
THE OXHILL NEWS

January 2012

No. 446



Mick Shepard receives a Chief Officer Commendation
for exemplary actions above and beyond the call of duty

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OXHILL NEWS

The editors welcome any pictures, photographs, drawings, poems, puzzles, recipes, announcements or items of local news for possible inclusion in The Oxhill News. Please email news-editor@oxhill.org.uk or place paper contributions in the box labelled 'The Oxhill News' in St Lawrence's Church.

The copy deadline for the February edition is January 15th 2011.

MOBILE LIBRARY

The library van has books with **large print**, ordinary print, picture books, children's books, paperbacks, non-fiction, novels, sagas, crime, mysteries, adventures, westerns and romance. The van also has talking books, cassettes and CDs.

The library van will continue to visit Oxhill every 3rd Wednesday, stopping at the Village Hall at 10am and staying there for 30 minutes. The van will visit us on Wednesday 4th and 25th January.

You can renew books between van visits by calling 01926 851031 or online at www.Warwickshire.gov.uk/wild

REFUSE COLLECTION

Recycling and green waste bins (blue and green bins) will be collected on Tuesdays 3rd, 17th and 31st January.

The grey rubbish bins will be collected Tuesdays 10th and 24th January.

WEEKDAY WALKERS

The following walks are planned for January:

January 13th – A 5 mile circular from Ettington via Pillerton Priors and Full Ready with 270 feet of ascent. Lunch will be at The White Horse Ettington – Leaving Oxhill at 10am.

January 27th – A 4 mile circular from Balscote with 50 feet of ascent. Lunch will be at The Butchers Arms Balscote – Leaving Oxhill at 10am.

Due to the numbers on the walk Jim Saxton now contacts regular members to get meal decisions by Wednesday evening. Those who wish to join us are most welcome, but please contact Jim Saxton on 01295 680613 or saxton@tiscali.co.uk before the Tuesday evening prior to the walk.

LOCAL HERO!

Mick Shepard receives Chief Officer Commendation

Last Winter Mick attended a call in South Warwickshire together with a Crew. A very steep road called Sunrising Hill was treacherous due to snow and ice. Half way up the road the ambulance lost traction and started to slide backwards. He made a decision to 'catch' the sliding vehicle with his 4X4 and successfully brought it to a safe stop. Had it not been for his swift actions the ambulance would have certainly have gone off the road into a large ditch.

101 NEW POLICE NON-EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER

Warwickshire Police have launched a new, non-emergency telephone number, making it easier for members of the public to report crime and disorder and make general enquiries.

The new number 101, which is already live in several force areas across the country, is an easy to remember number which goes directly to the local control room no matter where you are dialling from.

It takes away the need to search for the local force number and should reduce the volume of unnecessary 999 calls.

The new number can be used to report if a car has been stolen or property has been damaged or vandalised, to report a minor traffic collision, to provide information about crime or to contact a local policing team.

Hayley Ditchburn

Wellesbourne Safer Neighbourhood Team

Email: hayley.ditchburn@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

KINETON OIL CONSORTIUM

The Kineton Oil Consortium will be ordering oil again in January. Please let me know what you would like to order by 6pm on 11 January 2012. Thank you.

D Harper: 01295 680529

KATHERINE HOUSE HOSPICE FUN RUN

Thank you to all the kind people who sponsored me and my mum to run. We completed the four kilometre course. There were lots of Santa Clauses running and it was great fun.

Thank you, Owain and Elizabeth Harper.

NATURE NOTES FOR JANUARY

*Hark, the cock crows, and yon right star
Tells us, the day himself's not far;
And see where, breaking from the night
He gilds the western bill with light
With him old Janus doth appear,
Peeping into the future year,
With such a look as seems to say
The prospect is not good that way*

Charles Cotton, 1655 'The New Year'



Isn't it wonderful that in these days of the media constantly spreading news of doom and gloom that we in Oxhill live in such a lovely area of the country. Each morning as I watch the wild birds on our feeders, my heart lifts and it sets me up for the day. Several people have recently told me that they have observed changing feeding habits of our garden birds; some vanish for a day or two and then reappear, and in some gardens numbers of birds, mainly tits and sparrows, seem to have declined. Whilst there is a sparrowhawk that does circuits of the village to collect his "take away" I do not think this is the reason; you only have sparrowhawks where there is a plentiful supply of food. I think it may be down to the food we put out – they have so much choice and will visit the gardens with the 'best' food. For instance, we regularly had a pair of bullfinches who visited our finch food feeder daily. When we changed the brand, they simply stopped coming. We changed back to the original brand and almost to the day they have reappeared. Birds have an uncanny sense of locating the best food for their needs. Talking of birds' senses, a week or two ago I was watching a great spotted woodpecker feeding on nuts; suddenly he became motionless, the feeder stopped swaying he didn't move a feather and remained motionless for it must have been two or three minutes. Then a sparrowhawk flashed through the garden, passing within inches of the woodpecker, who didn't flinch. Within seconds of the sparrowhawk leaving, the woodpecker carried on pecking away. He had obviously heard warning cries from other birds and sensed that the hawk was coming his way and to move could have had disastrous results.

Those of you who came to the excellent talk from Matt Willmott of Natural England will be aware, but others may not know, that this small area of South Warwickshire – the Stour valley and Vale of the Red Horse – is an exceptional area for wildlife. Matt and his colleague have just finished a survey on the Upton Estate and he told me they had recorded a short-eared owl in fields at the bottom

of Edgehill. Off I went in the late afternoon, and sure enough there it was. They hunt in daylight and at dusk. I managed to get within about 20 metres as it sat on its hunting post. This really is a fabulous bird with its bright yellow eyes and short tuft feathers on the side of its head. Many local names make reference to this as in Cat Owl, Catafact and Catyogle. The wings are astonishingly long for the size of the bird; the body is tawny owl size and it has the longest wings of all the European owls. The owl I was watching was a male, the underparts and wings a beautiful creamy beige with a very distinct barred tail. It was so graceful in flight, briefly hovering and dropping to within inches of the ground, then up again. Its diet is almost exclusively small rodents and occasionally small birds. This is a bird of open rough ground, fens, marshes, moorland and sand dunes and is a ground nesting bird. It is a rare bird for Warwickshire, and I think this one was an October migrant. There have been two sightings in Northamptonshire and one at Brandon Marsh. I have to say this is my “best” bird sighting of the year.



Short eared owl

The flock of lapwings I have regularly seen between Ilmington and Halford has now grown to between 250 and 300. I haven't seen numbers like that for many years so it's really good news and shows that the Environmental Stewardship Scheme is working.

*January 21 – St Agnes Day – the Sun enters the House of Aquarius:
“The woman shall be delicious and have many noises for her children; she shall be in great peril at twenty-four years and thereafter in felicity. She shall have damage by beasts with four feet; and shall live seventy-seven years after nature”.*

The Kalendar of Shepheards, 1604

Happy New Year!

Grenville Moore

ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH

SERVICES IN JANUARY

All are warmly welcome

Sunday 1st Christmas II: (*All invited to Tysoe at 11.00am*)

Sunday 8th Epiphany I: 9.30am Morning Worship (BR)

Sunday 15th Epiphany II: 9.30am Parish Communion (BR)

Sunday 22nd Epiphany III: 9.30am Family Service (NM)

Sunday 29th Epiphany IV: 9.30am Benefice BCP Communion at Whatcote (NM)

For other services in the benefice please see porch notice board

VICARAGE NOTES

Dear friends,

The following words were broadcast to the nation by King George VI on Christmas Day 1939. From the book "God Knows" by Louise Haskins, they struck a note of hope for people at a difficult time.

"I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year, 'give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown'. And he replied, 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, and safer than a known way'."

Really, they're fitting words for any New Year as we continue along our journeys, with experiences that may be sometimes joyful, sometimes sad, and oftentimes perplexing.

Christmas 2011

Our thanks to all who decorated the Church so beautifully and to all who shared in the special services – as ever, it was lovely to see good support.

God bless, God speed, and happy New Year!

Nicholas Morgan 01608 685230

DEANERY NEWS FOR JANUARY

I trust Christmas was a wonderful celebration of our Saviour's birth for everyone. The next **Deanery Synod** will be on **Tuesday, 31st January at 7.30 pm** in St. Edmund's Church, Shipston. We shall be welcoming one of the Cathedral Canons, and hearing about the work of Coventry Cathedral, and the events surrounding its Golden Jubilee in May – the 50th Anniversary of the consecration of the new Cathedral.

Thank you:

During the last Lent services we collected money to help buy Bishop Cleophas in Matabeleland a new car to cope with the rough terrain there. The money has now reached him, and Elisabeth Ashworth received this letter of thanks from him:

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father be with you: like the great Apostle, I greet you with these words, hoping to find you well in Shipston in Warwickshire.

On behalf of the Standing Committee, Clergy and all of us in and around Matabeleland, I write this letter to express our greatest gratitude to you all for the gift of \$2,397.00 towards transport.

Your donation is indeed most appreciated. We feel so warmly cared for, prayed for and supported. The clergy and laity are amazed and yet so touched profoundly and highly motivated by your generosity of spirit. By this contribution some of our burdens are lightened.

Once again thank you so very much.

Yours in his Vineyard

+Cleophas Matabeleland.

May our Lord walk with you as you walk into his New Year.

Every blessing, Jill

CHRISTMAS IN CHURCH

Thanks to all who contributed to a really good Christmas in Church. The Christingle service was really good. The Tree was great this year and thanks to all the helpers who made the Church look so festive. Thank you to the readers at the Carol Service, to the choir and to all who made mince pies and made the mulled wine.

A very Happy New year to all!

Churchwardens

SENIOR CITIZENS CHRISTMAS LUNCH

The Christmas Lunch for the Senior Citizens from the Village was held on Monday 12 December and followed the usual, successful format of previous years. We had 30 guests to Lunch and in addition to the delicious 3 course meal with wine that was provided we also had some enjoyable entertainment.

We are grateful to the Children from Tysoe School who sang and played Carols & Christmassy songs on a variety of musical instruments. Also, sincere thanks go to Myrtle Knight and her two accomplices (Ruth Gibson and Ros Henry - pictured below) for providing some nostalgic entertainment to the absolute delight of our guests and helpers.

I would like to thank the following people who, whilst not on the Village Hall Committee, always help out behind the scenes: Sue Robbins, George & Gwyn Adams, David Hill, Anne Marshall, Hugh Rowse and Brian Hobill. I'd also like to thank Judy Badger for her overseeing the whole event and my other colleagues on the Village Hall Committee, who decorated the Hall, cooked food, waited upon tables and generally worked tirelessly to make the day a success.

Derek Harbour



Myrtle and the Supremes!

THE ANCIENT BRITONS CHRISTMAS PARTY

I am not sure if I offered, or was volunteered, to provide some entertainment for this party... I rather fear that the former is true. However, afterwards it was suggested that the two “Numbers” included could be of interest in the Oxhill News, so that others might raise a Christmas smile on reading them. Firstly this which was sent to me by Jill Jeffrey whom many of you will know:

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO WERE BORN IN THE 1920's, 30's, 40's, 50's, 60's & 70's!

First, we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank while they carried us.

They took aspirin, ate blue cheese dressing, tuna from a tin and didn't get tested for diabetes.

Then after that trauma our baby cribs were covered with bright coloured lead-based paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets, not to mention the risks we took hitchhiking...

We drank water from the garden hose and NOT from a bottle.

We shared one soft drink with four friends, from one bottle and NO ONE actually died.

We ate cakes, white bread and real butter and drank pope with sugar in it, but we weren't overweight because... WE WERE ALWAYS OUTSIDE PLAYING!!!

We would leave home in the morning and play all day until the streetlights came on.

No one was able to reach us all day. And we were okay.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We did not have Playstations, Nintendo's, X-boxes, no video games at all, no 99 channels on Sky, no video tape movies, no surround sound, no mobiles, no personal computers, no Internet or Internet chat rooms.... WE HAD FRIENDS and we went outside and found them!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.

We ate worms and mud pies made from dirt and the worms did not live in us forever.

We made up games with sticks and tennis balls and although we were told it would happen, we did not put our very many eyes.

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door or rang the bell or just yelled for them!

Football teams had trials and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn with disappointment. Imagine that!!

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers, problem solvers and inventors ever!

The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility and we learned HOW TO DEAL WITH IT ALL!

And YOU are one of them!

We had the luck to grow up before lawyers and the government regulate our lives for our own good. How brave we were to survive it all.

CONGRATULATIONS!



And finally the VERY best way was saved till last when Ruth, Ros and I were going to SING. (So this was the time for those who found something very pressing to do to leave. No one did!)

When Julia Andrews was 70 she commemorated her birthday at an event in Manhattan by singing “My Favourite Things” from the Sound of Music. She changed the words and so have we with suitable anglicised alternations.

No one under the age of 60 will be slightest bit interested in any of the above, as it does not apply to them!

Myrtle Knight

Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting

Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings
Bundles of magazines tied up in string
These are a few of my favourite things.

Bus passes, cataracts, hearing aids and glasses
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses
Pacemakers, zimmers and extra loud rings
These are a few of our favourite things.

When the pipes leak, when the bones creak
When knees go bad
We simply remember our favourite things
And then we don't feel so bad.

Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads for bunions
No spicy hot food or food cooked with onions
Specsavers, bath-aids and hot meals they bring
These are a few of our favourite things.

Back pain, confused brains and no need for sinnin'
Thin bones and fractures and hair that is thinnin'
And we won't mention our short shrunken frames
When we remember our favourite things.

When the joints ache, when the hips break
When the eyes grow dim
Then we remember the great life we've had
And then we don't feel so bad.

OXHILL VILLAGE HALL - UPCOMING EVENTS

Burns Night Celebration on Saturday, 28 January, 2012

Following the successes of previous years we have been asked to stage a Burns Night celebration on Saturday, 28 January, 2012. The evening will be a traditional event with Haggis, Tatties and Neeps and a wee dram to keep out the cold. Our talented Scots from the Village will be on hand to recall and toast the life of Rabbie Burns, 'address' the Haggis and entertain us with tales of derring do.

The evening will start at 7.00pm for a 7.30pm Dinner

Tickets, which this year will only cost £12.50 per person (rather than £15 for last year) to reflect the challenging times that we live in, should be ordered in advance and will be available from Tricia Harbour on 680676.

Friday Night @ The Village Hall – 2 March, 2012

One of our ever-popular Friday Night events with a Lamb Hotpot (to celebrate St David's day on 1 March) plus a desert all for £8 per person from 7.30 pm onwards.

Tickets will be available from Gaynor van Dyke on 680349

THURSDAY 'AFTERNOON DELIGHT' (OR KNIT & NATTER) 2.00pm - 4.00pm

On 24 November, Jude MacDonald showed us how to make special Christmas floral decorations and scented 'kindling logs'. This was followed 2 weeks later by Barbara Kenny teaching us how to paint on Silk and all participants took home a unique Silk picture.

On 15 December we had a relaxing afternoon knitting our own items and squares for our disabled soldiers whilst enjoying some Christmas Food & Drink

We will resume on Thursday, 12 January in the New Year when we recycling our Christmas cards by turning them into gift tags and anything else that we can create. On 26 January we will be learning new knitting skills and how to crochet.

If you don't want to participate in any of the above, feel free to come along for a cup of tea and to 'Knit & Natter'. Also don't forget the BOOK EXCHANGE. If you'd like to know more, then call Tricia Harbour on 680676 or just turn up and join in.

THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE REPORT

December 2011

On the 7th December the group of villagers now organising the village celebrations of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee met at the Village Hall.

Thank you to all those households that have completed their survey forms and passed them onto the members of the organising team. Collection visits are ongoing and if you haven't yet returned your form please lookout for one of the team who all have spare copies of the form in case you have lost yours!

We are particular grateful for the support of a significant number of you that have committed to the event by providing a deposit for tickets. Your responses have given us the confidence to go ahead with the organisation of the celebrations.

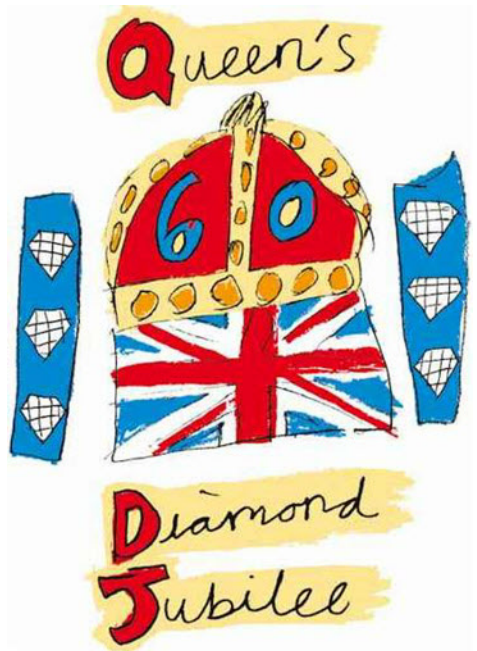
As expected we have been asked for deposits to confirm provisional orders placed earlier in 2011 and your support has enabled us to make those payments. Thank you again.

As some of you may already be aware we have received a pledge of support the enables the food at the 'Big Lunch' on Sunday to be included within the cost of your ticket. We are extremely grateful for this significant anonymous donation.

Lucy Mercer held the first meeting of OMG last month but needs more support. It is possible that two rehearsal groups will be formed, one during the afternoon and one in the evening. The next get together will take place in the Village Hall on Saturday 7th January. Full details are to found elsewhere in the news.

The next meeting will be held at 8pm on Wednesday 4th January at the Village Hall. We will start to identify team leaders to organise the various sections of the event so please come along and get involved and make the Diamond Jubilee weekend a memorable one for Oxhill.

Any questions please contact any group member or Mike Collins on 680564.



CHRISTMAS AT A NORFOLK PARSONAGE - 1791

Parson James Woodforde, who was Rector of Weston Longueville, Norfolk from 1774 until his death in 1803, had started to keep a diary while he had been an undergraduate at Oxford in 1758, and maintained it for the rest of his life. I found in it this account of Christmas Day at his parsonage in 1791, which that year fell upon a Sunday.

“This being Christmas I walked to Church this Morning and read Prayers and administered the Holy Sacrament to 22 Communicants. Gave for an Offering at the Altar £0. 2s 6d. None from Weston House (the big house of the village) this Morn’ the Weather being very cold, wet and windy and extreme bad Walking, being all Ice under (foot). My Foot extremely painful, hard Matter to get to and from Church, but thank God I went thro’ it all better than I expected. The following Old Men dined at my House being Christmas Day, and each had a Shilling apiece to carry home to their Wives, £0. 6s 0d. James Smith, Thomas Carey, Thomas Carr, Christopher Dunnell, Nathaniel Heavers and John Peachman. Dinner to Day Surloin of Beef roasted, plumb Puddings and mince Pies. My large Wax Candle lighted up as usual for one House (being Christmas Day) in the Evening. It froze again sharp this Evening. Thank God my foot was much better at Night. I laid my Foot up in a Chair almost all the Aft.”



I gather from this account that Parson Woodforde, then aged 50, most probably suffered from gout. The menu outlined was his customary Christmas dinner. He always invited poor old men to share it with him, and sometimes a widow. The men’s wives however were never included, but remembered by a gift of money to be sent home with their husbands – no equal opportunities then! A wax candle would have been an expensive item – tallow candles would have been for daily use. Parson Woodforde’s always mentions the ceremonial lighting of “my large Wax Candle” for one hour each Christmas Day, and it may be that he kept the same one for another hour’s burning the next year.

At Oxhill we would have had no resident Rector in 1791 – for most of the eighteenth century our Rectors installed a curate here instead. John Mills who had been Rector both of Oxhill and of Barford and never lived here, had died in March, 1791, so by Christmastime there was, or soon would be, a new Rector. Austen Bushby was the man appointed, and while he does seem to have officiated at some ceremonies in the church, in the early years of his tenure at least he also had a curate. In 1791 this was a young man called Robert Warde, who was sadly to die a few years later, in 1796, aged 29, and lies buried near the altar in the church. Robert would, I imagine, have lived at Oxhill Rectory, but he left us no diary to tell whether or not the poor old men of the village dined at his table on Christmas Day. Did he serve them with sirloin and plum pudding, I wonder, and light a Wax Candle to burn clear in the evening dusk? We shall never know.

Ann Hale

THE PEACOCK

Quiz Night

Quiz night on Sunday 8th January at 8pm.

Village Events

The village coffee morning is on Wednesday 4th January at 10:30am and the village lunch is on Wednesday 18th January.

Magnificent 7

Choose from 7 main courses for £7 each throughout January!

Lunch Monday - Friday from 12 -2pm

Dinner Monday - Thursday before 7pm



TEA WITH THE MAD HATTER (AND CANTAMUS)

Shipston and district's a cappella choir, Cantamus, directed by Richard Emms, would love you to come to a Mad Hatter's Tea Party on Sunday afternoon 4th. March 2012. There will be a diversity of music, readings, and dance to entertain you, and tables groaning with home-made cakes and tea to sustain you. Hats and teddy bears are optional – and you might just have a clue as to at least one of the songs featured in the programme!

The Townsend Hall in Shipston is the venue, tickets cost £10 – and will be available from choir members and Clarke Electricals in Shipston by the end of January. The Mad Hatter's Tea Party starts at 3.p.m., and will be a lovely way to spend an afternoon, welcoming the spring. If you would like to know more, please get in touch with Yvonne Ridley on 01789 269587.

OMG!

Oxhill Music Group

WE NEED YOU!

Following the first meeting, we are still in need of volunteers. We are planning the following acts for the Jubilee event:

- The Oxhill Jubilee Band
- The Oxhill Jubilee Dance Group
- The Oxhill Jubilee Choir
- A steel pan and drumming workshop

In addition to this, we would also like to finish the event with a show piece from a selected musical!

DON'T BE AFRAID!

Come along to our next meeting

Jan 7th 2012

Children from 3pm

Adults from 3.45pm

Any questions, please call:

Lucy - 01295 680407 / 07531 136136

(or find me at The Peacock)

Jess - 07974 360519

OMG! FIRST MEETING

Has Oxhill Got Talent?



The first meeting wasn't the best. Admittedly the weather was foul and the Village Hall freezing, but only 6 people, only one over the age of 11, turned up! Now, with a population of a couple of hundred, I was hoping for a few more volunteers. However, I do want to thank all the people who phoned me prior to the meeting, offering their apologies and their services. I look forward to seeing you all at our first rehearsal which is on Saturday 7th January at the Village Hall; children at 3pm, followed by everyone else at 3.45pm. Now, I would really like to see a lot more people on this date, whether you think you've got talent or not. I have so many ideas, but in order for them to happen, I'm going to need a good few more volunteers! So come on down, on the 7th and join in - it's going to be all good fun!

Ruth Mercer



Stour Singers
Handel's 'Messiah'
St Edmund's Shipston
3 December 2011



This performance of Handel's *Messiah* was a sell-out success for Stour Singers. Richard Emms, who has continuously directed his choir now for 36 years, sensitively guided the singers and the accompanying Cherwell Orchestra (leader, Judy Springate) to bring out all the drama and also the humour in Handel's music. The highlight of the choral singing was undoubtedly the joyous 'Hallelujah Chorus' in which Richard Emms included the four soloists and the entire audience stood, many singing along with the choir from the pews.

The occasion was a reunion for the soloists who had all taken part in 'Messiah' in Truro Cathedral in 2009. Apart from baritone, Rodney Clarke, currently at Paris Opera, the other soloists came here from Cornwall. The clear soaring soprano of Cheryl Rosevear excelled in 'Rejoice greatly' & 'I know that my Redeemer liveth', Shelley Coulter-Smith, mezzo, brought a rich, sympathetic warmth to the emotional range of her solos and Nicholas Hawker, likewise, skilfully adapted his dignified light tenor to suit his varied text. One visitor said the audience was mesmerised by the soloists. Certainly the whole assembly gave rapt attention throughout. This was especially evident in Rodney Clarke's 'Behold, I tell you a mystery' and in his faultless duet, 'The Trumpet shall sound' with Chris Cox on trumpet.

All agreed it was a most memorable evening and a splendid preparation for Christmas.

This concert was supported by the Birmingham & Black Country Community Foundation on behalf of the Mid-Counties Co-Operative Community Fund.

The next concert is on 5 May 2012 at 7.30pm in St Edmund's, Shipston, a Handel-Haydn programme featuring Haydn's *Creation Mass*. Rehearsals start at 7pm on Thursday 12 January 2012. New members are welcome (particularly tenors!) No auditions. Please contact Vic Twyman, tel: 01451 870361 for further details.



WOT2GROW COMMUNITY ORCHARD

What a fantastic December in the Orchard!! A big thank to everyone who came and helped with the tree and planting. Without the members and supporters we couldn't manage all these tasks.

We had another great session with John Edgeley who showed us many good tips for planting trees as well as the correct orientation, depth of planting and positioning of stakes. Following this we all enthusiastically started planting in the pre-dug holes checking that the tree label was the same as the plant label posts laid out by each hole, belt and braces to make sure we planted everything according to the plan!

We completed planting the 100 trees on a freezing cold morning but at least it was bright and dry. Luckily the frost the night before was not that heavy and the ground was only frozen on the surface and a bit of forking over and it was perfect for the last of the planting. The art of putting on tree guards was soon learnt and with a production line of putting on the guards and then tying the trees securely to the stakes it really didn't take that long to protect the 100 trees, which was just as well with the strong winds we have had. Hope the bunnies will not feel too deprived!

We put in 100 raspberry canes, autumn fruiting yellow ones this time, variety All Gold. A "production line" of digging a trench, trimming roots, watering and then planting and firming in meant that we finished in record time. The planting and tying-in of 5 loganberries and 5 tayberries finished the tasks for December

The orchard really does look like one now!! The rows of trees, the lines of canes with post and wire supports, the fence, the base for the shed all confirm the amazing amount of work that has been done since April. Why not just go down and see what we have done – it really is worth seeing.

The fun starts again on January 14th when we will be planting lots of raspberry canes, gooseberries and sundry other bushes, if we are not frozen in!. Come along and join us at 10:00am and look out for posters including details for the pruning and grafting sessions. See the photos and details at www.wot2grow.co.uk

If you would like to join the community Orchard call one of the team or e-mail membership@wot2grow.co.uk

Liz Atkinson (680045), Paul Sayer (680451), Derek Harbour (680676), Sue and Mike Sanderson (688080), Graham Collier (680127), Julia Stirman (01608 686776)



OWLS Oxhill WildLife Society

The OWLS group's latest talk in November was given by Matt Willmott from Natural England. Matt talked about the Environmental Stewardship scheme and the effect it has had on farmland birds which are amongst England's most threatened wildlife. Numbers have declined by over 80% in some cases e.g. grey partridges, corn buntings, tree sparrows, yellow hammers, linnets, turtle doves and skylarks. The decline has been caused by the loss of in-field nesting habitat, lack of seed food during the winter and early spring, and insect rich foraging habitats. By chance, there was a great photo of a short eared owl and mention of a local sighting which Gren followed up (see his Nature Notes).

The ES scheme pays farmers at two levels according to their management of designated areas. The land is not just left wild but is managed to encourage wildlife and greater biodiversity. Plants are grown to give birds all year round food supplies and ground cover in which they can hide. Nesting/roosting sites are protected or increased and hedges are left for a minimum of three years between cuts to leave cover for shelter and berries for winter food. Matt knew several local farmers including Tom Heritage who is a part of the Higher Environmental Stewardship scheme and who was in the audience. There was therefore much friendly banter and discussion around the room, helped along by a pleasant glass of wine!

SHIPSTON RURAL WATCH

At 1430hrs yesterday a white van was stopped in the village of Honington by the local Policing team and searched for stolen property. In the rear of the van Police located an electric fencing unit which had a name and mobile number written on it in permanent black pen (Very good idea - makes the unit very traceable and life a lot simpler for Police). Police rang the phone number and were able to confirm that the unit was stolen last week from the local area. The driver was arrested on suspicion of theft. The vehicle was recovered as used in crime and the fuel tank was dipped resulting in red diesel being found, the van has now been handed over to Custom and Excise who will deal with the man for fuel offences.

Regards

PC 396 Richard Grove BSC (Hons),
Shipston Safer Neighbourhood Team
Warwickshire Police



WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

JANUARY

Tuesday 3rd		Green & Blue bin collection
Wednesday 4th	10:00	Mobile Library - Village Hall
Wednesday 4th	10:30	The Peacock - Coffee Morning
Wednesday 4th	20:00	Village Hall - Diamond Jubilee Meeting
Saturday 7th		Village Hall - OMG! Oxhill Music Group
Sunday 8th	20:00	The Peacock - Quiz Night
Tuesday 10th		Grey landfill bin collection
Wednesday 11th	18:00	Kineton Oil Consortium order deadline
Thursday 12th		Village Hall - Afternoon Delight
Friday 13th	9:30	Weekday Walkers - see page 2 for details
Saturday 14th		WOT2GROW orchard planting
Sunday 15th		COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEWS
Tuesday 17th		Green & Blue bin collection
Wednesday 18th	12:30	The Peacock - Village Lunch
Tuesday 24th		Grey landfill bin collection
Wednesday 25th	10:00	Mobile Library - Village Hall
Thursday 26th		Village Hall - Afternoon Delight
Friday 27th		Weekday Walkers - see page 2 for details
Saturday 28th		Village Hall - Burns Night Celebration
Tuesday 31st		Green & Blue bin collection

MARCH

Friday 2nd:
 Friday Night @ The Village Hall
 Sunday 4th:
 Mad Hatter's Tea Party - Shipston

