

# THE OXHILL NEWS



FEBUARY 2006

## February 14 is St Valentine's Day.

It is the Feast day of Saints John the Baptist of the Conception, Antoninus of Sorrento, Maro, Abraham of Carrhae, Adolf of Osnabrück, Auxentius, Cyril and Methodius, and Conran.

It is not, surprisingly, the Feast day of St. Valentine, which some authorities give as January 7th. There he shares it with Saints Raymund of Peñafort, Aldric, Lucian of Antioch, Tillo, Canute Lavard, and Reinold. January 7th is Christmas Day in the Orthodox Church, so if you swapped allegiance at the right times you could have two sets of presents every year.

Saint Valentine was, according to tradition, a bishop of Terni martyred in Rome. He is usually now omitted from the calendar of saints' days on the somewhat dubious grounds that he probably never existed. His festival *was* 14 February (see above), but the custom of sending 'valentines' to a loved one on that day seems to have arisen because the day happened to coincide with the Roman mid-February festival of Lupercalia. You can look Lupercalia up for yourself.

Several important things happened on February 14th, but the only one anybody ever remembers is that in Chicago in 1929 seven members of George 'Bugsy' Moran's gang were gunned down in a warehouse by gangsters dressed as policemen, working for Al 'Scarface' Capone. It is important not to confuse Bugsy Moran with Bugsy Malone. Their motor cars worked in quite different ways. So did their guns.

*Editor*

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## MARCH ISSUE

Please could I have all copy for the March issue by Midnight on Thursday, 23rd February? If you normally prepare your material using a computer, it would make my life easier if you could submit your offering in electronic form, though paper is, of course, fine. If you do use electronic form, the best would be a Word file with the page size set to A5 and margins of 1.5 cm all round. The News is currently set in Garamond 10 pt, with headings in Lucida Sans Unicode 14 pt bold. This may, of course, change, possibly without warning.

My 'official' e-mail address is **news-editor@oxhill.org.uk** if you wish to send me stuff that way.

George Adams, 680286

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## COVER PICTURE

This splendid photograph was taken in Annecy by Ruth Mercer.

*Editor*

## ADVANCE WARNING

There will be a Coffee Morning in aid of Chernobyl's Children at the Old Church House on Saturday 1st July.

Further details nearer the time, but please pencil this date into your diary.

*Ann Marshall*

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## BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Once again The Peacock came up trumps. First a lovely lunch for Christmas, and then my Mother's seventy-fifth Birthday Party.

It would have been her Retirement Party as well, except that owing to ill health she had to retire the year before!

Many thanks to all concerned, especially for the lovely presents received.

*Joe Costa*

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## FOR SALE

Swedish Pine single bed, large drawers underneath,  
slatted wooden frame, firm mattress. £30

*McKail Tel: 01295 680412*

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## SCARECROW FESTIVAL

After the great success of the Scarecrow Festival in 2005, and listening to the many people who have asked us to have another, we have decided to try again. The dates for the Festival will be the 17th and 18th of June.

We hope you will all want to get involved, hopefully even more than the wonderful turn-out last year. It was such a lovely weekend.

We will have a plant stall and a car boot sale or table-top sales. If you can think of anything that will make the weekend better please let us know.

*Lilian Welsby*

# ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH, OXHILL

## SERVICES FOR FEBRUARY

Sunday 5th	9.30	Holy Communion
Sunday 12th	9.30	Holy Communion
Sunday 19th	9.30	Matins
Sunday 26th	9.30	Holy Communion

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## LOST AND FOUND IN CHURCH

After the Christingle Service in December, the following items were found in the Church:

- 1 white fleece
- 1 coloured fleece
- 1 child's warm hat
- 1 doll.

If they belong to you, please collect them. They are currently stored at the back of the Church.

*Di Harper*

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# ST. LAWRENCE CHURCH, OXHILL

## EVENTS PLANNED FOR 2006

Sunday 28th May	Curry Lunch
Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th June	Scarecrow Festival
Saturday 30th September	Harvest Supper

We intend to run a couple more events during the year, and are currently working hard trying to get the dates fixed. They will be announced in due course.

*Lilian Welsby*

# Village History 1 – The Thackwell family

Some interesting information has come to me via the website about the Thackwell family, no longer around in the village but quite numerous here in the nineteenth century.

Daniel Thackwell, an agricultural labourer, settled in the village with his wife Patience in about 1820. Among their children were three sons, Daniel, William and John. William and John and their families were to suffer badly in the scarlet fever epidemic that swept the village in 1869-70. They both lived in a complex of five cottages in Back Lane (no longer in existence but comprising Fellows House and its buildings along the lane), which were particularly badly hit by the infection. William lost five of his children and John two. After the epidemic two of the Thackwell brothers, Daniel and John both left Oxhill with their families in search of a new life. Daniel went to Burton-on-Trent, and John to New Zealand. William soldiered on in Oxhill, and he and his wife had several further children, some of whose descendants are still in the local area.

When John and his wife Elizabeth set sail for New Zealand in 1874, amongst their family was a four year old son, Joseph, who was to become the grandfather of my correspondent, Diana Brodie. Diana tells me that John had an assisted passage, and that he was also given an advance of £5.10s.0d, a considerable sum at the time, probably for the necessary equipment and provisions for the voyage, which was to take three months.

On arrival, John worked as an agricultural labourer in the province of Canterbury in the South Island, but sadly only for a short time, as he died in early 1876. However his family remained, and went from strength to strength, each generation building on the success of the last. To complete the circle nearly a century later, in 1966 Diana herself moved back to the UK – by sea, as John had, but taking only five weeks rather than three months. She now lives in Cambridge.

Oxhill in the 1870s was a poor place for agricultural workers to be, as successive bad weather and poor harvests meant little work, and harsh poverty. It was a bold move however to embark on a long and perilous voyage with a young family, with great uncertainty as to the conditions ahead. It is sad that John himself did not live long to taste his reward, but nevertheless his family prospered, and Diana tells me that the name Thackwell is now more common in New Zealand than it is in England.

*Ann Hale*

# **NOTES OF A MEETING OF OXHILL PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON TUESDAY 11th JANUARY 2006 AT 8.00 P.M.**

Apologies were received from Steven Hackett and Gwyneth Adams.

The meeting, chaired by David Hill, was attended by Tom Heritage and Brian Emmerson

## **MATTERS DISCUSSED**

### **Planning**

Permission had been granted for quarantine block at Church Farm

An Appeal had been dismissed at Vine House Farm to change use from agricultural to light industrial.

### **Finance**

A cheque for £1151 would be sent to the Village Hall Committee for the purchase of new tables. VAT would be reclaimed on this item. A cheque for £600 was also agreed towards mowing the churchyard.

The precept for the year ending 31 March 2007 was discussed. It was agreed to set the same precept as last year at £2600. This sum to cover the cost of May 2006 Parish elections, as required by Stratford District Council; grants towards mowing the churchyard and the village hall land; funding for the Oxhill News and Village Hall. Administrative costs of insurance, clerks expenses, internal and external audits, were also covered.

### **Street Signs**

Whatcote Road sign was missing at the top of Green Lane. A new sign would be requested.

### **Good Neighbour Watch**

In a small community such as Oxhill we do a very good job of keeping an eye on neighbours especially those who need help. Several people in the village live on their own and as far as the Parish Council is aware receive help and friendly contact, but if anyone requires any further help please let us know.

### **Council for Voluntary Service – Village Liaison Officer Project**

Doug Nethercleft is our Village VLO. This project has been set up to give local help for people in rural Stratford and Warwick districts. We have invited Doug to come along to a Parish Council Meeting to give us an insight into his work.

### **Winter Gritting**

A map of the areas gritted by the Council is displayed on the Notice Board.

## **Warwickshire County Council – Community Links**

A scheme will start in Spring 2006 to help people who are stuck for transport to get to local destinations on set weekdays between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. The scheme is aimed at, (i) those who do not have access to a car, (ii) cannot access public transport because of mobility problems, (iii) live in a rural isolated location with no other form of transport. Users of this scheme will be asked to pay a simple flat-rate fare based on miles. If you need to be on the register, forms can be obtained from Angela Kean 680441

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 14th March 2006 at 8.00 p.m. Please see the notice board prior to the meeting for venue.

Angela Kean, Clerk

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## **OXHILL GARDEN CLUB**

Our January meeting was held in The Peacock pub because of the December fire in the village hall. Steve and Sandra did a wonderful job of converting their dining room into a small meeting room for us and providing excellent refreshments, and we thank them very much.

Josephine Morgan was the speaker and she demonstrated and talked most entertainingly on the subject of Chinese brush painting. Her paintings were beautiful – unlike the daubs we made when encouraged to have a go!

The meeting on February 16th will be on Scottish Gardens, but the venue is still a little undecided.

*Heather Brennan, Secretary*

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## **Tysoe School Auction of Promises**

Tysoe School will hold an Auction of Promises on Friday 3rd February in the School Hall. Everyone is welcome to come and bid for some exciting lots. The evening starts at 7 p.m., with the auction getting under way at 7.30 p.m.

There will be a donations bar and nibbles. A list of lots will be on the Village Hall notice board shortly.

For more information, please phone Ruth Mercer on 680407.

# NATURE NOTES FOR FEBRUARY

In Anglo-Saxon: Solmonath – the month of cakes, now offered to the Gods. February 2nd is Candlemass “St Mary’s Feast of the Candles” officially the Feast of Purification and the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. Today lights and candles are blessed in churches and candlelit services and processions are held:

Candlemass Day, plant beans in the clay  
Put candles and candlesticks all away  
If Candlemass Day brings snow and rain  
Winter is gone, and won’t come again  
If Candlemass Day be clear and bright  
Winter will have another flight.

Fine weather on this day is feared since it shows that the worst of winter is still to come. In America February 2nd is Groundhog Day. The groundhog or woodchuck (similar to a squirrel) is said to emerge from hibernation to check out the weather: if it is dull or wet he stays out and about because winter will soon be over, but if he can see his shadow he goes back to his burrow for another six weeks. As I write this in January we have just been enjoying wonderful spring-like days. On the 19th in Cheltenham I saw bumble bees in the garden, and jackdaws are now pairing off and selecting their chimneys, and I have heard vixens intimating their wants to the male by three or four little sharp yelpings or barkings, frequently repeated, all rather earlier than would normally be expected.

A friend who lives in Kineton has a mass of ivy growing up his walls and outside his bedroom window, which provides a warm roost for all the house sparrows that inhabit his garden. Over several evenings he has observed a tawny owl that quietly flies up to the ivy, hangs on with his talons, and then vigorously flaps his wings against the ivy, causing a sparrow to fly out, which he then manages to catch. I believe this to be unique behaviour which shows acute observation and ingenuity, and it is also very unusual for a tawny owl to take other birds.

I was visiting a friend with a farm on the borders of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire the other weekend and whilst walking through a small coppice we flushed a Chinese water deer (*Hydropotes inermis*) out of some dense ground cover. Many people confuse the Muntjac with the Chinese water deer, the latter being much rarer. It is one of only two species of deer with no antlers, but the male is very distinctive in that he has two downward-pointing canine tusks two to three inches in length. With their woolly faces, they look rather like sad vampires! They are shy, dog-



sized deer from China, where they are now endangered; they are reddish brown in summer, but turning grey in winter. A few escaped from Whipsnade Zoo during the Second World War and groups are now established in the Norfolk Broads and some adjoining counties. This one in Bedfordshire is at the edge of the breeding area. It is thought that their numbers may be declining as they are very vulnerable to the cold, and being more timid than a Muntjac, the young are often taken by foxes.

The other day our large black cat Frank brought home and ate a weasel – a pity he hadn't read this first:

*“To drive away mice. If the brains of a weasel be sprinkled upon cheese or any other meat whereto mice resort, they not only forbear to eat thereof, but also to come nigh that place”*

Edward Topsell – This History of Four Footed Beasts, 1607.

*Grenville Moore*

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## ARE YOU STUCK FOR TRANSPORT?

In September 2005 Stratford District Council approved funding for developing a social and community transport project called *Community Links*, in partnership with Warwickshire County Council. Users of this service will be asked to pay a simple flat-rate fare based on miles travelled.

The scheme will start in Spring 2006 to help people who are stuck for transport get to local destinations on set weekdays between 9am and 3pm. The service is aimed at those who:

- Previously qualified for transport tokens
- Do not have access to a car
- Cannot access public transport because of mobility problems
- Live in a rural isolated location with no other form of transport available

If you qualify for this service and would like to register, please contact Chris Mitchell tel. 01789 260212

Note: The Stratford Volunteer Centre's *Medical Journey* scheme will continue to operate for doctor, dentist, day centre and hospital related appointments. Contact Clarissa Roberts tel. 01789 296344.

*Doug Netherclef (VLO, Oxhill)*

## Village History 2: Rouse's bus

You can buy anything on EBay!

Carol Clark has emailed me a copy of a Rouse's bus ticket that she has bought on the site. Newer residents may not know that Oxhill used to have its own bus service run by Reg Rouse (following on from his father Willoughby, the village carrier, who had used horse-drawn transport).

Reg's bus was a well known sight on local roads from the 1940s to his retirement in 1972.

*Ann Hale*

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## WEEKEND IN NORMANDY

The Oxhill Garden Club is planning a trip to Normandy to visit a few gardens, but in particular Monet's in Giverny.

The trip will depart on Friday May 19th and return on Sunday May 21st. More details will follow, but you might like to pencil these dates in your diary as it will be a lovely stress free few days – and visiting the gardens is not compulsory.

The cost will be £178 per person inclusive of the hotel stay, coach travel and the entrance fee to Monet's Garden.

If you would like to get your names on the list a.s.a.p., give Lilian a ring on 680468.

*Heather Brennan, Secretary*

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## W.I. REPORT – 4th January 2006

For this meeting, we used the smaller Committee Room in the Village Hall, and after our President, Ann Beeny had gone through the WI business at hand, she introduced our guest speaker, Mr Peter Hepworth, who gave a talk on some aspects of bees and the beekeeper. He had brought along some props such as his smock with hood and facemask (essential to a bee keeper!), some actual honeycombs and a small hive. This was an interesting and lively talk and it was obvious that Mr Hepworth enjoyed his occupation.

Mrs Mary Greenway gave the vote of thanks, and Mesdames Richards, Robinson and Swift served refreshments. The meeting adjourned at 10 p.m.

*J Batchelor*



The National Federation of Women's Institutes  
Textile Recording Project

**The National Needlework Archive** is working with the **NFWI** to create a full and detailed inventory of all the textiles belonging to the WIs in England, Wales, Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. The WI National Textile Collection forms a substantial part of the Nation's craft and artistic heritage and it is vital that a structured record is made of these artefacts, and their documented history, which is held in trust by local WIs across the country.

Calling all current and former WI members for your memories, memorabilia and photos.

Now is the time to tidy out all those cupboards, delve into those black plastic bags, get to the back of drawers, to the bottom of chests, under beds and into lofts!

We also need to check out the cupboards, chests and wall space in churches, village halls and Tysoe School. (This project will include all textiles, stitched or painted, lace, linens, book covers, etc.)

We need your help

Please contact Mrs Ann Beeny in Tysoe (680431) or Mrs June Wreford in Whatcote (680294) who are collating written and photographic information about the pieces of work in order to complete and return the forms on behalf of Tysoe WI.

*Ann Beeny*

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## SALE OF WHATCOTE CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS

I am pleased to let our customer's know that from the sale of 175 puddings a profit of £340.20 has been added to St. Peter's Church funds.

However, there are still twenty-three (23) 908 gram (2lb) puddings still awaiting a sale.

If you would like one please contact me, June Wreford, Tel. No. 01295 680294.

Many thanks to you all for your support. May I wish you a Happy New Year.

*June Wreford.*

# WHAT'S ON IN OXHILL

## February

Friday 3rd	7.00 p.m.	Tysoe School – Auction of Promises
Thursday 16th		Garden Club Meeting
Thursday 23rd		Copy deadline for The News

## March

Wednesday 1st	7.00 p.m.	Tysoe Village Hall – W.I.
Tuesday 14th	8.00 p.m.	Parish Council Meeting

## April

Wednesday 5th	7.30 p.m.	Tysoe Village Hall – W.I.
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## May

Sunday 14th	10.00	Ettington Community Centre – Spring Into Action. Contact 01789 740083 for details
Friday 19th – Sunday 31st		Garden Club Trip to Normandy
Saturday 20th	10.00-12.00	Townsend Hall, Shipston on Stour – Plant Sale
Sunday 28th		Rectory Garden – Curry Lunch

## June

Saturday 17th & Sunday 18th		Scarecrow Festival
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## July

Saturday 1st		Old Church House – Coffee Morning for Chernobyl's Children
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## September

Saturday 30th		Harvest Supper
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## THE OLD FIRE STATION

New Year Update 2006

Our new programme of courses is given below

### Computers for Beginners

Mondays	1300-1500 starting 6th March	5 weeks	
Fridays	1930-2130 starting 10th March	5 weeks	£10 fee

### Internet and email

Tuesdays	1000-1200 starting 7th March	5 weeks	£10 fee
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### Family History Research

Tuesdays	1930-2130 starting 7th March	10 weeks	£40 fee
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### Design and build a simple website

Wednesdays	1930-2130 starting 8th March	5 weeks	£10 fee
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### Digital Cameras and Image Manipulation

Thursdays	1930-2130 starting 9th March	5 weeks	
Fridays	1000-12000 starting 10th March	5 weeks	£15 fee

### Art Course for all abilities

Wednesdays	1300-1500 starting 1st March	6 weeks	£25 fee
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The waiting lists for Bridge and Salsa Dancing classes are growing fast!

We can also offer business related learning programmes.

For more information on all the above, please call Mary on 01295 688244.