

# THE OXHILL NEWS



JULY 2006

## PLAYBOYS

Eagle-eyed readers of our cover, and all who enter the village via the Kinton Road, will have spotted the recent addition to the Oxhill nameplate.

Rumours are rife that, with the apparent possibility of a new club opening in Oxhill, certain of our Parish Councillors are looking into the possibility of a fact-finding mission (or perhaps two or three) to see what advantages would accrue to our village.

Concerned villagers should attend the next meeting of the Parish Council in droves seeking clarification of the situation.

*Editor*

## COVER PICTURES

The small selection of scarecrow pictures on the cover were kindly provided by Myrtle Knight, since I ran away this year and was not here to take any myself.

My apologies to anyone who feels that their own efforts should have been on the cover; there were a lot to choose from!

*Editor*

## AUGUST ISSUE

Please could I have all copy for the August issue by Midnight on Monday, 24th July.

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

**REMINDER**  
**CHERNOBYL'S CHILDREN**  
**COFFEE MORNING**  
at  
**THE OLD CHURCH HOUSE**  
**OXHILL**

***SATURDAY 1ST JULY***

10 a.m. – 12 noon  
(If wet, in Village Hall)

CAKE, PRODUCE and PLANT STALLS  
Any donations of cakes, preserves and plants will be most welcome

The Chernobyl Children will be attending the Coffee Morning and afterwards will be going for a walk round the village.  
It would be appreciated if anyone who made a scarecrow for the festival on 17th & 18th June would put them out again on 1st July, as I am sure the children would really love to see them.

*Anne Marshall, 680411*

**OXHILL GARDENS OPEN**  
**SUNDAY 9TH JULY**  
**11.00 – 6.00**  
**SEVERAL GARDENS OPEN**  
**MINIBUS PROVIDED BETWEEN GARDENS**  
**CREAM TEAS AT THE MANOR**

If you can help in any way – parking cars for an hour or so, spreading cream and jam etc – please contact Jill Rodwell on 01295 680247.

# CHURCH OF ST LAWRENCE, OXHILL

## SERVICES FOR JULY

Sunday 2nd	No service	Ordination of Dr Jill Tucker at Coventry Cathedral	
Sunday 9th	9.30	Holy Communion	Rev Bill Rolfe
Sunday 16th	6.30	Evensong	Rev Bill Rolfe
Sunday 23rd	9.30	Holy Communion	Rev Stephen Knight
Sunday 30th	9.30	Holy Communion	Rev Bill Rolfe
United Benefice at Oxhill, followed by Morning Coffee			

## SCARECROW WEEKEND

Another beautiful weekend and a big thank you to Lilian and all her helpers for making this weekend so successful.

Thank you also to all the Villagers for their wonderful support.

*Carol Fox*

## HELP

Oxhill P.C.C. is in urgent need of an ex-officio secretary and also a treasurer for the coming year. We have 4 meetings a year. Our treasurer is retiring next year so we are looking for someone who could "learn the ropes" and maybe join the PCC permanently next year.

Any volunteers?

Please contact Andy Buchanan (01295 688112) or Carol Fox (01295 680223)

## GENEALOGY

We note that the latest issue of The Midland Ancestor (journal of the Birmingham and Midland Society for Genealogy and Heraldry) comments on the luck attending people with Oxhill ancestors.

This is because our hard-working Webmaster has, with the approval of the Rector and the aid of his daughter and Warwickshire Archives, posted on the Internet images of the entire Parish Register collection up to 1837. Hence researchers can hunt for the baptisms of their ancestors without the trouble and expense of a trip to Warwick – no mean consideration if you happen to live in Philadelphia.

If you wish to see for yourself, point your browser at [www.oxhill.org.uk](http://www.oxhill.org.uk) and browse.

*Editor*

# SCARECROW FESTIVAL

Well, Oxhill, we did it again! This time we made about £2300 for Church funds!

What a happy way to make money; it was so nice to see young and old alike with smiles on their faces.

Now to say thank you to everybody that helped in any way. It was very hard work the week before, but worth it all in the end.

Thank you to Gaynor Fila for organising the teas, and for the many beautiful cakes and the help on teas.

To Janet for the use of the field for the car park and for organising the plant stall, along with Eve. Thank you.

To Tom and Carol Fox for the pig roast, and to Mike and Josh for organising the bar. It was a great evening.

To Heather for the trip to the flower market and to town for wine. She was also very handy with the sledge-hammer, helping me put up 20 scarecrows.

A big thank you to Angela Kean, who made the scarecrows for the church and then came along and helped me.

To Ruth, or my scarecrows would have been headless!

To Helen and Jane, who seemed to take up residence in my home. Many thanks for your help and hard work.

To Grenville for his map, and to Jill for the printing.

I must not forget Kevin, my son, for the bale of straw, nor Bill, Alan and Graham for their help on Saturday morning. And thanks for the beautiful flowers in Church. It did look lovely.

To all the committee members who worked so hard to make the weekend so successful.

Lastly, the biggest thank you of all to all of you for your scarecrows. Without them we would not have a festival. They were wonderful, even more so than last year.

Many many thanks to you all. It was a great weekend.

*Lilian*

# NATURE NOTES FOR JULY

The month of haymaking, in Gaelic Am mìos buidhe – the yellow month.

Apologies for missing June nature notes – we were having a nice wet, windy and cold summer break in Pembrokeshire – where I also had a “first”. The cottage we rent is next to a marshy rough area with dense reed beds, and on the second night we were treated to a strange and mysterious reeling song. My first thought was that it was crickets or grasshoppers. The song continued and I realised it was a Grasshopper warbler (*Locustella naevia*). The bird has various names, grasshopper lark, reeler, and cricket bird, and the Latin name *Locustella* means “little locust”. The song is very like a continuous cricket call, and it has also been likened to spinning wheels and the winding of a fishing reel and apparently can carry for over half-a-mile. Eric Simms (distinguished BBC wildlife sound recordist and naturalist) studied the song in detail and calculated that it ranged between 3.3 and 7 kHz, a frequency often beyond the capacity of the older human ear (we could hear it!!). He also estimated that it included 1400 double notes a minute, while a bird can sing 250,000 notes during the course of a single night. Indeed our bird on several nights sang well after dark and I suspect it was only the cold and rain that stopped it. It is found throughout the British Isles, but its numbers have declined substantially, mainly through loss of habitat. It is a highly secretive bird and apparently few people ever manage to see one. We spotted ours twice and it really is a LBJ (little brown job) and kept itself in the reed beds for the week we were there.

Staying on the subject of bird song, I'm sure those of you living in the centre of the village can't have missed the continuous song of a Song thrush. This is good news; for the last few years we have had only the occasional thrush. I hope their numbers in the village are increasing. The Song thrush was recently voted Britain's favourite songbird and our ancestors clearly shared the opinion, because in the 1860s British settlers took Song thrushes with them to the Antipodes. It spread quickly and widely into New Zealand and is now one of the commonest garden birds throughout both main islands, and also occurs on some smaller islands. Our Song thrush sings morning, noon and evening, often the first bird to open its beak – at 20 minutes past 3 one morning! and is also usually the last. The song is sweet and loud, will full-tones clear notes, scattered with repeats and “ornaments” giving the impression that it is created of happiness, pure and simple. The Song thrush improves its song year by year as it reaches maturity. It has been estimated that an individual has about 100 different phrases to draw upon, which it does at random and then repeats each unit three or four times. In the 1920s Lord Grey notes that one common phrase resembles “did-he-do-it”. Our bird has two phrases we recognise instantly – “Doreen-Doreen-Doreen” and “Hoovie-Hoovie-Hoovie”. It is said that some of their repertoire resembles human phrases and they will also pick up on other bird notes, and even man-made objects like trim-phones!

“That’s the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,  
Lest you should think he never could recapture  
The first fine careless rapture!”

The name can be traced back to the fourteenth century where it comes from thrustle or throstle and it has strong links with the Midlands. It was used by the Warwickshire poet Michael Drayton in the sixteenth century – “the jocund throstle”. It also appears on the badge of West Bromwich Albion Football Club and is the club’s mascot; the supporters club is still known as The Throstles.

In the last 25 years Song thrushes have declined to just 1.4 million pairs. A widespread threat to the bird is the widespread use of pesticides in gardens, especially slug pellets. The continuing survival of “Britain’s favourite songbird” lies in our own hands.

I was both cheered and saddened (if that’s not a paradox) to see a pair of Kestrels had nested in the roof vent of the Church. I watched one young bird being fed mice early one morning as it sat on the ridge tiles. They have now all flown and I am hoping that the Barn owls will still have time to come and once again rear some young, but as yet I have seen no signs. Perhaps one of the congregation will let me know if they hear that eerie “hissing from above”.

July 10 – village feasts fairs and revels now frequent. *“This is to give notice that Yattendon Revel will be kept on 10 of July, and for the encouragement of gentlemen, gamesters and others, there will be given an exceedingly good Gold-laced Hat of 27s value, to be played for at Cudgels, the man that breaks most heads to have the prize. Two shillings will be given to each man that positively breaks a head, for the first ten heads that are broke; the blood to run an inch, or will be deemed No Head.”* – Advertisement in the Reading Mercury 1782.

Perhaps this could be included in the Scarecrow Festival next year!

*Grenville Moore*

## PLANT STALL

A very big thank you to everyone who supplied us with plants for the Scarecrow Weekend – including topping us up on Sunday morning.

The result was a magnificent £231.

A special word of thanks to our extra helpers, who were invaluable at times of stress, namely Gwyn Adams, Nadia MacCall, Dot Richards and David Whaley.

Some of the remaining plants are going to Anne Marshall's coffee morning in aid of Chenobyl's Children, and also some to the Methodist Church in Tysoe for a function they are having shortly. So they will not be wasted!

*Janet Gardner  
Eve Whaley*

## ANONYMOUS DONATIONS

A couple of weeks ago an envelope dropped through my door at Karibu. It contained £4 in coin of the realm, but absolutely no indication whatever of the kind donor nor the intended recipient. Just a sealed envelope, blank on all sides.

There seem to me to be three possibilities:

- 1        A non-resident of Oxhill is paying for two copies of the News
- 2        Someone is making a kind donation to bolster Jackie Hatton's efforts in the Race for Life
- 3        A generous soul realises that, as a retired teacher, I must be living in abject poverty and is trying to alleviate my sufferings.

Whichever it may be, much thanks, but it would help me set the coins rolling in the right direction if the giver could please slide another piece of paper through the door telling me which of my guesses (if any) is correct.

Thank you.

*George Adams*

## NEXT YEAR?

The Editorial Ear-to-the-ground (aka Gwyneth) hears that there are strong rumours going the rounds that Oxhill may next year have something called a Scarecrow Festival.

That being so, perhaps putting the scarecrows used this year into cold storage might be a good idea. Certainly better than my system last year, of taking them up to Shennington straight after the event and then cursing earlier this year.

*Editor*

## WI REPORT JUNE 2006

Our speaker for the evening told us that, 'Save the Children fights for the rights of children in the UK and around the world who suffer from poverty, disease, injustice and violence. They work with the children to find lifelong answers to the problems they face.'

She used slides to illustrate a brief history of the organisation and a selection of current schemes.

Eglantine Jebb was moved by the plight of starving Austrian children after WW1. Her efforts to help them led to her trial for treason for aiding the enemy, but aroused an international response and led to the founding of Save the Children and to the Convention of the Rights of Children.

Save the Children knows and uses people and systems already in place for emergency relief. They buy supplies locally and directly. This helps the local economy and reduces costs. The same structures can be used to anticipate predicted disasters.

Schemes that help people to help themselves include: loans of chickens or goats, which are later paid back to another family; training in maintenance of well mechanisms and healthcare vehicles; Befriending Unaccompanied Minors Project in Birmingham; family tracing in war zones; night shelters to ensure that children can sleep safe from abduction into rebel armies; fair price workshops for girls, with school rooms for basic lessons.

Ann Nethercleft was the hostess. Gwen and Peggy Pritchard provided the refreshments. Flower of the month: 1st June Wreford's iris; 2nd Pam McLeod's aquilegia.

Jackie Batchelor was thanked for her work on the committee, recently as press officer. Belinda Keep will write the reports until the AGM.

Members were reminded that 26th June is 'over packaging day' when we are asked to dump wrapping as we pay for goods.

Next meeting July 5th Mr Handy will demonstrate the craft of thatching. Instead of the garden party in August we are planning a lunch in Brailes, after a morning walk for the energetic. You are most welcome to join us.

*B. Keep*

# SOME THOUGHTS ON A TRIP TO FRANCE

By A. N. Observer

I owe George my humble apologies, I had not realised what a terrible shock to his system travelling to France with the rampant females of Oxhill would be.

In fairness it was impossible to forecast the profound mental impact that a supposedly innocuous trip to Monet's house and garden would bring about but I suppose he hadn't anticipated the lowering of tone that four brazen hussies from Merrydown might have on "The Gardening Club".

One might have thought that coach-load of women would give George enough to write about and a perhaps offer a chance to poke a bit of fun but, what to anyone else might have been an earth shattering experience, from him, after the event, drew two tight lipped lines in the magazine.

Not quite "the Gardening Club went to Monet's garden and it was enjoyed by all," but close enough

We husbands know the real story, George was frightened that if he told the truth about the trip no one would go next year.

I know just what he suffered, I live with it and, for an all too brief interlude, Merrydown became a haven of peace and tranquility as we relaxed with a few beers listening to the bird songs that one can actually hear without women talking. We also had free use of the television control without the nightly embarrassment of an arm wrestling contest to decide who presses the buttons.

While George sat, tight lipped, quaffing his wine and grimacing as another shriek of laughter imploded on his ears, in the evening we smoked cigars and drank Port, listening to gale force winds howling in the chimney as the logs roared into a furnace of activity, helped by God's bellows. We looked out of the windows, snug and warm inside, as the willow fronds lashed themselves into a frenzy, imagining that coach load of, mainly, women all being sea sick. Laugh? We nearly choked with glee at the thought.

How could George only manage two short lines? I know from suffering in silence myself the paralysing effect that the staccato rabbiting of those particular four friends can have on a man's nervous system, but only two short lines?

George had the temerity to dump them back home at Merrydown after 10.30 at night leaving a giggling rowdy entourage of four on the drive, reduced briefly to three as Susan raced down Green Lane following the coach. She was trying to return a case of lager that she had inadvertently purloined whilst unloading enough alcohol to float me to Tysoe.

Two Lines George? At 2 a.m. I gave up and went to bed, unable to get a word in edgeways, as they regaled each other, reliving every hysterical second in glorious side splitting detail. Had it not been for the fact that they were stone cold sober I would

have thought George had been leading the Oxhill Bacchanalia Society in its pre-summer rites.

Perhaps you simply hoped it might be cancelled next year if you said very little, but George they loved it. For you sir I have nothing but admiration; you clearly have a certain granite like quality about you that one can only aspire to.

*Alan Hedley*

[The Editor wishes it to be publicly known that the Two Lines repeatedly referred to above were NOT written by him. For the rest, no comment. So often the best policy, don't you think? However, if any of the trippers would care to pen a short description of the outing, I dare say room might be found in the next issue.]

## MISSING CAT ---- FOUND

This is a thank you to all the people who said "has your cat turned up?"---and particularly to the non cat lovers. The answer is yes, he turned up after 3 days, seemingly none the worse for wear, but rather hungry! If anyone knows where he got to I would love to know. Perhaps we should bear in mind when we lock up outhouses, garages etc that there could be something snoozing peacefully inside that might get locked in by mistake.

I must say that in some ways keeping a dog was less stressful-at least I always knew where she was. Anyway thank you again-I must try to be more laid back about owning a cat.

*Ruth Gibson.*

## RACE FOR LIFE

The Kineton Post Ladies and I managed to complete the Race for Life early in June. I would like to thank very much all those of you who were kind enough to support and sponsor us. We have so far raised £820 for the cause.

*Jackie Hatton (Jackie the Post)*

Congratulations to all four of you; a splendid effort. If any reader has not yet contributed to Jackie's efforts it is not too late to do so. She would be delighted to receive any further offerings that there may be, either direct to her or through me at Karibu.

*Editor*

# **“I’ll volunteer in 2006”**

## **A resolution you should keep**

Helpers are needed by these very worthy local groups:

- **Age Concern Stratford (Working with older people -lunch clubs, befriending, shops)** – urgently needs volunteers to help at the Pop-in Centre, Stratford Town, on Friday mornings and for the Melville Lunch Club on Tuesdays. A Lead for the Walkers’ Group is also needed.
- **RDA Kineton Area (Pitern Hill) (Helping the disabled)** - needs people to lead ponies ridden by disabled people of all ages normally on Tuesday afternoons and Friday mornings.
- **Warwickshire Education Business Partnership (helping 5-7 year old pupils)** - needs Help 5-7 year olds with reading and numbers in schools.
- **Family and Friends (Drugs helpline for users, their friends and families)** - needs Telephone Counsellors.
- **Mencap Residential Care Centre (Helping those with learning disabilities)** - needs an Honorary Secretary who would participate in the quarterly Executive Meetings. The commitment averages about 5 hours per month.
- **WE URGENTLY NEED VOLUNTEER DRIVERS TO HELP US WITH OUR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SCHEME, (40P PER MILE ALLOWANCE PAID).**

Call us if you are interested, or, if you can get on the web

( [www.stratfordvbx.org.uk](http://www.stratfordvbx.org.uk) )

check out our web site for all the latest opportunities for volunteering.

**Volunteer Centre Stratford-on-Avon District**

**Phone: 01789 262886**

# TENNIS TOURNAMENTS

I have been asked to host a court here at Oxbourne House, Oxhill for two charity tennis tournaments.

The first is in aid of The Katherine House Hospice and Warwickshire & Northamptonshire Air Ambulance and will be held on Sunday 20th August at 10.00 a.m., finishing with a barbecue at The Mill house, Stourton. Entry Fee for tournament and barbecue £15.00.

The second is in aid of Shipston Home Nursing and will be held on Sunday 10th September at 9.30 a.m. followed by a Pig Roast at Upper St Dennis Farm (between Whatcote and Honington). Entry Fee £15 for tennis and pig roast.

Last year both of these tournaments were great fun and raised thousands of pounds for these local charities. Please let me know **by 16th July** if you (and any of your friends) would like to play in either (or both!).

*Posy McDonald (Tel: 01295 688202)*

## GLEANINGS FROM THE CHURCH VISITORS' BOOK

A quick look at the Visitors' Book in the Church produced a long list of complimentary comments about the Scarecrow Weekend.

Mr. & Mrs. Webb of Doncaster talked of the 'wonderful display', while Amanda & Justin from Florida had 'really enjoyed our visit'. D. Emslie thought it was all 'Absolutely Fab', and Messrs Higgins & Bruin of Hook Norton wrote 'Very very good. Thank you.'

Issie Frankland said it was 'Beautiful, so peaceful, such community spirit', and Kilby & Steel (weren't they a 70s pop group?) commented that it was a 'Wonderful display, we hope to come again next year'.

So that's next June sorted out, then. Well done, everyone.

*Editor*

**SHIPSTON HOME NURSING**  
present a  
Country Car Boot Sale

**3rd September 2006**

Gates Open for booters at 8.00 a.m. and public at 10.00a.m.

Set in the idyllic parkland of the

***Honington Estate***

Booters = £15 per car or £25 per van  
Public entry fee £2 per head or £5 per car

Please call Rebecca Mawle on 01608 674929 or 07940 716345  
for further details and application form

Events - Food - Refreshments - Bar

## **CANALETTO PAINTINGS SAVED FOR THE NATION**

Compton Verney in Warwickshire has confirmed that a pair of historic paintings by the eighteenth- century master Antonio Canaletto, previously destined to leave Britain, have now been saved for public viewing for the sum of £6 million.

View of the Grand Walk, Vauxhall Gardens and Interior of the Rotunda, Ranelagh, previously in private ownership, have been on display at Compton Verney from 20th June.

*Ina Cole*

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## SCARECROWS APPRECIATED

Dear George

(My apologies if you are not the editor – I obtained your name from the Oxhill web site!)

My wife and friends and I visited your lovely village yesterday (Sun 19 June) and had a great time wandering around and looking at all the scarecrows!

As a result I have some 60 Jpeg pictures which I thought you might like to have (either for the web site or to pass round).

They are reasonable quality (courtesy of my Canon Digital Ixus 700).

If you would like to give me an address I will be pleased to send them to you on CD.

Either way, please thank the Scarecrow Committee and all the Entrants – I know the effort which has to go into these sorts of events!

We were amazed at the number and quality of the figures and had a delightful and highly amusing afternoon.

*Yours sincerely, Dick*

[We are delighted that our visitors had a good time in the village. It makes all the hard work worth while. I have asked Dick to send me the CD he mentions, and will arrange for the photos to be put up on the website when it arrives. Ed.]

## TYSOE MARIONETTE GROUP

### **Great opportunity for Teenage Marionettist! - - -**

“I’m going to be on TV – Yea!” exclaimed a thrilled Marifa Heapy (13) on hearing that the CBBC had accepted her audition DVD and invited her to appear on the BBC 2 breakfast programme, “Level Up” - a fast-moving show “by kids for kids”. Cat Cubie, a most enthusiastic BBC Researcher, came to our Barn Theatre late on the following Sunday to film Marifa operating Balotte, the dashing French Acrobat, swinging on his high trapeze.

Then on Thursday 15th June, Marifa and her Dad (accompanied by Balotte in a suitcase!) went to the Television Centre in London for the transmission starting at 7:30 am. After less than half an hour’s rehearsal in the throbbing compact studio, Marifa found herself in front of the cameras explaining to Presenters Sam and Mark how to operate a marionette. Interactive “Live” sessions were interspersed with video clips taken on location in Tysoe.

Well done, Marifa for accepting the challenge of showing millions of young viewers how much fun can be had pulling strings.

*Jon & Ann Beeny 01295 680431*

## WHAT'S ON IN OXHILL

### July

Saturday 1st	10.00	Old Church House – Coffee Morning for Chernobyl's Children
Saturday 8th	7.30	St. Peter's, Whatcote - Summer Concert
Sunday 9th	11.00	Oxhill Gardens Open
Tuesday 11th	8.00	Village Hall - Parish Council Meeting
Monday 24th	23.59	Copy deadline for the News

### August

Sunday 20th	10.00	Oxbourne House - Tennis tournament
-------------	-------	------------------------------------

### September

Sunday 10th		Upper St. Dennis Farm & Oxbourne House – Tennis Tournament
Saturday 23rd		Progressive Supper
Saturday 30th		Harvest Supper

### October

Friday 13th		Village Hall - Quiz Night
Saturday 21st		Village Hall - Casino Night

### November

Friday 10th &	12.00	Darlingstott Farm – Designer Sale, Shipston Home Nursing
Saturday 11th	9.00	
Thursday 16th	10.00	Ettington Community Centre – Gift Fair

### December

Monday 11th		Village Hall - Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch
-------------	--	--

## 'Art from a Cottage Garden'

An Exhibition

by Hazel Robinson

2<sup>nd</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> September

Open from 10am to 4.30pm

Morning Coffee and Cream Teas, in aid of the Ellen Badger Cottage Hospital, weather permitting.



Hopkin House, Lower Tysoe, Warwickshire CV35 0BN



Easy wheelchair access

