**November 2009**

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

**Village News: Puttenham, Wilstone, Long Marston, Gubblecote**

# Liz is now open for business!!

By Diana Crapnell

FOLLOWING on from last month's story, Liz is now up and running in the Wilstone shop. Liz said "its been lovely to see so many familiar faces again, it's what I hoped for when I decided it must be worth giving the shop another go". Liz would also like to say how grateful she has been for all the support she's had to give the shop a fresh look, in particular to Nic, Kevan, Paul, Robert and Jan, "they've been absolutely brilliant" she added.

**Behind the counter Liz Faulkner (right) and helper Jan Dolling welcome customers to the new village shop.** (Picture Village News)

It is very early days, but encouraging ones. So please pop along and, if you have any suggestions or special requests for products, please don't hesitate to let her know.

What you will find are a lot of old favourites such as local ham, pies and chickens. Newspapers are also available, and magazines can be ordered. Liz also has a small, but classy, selection of cards for us to choose from. We'll also find all the basic essentials, a great help when we suddenly need something.

Liz is open Monday to Saturday 7.30am to 1pm and Sunday 9am to midday. Do pop in to see her, you'll find a warm welcome and our support is vital to ensure we keep such an important asset in our parish.

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Readers' contributions are welcome. Send them in!

# VILLAGE VIEW

BY JOHN PAINTER

TRINGFORD reservoir on a frosty morning.

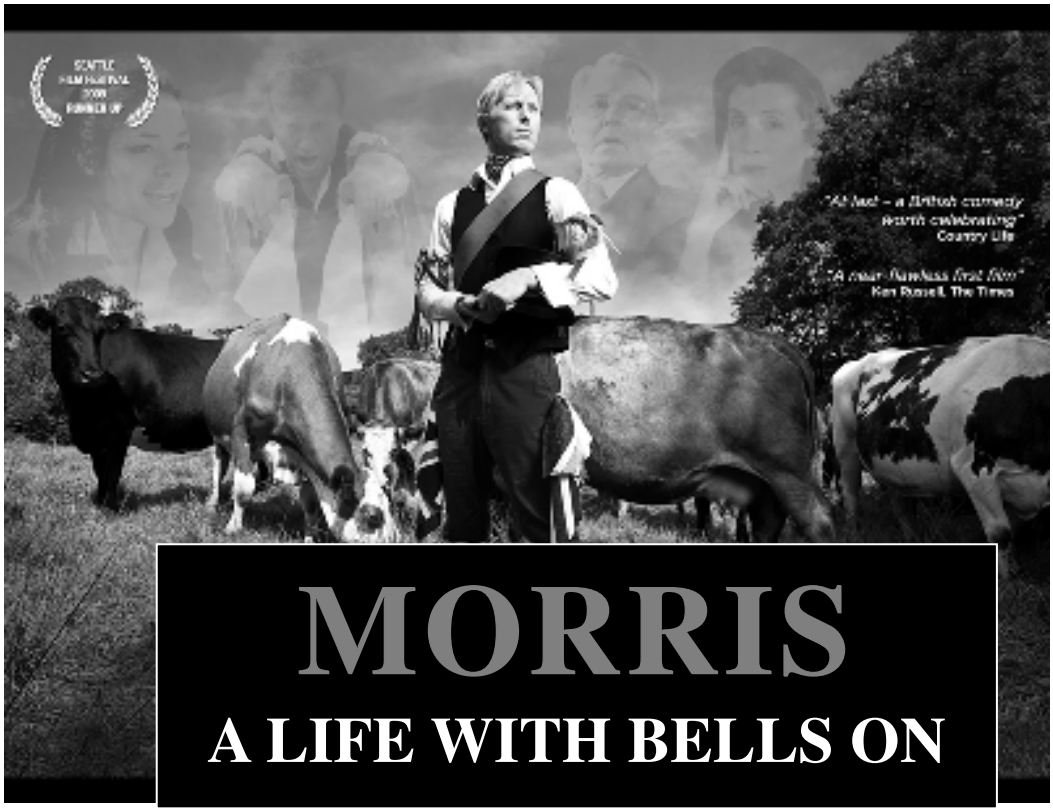
A little reminder that winter is on its way.

But on a cold but bright morning the local area provides some attractive scenes for those who are ready to wrap up warm and venture out.

***Village News is supported by Tring Rural Parish Council www.tringruralpc.org.uk***

# Wilstone Film Nights

## Friday, November 20th




MORRIS dancing – an innocent traditional pub pastime, quintessentially English, performed by hanky waving bearded men. Or is it a violent contact sport trying to change in the face of political opposition?
*Welcome Extreme Morris!*
A Life with Bells on is a heart-warming feature-length comedy that follows the fortunes of one of the leading Morris teams in the country, Milsham Morris, and in particular those of its leader, Derecq Twist. *Morris* is a gentle and affectionate look at an aspect of English culture which is, in the finest traditions of this country, unapologetically eccentric, and towards which there exists a huge amount of good will. The film's events take place in the summer months in and around Dorset and specifically centre around an idyllic thatched country pub, the Traveller's Staff. The film is an unashamed celebration of not only the English countryside but also what it means to be English.

***A good English feel good comedy.***

**FRIDAY NOV 20th**
**TICKETS £6**
AVAILABLE NOW AT:
THE HALF MOON PUB, WILSTONE, MEADS FARM SHOP
& WILSTONE VILLAGE STORES
Film starts at 8pm
Licenced bar opens at 7.15pm

# Village News

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HOW time flies! When I was writing my previous editorial, the clocks were just going forward and now as I write this time, the clocks are just going back. I think I blinked and missed a lot of the summer.

How splendid to see the Wilstone shop open again, we all wish Liz the best of luck but remember it is down to all of us to use this facility to make it viable, it is not a charity shop!

This edition of *Village News* is another 32 page edition which just goes to show how popular this publication is. We need plenty of articles to keep it going and we now need another editor to help the busy editorial team (see ad on page 15) Can you help?
Our next issue in December is a colour edition, if you have any suitable colour photos, please send them in to the editor.

*Colin Davenport*

***Deadline for items for our next issue (December) is Thursday 19 November 2009. We do not publish in January.***

***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 November**
10.00am All Saints Patronal Festival and All Souls Team Service
6.00pm All Saints Evening Prayer
6.30pm St Cross All Souls Service

**2 November (Monday)**
2.00pm All Saints Toddler Worship

**8 November Remembrance Sunday**
8.15am St Mary's Holy Communion
10.00am All Saints Remembrance Service with uniformed organisations and Royal British Legion and
11.00am Silence at War Memorial
10.50am Wilstone Act of Remembrance at War Memorial and
11.00am St Cross Remembrance Service
6.00pm All Saints Evening Prayer

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

**16 November (Monday)**
2.00pm All Saints Toddler Worship

**22 November**
10.00am All Saints Holy Communion and Sunday Club
3.30pm St Mary's Evening Prayer
6.00pm All Saints Evening Prayer

**29 November**
10.00am All Saints Holy Communion
6.30pm St Cross Advent Carols

# What's on...

**ART IN CHEDDINGTON: TOWN FARM OPEN STUDIO**

AN ART show to get you in the mood for the festive season! Mulled wine, mince pies and a display of high quality, handcrafted gifts, Christmas decorations and cards. Meet the artists who will be happy to talk about their work and the processes involved.

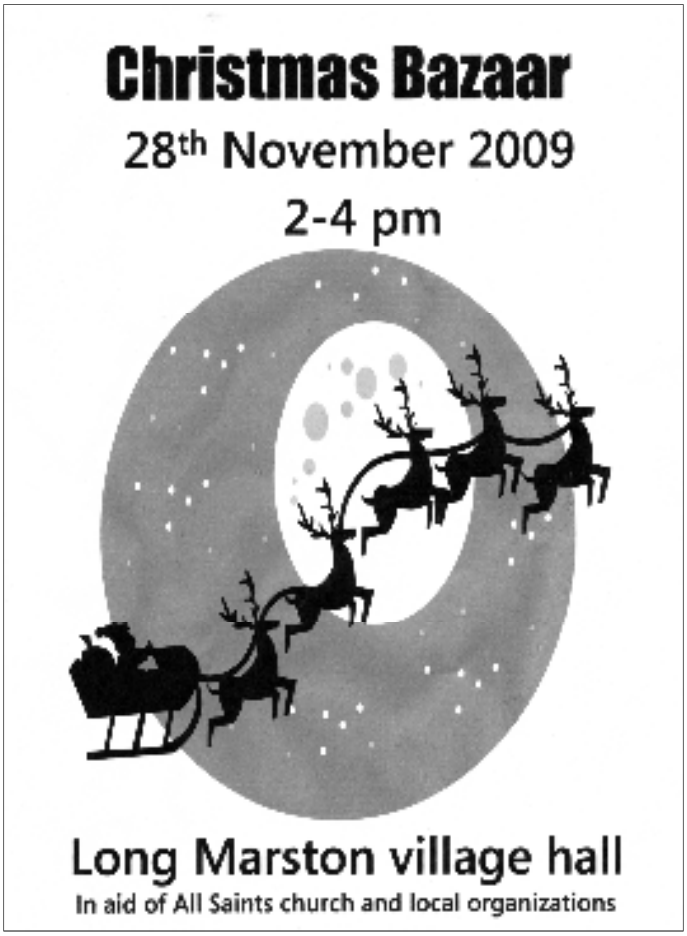
The show features three Cheddington artists: Christine Bass (painter), James Sansome (sculptor) and Mick Waterhouse (woodcarver); plus Susan Erskine-Jones (painter and printmaker), Kirsteen Holuj (ceramic sculpture), Julia Parkes (jeweller), Sue Richardson (textile artist) and Kate Wilkinson (jeweller).

See townfarmopenstudio.blogspot.com for the variety of work on show.

**ONE WEEKEND ONLY: Friday 27 - Sunday 29 November, 10am – 5 pm**

6 Town Farm, Off High Street, Cheddington, BEDS LU7 0TT
PLEASE PARK ON HIGH STREET – NOT IN TOWN FARM

**Free entry and refreshments. Donations in aid of Iain Rennie Hospice at Home.**




## Diary dates...

**Tring Rural Parish Council meetings** (8pm)
*The public are welcome to attend these meetings.*
**Wednesday 18 November** Wilstone village hall.
**Wednesday 16 December** Puttenham Cecilia hall.

**Friday 30/ Saturday 31 October**
Charity Christmas card sales, Court House, Berkhamsted.
**Wednesday 4 November**
Tring Parish Mens Society. See article page 30
**Saturday 7 November**
Fireworks and bonfire, Old Tom's Meadow, LM, 6.30pm.
**Sunday 8 November**
Remembrance Sunday . see Church services
**Friday 13 November**
Christmas food fair at PE Mead's Farm Shop, 6 - 9.30pm
**Saturday 14 November**
Vinyl Music Party Night. 8pm Wilstone village hall.
**Saturday 14 November**
Cecilia Musical evening. 8pm Cecilia Hall.
**Friday 20 November**
Wilstone Film Night 8pm
**Sunday 22 November**
Pantomime auditions, see details on page 5.
**Sunday 22 November**
All Saints Sunday Club 10am. Start of Nativity rehearsals.
**Friday 27 November**
Tring Traditional Christmas Festival
**Friday 27 November-Sunday 29 November**
Art in Cheddington—see advert.
**Saturday 28 November**
Christmas Bazaar. LM village hall 2-4pm
**Saturday 5 December**
Long Marston Cricket Club Race night. See ad on page 7
**Friday 11 December**
Wilstone Film Night 8pm
**Thursday 17 December**
Father Christmas visits Wilstone

***Your local event details can be included here for free.***

## Times for mobile library

***Thursdays, fortnightly: November 5th & 19th.***

| | |
|---|---|
| **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.

**TO ALL LOCAL CHILDREN AGED 8 TO 14 YEARS:**

# PANTOMIME AUDITIONS

FOR THE **CHILDREN'S CHORUS** OF NEIL GURNEY'S

**DICK WHITTINGTON**

will be held in Long Marston Village Hall
on SUNDAY, 22nd NOVEMBER at 3.30pm.

***** PARENTS MUST ALSO ATTEND*****

Priority will be given to children living within the catchment area of (or attending) Long Marston School.

**PANTOMIME PERFORMANCES WILL BE IN LONG MARSTON VILLAGE HALL ON: 18th, 19th & 20th February 2010**. (Dress rehearsal: 16th Feb.)

**This is half term in Herts.**

Children's rehearsals start on **Sunday, 3rd January 2pm - 5pm** and continue every Sunday until the performances.

**There will be only SIX rehearsals before the Technical and Dress Rehearsals and LOTS of songs & dances to learn, so you must be prepared to work very hard and concentrate during rehearsals.**

→→→ ALL children must be able to attend ALL rehearsals ←←←

***PARENTS PLEASE NOTE: ~***

***Be prepared to help with the children during at least 2 rehearsals and 1 performance.***
***The Dress & Technical rehearsals may finish very late at night. The performances finish 10.30 – 11pm.***

**For more information, contact Vicky Hayes on 01296 661586**

# PANTOMIME MEETING FOR ADULTS

## Sunday, 22nd November at 5.00pm
## Long Marston Village Hall
## Would YOU like to be involved in next year's Pantomime?

("DICK WHITTINGTON" - 18th, 19th & 20th February 2010)

We are always in need of more volunteers, so PLEASE come along to this short meeting, during which you can put your name forward to help in any of the following teams**: front of house (selling refreshments, raffle tickets, programmes, etc.) costumes, props, scenery painting or construction, backstage crew and make-up.**

Neil will also be casting the Pantomime, so if you are interested in actually appearing on stage, please be brave and come along. After all, if there is not a part suitable for you in this Pantomime, there's always next year!

*(We don't start working on the Pantomime until January - only 7 weeks from start to finale – so your Christmas and New Year celebrations will not be affected)*

**EVERYONE WELCOME**

Would you like to help, but can't attend this meeting? Contact Vicky Hayes on 01296 661586.

# *In brief...*

## Hi-De-Hi Wilstone

THE theme for the 2010 Wilstone fete has been chosen as Hi De Hi based on the television series in the 80s featuring Maplin's seaside holiday camp set in the 50's. If you would like to be involved in the planning of this event as a member of the fete planning committee and/or helping out on the day (June 5th), please contact the fete committee chairperson, Jill Walker on 01442 827891 or email: jillmarywalker@btinternet.com.

## Long Marston parent and toddler Group

IF you have a youngster who is not at school, 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 something for them to do and 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 moment of tranquillity whilst the junior members of the family have fun in a safe environment.
Call Sally Smith on 01296 661689 for further information.

## Birth announcement

JOHN and Carole Harrison are thrilled to announce the arrival of their fourth grandchild. Nicola and Rob had a healthy boy, Ryan, on 10th October, a brother for Skye.

## Ashridge events

7 November 2009 2pm - 4pm
**Badger Tea and Talk** £15.00
Learn about badgers and how they live on the
Estate and then enjoy a country tea. Booking required.
01442 851227
Over 16 s

21 November 2009 2-4pm
**Incredible Edible Dormouse Tea and Talk** £15.00
Learn all about our local rare animal
followed by a country tea. Booking Required.
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Over 16 s

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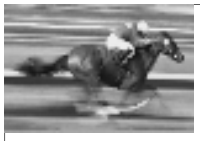
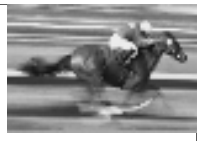


# LONG MARSTON CRICKET CLUB
# GALA RACE NIGHT



**This is to be a LADIES EVENING of RACING, with champagne reception and nibbles. Prizes for best turned out!!**

**Saturday 5th December 2009**

**7.15pm for 7.30pm start**

**Tickets £5 (£2.50 children) to include hot supper**

## Buy a horse for only £5! Place a bet for only 50p!

**To buy a horse, sponsor a race, reserve tickets for the night, or just for more information, please call Martin on 01296 660354 or email him at martinj.keable@virgin.net**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For more information or to arrange a visit, please contact our Playleader: Teresa Giddings on 07925 185311

**LONG MARSTON BABY & TODDLER GROUP**

Everyone Welcome. Come And Meet Some New Faces:
**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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# Sudoku Corner by Colin Moore

**No 44 Easy**

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

Continuing with our series of easier puzzles make a start by the usual inspection method. You should soon solve the right hand middle box. Always try to complete lines or boxes with only 2 or 3 squares unsolved. Solution on p25.


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in Wilstone

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All served by Liz and her team of friendly local staff.
Please pop in for a little, or a lot, or just come for a cup of tea or coffee and a chat - you'll be most welcome.

**We look forward to seeing you and to serving our community.**

# Funeral services for two great contributors to village life

SUNDAY the 20th September 2009 was a very sad day for Wilstone. Two very well known and much loved ladies died on that day.

## Inger Glasser

Mrs Inger Glasser, beloved wife of the late Harry , had lived in the heart of Wilstone & supported its community activities for many years. She was renowned for her feisty determination, elegance, paintings and sculptures.

The "Celebration of her life" held at the Amersham crematorium was packed with family and friends from home and abroad.

## Eileen Doley

Mrs Eileen Doley, beloved wife of Ian and sister of Doreen moved to Wilstone in 1965. She was a remarkable lady and was always helping others and fundraising for St. Cross, the village hall and the Ian Rennie at home team. She was also a regular contributor to the *Village News* but often under an assumed name.

Her memorial service in St. Cross, conducted by the Rev'd Jo Wetherall was filled with family and friends and included a heartfelt tribute by her long standing friend the Rev'd Janet Ridgeway. The collection for the Friends of St. Cross raised over £500

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# Borneo 2009

*by Max Baiden*

YOU may remember Merle Fitzpatrick and I, as well as 35 other students from Tring School, were on a mission to raise £3500 to join a World Challenge Expedition to Borneo this summer. Many of you were generous enough to help us with our fundraising efforts and we are really grateful to everyone who supported us. Well we got there! Never in our wildest dreams did we think that it would be as amazing as it was. Our journey took us into National Parks, through lively jungle and to fantastic village communities. Some of the favourite parts of our trip were:

- Seeing the orang-utans at Sepilok
- Speeding over the waves at 6:00am in the National Park.
- Snorkelling around the Islands near Kota Kinabalu.
- Me almost getting to the top and Merle's group getting to the top of Mount Kinabalu (It was too windy on top for my group)

**Bako National Park**

- Seeing the children's smiling faces after our lessons at the school
- Building benches for the local community
- Living with Nancy (our host) and her family in Bario where we started our jungle trek
- Flying in a plane with 14 seats!
- Coming face to face with a huge spitting spider!
- Learning how to manage a budget
- Discovering new skills – and our weaknesses and strengths
- Working as a team
- Sleeping in a hammock in the Jungle (even though some of us fell out)
- Cooking around the campfire
- Seeing a proboscis monkey (the one with the long nose)
- Eating delicious, healthy meals every day including fresh fruit
- Playing volleyball with the locals
- Helping a community less well off than ourselves
- Haggling with the locals on the Gaya Street Market
- Seeing a fantastic new country and their way of life

**With the Orang-utans at Sepilok**

World Challenge is an excellent opportunity to discover more than just our own little worlds. It is one of the highest regarded statements to put on your CV. The World Challenge Trip from Tring School in 2011 is to The Himalayas and Rajasthan – I am really tempted. Raising the money was really hard work but I will never forget Borneo and have come back with plenty of pictures and memories which will stay with me forever.

**Sleeping in hammocks**

# Hedgehogs

*by Vic Spratt*

WHILST making way for the Wilstone affordable housing development scheme at the site at the rear of 36-44 Tring Road, I had to demolish a shed which would be in the way of the new houses. After taking down the side panels the wooden floor which was built on top of wooden pallets, had to be taken up and in one of the pallets was a large nest composed of mostly grass but some old rag and bits of plastic.
Fearing something unpleasant might still be occupying the nest, it was gingerly nudged and prodded, nothing emerged and so further investigation was carried out only to discover a family of hedgehogs, five in all. It appeared that they had hibernated and were tucked up for the winter, this seemed a bit early but with the recent chilly weather they have probably got the right idea. They had to be moved so were gently relocated to a compost heap which consists mostly of fresh grass cuttings. They burrowed into it and hopefully will settle in for the winter and happily survive. Unfortunately when building of the new houses starts they will have to move again but who knows where? The photograph shows one little chap who was off to find another home.

# Parish Council news

by Phil Buchi

## Flood defence group needed

AN article on page 16 in this issue floats *(?)* the idea of forming a flood defence group in Long Marston to help tackle the causes of flooding from the Long Marston Brook, which flows through the village. Dawn Slade, Clerk to the Parish Council, has asked interested residents to get in touch with her. *(Contact details are on the opposite page.)* At the previous Parish Council meeting, Keith Lead from the Environment Agency, attended to give advice on flood prevention self-help. Since then he has surveyed the length of the Long Marston Brook through the village, accompanied by Cllr. Tomlinson and Mrs Slade, and has been able to identify some problem areas which could be fixed fairly simply. In some other villages, effective flood prevention action has been taken by groups of villagers themselves, with advice and some money from the Environment Agency. The same deal is on offer to us. The Parish Council wish to encourage people to come forward and form a group which could take action, with help from the Environment Agency. Judging from the extensive information on their website, the villagers of East Hanney in Oxfordshire seem to have created a valuable community project with their flood group, and achieved real results. The existence of an organised group appears to have attracted some official action too. If you would like to help fix this problem in Long Marston contact Dawn Slade. A good pair of Wellies would be an advantage.

## Affordable housing decision

THE Wilstone affordable housing scheme, and the plan for additional car parking in Grange Road, Wilstone, went before the Dacorum Development Control Committee on 22nd October. The applications were granted and the schemes will go ahead. The plans had not been taken at the 1st October meeting, as had been expected, because some amendments had been submitted by the developer. Planning Officers recommended approval of both schemes. A full report on the decision will be in the December edition of *Village News*, as full details were not available before we went to press.

## Lighting up time

THE bus stop and corner in the centre of Long Marston is to be better lit as Councillors decided to spend £1,000 on providing a new street light by Raven's Court. Villagers have complained about the darkness at the crossroads which is also a busy junction. The process will now begin of seeking the various permissions and agreeing the exact site of the new lamp post.


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# Parish Council news

## New train signalled

THERE was a pleasant interlude at the October council meeting when Councillors had to consider purchasing a replacement train for the playground at Long Marston. The existing wooden engine has come to the end of the line, so to speak, and catalogues were circulated from suppliers of wooden trains showing various configurations of locomotive and rolling stock. After some debate about what 5-year olds might prefer, Councillors decided that perhaps they were not best qualified to judge, and wisely decided to seek advice from the Pre-School Group before making this (not inconsiderable) investment. All in an evening's work for a Parish Councillor.

## At last!

"WE'RE NOT leaving until a decision is made", warned the Clerk. Stern words were apparently necessary to make sure that the now decrepit village notice board in Long Marston was replaced without further delay. It worked. All agreed which type of board should be purchased, and that it should be placed by the post box. Phew. So we could all go home.

**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
Mrs Kim Deathe 01296 662 623

***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**

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

FARM P.E. MEAD & Sons SHOP

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Jon & Beckie look forward to seeing you.

Richard Miller's open mic night last Monday of the month.
Quiz night first Sunday of the month.

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# *PLUMBER*

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## *The agricultural story line…* *by David Mead*

# The Home Guard in West Herts

**"RIGHT.** Get fell in! **Atten-shun!** Right dress! Eyes front. Stand at ease. Stand easy. Today we are travelling in Bill Jeffery's coal lorry to Berkhamsted Common. No.1 Section will man a road block. Sections 2 and 3 will do an attack and defence exercise at Coalharbour Farm."

At first they were known as the Local Defence Volunteers (L.D.Vs). On 20th August 1940 the name changed to the Home Guard. Cap badges were issued in November, battle-dress the following September. Boots were then issued but there were difficulties with sizes. Most boots were far too big. Socks were never issued. Boots were not to be worn for normal work!!

The first jobs involved the making and working of the road blocks; old cars and machinery were used. Concrete blocks can still be seen by the road in Dagnell. Our nearest was in the road by the farm shop, an old black car. Stopping people and examining identification papers and then searching vehicles. All crashed aircraft had to be guarded and souvenir hunters kept at bay. A light bomber crashed in the field next to the cemetery. R.A.F. Halton soon removed it. In 1941 an order came from above: "Captured German airmen must not be treated as guests but as prisoners". In one case chocolate and cigarettes had been offered. On Easter Sunday, a holiday, Church services were suggested! All the Home Guard were volunteers, most had jobs to do, some had experience of the 1914-18 war, some had just left school and would be called up in the regular army.

In the summer evenings and on Saturdays and Sundays trenches were dug, timber was prepared for defences, bottles filled for Molotov cocktails, all privately owned weapons were restored and drilled with. Identity of enemy aircraft was taught. The first test call-out took place at 0300 hours on July 2nd, 1940. Dismissal at 0400 hours. There occurred several alarms on 7th September. There were four or five turn-outs at night and the next morning Major Swan made this note: "It has become history that the enemy embarkations were actually made on that night. The landing craft were dispersed with heavy loss by our bombers and surface craft. It is doubtful whether more than one German reached dry land on this side of the Channel".
Gradually the training became more intense with regular troops instructing and taking part. Bicycles were used to increase mobility; a large area had to be covered. (There was no bicycle fund.) Training in the rifle, Sten gun and spigot mortar. 30 rounds of live ammunition per person per month were allocated. A warning to all ranks who kept cigarettes, matches, socks or photos of their best girl in their ammunition pouches.

**Cap badge worn by the Hertfordshire Home Guard units.**

In 1943 the road blocks were removed. The Home Guard helped with the harvest. Agricultural workers were given lighter duties. There were 3 flying bombs in the area. On 3rd December 1944 the Home Guard was stood down. A melancholy reality. They were the most numerous, highly trained volunteer army ever raised in this or any other country.
*King George VI, December 2nd 1944.*

*"History will say that your share in the greatest of all our struggles for freedom was a vitally important one. You have given your service without thought for reward. You have earned in full measure your Country's gratitude".*

No. 4 Platoon, C Company. Just some of the names: Corporal Dick Bateman, Sergeant Fred Bateman, Lieutenant Bert Bussey, Tom Chapman, Henry Chapman, Thomas Chappin, Henry Chappin, Donald Dean, Leonard Dean, Arthur Gates, Harry Glasser, Gilbert Grace, Fred Jeffery, Howard Ross, Don Bignell, G. Casemore, Ron Kitchener, John Rush, Reg Winfield. There were 9 Webbs in No. 4 Platoon. Nearly 600 men involved in C Company.

I would like to thank Tommy Chappin for the loan of the book: "7th Hertfordshire Battalion Home Guard", edited by Henry K. O'Kelly, to which acknowledgement is given. *(If any reader has photographs of the local Home Guard or LDV's we would be delighted to publish them. Ed.)*

## *Village News editor wanted*

We would like to recruit an additional editor to join the established team of volunteers who produce your village magazine.

It's not hard, full training is given, and it is a fun way to make a valued contribution to the community. Each editor produces 2 or 3 issues per year and the months are agreed in advance.

You don't need to be an IT expert. If you have a computer running Windows XP or Vista and can produce a Word document then we can show you how to do it. We supply the software.
Call Phil Buchi on 01442 890599 and have a chat about it. No obligation!

# Flood defence group for Long Marston?

***by Keith Lead, Environment Agency***

*This article contains information and advice for those residents of the Parish whose properties may be affected by flooding. If anyone is interested in forming a Flood Group, please contact Dawn Slade (Parish Council Clerk) on 01442 824138 or email* clerk@tringruralpc.org.uk

IT IS a fact of life that the Environment Agency has a limited sum of money for maintenance and therefore has to prioritise its work. This inevitably results in many of the smaller watercourses not being looked after as you would expect.

My role in Flood Risk Management is to make communities aware of this fact and to encourage systems of "self help" by facilitating work and / or schemes. Rural parishes may have fewer properties at flood risk, but are just as important and consequently I am encouraging a Flood Plan to be formulated.

Many of you as landowners are not aware that, if you adjoin a watercourse, you are very likely to be responsible for its maintenance as a riparian owner, as the bank(s) and possibly the bed will be in your ownership. If the watercourse is designated as "main river", such as the Long Marston Brook which flows through the village, then the Agency has permissive powers to undertake such works as it deems necessary.

With the many kilometres of "main river" over the Thames Region, we have to prioritise our work relating it to the flood risk to property and therefore much of our maintenance work is carried out in towns where there are significant numbers of properties at risk. Consequently this results in many smaller communities left at risk which is why I am assisting many parishes and advising what you can do to help your community!

- Check your ownership. You may assume that a watercourse running outside your property adjacent to a road is the Highways responsibility, but it could be yours.
- Regularly check watercourses for blockages or debris, particularly where there are culverts, sluices and trash screens.
- Link up the actions via a Flood Working Group. Small groups of villagers could take on larger tasks with assistance from the Agency.
- Have a flood plan for your property, particularly if you have flooded before. Know where sandbags can be obtained from, or better still, fit flood resistance products to your airbricks and doors.

Finally there are two good web sites that you might like to visit to assist your plan(s):
www.thehanneysfloodgroup.org.uk
www.floodforum.org.uk

*Keith Lead*
*Technical Specialist, Flood Risk Management*
*Environment Agency*

# Neighbourhood Policing

***by PCSO 6096 Thomas Montgomery, Herts Police***

SO WE are midway through October and the year seems to be passing very quickly. At my count we are 63 days away from Christmas, so this gives me the opportunity to remind everyone of the increased risk of Burglaries in the area. Please ensure that we all take practical precautions to reduce this risk. Don't advertise your home, where possible keep high valued items out of view. If you have purchased new items ensure that the empty boxes are discarded in a way that it is not easy for someone to see what you may have inside your home. With it becoming much darker early on ensure your home looked "lived" in. If you are away set timers switches or ask the neighbour to check on your property. We have had a few burglaries in the area so let's be aware. More advice can be found on our website.

Again thefts from motor vehicles are still causing problems, leaving the sat nav/phone holder on display will be a temptation for a thief, so where possible remove everything from your car when leaving it unattended.

With us being in the midst of the early dark nights, can we just ask that if you are walking around the area, where possible use the pavements, try to wear something that would be visible to other road users and remind the children to be careful as some of our roads have no lighting.

**Appeal**

We have unfortunately seen a few incidents of Arson in the area of Tring, we would ask that should anyone receive any information in relation to this that they contact us, alternatively contact the crime stoppers hotline.

Upcoming Events

Local Surgeries- Tesco, Tring Every Monday @ 13.00

Silk Mill Community Centre Every Wednesday @ 09.00 meet local officers to discuss any problems or to get crime prevention advice.

Tring Traditional Christmas Festival Friday 27th November 2009 18.30-21.30 Hrs

Mobile Police Station Times:

Monday 16th November 2009 11.00-13.30 Wilstone (Village Hall)
Long Marston (Victory Hall)

Should anyone need to contact us, please visit www.herts.police.uk to see your local officers and how to contact them, alternatively contact us on 0845 33 00 222 or in an emergency call 999. Crime stoppers: 0800 555 111

# Gun dog training proves great fun (and no guns)

***by our roving reporter***

EIGHTEEN dogs and their owners turned out in a field in Astrope on a bright Sunday morning at the end of September to take part in a training event organised by Mike Walker, well known locally for his instruction at the Long Marston Dog Training Club. This morning was a bit different though. Mike wanted to give novice and experienced dogs the opportunity to have a go at some gun dog tasks. The dogs don't have to go on shooting parties, he explained, it's just that these tasks are good training experiences in their own right for both owners and dogs.

It certainly looked that way. The dogs had great fun sprinting along the carefully laid out courses to retrieve various objects. Almost all the dogs, even first timers, quickly got the idea that they were to chase after the dummy and find it behind a bale or hurdle. But the concept of bringing it back was another matter entirely. Strenuous efforts by handlers were required with whistle and voice to keep doggy minds on the job in hand.

**This is how it's done. Handler Melvin explains to Alf (the Terrier) that Harvey (the Labrador) has the right idea.**

**Got it! A successful retrieval.** (Photo: Village News)

With so many dogs, whistles and calls it was easy to get confused and succumb to some nearby distraction. Apart from being great fun to watch, it was clear that all the dogs were having a great time, and generally the results were not bad at all. One or two experienced dogs were excellent, and some first timers did remarkably well too. With lunch provided for all as a bonus, there is likely to be a scurry for a repeat of this well organised event.

## WANTED

Friendly, caring home environment in which a small well-behaved, house trained dog can be looked after while the owners are on holiday. Must have secure garden. Good rates paid. Any animal lover interested please phone 07963 224 366 evenings.

**Keen owners ready to start their (dogs) training!** (Photo: Will Baxter)

# Long Marston Cricket Club

*by Paul Dumpleton*

ANOTHER season completed and ground put to bed for the winter. A mixed year, where our 1st and 2nd XI's struggled in their respective divisions. The major success was the introduction of a 3rd XI to continue the development into league cricket of our young players. This side, guided by Simon Vessey and Geoff Graveson finished mid table in their first season with some very creditable and encouraging performances. Cricket continues during the winter with our colts and veterans keeping the muscles loose by playing in indoor leagues on those cold dark evenings.

Saturday 26th September saw the club's awards and presentation evening take place at Marlins. A very welcome large number of players, friends, colts and parents enjoyed a lively social gathering and awards were presented as below by club president Jim Dean:

**Coaches Awards**
**U9 Adam Connors**
**U11 Robbie Cogger**
**U13 James Cockbain**
**U15 Jack Doodson**
**U17 Rory MisCampbell**

**Special award**
**James Cockbain (impressive breakthrough into senior cricket)**

**Chairman's Awards** (for exceptional individual performance)
Mark Green – 129 not out (at Challow)
Adam Wells – 130 (at Marlins v Warners End)
Matthew Storey – 104 not out(at Marlins v Brooklands)
Matthew Storey – 115 not out (at Marlins v Brooklands)
Mark Geen – Hattrick (at Bourton Vale)
Adam Wells – Hattrick (at Balinger)

**JOHN CALDER CUP 2009** (best **junior performance)**
**Matthew Storey**

**HAROLD CUTLER MEMORIAL CUP 2009** (most promising young cricketer)
**Tawanda Bwerudza**

**MARY SIMS MEMORIAL CUP 2009** (best **match winning performance)**
**Mark Green & Mike Lyons**

**DUMPY SALVER 2009** (best all round performance in a league game)
Lee Beesley

**LEN DEAN CUP 1st XI 2009** (Players player)
Peter Toovey

**LEN DEAN CUP 2nd XI 2009** (Players player)
James Beesley

**DON DEAN CUP 3rd XI 2009** (Players player)
Jack Hamper

**THOMAS CHAPMAN MEMORIAL AWARD 2009**
(services to the club)
Geoff Graveson

The Annual General Meeting will be held at Marlins on Thursday 12th November.
The club is holding a race night on Saturday 5th December (see separate advertisement). All are welcome to come and join us.
.

# Pre-School News

FIRST STEPS Pre-School is held at Victory Hall, Long Marston every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9.15am – 11.45am during term time, with lunch clubs on Tuesday and Friday until 1.15pm. We welcome all children aged between 2½ and 5 and as a result many children stay with us until they 'cross the road to big school'. Half term will run from 26th October – 2 November inclusive and the autumn term will end on Friday 18th December.

November is the month of fireworks and bonfires and both of these subjects will be covered at First Steps in the coming month. Time will also be spent looking at 'My Family' before the story of Goldilocks and the three bears is examined in more detail. In line with Early Years Foundation Stage guidelines, the children study a wide range of topics and have recently spent a week making and tasting foods from around the world – after one session during which the children had made 'curry pictures', a very fragrant aroma filled many a local household!

We have recently welcomed Fenella Blankhertz to First Steps and we hope she will be very happy during her time with us and enjoy the themes planned for the rest of the term and the year ahead.

If you would like to know more about Pre-School, come and look round, or put your child's name on our waiting list, please contact either Teresa Giddings, pre-school leader, on 07925 185311 (during pre-school hours) or our Chair, Sally Smith, on 01296 661689.

++++++++++++++++++++++

# Fitness myths debunked by Jazzercise

*by Kerri Donnellan*

MYTHS are entertaining when they involve Greek gods and goddesses or tales of the Trojan War. But, myths about physical fitness can be downright dangerous. Dozens of myths circulate the physical fitness world, and sometimes it's hard to separate fact from fiction. Take a look at these common fitness myths.

- **Myth # 1: Exercise turns my fat into muscle** - We all dream about our fat miraculously transforming into muscle as we log hours on the treadmill. But, the truth is that muscle and fat are two entirely different types of tissues. One type simply cannot turn into the other. However, if you exercise, you will build up muscle fibres, and fat cells will shrink as you burn more calories than you eat.
- **Myth # 2: No pain, no gain** - You may think that you didn't work hard enough if you don't feel sore the next day. This is completely untrue. Sure, it's normal to have delayed onset muscle soreness when you first start a fitness program. But, other than that, muscle soreness is an indication that your exercise was too intense.
- **Myth # 3: Lifting weights will make me bulk up** - Most women don't have the testosterone levels needed to look like the Hulk. So, don't shy away from weight training. Regular strength training will actually make you look leaner. That's because a pound of muscle takes up less space than a pound of fat.
- **Myth # 4: I can spot reduce my belly fat with crunches** - Crunches or any abdominal exercises will strengthen your muscles, but you cannot direct your body to lose pounds in a particular area. So, continue with exercises for your abdominal region. Then complement those workouts with cardiovascular activities to burn calories. As you burn more calories than you take in, you will shed fat, and your muscle will become more visible. Of course, genetics will decide which area of your body shrinks first.
- **Myth # 5: Exercise is more effective in the morning** - The early bird may catch the worm, but workouts can be equally valuable at any time of the day. There is no solid research to support that one time of the day is more effective than another. That means the best time for you to exercise is when you will stick with it! Find a time of day that works for you, then block off that time on your calendar.

**Myth # 6: For noticeable results, I have to live at the gym** - You may not gain a Million-Dollar Baby body overnight, but you don't have to set-up camp at your local gym to see genuine results. The recommendation is 30 minutes of exercise on most days of the week. And even if you can't meet those guidelines, keep in mind that some exercise is always better than no exercise.

Jazzercise can help you exercise effectively and safely, and can give you long term results to fitness, health and looks by providing a fun, positive environment in which to burn calories and tone muscles. 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.

## Rummage in your wardrobes for the Hospice of St Francis

PEOPLE across the area are being asked to rummage in the back of their wardrobe for items they may never have worn and to clear them out and donate them to the Hospice of St Francis in Berkhamsted for stock in their charity shops. The Donate Don't Dump campaign – which has just been launched - was inspired by the recent TV programme on charity shops on BBC One featuring Mary Portas.

The Hospice is looking for businesses and organisations, pubs, sports teams, schools and colleges to take part in the initiative.

All it takes is someone to organise a collection, the Hospice team will come and visit and collect all the donations given. If you would also like a member of the team to give a short presentation about the work of the Hospice, that can be arranged at the same time.

Claire de Silva, spokesperson for the Hospice of St Francis said: "It's such an easy thing for people to do - they don't need to worry about going to a charity shop with their donations, just have a sort out at home and bring a bag of goodies into work and we'll do the rest."

We can turn your unwanted items into cash for the Hospice which relies on public donations to fund its specialist care for terminally ill patients from across Herts, Beds and Bucks.

If you would like to take part in Donate Don't Dump appeal at your office, pub, with friends etc please get in touch with Pippa Brush at the Hospice of St Francis on 01442 869555.

**Claire de Silva**
PR Officer, The Hospice of St Francis
01442 869555 ext 213 (Mon and Tues)
For urgent media enquiries at other times please call 07515294632
Follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/hosfherts

Please support our work today by making a regular commitment to the Hospice. It means you will be helping our staff who are prepared to work tirelessly when time is precious. Call 01442 869555 today to find out how you can make a real difference.

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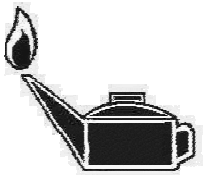

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# Recipe page

by Anna Ashwell

## Mary's Fruit Cake

ANDY'S mum gave this recipe to me. She, and now I, have used it for Christmas, wedding and birthday cakes many times. It can be eaten immediately or you can "feed" it with alcohol and let it mature.

This recipe makes sufficient mixture for a 9-inch cake tin. Half the quantity is enough for a 7-inch tin. For best results line the tin with baking parchment.

**Ingredients:**

- ½ lb (225g) butter or margarine
- ½ lb (225g) soft brown sugar
- 6 eggs
- grated rind and juice of one lemon
- ½ teaspoon each of ground cinnamon, ground nutmeg, ground cloves and mixed spice
- 6 tablespoons of **black** treacle
- ¾ lb (340g) plain flour
- 2 lb (900g) dried fruit. You can use whatever combination you prefer. I usually use raisins, currants and sultanas but you can also add things like candied peel, figs or glace cherries.
- 12 tablespoons of fruit juice
- 1 level teaspoon of baking powder

3-6 tablespoons of rum or brandy

**Method:**

- Soak the fruit in the rum or brandy overnight
- Cream the butter (or marg), add the sugar and then cream again
- Beat in the egg yolks with the lemon rind, spices and treacle
- Work in half the flour with half the fruit with enough liquid to moisten
- Add the baking powder to the remaining flour and add along with the rest of the fruit
- Before it is completely mixed, whip the egg-whites stiffly and fold in adding the remaining liquid, if any
- Bake in a slow oven (170-180°C) for 2 to 3 hours. (Test with a skewer after about 1¾ hours)

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# Juiced a Minute

*by Andy Ashwell*

THE weather leading up to the scarecrow competition was pretty good for mid-September and all fingers were crossed hoping that it would stay fine for the weekend. As D-day drew near, more and more scarecrows of all shapes and sizes started to appear around the village.

Florence and I had great fun walking around scarecrow-spotting and spied well over twenty in all. There were some fantastic efforts on view and any dreams we had had of winning gradually faded away as the week progressed.

I must admit that I had kept our scarecrow hidden in the shed for a while – not for any sinister reasons – but simply because he was stuffed with newspaper, rather than straw, and consequently unlikely to survive a damp night outside without morphing into a shapeless gob of mushiness. When I eventually lynched him up on the house sign, he did look rather splendid in Florence's old pyjamas and a pair of Grandpa's moth-eaten Y-fronts.

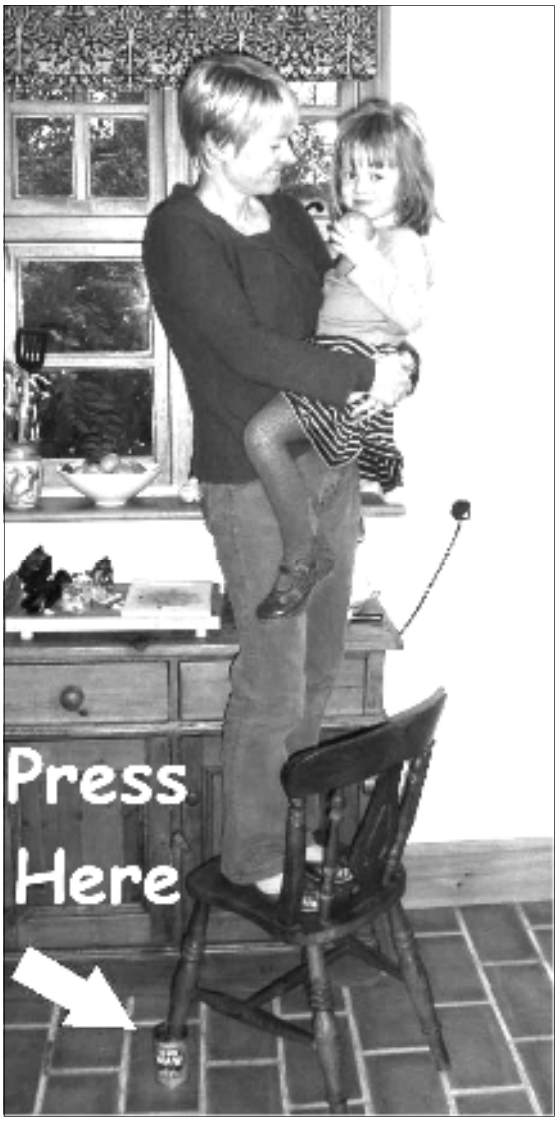
When we arrived at the field where the competition was to take place, we discovered that several new scarecrows – which, perhaps like ours, were also too delicate to face the elements – had crept out of their secret, hidey-holes and into the arena to further jeopardise our already slim chance of victory.

As the kids ran around throwing hay everywhere and everyone cast their vote(s), I sat down in the evening sunshine and enjoyed the delicious hog-roast with an accompanying beer. When the time came to announce the winner, not surprisingly, Florence's scarecrow didn't win. That honour went to our neighbours, Oli and family, with the tallest scarecrow in the world. Then, as if to rub salt into my wounds, I discovered that Florence and her cousin Martha had both voted for Oli's giant, despite my best efforts to steer them towards No.11 and his dodgy pants.

The lovely autumn weather that blessed the scarecrow competition has meant that our apples have ripened (or dropped off) earlier than expected. Because our tree is not a 'cooker' we are rather limited as to what to do with the profusion of windfalls that keep littering the lawn. Hoping for some inspiration (and a solution) we visited Jaecocks Orchard in Tring for their 'Apple Day'. Florence was fascinated by the man with the apple press and even 'helped' him to turn the screw to extract the juice.

When we arrived home, she rushed eagerly up the garden to collect some of our own fallen apples to make into juice. I tried to explain that we didn't have the correct equipment – but she was adamant that we did. I had a quick think and then chopped up some apples and placed them in between two of Mummy's posh nesting-pans. We then stood on top, but our combined weight failed to produce anything more than mildly bruised, chopped-apple. More pressure was obviously needed in order to extract juice, but not the sort of pressure that I was getting from Florence for failing to produce any – or from Mummy for using her best pans.

Two small cans from the recycling box and a rough calculation indicated that a four-fold increase in squashing-pressure – up to an amazing 2kg/cm$^2$ (or almost twice atmospheric) – was possible. So I filled the larger (baked bean) can with the bruised apple and put the smaller (sweet corn) can on top. With Mummy and Florence standing on a chair with its leg




**Andy's makeshift apple press**
(Picture Andy Ashwell)

in the top can, the makeshift apple-press was complete. After about two minutes a tiny trickle of juice appeared; after 20 more we had an impressive 16ml (4 teaspoons full) of juice to show for our efforts. That works out at around four hours to fill a small cup, yet still leaves no solution to the surplus-apple problem…except that they make great compost!

We now have about a hundred good apples in the garage ready to feed the mice, a few bags full out front for passers-by, but the rest are, sadly, destined for the compost heap and thus on to feed next-year's vegetables and, no doubt, next-year's greedy slugs too.

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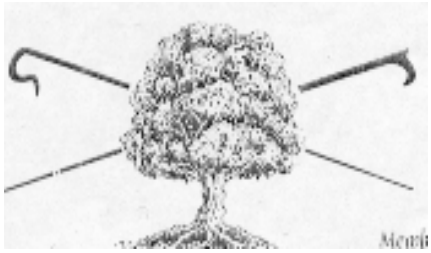

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# The Puttenham Page

compiled by Christine Rutter

## CECILIA MUSICAL EVENING

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THE Puttenham Trust OCTOBER SUPPER & AUCTION was a great success. How can you fail with Mr. John Bly as the Auctioneer. With wit and much laughter he easily emptied our pockets of (after expenses) £1130 – a really excellent result. We are most grateful, John. This amount is to be split between Cancer Research (nominated by Margaret Kaye), Ian Rennie Hospice at Home (nominated by Sue Miles) the Renal Unit at Churchill Hospital, Oxford (nominated by Jill Atkin) and the Altzheimers Society (nominated by Gerald Ford). The evening commenced with a full supper, and our thanks go to those who nominated food items towards the meal. The "Guess the weight of the marrow/squash" competition was won by Mike Atkin (the marrow) and Margaret Bagnel (the squash).

The evening would not have been possible had it not been for the generosity of all those who contributed items for the auction. Apart from the usual home produce, there were also some very generous donations of items for auctioning, all of which caused much excitement and fast, keen bidding. Also thanks for everyone who donated raffle prizes for the evening. ***Thank you, all.***

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John Kaye 01296 662975

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**Vicar**
Rev'd Joanne Wetherall 01442 851200
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*Wilstone St. Cross:*
Andrew Minter 01442 823605
*Puttenham St Marys:*
Christine Rutter 01296 668337
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**Clerk to the Parish Council**
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**Long Marston Baby & Toddler Group**
Sally Smith 01296 661689
**Long Marston Tennis Club**
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*Changes or additions? Contact the Editor.*

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## Village News

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**Your editor for December will be:**
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**01442 823489**
**editorwlmp@yahoo.com**

**Our advertising managers:**
**Alison & Matthew White**
**01296 660402**
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**Deadline for the next issue is Thursday 19th November**
for the December edition. We do not publish in January.

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# The Gubblecote Gob

*By Mimi Kelly*

## Kite Fright!

TERROR strikes once again in Gubblecote as flocks of hungry red kites circle the area, it seems things are never quiet in the little hamlet! Whilst other villages are celebrating the return of this endangered species, claiming that they are 'harmless scavengers', Gubblecotians (yes, as usual) fear for their children's lives. It seems the Kites have acquired a taste for Gubblecote's little ones. Maybe they taste better than kids from the other villages… Yes, believe it or not, Red Kites have been stealing children from their very own back gardens! To catch the action we set up CCTV cameras in many of the Gubblecote gardens and it wasn't long before we got the evidence we needed- see below a terrified and helpless child as he was snatched by one of the villainous birds. Luckily for him he managed to break free from the bird's sharp talons. Others, however, were not so lucky. Children are disappearing everyday, parents are calling the police, but no evidence can be found. Now we have uncovered the truth…

In the middle of the night on the 25th September Gubblecote's Crime Response and Prevention Team were out on one of their regular night patrols. What they came across was something that they never expected to witness; on hearing a rowdy commotion coming from Long Marston Park, the team expected to find local youths responsible for all the noise. What they discovered instead left them flabbergasted. Assembled was almost every scarecrow that was due to appear at the Long Marston School Hog roast the very next day. Nearly all of them were highly intoxicated. "Drunk and disorderly" would be an understatement. They were jumping off swings, falling face first into the grass and singing 'Angels' by Robbie Williams. Maybe they had decided to celebrate their last night of freedom. Maybe they needed to drown their nerves before the big competition. We just don't know. All we do know is that one scarecrow didn't make it home that night. He didn't even make it to the competition. In his drunkenness it is suspected that he was walking in the middle of the road when he was tragically hit by a motorist. There are two lessons to be learnt from this tragedy: Always take a cab home. Never let your scarecrow out of your sight.

**Sudoku solution No44**

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

# Summer Wednesdays

*by Afra Willmore*

THE initial excitement of being off school had passed for my bigger children. My little people were tiring of lovely walks, damp picnics and their toys. The rain pattered down onto the cover of the giant paddling pool - I was wondering if I would make it through till September with my sanity. Then we remembered Tring Team Parish's Wednesday fun days.
So one drizzly Wednesday I piled a selection of my own and other people's children into the minibus and set off to Wilstone.

Halfway there we realised we were following the Banister/ Bellis 'Postman Pat' vehicle at which point I breathed a sigh of relief. I thought: "At least there will be one person I know there..." Well I don't know what I expected - a light hearted service with some crafty bits maybe? We walked into the church at Wilstone to be greeted by rabbles of children all busy, busy, busy glueing, threading, painting, playing, running and reading. Lovely serene Rev. Jo and her band of happy helpers showed the children the activities and I sat down for a break with a cup of tea and a home-made cake whilst willing volunteers read my children endless stories, threaded endless beads for necklaces and provided an endless stream of sequins for my sparkle-mad 3 year old to glue onto things.

I reacquainted myself with loads of people I knew and made some new friends! And this went on, every Wednesday through the holidays. We visited Wilstone where the theme was King of the Jungle, Long Marston for Noah's Ark based activities, Puttenham (which by the way is well worth a visit - what a gorgeous little church!) for a lovely games afternoon in glorious sunshine, and of course St John the Baptist in Aldbury for fishy fun. Tring was the base for a more traditional children's service.

Rev. Jo deserves a medal for remaining calm and cheerful even after several weeks of expert face painting. She did everything from Spiderman to scary frogs and too many butterflies to mention onto a parade of small people (although Jonti's request for a rhino face almost stumped her.) And my heartfelt thanks go to the volunteers who brought me tea, played with my children and made Wednesdays the highlight of my week. And believe it or not - all this fun was FREE!

**Rev Jo Wetherall demonstrates her face painting skills at a Wednesday fun day.** (Picture: Afra Willmore)

# News from All Saints

## Christmas Bazaar

Saturday 28th November 2 – 4pm.

We shall have our usual Cake Stall and the very popular Children's Hoopla. Donations of cakes and children's prizes – sweets, pencils, books, games, etc - would be very welcome. Please be generous so that we can keep the children entertained at this village event.

See you there!

# From the Vicarage

by Rev'd Jane Banister

## A little light reading

BOOK clubs have become very popular over the past few years. They provide an opportunity for people to read books they wouldn't necessarily choose, and also give one the motivation (and deadline!) to finish a book. You can learn a lot about yourself from what you like and don't like, as well as about other people. Each group is different however, and many fulfil a social function as much as a literary one.

The brain is as much a muscle as any other part of the body, and it needs exercise in order to keep it in good shape. Lots of us need motivation to exercise, whether in the form of better health at the end of it or through the solidarity of exercising with others and book groups can fulfil this function for the brain. Admittedly one doesn't need to be in a group to read widely, but it does add an extra dimension to hear the opinions of others and to find different interpretations of the same book.

Our spiritual life also needs to be kept in good shape. Regular prayer and worship are important in doing this but more is needed. I know that many people say they are religious but don't need to be with other people to practice it. That can lead to a very one sided view however, which becomes very centred on oneself as an individual. The Christian faith is about our relationship with God **and** with other people and the two things cannot be separated – Jesus himself condensed all his teaching into this phrase "love God, and love your neighbour as yourself".

To do this we need to continue learning, to continue stretching our minds and our understanding. So we are starting some classes in November: one course is for those interested in Confirmation (the act of commitment that we make to God as a adult having been baptised as a child). It is also open to those who would just like to find out more or who aren't sure yet. The second will be along the same lines but is for those who would like a refresher course. It will be in the form of a discussion group (location will depend on those attending) and there will be ten sessions in total. Neither group will be intimidating or scary, and I hope will provide an opportunity to get to know other people, and to reinvigorate one's faith.

If you would like to know any more, please contact Huw Bellis on 01442 822170 or Didier Jacquet on 01296 660961.

# Tring Parish Men's Society

## Flight memories

by Leslie Barker

BILL George's *Flight Memories* finally took off at our October meeting, after being delayed by bad weather in February. The title of his accompanying visual presentation, *Tales of a National Service Pilot 1952-54*, showed the precise nature of the memories.

A precise talk followed as 2553276 * George outlined his career in the RAF, explaining the different initials which follow the name of every RAF base, and how "*" changes every couple of months while training.

At the age of ten Bill, seeing warplanes flying overhead wanted to join those brave men fighting for their country. However his father was a pacifist so he became a bank clerk when he left school and did not get his opportunity to join the RAF until called up for national service. Normally only volunteers had the opportunity to be assessed for training as a pilot, but with Britain involved in a war in Korea the RAF was taking on more potential pilots.

Bill described the process from the first medical and IQ tests, through each topic to be mastered and a different plane to learn to fly at each base, to gaining his wings and, by the end of his two year's national service, flying as a stooge for the radar school. On the way he did not neglect to mention RAF social life, his three near misses, and what he found most exciting.

With a high drop out rate, only about half a dozen of the originally accepted forty 18 year olds stayed the course. His recipe for success was that though he was slow to learn, and always bottom, he eventually learnt things thoroughly – and had a passion for flying and taking planes to their limits. But space does not permit me to tell of his acrobatic experiences – only to remind you that at next month's meeting the military theme continues when Brian Berry will show a video and speak on *Britain's New Aircraft Carriers.*

**That is on Wednesday 4 November at 8pm in the parish hall. The December meeting is on 2nd of the month when I shall present the Holy Land churches designed by Antonio Barluzzi.**

# All is safely gathered in...

*by Rev'd Joanne Wetherall*

TIMES and seasons have a greater effect and pull on our lives than perhaps we like to imagine in this day and age.
We consider ourselves to be so sophisticated, with all our advances in science and technology, that a celebration of something as simple and ancient and necessary as Harvest seems perhaps just traditional, even quaint.

But whatever we like to think, there are occasions and events in the cycle of a year and in the course of our lives which stir something way down inside us, something primal and deep which connects us to the earth, to each other and to...

It's that bit, the "and", which is so difficult for very many people.

I have a suspicion that one of the reasons we consign the feelings generated by events like Harvest Festival to the category of quaint and traditional is because if we take them out and look at them harder we then have to find a new vocabulary for describing things. We start talking about things being gifts, or blessings, that they are sacred or hallowed. When we use this kind of language we run slap bang into that indescribable mystery that I know and name as God.

For me this is an encounter filled with wonder and possibility. It takes me to a place where the visible and the invisible, the natural and the spiritual, the human and the divine become permeable. The first time I recognised this encounter was when I was about 7 years old and found my first hazel nut growing in a tree. I'd only ever known bowls of brown nuts for cracking at Christmas, so when I discovered this pale yellow green one with its surrounding frilly skirt I thought it was a miracle just for me. If Christmas treats could grow on trees then there must be all sorts of possibilities in the world – I kept that hazel nut for years.

But this encounter with God, while it is wonderful, isn't a safe place you can just hide in.
For me it's more like one of those occasions when someone you love gives you a big hug to give you courage - maybe before an interview or exam or some other potentially life changing event. You want to hold yourself in that warmth and security but sooner or later you know you have to take strength from it and move forward independently.

Just like an exam or interview this encounter with God asks big questions of me. The biggest of which is: How I am to respond to God in the world?

It is a big question because for God to be meaningful, and not just fill the gaps, I need a God who knows what life is really like:-

> Who knows about poverty and being marginalised.
> Who knows about friendship and commitment, laughter and love.
> Who knows about hunger, insecurity, danger.
> Who knows the pain of loving and not being loved back.
> Who knows about torture, betrayal and death.
> Who knows about exploration, excitement, hope and longing.

Yes, I need a God who knows what it is like to be human, but actually I need more than that, I need a God who goes further, someone more than human who can help me to be more than human.

Someone who can help me transcend life and find glimpses of heaven, not just in the beauty of life, but in the ordinary and the ugly. In making coffee and washing up, in chatting with friends, in trudging round Tescos, in illness and even in death. Someone who can help me hope for justice and healing in this broken, wounded world.

That's why I find God in Jesus and respond to God through the framework of Christian faith and spirituality.

As the year turns and we harvest not only garden and farm produce, but exam results, holiday photos, friends, memories, listen to the language we use to describe these things. It's the language of mystery, the language of God.

# Long Marston's scarecrow competition

*by Liz Young*

WHAT do Harry Potter, a Calendar Girl and the man who landed on the moon have in common? Along with a host of other characters including hippies, sportsmen, flower girls and dolls, a telly tubby, scrumpy jack and a diver, they manifested themselves as scarecrows for the competition held to raise funds for Long Marston's school.

One by one scarecrows appeared during the last week of September, outside houses along the main street, then each day a few more popped up until it seemed that no one wanted to be left out of this entertaining event.

On competition day (Saturday 26 September) 35 scarecrows made their way to the Front Paddock in Chapel Lane where, during a lovely fine evening, a large crowd enjoyed a hog roast and voted for the winning entries.

This hugely successful event was organised by Ruth Robson and Andy Buttars of Marston Place. Andy cooked his home reared pig for the roast.. The prizes were a meal voucher for two, kindly donated by the Stag at Mentmore, and cash. The winners were Oli Tod, whose grandfather Brian Parkinson had made the jolly faced tall farmer Giles style scarecrow, and Kay Aylwin with her amusing farmer who had a crow pecking at his sleeve and rat coming out of his pocket. Brian Parkinson generously donated his prize back to help swell the total raised to over £700.

**Kay & Charles Aylwin's scarecrow which came second in the competition** (Picture: Liz Young)

**The winning scarecrow by Oli Tod and Kaye Aylwin** (Picture: Andy Ashwell)

Astrope Astronaut Alive

The mystery of the Astrope spaceship has, at long last, been resolved. The owner of the rusting wreck made a surprise appearance at the recent Scarecrow competition where he had hoped to meet other intelligent life-forms. "I found 38 fairly intelligent-looking, but mute, beings there..." he mused, "...plus a load of other weird Earthlings." When asked about his plans for the decrepit spaceship, he replied, "I'm hoping to take full advantage of your Earth Government's vehicle scrappage scheme and trade it in for a newer model - unless the new village shop plans to sell spares."

*More photographs in next month's edition.*

# Affordable housing planning application approved, and more parking spaces too.

THE planning application to build affordable homes on council owned land at the rear of the houses in Tring Road , Wilstone was approved at the Dacorum Development Control Committee on Thursday 22 Sept.

At the same meeting approval was also granted for the additional parking spaces in Grange Road, Wilstone.