

Village News

for Bishopstone & Hinton Parva August 2017



Picture above, Browning's glorious poppy field, between Bishopstone & Idstone.

Dickie's Diary

Writing in early July, we are dry, Wimbledon has started and in this area harvest is still probably 2/3 weeks away, but predictions are never easy with our fickle climate. The combine and grain plant have been serviced and we are ready to go. Marauding rooks have started to eat and tread into the edge of one of our spring barley crops. They find the still sappy and soft undeveloped grain attractive and they like to pitch in from an adjacent grass field to inflict considerable crop damage. Moving them on can be a real challenge and I have heard them referred to at this time of the year as *the black death*.

A month ago at the beginning of June Ray Giggs, who lives in Ashbury, showed me some early bee orchids that

can be seen in June along the gully to the Ridgeway opposite Odstone Farm. It does take a moment to get your eye in and at first I could not see one growing within 6 inches of his foot! Whilst there I was surprised to spot a curlew flying over us emitting its characteristic haunting and plaintive cry. Curlews with their long upturned bill used to be more common here but I have not seen one here for near on twenty years. They like wet hay meadows as a site to breed and rear two chicks. When I used to rent grass meadows from the Berners Allsopp estate down Wharf Road at Longcot we had several nests there which fledged successfully. Also at Zulu in the field we called Hallidays, formerly wet and undrained, when farmed by Les Halliday, who in the eighties still milked cows in the centre of Ashbury grazing what is now developed as Wickes

Piece. With friends this spring we were walking part of Offas Dyke near Hay on Wye and a curlew went over there. Seeing us looking, a farmer pulled up and said rather cryptically, *that could be the last curlew in Wales!* It is timely that the Game and Wildlife Trust is raising funds to better understand and stem the decline. They say that there are only 300 breeding pairs left south of Birmingham. The pyramidal orchid blossomed again as a fine specimen in the lawn of No 4 Rectory Farm Cottage, Idstone; its site marked from last year by a metal stake to prevent that little area being mown. To me this seems something of a miracle since as I have remarked before, this garden had been continuously cultivated until very recently.

Richard Green

www.bishopstoneandhintonparva.org for breaking news



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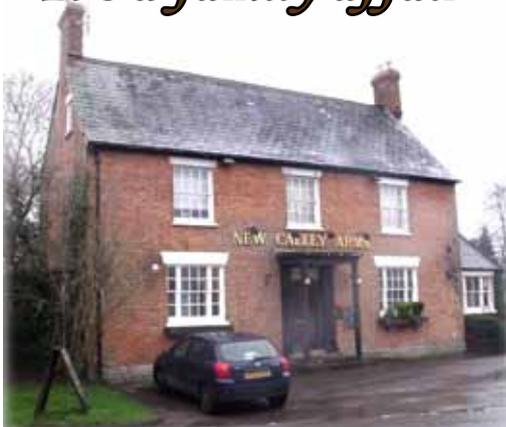
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Bench in Hinton Coomb

Up on the Eastern side of Hinton Coomb there is an attractive, well constructed bench, just exactly in the spot where one gets to the point of thinking that it would be a good idea to sit down. I don't believe that it has been there very long, but judging by the inscription on the back, it is there to commemorate somebody. Being nosy, I have made enquiries. Loretta, the National Trust ranger tells me that is in memory of Tracy Walters. Did anybody know her? It must have been quite a difficult job getting it there; well done, jolly good idea.

Ed

Ramsbury & Wanborough Surgery

We are currently running a Patient Survey, and would like to capture feedback and comments from our patients. Please visit the Surgery website at www.ramsburyandwanboroughsurgery.com and click on the survey link to complete the survey online OR pick up a paper copy from the Surgery. All completed paper copies should be returned to Reception. Thank you for your cooperation and continued support.

Volunteering with Samaritans

Along with the opening of a new bus station in Swindon, the first human heart transplant and the launch of the Beatles' Sgt Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band LP – 1967 saw Swindon & District Samaritans take its first phone calls.

Throughout the last 50 years, Swindon & District Samaritans has continued to offer emotional support to anyone who is struggling to cope, including those who may be feeling suicidal, 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. This support can be provided confidentially by email, letter, text and face to face as well as via the telephone.

Recognising the difference these 50 years have made within our com-

munity is where Swindon & District Samaritans need your help, please. In this special year, we are looking for people to join us, either as volunteers offering emotional support, or in a variety of roles supporting the work that we need to run our branch. There are 130 volunteers based in the branch at 6 Curtis Street, Swindon - the majority of these undertake shifts to provide emotional support.

Listening volunteers come from all walks of life and are united by their common commitment to support others when times are difficult – people can talk to Samaritans at any time they like, and in their own way, about whatever's getting to them.

They don't have to be suicidal.

Recently-trained Swindon and District volunteer Fiona Cowlam said: *The training is very thorough but it has to be, you need to support people at a very vulnerable time in their lives and you need to protect your own mental health whilst doing so. Coupled with the branch mentoring scheme, which allows you to train on the job with an experienced volunteer, I felt I had all I needed to start taking calls on my own.*

Alongside volunteers from Salisbury branch, Swindon and District volunteers also help to run the Prison Listener scheme, at Erlstoke prison near Devizes, which provides peer support in jail. They also provide outreach in schools, community groups and Jobcentres and provide support to the Mental Health Liaison Team, where people leaving their care welcome additional support from Samaritans. To find out more, without any obligation, please come along to an Information Event at 6 Curtis Street in Swindon on:

Tuesday 8th August:

7.00 - 9.00pm

Paul Bentley

New Bursaries for Educational Expenses

Little Hinton Educational Foundation is pleased to offer bursaries of up to £300 each to help young people in our parish with expenses related to their education.

If you are under 25, live in Hinton Parva or Bishopstone, and need help with the cost of books, travel, materials, equipment or other learning resources required for your academic, social or physical education, please get in touch.

We need to know your name, age, address, where and what you are studying, and what costs you could use some help with. There are ten bursaries available for 2017 – first come, first served!

Write to:

Mrs Valerie Brodin
The Coombs
Hinton Parva
SN4 0DH

The Village Hall, Bishopstone - August

The hall is cleaned	Mondays	8.30 - 10.30am
Village Hall Meeting	Monday 7 th	6.00 - 8.00pm
Daily School Dinners (not holidays)	Subject to bookings	11.45 - 1.00pm

All bookings for the Village Hall Bishopstone will be taken via Bishopstone CE Primary School. In term time, call 01793 790 521 and speak to Sue Tremlin, or leave a message on the answerphone. During school holidays there will be a message giving an alternative number to contact. We look forward to receiving your bookings for Bishopstone's excellent Village Hall. Cost for hiring the hall: £7.50 per hour for Bishopstone and Hinton Parva residents. £11 per hour for all other bookings. Cost for hiring the hall for a full day is £55.

At <http://bishopstoneandhintonparva.org/bishopstonevillagehall/> you can find a link to more helpful information about the Hall and the terms and conditions of hire.

Hinton Parva Village Hall - August

Baby Massage	Wednesday 2 nd , 9 th , 16 th , 23 rd & 30 th	1.15 - 4.00pm
Bridge	Friday 4 th , 11 th , 18 th & 25 th	7.00 - 10.00pm
WI	Thursday 10 th	7.00 - 9.30pm

The most pretty Hall around, and free parking .

Bookings Secretary Janet 791 391- Please leave a message if required

£6.00 per hour for residents of Bishopstone & Hinton Parva

£8.00 per hour for those living outside the parish

Private Parties
Meetings etc welcome

Catering may be available
Free Parking

Hinton Parva Village Hall

Brilliant inside but looking a bit tired on the outside. The main problem is the wild grass growing along the front and going to seed. There is a suggestion to place a layer of slate chippings along and under the front windows and around the flag pole - basically everywhere behind the parking chain. Before that can happen I would ask that anyone with a powerful strimmer spend a few minutes and cut down the unsightly grass. It would be very much appreciated.

The Village Hall Wheelie bin is expressly for the non recyclable waste generated in the Hall. We recently experienced extra donations in our bin - to the extent that the collection service refused to empty it and who can blame them. The bin was so heavy with assorted metal mechanical oddments (obviously not from the Hall),

that it was impossible to move by anyone less than superman! Please refrain from this unfriendly action. Enjoy the summer.

Howard

Is it Curtains for The Village Hall?



LOTTERY FUNDED

An outstanding yes! But in the best possible way. Richard Walker, Bishopstone Village Hall Committee Chairman writes... *I am pleased to confirm we have been successful in securing Lottery Funding for some much needed improvements to the hall. After many months of form filling, quotation gathering, measuring, sizing up, debate, more debate and a*

particularly gruelling session on colour palettes, the funding notice finally arrived, albeit slap bang in the middle of the General Election. We were asked to refrain from publicising at that time. Committee member David Wray had championed the application through its various stages and in turn, Russell Hatch had applied for a further community grant through the Co-op. We were delighted when both applications were approved. The money has been primarily allocated to provide 100 new chairs, together with trolleys to make hall set up easier, new stage curtains, black out blinds and curtains for the main hall as well as audio visual equipment and Wifi. Richard continued, These much needed improvements will make the hall more attractive for business hirers, for talks, seminars and presentations, as well as encouraging more community focussed events within this fabulous village facility. There is even excited talk of a film night with the new comfy chairs and projector - watch this space! When the curtain falls at the next BADS event or school play it will certainly be a posh one! A BIG thanks goes to the Committee team who have all pulled together on the process to make this happen.

Monthly Coffee Mornings

10.00 - 11.00am

Wednesday 2nd August

The Village Hall, Bishopstone

Contact: Doreen Cooper 792 965
Jane Manktelow 790 503

Community Connect

10.00am - noon

Saturday 5th August

Wanborough Village Hall

We will be serving Coffee/Tea and Cake/Biscuits. The refreshments are **free** and any donations received will be given to the local charity:

Swindon Hydrotherapy Pool.

If you are able, why not pop in and:

1. Bring your family and friends with you.
2. Enjoy some excellent home baking.
3. Support a local charity.

Contact 790 355

Womens Institute - Inspiring Women

Last months meeting, held in the pavilion at Hoopers Field, was crammed with 218 entries for our annual flower and craft show. Well done to all the trophy winners (Diane McLaren, Hilary Ponting, Joanna Hales, Caroline Wilson, Fran Brown-ing, Janne Dawson, Maggie Simons and men's class winner Gordon Wilson). Trophies were presented by Maggie Simons, our president. The lively evening ended with Stuart Smith once again entertaining us as he auctioned some of the exhibits kindly donated by members.

15 of us recently enjoyed a private tour of Kelmscott Manor, former home of designer William Morris, which was preceded the week before with a facinating talk on the life and influences of William Morris, given by enthusiast and guide from Kelmscott, Michael Iremonger.

Our next meeting is

**10th August, Hinton Parva
The Art of John Constable**

with Helen Lockhart.

Our next trip is to *Hilliers Art in the Garden* - over 100 sculptures show-cased in the beautiful setting of Hilliers 180 acre garden and arboretum in Romsey, Hampshire on

Wednesday 9th August.

Your local WI has members from the villages of Ashbury, Bishopstone, Hinton Parva, Wanborough and Lyddington, and we always welcome new members.

Our monthly meeting takes place on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7.30 - 9.30pm in either Bishopstone or Hinton Parva village halls, and we have groups which also meet outside of our monthly meeting; e.g. Reading, Art Study.

Please contact Patricia Wells if you would like any further information.

Patricia Wells 01793 790 054

Bishopstone 100 club

July Winners

1st 71 Ray Darling

2nd 22 Jane Lomax

3rd 18 Sara Hall

Jo 790 485



Fête Money

I have been trying to ascertain an updated figure for the fête takings, but haven't yet been able to do so, hope we will have more information next month.

Ed



Rainbow
Baby and Toddler Group

Bishopstone Village Hall
Every Thursday during Term Time
9.30 - 11.00am
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Mary Greenwood

21st September 1929 - 6th June 2017

We, as villagers who lived here over thirty five years or so ago, were saddened by Mary's death. She was the infant teacher at Bishopstone School for 14 years from 1975. To Mary we entrusted our small children. *It was like them going to a home from home*, was one quote. My own children, coming from not just another village, but another country, stepped into a wonderful world, a classroom that became a pirate ship, a desert island, a castle or a bus route, depending on her wonderful imagination. Thing 2 is the only child that I have heard of who had to be dragged out of school screaming, *I want to stay here!* She listened to the children, but was quite capable of being firm with them. I had great fun helping her with drawing, accompanying her on expeditions to the Lawn Woods, identifying trees and on one memorable occasion, a trip to the Natural History Museum; we only lost one child (temporarily) and another was sick in the biology room. We are so glad that this kind, sensible, woman was our children's first contact with the world of education, and a friend to us parents. At her funeral donations were given for a sanctuary garden at Bishopstone School; we look forward to seeing it.

Editor and Friends

A Day in the Life of a Small Builder - 8

Until very recently, we always used scaffolding contractors when we needed them. Scaffolds need to be safe, particularly with regard to stability, kick boards (to stop things falling off the platforms), ladders being attached, etc. etc. Erecting them is also a treacherous task and a respect for heights and a good team are essential. Many scaffolders have come to grief on sites and now Risk Assessments are required for every job. But the last firm we used was not very good and so...

A few months back, I decided to invest in some scaffolding poles, boards and fittings for a particular job but also to use in the future. I found some on eBay being sold by a builder near Portsmouth who no longer needed them. He seemed honest, otherwise I would have walked away. All the heavy poles, some 5 metres long, the clamps and bits and pieces were loaded onto the roof and into my transit van and lugged back to HQ without incident. We then carried out a roof and guttering job in Bishopstone for the delightful Mary Hill – thank you Mary. The scaffolding came into its own and I felt chipper about the new kit.

In June, we were working on a house

near Upavon, replacing a second floor window as it was rotten to the core, and working on some chimneys. A new, bespoke, hardwood window, complete with flying mullion, had been ordered and duly arrived and so did the chance to use our scaffolding again. Once again, I loaded the poles and boards onto the roof of the van and put the heavy fittings in their plastic tubs inside.

Aware of the heavy weight above me, I drove steadily but, just the other side of Marlborough, a large lorry rounded the corner towards me taking up nearly all the road. I braked and heard an ominous noise from above. Yes, the poles were sliding forward...

I had no choice but to brake more and come to a standstill so that the lorry could pass. The poles careered forwards bumping off the roof bars, landing on the roof, windscreen and bonnet before skidding off down the road.

Fortunately, they followed the camber of the road and ended up on the edge. I switched the hazard lights on and surveyed the damage. Windscreen broken, roof dented, bonnet dented and aerial kaput. I began to reload the poles back on to the roof, tying them on carefully.

Finally, I made it to site. We erected the scaffolding, installed the new window with a new lintel and made good inside and out. Then we were up on the roof, about 12 metres high, fitting chimney cages and repairing the flaunching (mortar around the pots) to the top of the stacks and filling holes in the wall to stop the rain penetrating. On the way home, I clamped each pole to the roof bars; another lesson learned.

Tom Cripwell



Wild Wednesday

The Coombs, Hinton Parva
11.00am Wednesday 16th August
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Church Services in the Benefice

Wednesday	2nd August	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Sunday	6th August	8.30am	Holy Communion	Lyddington
	8 th Sunday after Trinity	10.30am	Family Communion	Bishopstone
	Transfiguration of Our Lord	6.00pm	Evensong	Wanborough
Wednesday	9th August	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Sunday	13th August	8.30am	Holy Communion	Bishopstone
	9 th Sunday after Trinity	10.30am	Family Communion	Lyddington
		6.00pm	Evensong	Hinton Parva
Wednesday	16th August	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Sunday	20th August	8.30am	Holy Communion	Hinton Parva
	10 th Sunday after Trinity	10.30am	Family Communion	Wanborough
		6.00pm	Evensong	Lyddington
Wednesday	23rd August	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Sunday	27th August	8.30am	Holy Communion	Wanborough
	11 th Sunday after Trinity	10.30am	Family Communion	Hinton Parva
		6.00pm	Evensong	Bishopstone
Wednesday	30th August	7.00pm	Midweek Communion	Wanborough Vicarage
Sunday	3rd September	8.30am	Holy Communion	Bishopstone
	12 th Sunday after Trinity*	10.30am	Family Communion	Lyddington
		6.00pm	Evensong	Hinton Parva

Adjustment to the routine pattern of services in the United Benefice of Lyddington, Wanborough and Bishopstone with Hinton Parva from 3rd September.

As a result of a request from the congregation concerned, from Sunday 3rd September 2017, the 10.30am Family Communion service on the first Sunday of the month will regularly take place in All Saints' Lyddington, rather than at St Mary's Bishopstone, (St Mary's routinely taking the second Sunday slot from that date). There are also a number of consequent adjustments to the 08.30am and 6.00pm service locations to re-balance the services across the Benefice.

As well as allowing a Harvest Festival to take place at All Saints on 1st October, as previously planned, it will, for future years, also allow the 10.30am service to avoid the congestion and road closures caused by the annual Swindon Marathon. We trust that you will support this change.

The Vicar's Letter

Dear Friends and Neighbours,

One topic that we are famous for is our obsession with the weather, and while we don't have the most extreme climate of anywhere else in the world we do have the most varied. One particular doctor who was on the lifeboat crew went off to Ireland to retire. He'd found a collection of buildings that made an ideal restoration project in which to live and develop in his retirement. However, his first task was to get his amateur weather station set up! We never did find out how that went down with his wife. Our national obsession has been caused by the impact that the weather has on our lives and according to a recent Channel 4 documentary, it is a £6bn

industry in its own right. Our very own Met Office is cited as one of the top two facilities in the world.

So where is the Vicar going with this and what has this to do with the good news of the Gospel? In short, the boiler at St Andrew's is well past its best and quotes for a replacement system come in at around £18k. Roughly, that equates to the price of a bottle of wine per resident. We have a number of quotes and are based on a system where in simple terms we have what looks like two domestic boilers to get the church warmed up. One of the boilers is then switched off so that only half the gas is used to keep the place up to temperature. This may be a bit of an over simplification, but you get the gist.

Given the breadth of talent that exists within the benefice I would be most grateful for any help to get this important piece of work done. As things stand, if we all throw about £6 or £7 into the pot we won't need a fundraising team. However, not everyone is in a position to do so and any donations over and above this notional figure would be very much appreciated. St Andrew's is a treasured place for celebrating and remembering key moments in life and in the life of the school.

It would be lovely to be able to open its doors as an additional community facility during the week. So your thoughts and help in realising this aspiration would be appreciated too. If you would like to make a donation, please make cheques pay-

able to *Parochial Church Council Wanborough, St Andrews*. Alternatively, please contact me if you wish to make an electronic payment.

With these preparations for winter having been said, I do hope that you get to enjoy some great weather; if not, some great holidaying during this month of August.

With best wishes and prayers

Prayers

If you have anything that you would like our village prayer group to pray for please contact:

telephone - 790 088 or email - villageprayers@gmail.com

Bill

Goddard, Coker and Edmonds Educational Charity

This charity exists to assist people under the age of 25, living in Bishopstone for 12 months or more, with the costs of books and equipment for further education.

Those interested in applying for a grant should contact the clerk to this charity, Alan Taylor:

R2attayloralan@aol.com or 791 666

Church Wardens' Activities

No churchwardens' report received by the deadline



Contacts

The Vicar: the Rev Bill O'Connell
The Vicarage, Church Road,
Wanborough, SN4 0BZ

01793 791 359

villagevicar@hotmail.co.uk

The Churchwardens: St. Mary's

John Lowry 01793 790 271

john1000000@live.com

Alan Taylor 01793 791 666

R2attayloralan@aol.com

The Churchwardens: St. Swithun's

Tom Cripwell 01793 791 148

tomcripwell@gmail.com

Emma Cripwell 01793 791 148

emma@angelpublicity.com

Charlbury Cottage, Westend,
Bishopstone, SN6 8PX

01793 791 666

R2attayloralan@aol.com

The Parish Safeguarding Officer:

List of Other PCC Members:

Karen Stevens (Treasurer)

01793 791 107

kschurchview@gmail.com

Doug Stevens 01793 791 107

doug@mowerfixer.co.uk

Roz Boot 01793 790 508

Sara Hall 01793 791 202

thecourthouse@gmail.com

From the Benefice Register

Baptisms

St Andrew's Wanborough

11th June Archie William Trigg

Weddings

St Andrew's Wanborough

24th June Steven Thompson & Charlotte Spring

Cleaning Rota - St. Mary's Church, Bishopstone

August Sarah Best & Jenny Isles

September Mary Darling & Lisa Fitchett

October Lorna Ford & Linda Matthews

November Karen Stevens & Sheila Collins

December Caroline Brandi & Gill White

Many thanks to all those who have helped to keep our church cared for and clean. We always welcome more volunteers on the rota, if you or anyone you know might like to join us

Sarah Best 791 121

Bishopstone Gardening Society



Rod and I would like to say how much we enjoyed being able to host the Bishopstone & District Garden Club Charity event. It was a real pleasure to share our garden with all who came to enjoy the Pimms, cream teas, games, good company and not least, the sunshine. To be able to support the Wiltshire Air Ambulance as a result of your generosity was the icing on the cake.

Marion Peck

A joyous day! Thanks to our trusty team of willing helpers and those who came to support us. We raised £256.35, plus a contribution of £250 from the garden society,

making the grand total: £506.35!

Sheila

A worthwhile sum and brilliant effort by everyone!

Ed

Diary date

Tuesday 29th August: Looking forward to our guided tour of Highgrove. Please contact Sarah if you need any info before we head off. Reminder details will be emailed to those who have previously booked. Don't forget to bring a picnic lunch!

Sheila & Sarah can both be contacted at banddgardeningsoc@gmail.com

Bishopstone & District Gardening Club Show

Saturday 9th September

A traditional village produce show, open to all who live within a 10-mile radius of Bishopstone.

Classes for fruit, utopian veg (and the positively quirky veg), flowers, plants and produce, arts, crafts and photography. Children are encouraged to have a go and to come along on the day - trophies and prizes to be won! Bake a cake, make some chutney, show off those fancy dahlias and display your stunning photos. This year's artwork theme for children aged 4-7 and 8-11 is: 'Mini garden of dreams.' Seniors aged 12 - 18 can submit any form of craft/art work, and/or design and bake 6 x small cupcakes. (We especially like cupcakes.)

Our five photographic themes this year are:

*Kids having fun with water; specimen bloom single rose; contemplation; a fly's eye view and flight of the bumblebee.

Apart from the single rose, subjects can be of a singular or plural theme. Photographs should be unmounted and should not exceed 5" x 7" (12.7 x 17.78cms.)

*Always check that you have permission to take a photo.

Show schedules can be obtained from: Doreen, Mogs, Sheila and Ashbury Village Shop

Refreshments, raffle and action-packed end when produce is auctioned.

The Wanborough Show Society 86th Summer Show

Saturday 19th August

The summer season for Flower and Produce Shows is just starting across the country. We may not be Chelsea or Hampton Court with their extreme show gardens but we can promise you a great, traditional fun time at our very own Wanborough Flower and Produce Show.

There will be the joy of a lovely pair of cucumbers, glorious gladioli, mouth-watering malt loaf, fascinating photographs and much, much more.

Not only can you come and wonder at the amazing entries to the show, but you can take an active part as well. So whether you are a gardener, photographer, artist or artisan, flower arranger or cook, there is bound to be something you can enter. Age is no object either. The Children's Show has loads to showcase the talents and creativity of our young people.

You could experience the sheer joy of seeing your hard work rewarded with a prize card or trophy and the delight of knowing you have won!

So look out for the schedule in the Wanborough Show programme coming through your door or go on line to:

www.wanboroughshow.org

to find out more details and how to enter.

We cannot wait to see you there.

Sue & Adrian Dent

flowershow@wanboroughshow.org

01793 790 246

Sue & Adrian Dent



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The Royal Oak Diary



Just when I thought things were looking a bit quiet on the what to write about this month, I thought I'd irritate you all by delving into the world of politics (like my neighbour Richard Green, every piece political if semi-disguised), and justice. I know it will irritate because it has done in the past; and after all, this is the Church newsletter and so the people of Hinton Parva and Bishopstone don't expect to have to endure my limp polemics from time to time. This is The Royal Oak diary. And a pub encompasses people, politics, sport, gossip, parties, and from those sources, and others, spring words for this page.

How glorious it is to be able to welcome increasing numbers of anti-Brexiters into our cheerful pub; you won't believe how many of them are fleeing from other pubs in the area where the landlords and customers appear still to be in favour of Brexit! They get their beer, read our various tracts, and declare themselves amazed that such an institution should be so overtly political. In a sense, it reflects what we've tried to make this pub—open to everyone. In the early days, 10½ years ago, we had customers at the bar (we inherited them) who openly hissed and scowled when anyone who wasn't a white anglo saxon heterosexual (male or female) walked into the place. While the staff went about their generous business, discomfort ruled on the other side of the bar. Now this pub is an icon among village pubs in the way it welcomes everyone (except two of you in the village)—and when I say everyone, I mean it (apart from you two, of course). I won't list the sort of people I'm talking about, because to create that sort of list actually makes people seem separate from each other. When we're all pretty much the same (apart from you two, again).

And of course with the changing political mood in the country, the chances of Brexit—which is where



Valerio doing house keeping duties, sorry no room on page 3

I started—look slimmer and slimmer. It will not happen. Rules will be changed, here and in Brussels. The EU itself will undergo some sort of reform. Transition periods will be never ending. The referendum will be long forgotten, effectively, at some point. And the great cultural experiment will continue, and Europe in its own eccentric way will remain a bulwark against all sorts of other infidels.

Talking of infidels, one of ours as I write this is apparently spending some time at her majesty's pleasure, and expense, near Bristol, after a series of relatively minor indiscretions from a few years ago came to light on account of some car-related misdemeanour in early July. Valerio has talked about starting a Free Frank Now campaign, which I have declined to join. I have also declined an offer to ram-raid the Bristol detention centre where the alleged crim is being housed, on account of the red Landrover being bla-

zoned with the HB logo; and therefore me and Valerio also likely to end up in detention. However, we might put up some posters round the village saying *Free Frank Now*, if only because I wish to have a chat with him when he gets back about why he missed service on Sunday, and could he clear his tab.

You'll gather from the above that it's all quiet here. The rain started as I wrote this, so the amazing garden at The Royal Oak will be thrilled; as will Helen's pigs and arable crops. Come and enjoy them. Use the marquee, or the new playroom; or the deck, and the upstairs. Private parties a speciality. Thanks be to God. And to the Wrays, Russell Hatch, Michelle Matthews, Tom Green, Becky Brain the ace gardener, Valerio for his housekeeping expertise, Manon our French maid for her diligence, and all those other staff, customers and friends who are not currently in prison, or barred.

TF

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Exhausted of Hinton Parva

Those of you who know the Mantel-pieces will know that our joining a gym last year was nothing new. What is new, is that we actually use this one. In fact, I suspect that we use it rather too much, as people are now starting to address mail to us there.

At this gym, we have met many people; despite the fact that they're dressed primarily in lycra, this isn't too alarming. I say this because a friend, who works for a local authority, began using a local gym and was horrified to find herself sitting in a jacuzzi next to an elderly, and overweight, Councilor clad only in a pair of outrageously skimpy Speedos. When she reports to him in meetings these days, she has to school herself not to flinch.

Presumably because of our daytime gym habits, most fellow exercisers fall at the high-numbers end of the age scale, yet most look much younger than their years. Indeed, we were astonished to hear that one chap was disappointed to have had to give up skiing because the insurance now cost more than the holiday, as he'd reached 75. Until now, my conclusion

And Almost Finally.....

Unfortunately, my poem in the July issue caused consternation in some quarters. It was taken to mean that I have problems... OR that I had resigned as editor of this newsletter. Sorry if my words were misinterpreted, you don't get rid of me that easily!



An eagle eyed reader, yes somebody actually reads this newsletter, spotted that I had the wrong date for the great flood; it was the 20th July 2007, not the 7th, sorry.

Look who has been eating my roses. Not that I mind sharing them with a muntjac. *(Picture bottom right - taken in my garden one morning by Bernard Phillips)*

mogs

ADVERTISING

The advertising part of the newsletter, which of course, helps to fund the

had been that either a) exercise keeps one looking young or b) some people are blessed with the sort of genes that makes them wear out more slowly than the rest of us. Or, of course, c) a mixture of the above. . .

This morning, however, I had cause to revisit my conclusion. Dearly Beloved happened to mention that a new TV sports pundit was looking rather worse for wear; having been used to seeing him looking trim and fit in sports wear, he looked, well, decidedly average, in his everyday clothes. I now wonder whether the young looks of older exercisers aren't simply a product of their having shrugged off anoraks and slacks in favour of tee shirts and shorts – a sort of Emperor's new clothes benefit of sports wear. Please note that exempt from this benefit are the MAMILs, subject of a previous article; portly middle aged men will never look good when squeezed into garments that make them resemble over-stuffed sausages.

Another age-related pondering has come courtesy of a new-build development in Shrivenham, which proclaims on large banners that *your living experience starts here*. Good-

ness. I thought mine started many years ago in t'North. How could I have got that so wrong?

To test the Shrivenham hypothesis, your Editor and I devised a cunning experiment involving a Pythonesque Norwegian Blue, or similar. We intended to present said parrot to the person manning the Shrivenham show home and demand they start its living experience. Unfortunately, recently deceased parrots seem hard to come by, so that particular experiment's on a back burner. Any local taxidermists who could help out?

In the meantime, if anyone's feeling a little jaded and looking for some excitement in their life, why not pop up to Shrivenham. I'm assuming that the living experience they're offering is a good one, or I can't see why they'd be so keen to advertise it (though that may be an assumption too far). You could even try to help things along by wearing top to toe lycra. And if you find that the combination of sports wear and housing for the elderly is the secret of eternal youth, please take time out from partying 24/7, and drop a line to the Editor so that we can all benefit. . .

Mrs. Mantelpiece

enterprise, is organised by Angie Alcock. For business advertising rates please contact her: email angiealcock@hotmail.co.uk or telephone 07976 645 229. We must warn you that adverts received without payment will not be included. For people with small, one-off advertisements there is a minimum fee of £1.00.

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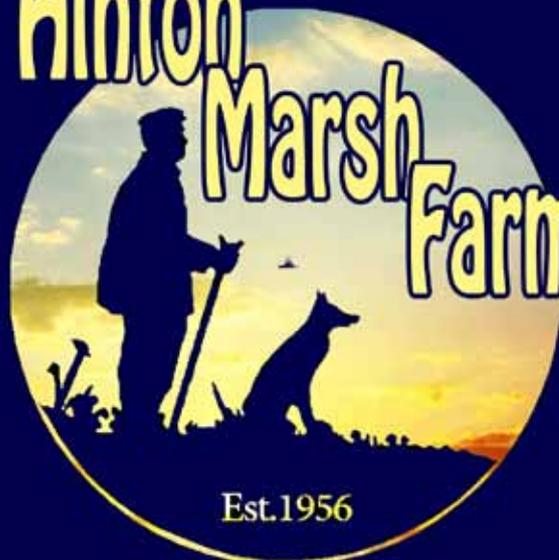
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