for nearby properties, they believe.

Jack Shepherd of Herts CC said in a written reply: "My colleagues in (Hertfordshire) Highways have stated that they will be taking the modification of Chapel Lane into consideration for their budget planning in September 2015." Realising that there will be no action on the road level in 2015, Parish Councillors agreed also to pursue their parallel action to see what could be done locally to improve existing drains in Chapel Lane. £2,000 has been earmarked for this year, with a further £2,000 from next year's budget. A site meeting attended by County Councillor Nick Hollinghurst, an engineer, Parish Councillors and residents, was held in Chapel Lane on 11th February to get this moving.

Not enough for a skate park

After considerable research, Councillors have concluded that there is just not enough money available from the CALA Homes 'S106' community contribution to pay for a skate park. All have been astonished at the cost of these facilities, which was one of the suggestions from the consultation held in 2014. The lowest quote for preparing a suitable base was an eye-watering £30,000; and this for an installation of modest size. The ironmongery of the skate park itself would be an additional cost. There were also difficulties in agreeing an acceptable location. Councillors felt that the whole thing was just too much money focused on a single play activity, particularly as the rather modest skate park under discussion would not compare well with much more elaborate structures nearby, for example at Aston Clinton. They will reply to Dacorum that the idea is not feasible, and propose that the money could be better invested in a whole range of other play equipment which would serve a wider audience of children.

Tring Rural Parish Council - Public Notice

Nominations sought for Parish Council elections in May 2015. Closing date is Thursday 9 April.

In May this year the Parish Councillors' four year term of office will come to an end. This means that all Councillors stand down and then decide whether to stand for office again. If you feel passionately about the area you live and would like to be involved in discussions and decisions about looking after and improving the parish, then perhaps becoming a Parish Councillor could be the thing for you.

Nomination papers, which must be with Dacorum by **Thursday 9th April**, are available from:

Lucy Bancroft, Clerk to the Council
Email: clerk@tringruralpc.org.uk
Telephone: 01296 660844

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Highways exasperation

Councillors unanimously expressed their exasperation with the complete lack response to their complaints about the poor condition of local roads. "Something at County Hall is wrong", said Cllr. Chris Griffiths, referring to comments that no one at Herts County Council seems to be accountable for appalling service to taxpayer. Dacorum Cllr Christopher Townsend agreed that the way that the road maintenance contract with Ringway had been set up, there really was no one at County Hall whose job it was to manage the contact. Parish Councillors agreed that this appalling lack of public accountability had to be challenged, and decided to mount a campaign. The Hertfordshire Cabinet Member who is supposed to discharge this responsibility is Councillor Terry Douris, so publishing his name here is perhaps a first step. His contact details are published at www.hertsdirect.org. (Look at: "Your Council/Councillors".)

Elections: papers in by 9th April

The deadline for nomination papers to be in for candidates for election to the Parish Council is 9th April. All Parish Councillors stand down in May at the end of their four-year term, and may stand for re-election if they choose. Only if there are more candidates than places will an election be called. If it is, the election will be on 7th May with the general election. If you want to seek election contact the Clerk, Lucy Bancroft. (*See contact details, right.*)

Your Parish Councillors are:

Mr Michael Tomlinson (Chairman) 01296 661 311
 Mr Chris Griffiths 01296 668 257
 Mr Alan Winfield 01296 668 977
 Mr Christopher Mann 01296 668 548
 Mr Nick Murrell 01296 668 190
 Mrs Olli Wheeler-Cornell 01296 662 207
 Mr Richard Briant 01442 825 674
 Mr Robert Briant 01442 825 674

The Clerk to the Council :

Mrs Lucy Bancroft 07590 989202
 Email: clerk@tringruralpc.org.uk

The Village Warden is:

Mr Colin Reedman 01442 822 031

Parish Council Website:

www.tringruralpc.org.uk

You can view and comment on planning applications at
www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning

www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

Read Village News online at:
www.tringruralpc.org.uk (Click on Village News)
www.wilstone.me.uk (Click on Village News)

Engaging with democracy by Chris Mann

IT is unlikely to have escaped your notice that there will be a general election on May 7th this year. What may have passed you by though (unless you picked up on the Tring Rural Parish Council notice in last month's Village News) is that May 2015 also marks the end of the five year term served by your parish councillors. All of us have to stand down and those of us who wish to do so may put their names forward for re-election.

Serving the community

Having only been a parish councillor for eighteen months or so I am a 'newbie', unlike many of my colleagues who have served the local community for many years – and I do mean served. When I joined the council in 2013 I did not know what to expect and, prior to my election, I regularly heard the refrain: 'of course they're only in it for what they can get'. Well I wasn't, and it soon became clear to me that the other parish councillors weren't either. We don't always agree but, without exception, they are passionate about helping the local community. However, most of us on the parish council belong to the 'bus pass generation' and, of the eight current councillors, only one is a woman.

This is a problem and - as a bus pass wielding male councillor - I am part of it. I believe that the parish council needs to be more representative of the community it serves, bringing a wide range of views and perspectives.

A need for diversity

Whilst having a load of oldies like me brings (hopefully) valuable experience, I believe that this experience needs to be leavened by the views of the younger generations (perhaps even a teenager?) committed to helping improve the quality of life here and a stake, for themselves and their children, in the long term future of the villages. Such passion and diversity would bring exciting new perspectives to the parish council, and would be of great benefit to the life in the locality. Being a parish councillor is not all-consuming and does not require a degree in civics, or forty years experience. It simply requires some common sense along with a desire to do something for the community.

If that sounds like you, or someone you know, then I would urge you to contact Lucy Bancroft clerk@tringruralpl.org.uk to find out what is involved in getting engaged with democracy.

Disclaimer

I must emphasise that the views put forward in this piece are mine alone and not those of TRPC or other parish council members.

News in brief...

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TO SPARE FOR
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CLEANING?**

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Drop your dry cleaning and laundry into our Quick Drop bag and it'll be ready to go when you're done.

-  Simply complete a prepaid order card at our website or in person. It's that easy!
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-  We can be working on your dry cleaning & laundry packages.
-  We will email you when your package is ready for collection.

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Community Shop**

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DO you have an old copy of Publisher v2003 sitting around in a drawer? Village News is willing to pay £40 for a good genuine original copy of Microsoft's Publisher v2003 for use by the editorial team. The way that we produce your village magazine means that all editors have to use the same version of the software, and this is currently the 2003 version of MS Publisher. As files are handed over each month from one editor to the next, we have found that anomalies creep in if we all use different versions and these can cause us considerable difficulties.

As this version of the software has long been obsolete we are having difficulty getting an additional copy, and we need one right now for training purposes. If you have a genuine original copy that you no longer use you would be doing us a big favour by handing it over! In return for a genuine copy on CD-ROM, complete with the original plastic box and licence sticker, we will be pleased to pay you £40 as a token of appreciation. Version 2003 originally came in a cardboard outer carton with manual, and if you have that too - so much the better! If you can help us please contact Colin Moore on 01442 826976, or email: editorwimp@yahoo.com. *Thanks!*

Roads closed in March (for repairs!)

ROAD closure orders affecting two local roads have been approved - which means that the roads are going to be repaired. (Yippee!) Roadside signs have already been placed giving notice of the intended work. Motorists will wish to take evasive action.

At **Gubblecote**, the section of Wingrave Road between the Gubblecote bridge and the Wilstone junction will be closed for most of day on Friday 6th March.

At **Tringford**, a section of the Tringford Road will be closed for most of the day on Saturday 7th March.

These are certainly a couple of the worst spots in the parish, so let's hope they make a decent job of it.

Welcome new editor!

READERS may have already noticed that Village News has a new editor this month. We are delighted to welcome Caroline Clist to the editorial team and hope you enjoy this, her first, edition. Caroline, who lives in Long Marston, responded to our advertisement for a replacement for editor Colin Davenport, who has retired from the team on completing the February edition after more than ten years editing Village News. Caroline finished her training in early February and opted to jump straight in to put it into practice.

Village News chairman Phil Buchi said: "It's great when people volunteer to join the team and I am very pleased to have Caroline's enthusiastic contribution. I would also like to thank Colin and Heather Davenport for their considerable contribution over many years. Colin joined me back in 2004 when we only had two editors on the team, compared to five today. He has probably lost count of the number of editions he has produced. Heather has been one of our proof readers for many years and in that time she has saved readers from hundreds of annoying errors, and editors from consequent embarrassment. I offer my thanks and best wishes to them both."

Registering to vote on 7th May: here's how

THE Electoral Register is in the process of being updated in preparation for the general election on 7th May. On that day there may also be an election for Tring Rural Parish Council. It is not too late to get your name onto the register so you can claim your right to vote. If you are new to the area, not on the current register, or if you have moved locally and want to vote at your new location, you can contact the Electoral Registration Officer as set out below. If you will be 18 this year before 7th May you will be entitled to vote, but you must be on the register - so best to check that you are. ***There is an important change to the voter registration process this year: applications should be from individuals, not from "heads of households".*** So we are each responsible for claiming our own right to vote. To vote on 7th May you must be on the register by 20th April.

If you have access to the internet, go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote to apply to register. It only takes a few minutes. You will need your National Insurance number. If you do not have access to a computer, phone the Electoral Registration Office at Dacorum on 01442 228071 and they will help you.

If you are going to be away from home on 7th May and need a postal or proxy vote, you can apply now by emailing your request to absentvote@dacorum.gov.uk, or by phoning 01442 228071. They will send you the appropriate form to complete. Completed applications must be received by 5pm on 21st April. (Information supplied by Dacorum Borough Council.)

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No superfast broadband?

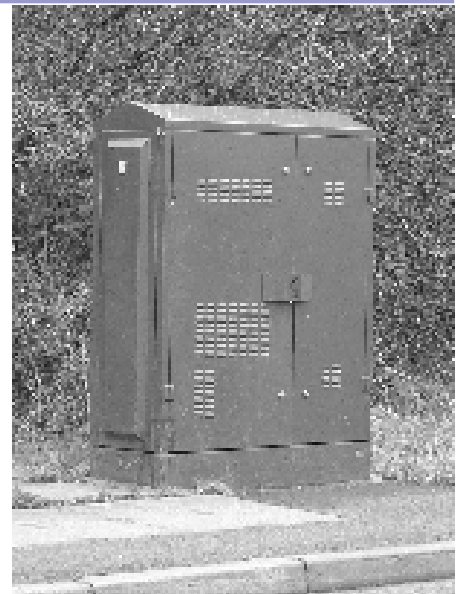
(Continued from page 1)

Even though the Tring exchange has been upgraded for the fast services, BT customers in Wilstone with 01442 numbers have been turned away by BT customer services when they tried to place orders. The reason always given is that Wilstone is too far from the exchange (it does not have its own cabinet), and there are apparently no plans to overcome the transmission problem. Internet users with Cheddington 01296 telephone numbers are no better off. Even though two of the cabinets on that exchange have been upgraded for superfast fibre services by the Herts and Bucks 'Connected Counties' programme, there are no plans at present to include Cabinet 3 in Long Marston. BT has told a Village News reader that Cabinet 3 has too few lines connected for it ever to be considered commercially viable for the BT upgrade programme.

In the surrounding area though, it is a different story. The fibre rollout programmes operated by BT, and by the County Council's 'Connected Counties', have made impressive progress in the last six months. In fact, pretty much

every community surrounding Tring Rural parish has fibre access either right now, or within the next few months. Tring's upgrades have been joined by new superfast broadband cabinets serving Aston Clinton, Cheddington, Marsworth, Wendover, Aylesbury, Wingrave, and even Aston Abbots! By accident and circumstance (let's be generous) Tring Rural parish has been completely left out, and campaigners believe this must change.

The 'Connected Counties' programme may present an opportunity though. Recent news reports indicate that this government funded investment in rural broadband is ahead of schedule and under-budget. Edmund Wellington from 'Connected Counties' has replied to Gubblecote resident Paul Dumbleton offering some hope. Mr Wellington said: "You are connected to Cheddington Cabinet 3, which I'm afraid is not part of our current programme. However, we do hope to bring fibre to this cabinet using additional funding - we are currently going through the process to determine which areas will benefit and under what timeline. Hopefully Cheddington 3 will



No use to us. The splendid new Cheddington Cabinet No.7 - near the station - is ready to provide superfast broadband, but not to any homes in this parish. (Picture: Village News.)

be included... as we do recognise the need for faster broadband in your community." Paul added: "We do need to keep the pressure on. The more of us on Cheddington Cabinet 3 who complain, the stronger our case". All Village News readers can help by completing the survey opposite.

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Tring Rural campaign for better internet... your help needed please!

by *Chris Cobb and Graham Thorpe*

Do you want a better internet connection and live in the Tring Rural area?
Then look at this new website: www.tringrural.wordpress.com

Complete the survey online, or by returning the survey form printed here by 15 March.

Following on from the front page article in Village News February edition, faster internet is not available to anyone within the Tring Rural area. If it was available, the price increase would be relatively modest.

Why have faster broadband?

- **Web pages load more quickly**, especially noticeable when several people using the internet in one house.
- **Watching "catch up" TV, sports and movies** (especially in HD) is much smoother and more quickly downloaded.
- **Skype and Face Time video calls** are of higher quality and suffer less 'stuttering'.
- **Uploading and downloading** large documents, videos and photographs is much faster.
- A report* has shown that slow broadband wipes as much as **20% off house prices!** (*See website for report.)



We have become aware that Potten End, albeit a larger village, successfully campaigned to acquire better internet. That involved installation of a new supply cabinet. The community came together and enlisted the support of MP and Parish Council. We believe that our community needs to do the same. However, we need to know if this is something that you would support. Therefore we would be grateful if you would please complete the survey which will help us gauge the demand for faster internet in our area. The survey can be completed online, or by using the form below.

Tring Rural campaign for better internet - please return survey form by 15 March to:

Graham Thorpe, 15 Tring Road, Wilstone, HP23 4NU.

Does your property already have internet access?

- Yes.
 No, because the current available service is not fast enough for my needs.
 No, I have no plans to use the internet.
 No, because of other reasons. Please state:

Which dialling code does your telephone number start with?

- 01442
 01296

Do you want or need faster internet?

- Yes
 No

If you had faster internet what would you use it for? (Tick all that apply.)

- General use (browsing, online shopping, etc)
 Video chatting (eg Skype, Face Time)
 Streaming or downloading video (eg. BBC iPlayer)
 Streaming music (eg. Spotify)

Do you run a business from these premises?

- Yes
 No

Does anyone in the household work from home?

- Yes
 No

Does anyone at this property need to upload large files?

- Yes
 No

Would the bill payer be prepared to pay extra for faster broadband (compared to the basic rate)?

- Yes, but only £1 - £2 extra per month
 Yes, but not over £5 per month
 Yes, but not over £10 per month
 Yes, any reasonable amount!
 No

What is your postcode? (Optional, but will help us see which areas in Tring Rural have most interest.)

HP23

Thank you! Don't forget to return the form or complete the on-line survey by 15th March.

www.tringrural.wordpress.com

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Sessions available for ages 2 to 5 years, FULL or PART days:-

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday
 Morning Session:- 9.00am - 11.30am
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 Afternoon Session:- 12.30pm - 3.00pm

For further information, details of funding, session availability or to arrange a visit, please call 07506 179658 or visit our website www.marsworthpreschool.org.uk

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Places are available for children between 2½ and 5 years old.

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For more information or to arrange a visit, contact our playleader Teresa Giddings on 07925 185311 or firststepslongmarston@gmail.com

LONG MARSTON BABY & TODDLER GROUP
 every Wednesday during term time 10-11.30am
 Victory Hall, Long Marston. Everyone welcome.
 Contact Tara Thinkettle 07796 965171.

From the Vicarage

by Rev'd Jane Banister

Mardi Gras Pancake Party!

GREAT fun was had by all at the first All Saints' Pancake Party on Sunday 15th February. We raced, tossed pancakes, ate lots of pancakes and thought about what we were going to do for Lent. There was a lot of speed

and skill on display particularly from those who managed to get their pancakes into the trees! The birds did very well from the leftovers. Many thanks to all those who came along and supported and particularly to those who made pancakes. We hope to do it again next year!

Mothering Sunday Sunday March 15th

All welcome to worship at All Saints, Long Marston at 10am when we will give thanks for all those who care for us. For some of us, this will include our mums, but it is also a chance to give thanks to God for all those who show love for us, whether individuals or communities.

(Picture: Adele Jones)



The Circus is coming to ...

Roll up, roll up on Sunday, 7th June to join in all the fun and frolics

See Queen Jane face her feline fears with Leo the Lion, be amazed at the strength of the strongman, gasp at the dexterity of the juggler. It's going to be amazing so make sure you pop the date in your diaries.

Wilstone!

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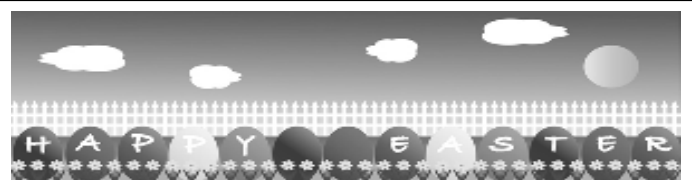
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First Steps Pre-School News by Emma McDevett

SOGGY spaghetti, sawdust and shapes have all inspired and entertained the children at Pre-School during their winter-themed activities this February. In between cooking, discovering new books and learning new rhymes the children have also pulled on their coats and wellies and ventured out on walks around Long Marston village, trips across to the big school to use the climbing frames and play equipment, and ride scooters and bikes in the outdoor area. Those children that have joined Pre-School recently have settled in really well.

On return from half term on the 23rd of February we are looking forward to special Book Week activities and marking World Book Day with fancy dress outfits representing the children's own favourite literary characters. The children will also start rehearsing for the end of term Easter Show on 31st of March to which families are invited to come along and watch the big performance.

First Steps Pre-School is a registered charity and we rely on donations for renewing equipment and resources and to allow us to provide additional trips and activities for the children. You don't have to be a parent to support Pre-School, any individual or business can help whenever you buy anything online - from your weekly shop to your annual holiday - you could be raising a free donation. There are nearly 3,000 retailers including Amazon, John Lewis, Aviva, the trainline and Sainsbury's (we are collecting their Active Kids vouchers too!), who will donate a percentage of the amount you spend to First Steps



Pre-School - Long Marston to say thank you for shopping with them. It's really simple, and doesn't cost you anything. All you have to do is:

1. Go to <http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/firststepslongmarston>
2. Sign up for free
3. Get shopping - your donations will be collected by easyfundraising and automatically sent to First Steps Pre-School - Long Marston. It couldn't be easier!

There are no catches or hidden charges and we will be really grateful for your donations.

Pre-School is managed by a voluntary parent committee, we always welcome new members and currently have a position available on the core committee. If you are interested in joining the committee and would like to find out more about what is involved then contact Emma on 01442 823 013.

First Steps Pre-School is held at Victory Hall, Long Marston every Monday (9-12), Tuesday (9-12, Lunch Club 12-1:30 and afternoon session 1:30-3), Thursday (9-12, Lunch Club 12-1:30) and Friday (9-12, Lunch Club 12-1:30) during term

time. We welcome all children aged between 2 ½ and 5 years and as a result many children stay with us until they move together 'across the road to big school'.

There are no Pre-School sessions on a Wednesday. The Baby and Toddler group runs at Victory Hall on a Wednesday morning from 10am-11:30am for children from birth to 5 years. The group is not only great fun for children but a good chance to meet other parents, and an opportunity for children that will join Pre-School in the future to meet their peers and become comfortable with the facilities helping them to settle well. The sessions are run by parents and include a craft activity, lots of free play, a baby area and a section for bikes and scooters. There is a break for the children to have a drink and biscuit, time for some physical play with footballs or hula-hoops and a group sing-a-long. The cost is £2 (plus 50p for additional children) including children's snack and a hot drink for parents. For more details please contact Tara Thirkettle on 07796 965 171.

If you would like to know more about Pre-School, come and visit, or add your child to the admissions list then please get in touch with either Teresa Giddings our Pre-School Leader on 07925 185 311 (during Pre-School hours) or our Chairperson Emma Lynch on 01442 823 013 or email firststepslongmarston@gmail.com. See also www.firststepspreschool.org.uk.

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Panto review

(Continued from page 1)

arrangement, and it was decided to send Lady Cootie Dumpling (Pat Daniels) to spy on the Giant disguised as a chicken instead. *(Are you sure? Ed.)* The odious keepers of the cloud, Nimbus (Chris Hodges) and Drizzle (Vanessa Iley), kept the audience in boos and hisses as they showed themselves to be artful tax collectors, catching Lord Sugar Dumpling in their net too. So, in a spirited performance, the not-so-bad-after-all Lord (Martin Winship) decided to join forces with the villagers against the powers of the cloud. What about Jack (Samuel Watson) and that beanstalk? OK, we did get to that too thanks to Fairy Spud's assistance with continuity magic. Goldy Tops (Sally Smith) entertained with doses of good humour and Dopey Dick (Terry Veal) threw lots of sweets. In the end the rather cheeky Lady Suet Dumpling (Mel Bayer) did get to marry the right man, but we never did see the Giant (Toby Davidson.) Only his voice boomed out, causing much alarm in the auditorium. There were fine renditions from the Chorus, especially in their roles as bedbugs and greenfly! Very funny. Younger members of the audience were particularly delighted - and were paying attention too.

One young man at the front was able to explain to the cast where they had got to. Thank goodness someone understood.



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Queens Head, Long Marston wins Fullers “Pub of the Month”

LANDLORD Andy Buttar is absolutely delighted to have been awarded the Fullers Brewery prestigious Pub of the Month award for December 2014. Andy received the acclamation from Area Manager James Cook. The pub was chosen as the best from hundreds of other Fullers' establishments.

At the Queens Head, traditional home cooked pub food is served up seven days a week. The popular menu focuses on freshness with all the dishes crafted from locally sourced ingredients. The menu constantly changes to offer the advantage of the best seasonal produce. Lunches are from 12pm-2pm daily, the evening menu is served on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights from 6pm-9pm and delicious Sunday Roast from 1pm- 5pm. The wine list includes a fabulous reserve Rioja and an amazing “un oaked” Chardonnay, together with two other whites, three reds and a rosè. A particular favorite is a bottle of Bengal lancer with the steak and chestnut mushroom pie or the Rendang curry.

After receiving the award Andy explained; “I’m so proud, it’s been a challenge from the first day, back in the summer. I could not have got the pub to where it is today without the incredible support of my friends, family, the community of Long Marston and surrounding villages. I am determined along with my fantastic staff that the pub will go from strength to strength and remain the hub of the community and the prospect of Long Marston losing the

village pub becomes a distant memory.”

The pub offers a warm welcome to all. If you fancy a great night out with good food, music, quizzes, and lots more, then pop along anytime. To book a table in advance, ring the pub direct on 01296 668368. (Bed and Breakfast available)

By Steve Toms



Photo Steve Toms

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Long Marston Tennis Club sees the light(s) at last!

A MERE 14 years after making its first application for planning permission, Long Marston Tennis Club is equipping its two courts with floodlighting. When those lights switch on for the first time, the club will be celebrating something more significant than just a handy new facility – but to explain why, I need to give you some background...

We are of course the local club for Long Marston and several nearby villages; we cater for all ages and levels and we have a lot going for us. If you ask practically any member what they like about it, near the top of their list will be that they feel it is a particularly friendly club. Other things may feature too: we are lucky enough to enjoy a beautiful rural setting and at least some members enjoy having their games commented on by nearby cattle and observed from above by REAL hawk eyes. Charges are low and great value coaching is available routinely for all levels. The clubhouse is small but smart, and if you want to analyse your latest victory over a drink, there is the equally welcoming Cricket Club bar just next door, something not available to many clubs of our size.

And yet... the club remains smaller than most, the courts are not used as much as they could be, and even amongst our loyal members, a fair few also pay to belong to larger clubs in the vicinity. Why would any local player, or someone looking to try the game, look elsewhere ?

Well, up to now we have suffered in one important way relative to other clubs in the region – without lights it has not been possible to play into the evening, even in fine weather. For someone in full-time work or education who can only play during the week at the end of the day, this seriously limits the opportunities to get full value from membership. So what that light switch will actually do is to switch off the major obstacle to a bigger, better Long Marston Tennis Club, and what the committee and members will be celebrating is the chance to build on that. Starting now, we want to do more to provide sociable, healthy enjoyment and the opportunity to compete in regional leagues for many more people in the area.

So, if you or anyone you know could be interested in joining in the fun, don't hesitate to contact the club secretaries Margaret Kelland (margaretkelland@btinternet.com) or Jackie Anwyl (jackie@jamosaics.co.uk) for more information.

Please note that you don't have even have to join to play on our courts - if you just want to play an occasional game with a friend, just ring Joan Dean on 01296 668458 and she can arrange access for a small fee.

A great way to learn more would be to attend the club open afternoon on Sunday 26th April 2015, when (amongst other things) there will be free coaching sessions for juniors and adults, including people holding a racquet for the first time - and a chance to check your speed of serve ahead of Wimbledon !

By Lee Nash



Play continues during the construction works
Picture by Lee Nash

We also plan to run one or more special "camps" for juniors during the school holidays – we'll make sure these are publicised later. If you ever want to know what's on, you can look on our website at <http://www.longmarstontennisclub.co.uk/> or follow us on Facebook.

See you on court !

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The Whitchurch Morris Men – the new programme

WELL no sooner had I said watch out for the Radio 2 Folk Awards in February when the date was announced as the 22 April at the Millennium Centre in Cardiff and all of the tickets are already sold. You can't say I didn't warn you. You will be able to watch on TV in some form though.

We've been out and about again this time to the Woodside Ale, to Overstone School in Wing for a Yr 1 & 2 demonstration and all the way to Leicester for their annual feast. We're being a little quiet for a while with invitations from the Jockey Ale now on the 14 March and the Letchworth Ale on the 21 March.

In the meantime, I am finally able to confirm our summer programme which starts at 5:30 in the middle of Towersey on the 1 May to dance in the summer, yippee! This turns into a busy weekend as the Sunday sees us assisting Etcetera MM at Forte Hall and our usual 06:30 start on the bank holiday Monday with our Day of Dance. All of the details can be found on our website at:-

www.whitchurchmorris.org/events

One invitation we've had is to assist with a re-enactment and provide suitable dances from the period of The War of the Roses c 1455-1487, and here is the difficulty. Although dancing was being performed during this period, it was mostly a Courtly dance and at this time was generally called Morisques. Alice Wetenhale of Bury St. Edmunds, a lady of substantial means provided in her will for her daughter "3 cups of silver engraved with morris dancers with a single lid for the" The year was 1458 and this was the first use of the modern spelling but the difficulty still remains; what did they dance? Whist there are references in fiction of the time which places morisque in the courts of northern France, and true accounts from Rome where they danced for the Pope, no evidence of dance notation has been discovered. With the majority of the population literate, evidence comes from court, guild and church accounts such as in 1494 Henry VII's court at Westminster "for playing of the mourice dance 40 shillings" and from art such as the 3 silver cups. So what will we dance? Morris remains a dynamic and organic art form and changes with sides developing and adapting dances as they see fit. We will dance in the current styles of Cotswold and have a great time.

by John King

We're always looking for new recruits so if you have an interest in the history of the people, music, dancing or just want to keep fit come and join us on a Tuesday night at the Wilstone village hall. You must be of the male gender and if possible, regardless of whatever age you are, you must bring your dad. All details can be found on our website.

Wassail.



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Snowdrop event February 2015 by our Outside Team

On a gloomy damp and cold Valentine's Day followed by an equally miserable Sunday 15th February, John and Margaret Noakes opened their garden in Chapel Lane, Long Marston for the National Garden Scheme. This organisation raises money for a variety of charities which is profiled on the web and in the "NGS Yellow Book" Mulled wine was dispensed to visitors on arrival and warm muffins served on the terrace.

Visitors explored the churchyard surrounding the Old Chapel of Ease and then proceeded to the garden where they



enjoyed the drifts of sixty plus varieties of snowdrops. Complementing the snowdrops were carmine coloured *Cyclamen coum* hailing from turkey. Many irises were coming into flower and a pink flowering *Daphne bholua*, from Nepal, scented the air. Although there was no sunshine, Winter Aconites provided a slash of bright yellow emerging from cyclamen leaves. Visitors were slow to depart and it was not certain what detained them. Was it the snowdrops, mulled wine or muffins?

Was it worth it? Over **one thousand pounds** was banked as result of this event. The down side is that this event may have to be repeated next year! It was hard work but there was a great team of helpers and maybe they could be persuaded to come again. Hopefully the event, if there is one, will not clash with the pantomime. Snowdrops are no respecters of village artistic events, even if Snow White is pantomimed again.

Thank you to all those who attended on such a gloomy weekend.



(Photos John Noakes)

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Fed up with cooking, fed up with turkey sandwiches? Get your orders in now- a SMIFFY'S Curry in the freezer ready for the days when you just want a break.

Just tell me your preference of curry and heat - £3 a pot (serves 1) I would just like to thank everyone for their continued support. I have now cooked well over 500 curries, a mix of Friday night orders, dinner parties and parties. I think my family are fed up with the smell of curry in our house!

My World Challenge trip is fast approaching in July and I am over half way towards my target of £3,400. If anyone is interested in sponsoring me it would be greatly appreciated.

Emily Smith .
SMIFFY'S CURRIES
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Testament of age by Chris Mann

THE great thing about being young is that you have all the time in the world to achieve your ambitions. There's no rush, what you don't do now you can always do later but time passes and you are no longer gilded youth but old fart. You probably won't now open the batting for England, or become a rock megastar. Well, such is life, but for most of us you still have a 'bucket list' of things we want to do before we are too old, or too decrepit to do them.

It was during such a conversation with my friend Jo Ramirez that we realised that high on both our 'bucket lists' was the desire to compete in the Mille Miglia. First staged in 1927 as a 1,000 mile road race round Italy, the Mille Miglia was described by Enzo Ferrari as '*the most beautiful race in the world*' competitors ranging from amateurs in their FIAT specials to the top professionals of the day. However, following the 1957 race in which the Marquis de Portago was killed, along with his navigator and nine spectators when his Ferrari crashed at 170mph, there was a public outcry and Mille Miglia was banned.

In the 1980's, though, the Mille Miglia was revived as a retrospective for historic cars and has become one of the world's most exclusive classic car events. Obtaining an entry was reputed to be more difficult than getting an invitation to Elton John's birthday party but my 1953 Jaguar XK120 was eligible and Jo was well known in racing circles, having worked for Ferrari, Maserati and Lamborghini back in the sixties and, later, for the McLaren F1 team, so we thought we might be in with a chance.

To our relief, my entry for the 2014 Mille Miglia was accepted and, following a series of dramas too painful to relate, we made it to the start line by the skin of our teeth. Thus, at 7.27pm on Thursday 15th May, our Italian adventure began. Leaving the iconic Mille Miglia starting ramp just behind Jodie Kidd, Jeremy Irons and Jay Leno (also in Jaguar XK120s) we headed east to Padua, part of an ever-evolving high speed snake of classic cars, cheered on by thousands of

spectators and waved through towns, villages and red traffic lights by the local police. Every so often we would be diverted on to a timed section which required us to travel a series of set distances in specified times, measured to 1,000ths of a second. Unfortunately, although we had had a sophisticated rally meter fitted to the car, neither of us could fathom how to use it and our time-trial efforts rapidly descended into farce. The car drove beautifully, though, and we arrived at our first night destination near Padua just after midnight.

Day two dawned bright and sunny and we set off on a 775 kilometre journey down the Adriatic coast to Rome. We made good progress through Rovigo, Ferrara and Ravenna and, after a brief lunch stop in San Marino, we headed to Ancona where the *Polizia Stradale* looking cool in their mandatory shades escorted us in a 70mph convoy through the town centre (think Aylesbury with sunshine!). The sky was blue, the scenery was glorious and we were thoroughly enjoying ourselves, a magical experience almost too good to be true which, dear reader, it turned out to be.

In the early evening, as we set off into the mountains towards L'Aquila, the heavens opened and within minutes driving rain had soaked us through. Unable to see, Jo slowed to a crawl as we were battered by a barrage of icy needles of rain. Freezing cold and wet through we crawled on for hours, our misery compounded by an engine misfire as the water found its way into the distributor. Lost, soaked and frozen, we eventually reached our hotel in Rome at 3.20am having been on the road for nearly twenty hours!

The following morning, we threw on dry clothes and headed for the start line, feeling a lot better than we deserved to after a day that would have taxed the endurance of Bear Grylls and the temper of Mother Theresa. Fortunately the sun had returned and all was well with the world once more as we drove north-west to Siena and the next checkpoint in the breathtaking medieval square of Il Campo. From Siena we crossed the Appenines via the spectacular Futa and Raticosa

mountain passes to our day three destination, Bologna's historic Piazza Maggiore, where most of the local population turned out to cheer the competitors.

On Sunday morning we left Bologna for the final leg of the 2014 Mille Miglia, heading for Modena, where Jo pointed out the Albergho Real Hotel favoured by Ferrari drivers of the 1950's and 60's and the apartment block where he had lived during his time with Lamborghini. This last section was something of an anti-climax, a relatively gentle 240 kilometre jaunt through Reggio Emilia and Mantova to Brescia where it had all started. Our Friday tribulations well and truly behind us, Jo and I arrived at the finish line to the cheers of a million people and with smiles a mile wide. We had successfully completed *the most beautiful race in the world*, an experience we will never forget and a big tick on our bucket lists!



A thousand miles to go: Jo Ramirez in Brescia with Chris Mann's Jaguar XK120 shortly before the start of the 2014 Mille Miglia (Picture by Chris Mann).

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Farmers market

by Andy Ashwell

I'VE been walking and running around the countryside for as long as I can remember and I try to obey the Countryside Code whenever I can. For example, I leave gates as I find them and give grazing animals a wide berth. If I come across a field full of white cows I always keep an eye on them and check out my escape-route options just in case they decide to start chasing me.

One thing that has often confused me over the years is where I should go if the footpath is not obvious. I don't mean when suddenly there aren't any signposts or little arrows anywhere because when that happens I know that I'm simply just lost. No, what I mean is when there is a sign pointing straight across the middle of a newly sown field of crops but no indication of where the actual footpath goes – no footprints or weed-killed path. Nothing except for the sign.

I used to skirt round the edge of the field to avoid trampling the new seedlings but 20 years ago I was hauled up by an angry farmer who told me that I was disturbing his pheasants that were hiding in the hedges. When we first moved to Long Marston and I started exploring the area with Florence on my back in a backpack I once again faced the trample-the-seedlings or skirt-round-the-edge dilemma when I came across a newly-sown field with a sign but no obvious footpath. I chose to go round the edge.

The following week I went for a run along the same route and when I arrived at the footpath-less field I once again skirted round the edge. This time, however, I was confronted by a rather irate farmer who leapt out of the hedge and demanded to know what I thought I was doing. I tried to explain the reasoning behind my actions but he didn't seem at all impressed.

So I apologised to him as sincerely as I could and agreed not to stray from the footpath in future. He pointed diagonally across the seedling-filled field so I set off in the direction of his wagging finger, trying to squash as few of his plantlets as possible. On reaching the stile at the far end of the field I

looked back down the line of flattened plants towards where the farmer still stood. I waved at him and shrugged my shoulders in apology; he waved back and nodded at me in approval. It's a funny old world!

So, after that experience I now always try to go where the footpath markers point, be it through a prickly hedge or straight through the middle of a field of freshly planted crops. Last week, however, I became the victim of not following the rules. Not because of a poorly-marked field this time but because of a poorly-maintained kissing-gate. This particular kissing-gate was rather heavily overgrown with brambles so, in order to avoid the pain of getting scratched and noticing that there was a gateless gateway right next to it, I surreptitiously ran through that instead. Assuming that the gateway was gateless to allow livestock to roam freely between fields I immediately scanned ahead for white cows and any irate farmers who might be lurking in the bushes.

Suddenly, without any warning, I found myself sprawled face-first on the ground, my feet entangled in a low wire fence. Seconds later I received an excruciatingly painful electric shock right through my "privates". Because I was lying on my front, my delicate bits completed the shortest electrical path from my entangled feet down to the wet ground. As I instinctively twisted on to my side a second painful jolt surged through my hand.

I suffered two more painful electrocutions – one through my bottom and one through my elbow – before I managed to untangle my feet from the electrified wires. Despite its ordeal, the fence sprung back into shape and, resisting the temptation to touch it to check that it was still working, I continued on my way, tingling where I didn't particularly want to tingle. I never thought that running could be so hideously painful – or amusing, for that matter. Oh, how Anna and Florence laughed when I told them about my nightmare ordeal: not an ounce of sympathy between them. Fortunately my electrifying experience has left me with no lasting damage. It has, however, confirmed that I should follow the farmer's advice and not stray from the footpath, or indicated route, ever again.

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The agricultural story line...

by David Mead

An apology to readers, and to David. I accidentally sent the wrong file to the editor for the February edition. As a result of my mistake the article published in that issue was in fact written by David for the February 2014 edition. I am sorry for the puzzled looks this generated among regular readers of David's column. PB.

The farm in winter

WE had a bit of a mix up last month with the 2014 article going out for the second time, so I'll have a go at February 2015, well some of it. The new farm vehicle was driven up from Cornwall, a black Land Rover Defender with a tipping body able to take three separate loads. We take logs, and pizza oven firewood to the ten Akeman restaurants, Abingdon, Whitney, Wallingford, St. Albans etc. We haven't been invited to their new Warwick one yet, just off the M40 - mixed feelings.

It's still not too late to mention our Christmas dinner. Daughter Sarah and David invited the gang to Thistle Brook where they had converted a very run-down shed into a wonderful room decorated with a long table down the middle. A good twenty of us sat down to a feast. Afterwards, we all had the chance to see and speak to Josh in Australia. Quite amazing. Loud and clear, and no delay.

I don't know whether anyone else is having phone calls from people selling solar energy, wind power, wood chip etc. The fuel power business is a guessing game with petrol nearing £1 a litre. Mark you, I can remember the shock when it went to £1 a gallon. Geoff, Barry and I got the bicycles out. Well, that lasted ten days.

The ewes are in their maternity yard, under cover, in the warm. This old shepherd is semi retiring, so Chris, Alex, Molly and any passers-by are volunteering to be on standby. You can almost see the girls rubbing their feet together with this new challenge. It's a beautiful day today, can't they make a start? The Aberdeen Angus have been in their yards since October. They have had good silage this year; they always seem to make good progress after Christmas. For me it is a very pleasing sight - a yard full of cattle lying on a deep bed of straw, chewing their cud, eyes half shut, a do-not-disturb look on their faces. I can remember being told that this



situation must be adhered to. The ewes had some winter grazing down at Boarscroft, across the river from the solar panels. There is an extra responsibility on farmers' fencing - cattle would love to have a scratch on one of them. It's always a bit worrying if cattle do get out down there and find their way on to the old railway line. Next stop Aylesbury High Street.

Farmers' hedges look quite tidy this winter. I gather the EU has said: cut one half one year, the other half the following year. The hedge cutter man can't see the sense in that, so if it is dry enough he does a proper job. If a man with a clip board appears - you are new round here. It's another EU rule where there are very few hedges in the rest of Europe. Happy days.

Chris Griffiths

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Any Witch Way - A Story of Longub Puttastone

Old Siegfried pushed through the front door of the village pub – the Half Head – and leaned his best allotment fork against the wall. Jake Sparhawk was already seated at a table, nursing a pint. There was no other customer in the pub. “There’s one in the oven for you Sigg,” announced Jake, and when Siegfried had fetched his pint, and settled down opposite Jake, they sat in reflective silence for a few minutes.

“Quiet, isn’t it?” Siegfried said eventually.

“Always is, these days,” replied Jake, philosophically.

There was another reflective silence. “Someone should do something about it,” Jake said.

“It’s been registered as an Asset of Community Value” Siegfried pointed out.

Jake humphed. He didn’t mention that someone had suggested that Siegfried should also be so registered.

“We could do some sort of village event, to attract visitors” he suggested. “You know, something like the Witch business – a re-enactment.”

“What Witch business?” asked Siegfried.

“That poor old lady; a great crowd

grabbed her and dunked her in the pond and she drowned.”

Siegfried looked astonished. “I must have missed it. I’ve been on holiday.”

“No. It was hundreds of years ago. It’s quite famous.” Jake finished his beer.

“We could get a few of the regulars to dress up, chuck one of the wives in the pond. I’ve a mate who drives for Plumbers Coaches. I bet he’d bring the next mystery tour here if there was a pint or two in it for him. And they could have their lunch at the pub.” Jake looked pleased with himself.

Siegfried rubbed his chin. “You might be on to something Jake.” He stood up, and picked up the glasses. “Fancy another pint?”

*

At first, things went surprisingly smoothly. Rupert, the landlord, was all in favour, and Jake’s mate at the coach company agreed readily enough when he was promised his food and beer “on the house.” Only one other regular had volunteered to dress up and take part, but at least he had offered his wife for ducking duties, so that was alright.

The great day arrived, and Jake met Siegfried outside the pub. They were dressed as “olden day peasants.” Jake

looked worried.

“Not good news, I’m afraid. Wilfred can’t come. His wife found out about the dunking thing, and now she won’t let him out of the house.”

Siegfried frowned.

The pub door opened and Rupert stuck his head out. “Jake. I’ve just had a call from your mate at the coach company. He’s not coming. He’s been sacked – something about ticket irregularities.”

He raised his hands. “All off, I’m afraid. Still, thanks for trying.” He went back inside the pub. The door closed. It was still five minutes before opening time.

Jake and Siegfried sauntered across the road, hands in pockets, looking a bit glum. The door of the cottage opposite opened, and Alice Ball stepped out, sweeping her step with her besom.

“Morning Aniseed,” said Siegfried. “It’s good to see that someone else made the effort about this witch thing, and dressed the part.”

Alice gripped her besom. “You cheeky old rascal. These are my normal housework clothes. I’ll give you a piece of my mind, you…….”

But Jake and Siegfried were already back across the road, intent on boosting the pub’s trade in their usual way.

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What is the definition of a Bird ? by Ken Lawless

(A warm-blooded, egg-laying vertebrate animal distinguished by the possession of feathers, wings, a beak and typically being able to fly.)

ORNITHOLOGY is the scientific study of birds. It's also a branch or section of zoology which deals with birds.

Living in this area we are very lucky to see many varieties on a daily basis.

We've got the fields, canal and reservoirs all close by and as a result our gardens are visited by different birds daily. How good is that?

Should we get involved and encourage them to keep returning? Well, that's down to us to decide. Birds are great fun to watch and having a pair of binoculars handy helps. It brings you up close to them so as to observe their movements in greater detail.

Now, not everyone likes birds. For instance cats. Almost all cats will observe birds movements and their mind-set will immediately explore ways to catch them. Cats being the Sherlock Holmes type are usually more than capable of catching what is their aggravating prey, as they might put it.

Not everyone likes pigeons. Columba palumbus to use its Latin name. Yet for many years all over the world they were huge crowd drawers. In Rome, Venice and particularly Trafalgar Square London. The pigeon at one time drew in the masses. Families looked forward to feeding them. Lots of people travelled down to London's Trafalgar Square to feed them. Sadly nowadays they are often regarded as flying rats. Having said that Queen Elizabeth is a huge pigeon fan. Farmers mostly detest them as they can devastate crops. At one time a pigeon would be so pleased to see a human that they would wait and expect a treat. Not so nowadays, sadly.

On the other hand there are racing pigeon enthusiasts all over the UK and beyond who adore them.

All birds are kept recorded in Great Britain in two languages English & Latin.

The blackbird (*Turdus merula*) is one of the most common birds in the UK. It eats worms and insects also surviving on fruits and berries. It will visit the bird table but prefers to search the ground for food. However a great way to encourage them is to throw some apples under a hedge and keep watch. Some prefer their apples slightly on the turn so never ever throw damaged or over ripe apples in the compost bin. Think firstly about feeding the birds in your garden. The blackbirds are great parents and take the time to teach their young what's needed to be done in terms of foraging. Watch when the young visit your garden with the male blackbird. You will see them showing the youngster what to do. It's great fun to watch. You cannot beat the sound of a blackbird song in the morning. It can set you thinking what life is about. So do try to look after them. Encourage them into your garden and enjoy their company. It really does you good - and them.

Of course one of the easiest ways to encourage birds into your garden is by putting out bird seed feeders. You'll be surprised how effective they are. Also try a fat ball feeder. Don't forget water as they will need a drink after eating their food. You don't want them to get indigestion, do you?

If you only feed seeds you are less likely to attract the range who visit.

You could try listing the different birds that arrive and I bet you anything you will not believe the varieties. All this will give you the motivation to move on and encourage them.

Of course one of the real favourites is the robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) It is the most popular bird in the UK. When I was a child they were always referred to as the Robin Red Breast, for obvious reasons. They are extremely friendly once encouraged. A tip is when you are weeding or digging and come across a worm, have a look and see if a robin is about. If so leave the worm handy for him to reach, then I guarantee he will be near next time you are out doing the same work. You'll make a friend very quickly and he'll gradually move closer to you. They can become quite tame if encouraged, even to the extent of taking food from an outstretched hand. You can have such enjoyable times with birds and more so once you discover what their needs are.

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Encouraging young children to be involved with bird life teaches them all about what's great about wildlife on our doorstep and helps them understand nature.

In the cold weather food & water, as well as areas where birds can shelter and feel warm & secure, are all essential from Autumn through winter especially. Feeding fat balls at this time ensures birds bulk up and are better prepared to cope with extreme weather conditions. Some people say we should leave birds to forage for themselves. However this is now discouraged by the RSPB who clearly ask us to keep feeding birds especially at times when bad weather is expected.

Do keep the feeders clean by washing them regularly in hot water and using a disinfectant like a bacteria hand soap or washing up liquid. Also move feeders to different spots to avoid a build-up of waste bird droppings.

One of the smallest cute birds to visit our gardens is the wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*). It mainly searches for food on the ground and will rush away at the slightest movement. Their diet consists of insects, larvae, spiders and worms. It is difficult to sex them as they all appear with a tiny fat body and a spiky tail which is always cocked high. It's the female who does the singing on winter nights. Males usually build several nests to attract females on waste ground and they reside in hedges, in gardens and woodlands.

A real favourite is the sparrow abundant in this country. The house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). The male is easily recognised by its grey crowns and variably-sized black bibs. The female might be more difficult however nearly all the other dull brown birds with thick conical bills have streaked rather than plain under parts. Sparrows are great to watch and like all birds will be regular visitors to your garden once encouraged by feeding and caring for them. Like your pet cat or dog or whatever animal you keep, they all congregate around food.

The starling or *Sturnus vulgaris*, using its Latin name, is very common in the Wilstone area.

If you look out into a field which houses telephone poles with wires stretching a distance you will at some point see a mass of starlings who like to congregate and show off. It's mainly in wintertime when there are more about as they arrive in masses from North & Central Europe. They are always on the lookout for food and love fat balls as well as a pecking of apple as possibly their dessert! The starling is quite a noisy bird, yet great fun to observe. Should you hear a commotion around bird feeders in your garden it's usually the starling.

So there you are, enjoy bird watching as it's a great relaxing pastime. More varieties to follow soon, plus a mention about Sherlock Holmes.



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The Puttenham Page

compiled by Christine Rutter

It is A.G.M time !!!

FRIENDS OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH

A.G.M.

Monday 23rd March – 7pm

Cecilia Hall, Puttenham

“The Friends” raise funds for the care of St. Mary’s and Cecilia Hall. Members of the church electoral roll are automatically Friends or you may join by paying a subscription of £5 per annum. All welcome.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

VESTRY MEETING

(Election of Churchwardens)

Immediately followed by the

A.G.M.

Monday 23rd March – 7.30pm

Cecilia Hall, Puttenham

Refreshments will be served

EASTER at ST. MARY'S

Good Friday – 3rd April : 2pm Raising the Cross in the Churchyard, immediately followed by “Hour at the Cross” service in church. Hot cross buns will be served before returning home.

Easter Day – Sunday 5th April: 8.15am Holy Communion service with Easter hymns

PLEASE NOTE: The usual 2nd Sunday 8.15am HC (the following Sunday), will still take place.

In memory of Patricia Bothwell (Pat)

IT is with sadness that I report the passing, at the start of the New Year, of Miss Pat Bothwell who had lived in Knoll Cottage, Astrope, for nearly 40 years, prior to moving to Foss House Care Home in St. Albans for a short while after a spell in hospital. A service for her was held in St. Bartholomew's Church, Wiggington, on 16th January, followed by a short cremation service.

Pat was born in Kew, where she lived with her mother and father and an elder sister, Margaret, who still survives Pat. Her main education was at Haberdashers' Askes Acton School for Girls in Richmond. She chose nursing as a career and trained at the Evelina Hospital for sick children in London in 1942, then completed her nursing training at the Middlesex Hospital in 1946. She worked as a sister at Edenhall, a Marie Curie home in Hampstead, but left in 1956 to undertake further training. She returned to Edenhall as Matron until she retired in 1977. While at Edenhall, she had the honour of being presented to the Queen Mother, who was patron of the Marie Curie Foundation.

Whilst working at Edenhall, Pat bought The Thatched Cottage at Ludgershall, Nr. Aylesbury, which gave her many happy memories. Upon retirement she moved to Astrope, Puttenham, purchasing Knoll Cottage.

By Christine Rutter




My memories of Pat are seeing her with her dogs, not only her own, but also those of friends. Pat would often have an extra set of "4-legs" beside her as she delighted in having her friends' dogs to stay while they went away for a holiday. In her early days at Astrope, she also had a black and white cat which used to enjoy sunning himself on the verge, tight to the front wall of her cottage, getting both the benefit of the sun and the heat radiating from the wall! Despite her dementia in latter years, she could still recall the names of all her dogs over the years and produce their photos.

Pat was always a very religious person, her faith was very important to her. Her main church was St. Bartholomews in Wiggington, but she also supported St. Mary's in Puttenham and came to many services there, too. Another vivid memory of Pat was seeing her in charge of the "boot and shoe department" at the Puttenham Jumble Sale when it used to be held in the old tin hut. Due to lack of space in the small building, Pat's "shop" was set up on the grass verge along the road outside the hall (the hall "garden area" already having been taken up with many stalls selling brick-a-brac, etc.).

She will be greatly missed as a member of the village. Although in her last years she was rarely seen outside of her cottage, she was always very merry and bright when visited, and keen to hear all the latest news and village scandal!


May she rest in peace.

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Local Police Officers (in emergency dial '999')

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Fly-tipping reports

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Call the police if you see a crime being committed.

Cecilia Hall (Puttenham)

Christine Rutter 01296 668337

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Jane Dawson 01442 827410

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David Severs 01296 661021

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Churchwarden

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St Mary's Puttenham

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Churchwardens

Christine Rutter 01296 668337

John Barron 01296 631351

All Saints Long Marston

Clergy Rev'd Jane Banister 01442 822170

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Lucy Bancroft 07590 989202

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Village News

Phil Buchi 01296 661339

Whitchurch Morris Men

John Bush 01296 641382

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Jane Waterhouse 01442 826813

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Bookings: Tony Short 01442 823096

Wilstone Toddlers

Jane Cole 01442 828272

WI

Sue Barraclough 01296 668272

Wilstone Community Shop 01442 891167

Changes or additions? Contact the Editor.

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**Deadline for items to go in the next edition is:
Thursday 19 March 2015.**

Mark Woodbridge will be your editor.

**You can read Village News online at:
www.tringruralpc.org.uk (Click on Village News)
www.wilstone.me.uk (Click on Village News)**

Windsor Great Park sponsored ride

On 14th September 2014 four of us set off to Windsor Great Park to take part in this annual event. The weather was beautiful as you can see from the picture. The aim was to raise money for Windsor Lions to distribute, mostly to Riding for the Disabled. My thanks go to all who sponsored me, I raised in excess of £305! A fantastic amount.

The ride was 9 miles long over the wonderful Great Park interspersed with 30 cross country fences, quite challenging from time to time. It took us a couple of hours in all, just for the ride then there was loading the horses back into the lorry and tackling the M25 again.

The picture has Windsor Castle in the background; unfortunately the Queen wasn't around to give out the rosettes!

The four are from left to right: Jaye Smith, Melanie Stark, Anita Lane and Franzella Flowerdew.

Picture by MHPHOTOS reproduced with permission

by Melanie Stark



VILLAGE VIEW



Rainbow over Wilstone

Picture taken by Jean Fox

Spotters' Corner No.381:

A4 Pacific

Picture by David Prosser

A4 Pacific class 4-6-2 locomotive number 60007, "Sir Nigel Gresley", was on display at the National Railway Museum in York for a gathering of A4 Pacifics when David took this picture. The same design as the record breaking "Mallard", 60007 also held speed records - achieving 112mph on a measured run. This engine was in service from 1937 to 1966. Sir Nigel Gresley designed many locomotives during a long and illustrious career, and was rewarded with his name on this one.

Spotters' Corner No.381: A4 Pacific





Dwarfs planning to attack the giant



Villagers hatch their plot to attack the giant



Necessary evil; Nimbus (Chris Hodges), Drizzle (Vanessa Iley)



Dame Dolly Daydream (Alan Munt) and Dopey Dick (Terry Veal)



The amazing bedbugs



Lord Sugar (Martin Winship) and Lady Cootie (Pat Daniels) Dumpling



Pumpkin Pete (Ian Nicholls), Lady Cootie Dumpling (as a chicken), Jack (Samuel Watson) Suet Dumpling (Mel Bayer)



Fairy Spud (Serena Williams)



Dame Dolly Daydream (Alan Munt) Cow (Trudy Watson, Dan Smith) Goldy Tops (Sally Smith)



All's well that ends well