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# THE OXHILL NEWS

July 2011

No. 440



George Adams, outgoing editor of The Oxhill News

Editors:

Paula Buffery (07812128097) & Vanessa Druce (07972240818)

[news-editor@oxhill.org.uk](mailto:news-editor@oxhill.org.uk)

## REFUSE COLLECTION

Recycling and green waste bins (blue and green bins) will be collected on Tuesdays 5th and 19th July.

The grey rubbish bins will be collected Tuesdays 12th and 26th July.

## MOBILE LIBRARY

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 13th July.

You can renew books between van visits by calling 01926 851031 or online at [www.Warwickshire.gov.uk/wild](http://www.Warwickshire.gov.uk/wild)

## WEEKDAY WALKERS

There is just one walk in July:

**Friday 15th July**

This is a 7 mile walk from Honington to Whatcote with 500 feet of accent. Lunch will be at the Royal Oak Whatcote. We will leave Oxhill at 9:45am.

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 at [saxton@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:saxton@tiscali.co.uk) before the Tuesday evening prior to the walk.

## AUGUST ISSUE

Paula and Vanessa would like to thank George, who has not only been a wonderful editor of the News for the previous 100 editions, but also for his time and generosity during the handover of editorship.

We hope to carry on George's good work and welcome any feedback and ideas for future editions.

The copy deadline will be the 15th of each month, this is necessary due to the external printing of the News. We hope that this will not cause too many problems. Thus please can you ensure all copy is sent to us by midnight on 15th July 2011 for the August edition - [news-editor@oxhill.org.uk](mailto:news-editor@oxhill.org.uk) A box labelled 'The Oxhill News' has been placed in the Church for any paper based contributions.

## GEORGE ADAMS - EMERITUS EDITOR OF THE OXHILL NEWS

After one hundred issues as editor and publisher of the 'News' I am sure that we would all like to thank George for the stylish professionalism and overall excellence which he brought to it over eight years and four months. I know that George would want us also to acknowledge the efforts of his publishing and distribution teams.

George developed a simple style of newsletter which informed and entertained in appropriate proportion, judiciously interspersed with his own wit, as well as that of the likes of Flanders and Swann *et al.* We have to be grateful that he did not use his position to editorialize, sermonize or otherwise lecture his readership on personal likes or interests.

Actually, George's interests might have been fun to read about anyway: having known him for thirty-six years I would assess his main interests, after his wife and family, as, in no specific order of priority: gardening (when Gwynneth lets him), good food, good wine, adventurous travel, theatre and, for many years, a funny green car which he called 'Ermintrude'. He and Gwynneth will now have even more time to indulge them all, except Ermintrude - she left him.

The Oxhill News has become a vital part of Parish life under George's editorship, and is delivered to a lucky few outside the Parish, where it is as eagerly awaited as it is here. George would, I think, say that a village newspaper is only as good as its contributors; that may be so in many respects, but nevertheless his light and sensitive touch has been vital.

Thanks again George for doing a great job.

*David Hill*

## JOB WELL DONE

100 is a big number for anything, George and Gwynn produced this many copies of our Oxhill news, it was a job really well done. Thank you George and Gwynn.

*Mick Shepard*

## INTRODUCING THE NEW EDITORS

Paula and her husband Martin moved to Oxhill in 2009, their daughter Eleanor was born in November 2010. The Oxhill News is a wonderful village newsletter and it will be a pleasure to help to publish your contributions.

Vanessa, the Canadian in Oxhill, has long wanted to contribute to village life, co-editing The Oxhill News suits both her love of language and unhealthy attachment to her computer.

# ST. LAWRENCE'S CHURCH, OXHILL

## SERVICES IN JULY

*All are warmly welcome*

Sunday 3rd	Trinity II	9.30am	Holy Communion (ML)
Sunday 10th	Trinity III	6.30pm	Evensong (BR)
Sunday 17th	Trinity IV	9.30am	Holy Communion(ML)
Sunday 24th	Trinity V	9.30am	Family Service (NM)
Sunday 31st	Trinity VI	11.00am	United Benefice Communion at Whatcote

For other benefice services see porch notice board.

## DEANERY NEWS

Firstly, my thanks to everyone for their generous gifts during the Lent Services, and also the Ascension Day Service. We have managed to raise over £1200, plus gift aid, which will go towards helping Bishop Cleophas with a vehicle to cover the hundreds of miles of rough terrain that make up his Diocese in Zimbabwe.

My diary is filling up with wonderful summer events: here are two in particular-

We are looking forward to **Music for a Summer's Evensong**: on Saturday, 9th July at Ilmington Church, between 2pm and 6pm (ish). This will be an afternoon of Music for Evensong, led by Julian Harris, for both adults and young choristers, ending with a simple Choral Evensong. Cost is £6 for adults, £3 for children, to include tea and all music. Get in touch with Jill Tucker if you want to come (01295 688193, [revjill.tucker@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:revjill.tucker@tiscali.co.uk)) or Karen Gaymond if you are in Ilmington.

The **Deanery Garden Party** will once again be happening, rain or shine, at The Old House, Oxhill on Saturday, 13th August, between 3pm and 5pm, and we would love to see as many people from the Deanery as possible. Gifts of cakes would be appreciated. Every year people press money on us, which we send to Tear Fund, so this year we will formally receive donations in aid of Tear Fund, but they are not compulsory!

May you all enjoy thoroughly God's blessings of a summer in the countryside!

*Jill Tucker, Rural Dean*

# FROM THE PARISH REGISTERS

Funerals: remembered with thanksgiving  
14th June, Sylvia Groves

## SYLVIA GROVES, 1934 - 2011

Sylvia Rosamond Groves was born the only daughter of John and Ivy, sister to John and Timothy of Hardwick Farm, Kinton on the 5th of December 1934.

Sylvia worked hard on the farm and enjoyed everything to do with the country life, especially the hunting and cattle markets where she made many friends. When she was younger she had her own chickens and sold their eggs around the community. She also loved all animals, especially the horses and ponies on the farm and had many of her own dogs over the years. The most recent was Bluebell, who has been great company for her as she got older.

The family moved to Oxhill in 1976 and continued farming and Sylvia was often seen around the village going to feed her sheep and cattle in the fields around, with an extraordinary large load of hay bales in her car, leaving just about enough room for the dog! She was always happy to stop and chat and catch up on the local gossip.

As time went by she became Aunty to Shelley, Carley, Ryan and Shaun and this year became Great Aunty to Alfie John. She loved all children and welcomed them to the farm, either to help outside or bake cakes or just play a game of draughts with her. Of course she welcomed all visitors and rarely could you leave without having a cuppa, bread and cheese or just a little drink!

Unfortunately, she fell ill and spent her remaining time at Tim's farm in Arlescote with her family and Bluebell. She never once complained or showed any pain or discomfort and took everything in her stride. She closed her eyes in peace on the 6th of June and we would like to remember her as the lady who asked for nothing but gave everything.

*[The above was the eulogy given at Sylvia's funeral service]*

## CHURCH SURVEY

Thank you very much to all of you who have returned the St Lawrence Church survey. We have had a good response so far from both regular Church attenders and non attenders. We would still love to hear from others so, if you haven't done so already, please complete the survey and return it to the box at the back of the Church by 31st July. We will report on the results in a future issue of the Oxhill News.

*The St Lawrence PCC*

# VICARAGE NOTES

Dear friends,

The Questionnaire - On behalf of Oxhill PCC, may I thank everyone who returned a completed questionnaire. The results were discussed at the last meeting though we will be pleased to receive further responses. It is good to know that St. Lawrence's is valued in the community, either as a historic building or as a living and active church.

Comments included the use of the building for concerts; most respondees being mindful (as indeed the PCC is) that other buildings such as the Village Hall need to be fully utilised. My initial impression about services is that a variety is welcome and this the PCC will be discussing. Some replies felt that 9.30am was rather early, but it is difficult to provide alternatives. The PCC will be reflecting on all the responses over the next couple of months. Once again, thank you.

The Oxhill News goes to press earlier now, so we are still looking forward to the Scarecrow Weekend rather than looking back. However, may I say how much everyone's efforts are appreciated - I'm sure it will be a great weekend!

*God bless, Nicholas Morgan 01608 685230*

## A REALLY BIG THANK YOU TO YOU ALL

Barbara and I are now in our second year of early retirement with the many benefits that this brings, but there is just one drawback, and that's the fixed income bit. Therefore we are extremely grateful to you all for your recent donations, two of which where the results of recent events held at the Village Hall, and on Sunday, following a very enjoyable evening of fundraising on our behalf, at the Peacock we were presented with a donation by Pam. We receive NO payment what so ever from the Government or the Ambulance Service, the equipment and dedicated vehicle are all at our own expense, so this recent fund raising will help us to carry on helping our community, over the last few months we have been averaging 500 hrs. a month of duty time.

*Mick & Barbara Shepard, 3, The Leys. [viper@viperrecovery.co.uk](mailto:viper@viperrecovery.co.uk)  
Accident and Medical Emergencies - FIRST CALL 999, then 01295 680644 /  
07977149317 - West Midlands Ambulance Service Responders.*

## BBC WILDLIFE ARTIST OF THE YEAR 2011

Congratulations to local Oxhill resident Martin Buffery who has won the category 'Black and White Nature' in the BBC Wildlife Artist of the Year 2011 competition for his pencil drawing 'Warthog Love'. His drawing will be published in the August edition of the BBC Wildlife Magazine along with the winners of the other categories.

# OXHILL VILLAGE HALL - UPCOMING EVENTS

## Family Boules Day - Sunday, 10th July

Our ever-popular Boules Day, an event for all of the family, is taking place on Sunday 10th July starting at 12.30pm. As well as the Boules Competition there will be French cheeses, pates and appropriate liquid refreshments. As usual, we will be taking precautions to ensure that the event goes ahead despite the vagaries of the English weather. In addition to the adult Boules competition there will also be one for children, as well as other suitable activities. The cost will be £6 per person while children (up to the age of 10) are free. This cost will cover food and entry to the competition. Tickets are available from Tricia Harbour (680676)

## Oxhill Artists Art Exhibition - Wednesday, 20th July & Thursday, 21st July

The annual Oxhill Artists Summer Art Exhibition will take place on Wednesday, 20th July from 7.00pm to 9.30pm for viewing, a glass of wine and some nibbles & Thursday, 21st July for viewing, coffee & biscuits from 10am to 12.00 noon. See posters around the village for more details.

## Village Hall Maintenance Day & BBQ - Saturday, 20th August

We are having our annual Village Hall Maintenance day, well afternoon really, on Saturday, 20th August starting at 1.00pm. This will be followed by a BBQ, starting at 6.30pm/7.00pm that is open to everyone at a cost of £6 per person. However, if you have helped significantly with the maintenance tasks, there are a few 'concessionary' tickets available for free. More details to follow, closer to the date.

## A Tapas Safari - Saturday, 25th September

A new take on an old favourite - meet in the Village Hall for a glass or two of sangria and then off to various houses throughout the village for some interesting plates of tapas. Then on again to another couple of destinations for more varieties of tapas before returning to the Village Hall for coffee & liqueurs.

For the safari traveller you get to meet different people, see different houses and taste different delicacies. For the hosts, you have all the fun of welcoming people into your home but without the stress of preparing and cooking a main course to a tight schedule. More details to follow but put the date in your diary NOW!

# AT THE PEACOCK

## Charity Quiz Night

The July quiz night will be Sunday 3rd July at 8pm, please come along and show your support.

Many thanks to all those who attended the June quiz night. It was a fun night which raised the magnificent amount of over £500 in aid of our First Responders.

## Village Events

The village coffee morning will be on Wednesday 6th July at 10:30am and the village lunch will be on Wednesday 20th July.

## WOT2GROW COMMUNITY ORCHARD



The hay crop has been taken and the orchard looks very different with most of the bushes and canes having survived the difficult weather conditions and growing well. There are some small fruits on the currants but the raspberries are still to flower, so we are not expecting a large harvest!

Weeding has been done to keep the ground clear around the young plants, to give them plenty of room and to cut down on competition, especially for water.

Planning for the autumn planting of fruit trees has been taking place and we have reserved apples, plums, pears, cherries and nuts. We will not know if we can get all the trees we want until later when the growers allocate their stock and let us know if they have sufficient trees to go around, then we will wait for delivery in October/November.

See the web site for photos and more; [www.wot2grow.co.uk](http://www.wot2grow.co.uk)

Please contact one of the team for how to get involved:

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



*'If music be the food of love...'*

**THE WARWICKSHIRE SINGERS**

Saturday 9th July 7.30pm  
St. Lawrence's Church, Oxhill

The serious and the lighter side of food and feasting  
with music by  
Tallis, Victoria, Handel, Bernstein, Rutter and Bratton

directed by Oliver Walker  
with

Barbara Rodway (soprano) Gary Beman (tenor)  
George Parris (baritone) David King (accompanist)

*Admission by programme £10 (children free)  
or phone 01295 680427 or 01608 661372*

*Interval refreshments*

*In aid of stonework restoration of the church*

## SHIPSTON POLICE

From the Community Forum which was held on 7th June in Lower Quinton, three policing priorities have been voted on and it was requested we carry out the following speed checks:

- Speeding Loxley: Excess 30 mph - Between peak times Monday - Friday 30 mph zones on Loxley/Stratford Road and Goldicote Road.
- Speeding Tysoe: Excess 30 mph - Between peak times Monday - Friday 30 mph zones on Main Street, Oxhill Road and Lower Tysoe Road.
- Speeding Armscote: Excess 30 mph - Between peak times Monday - Friday 30 mph zones on Ilmington Road and Middle Street.

Monthly updates will be added to the Shipston Safer Neighbourhood Team website.

## SUMMER POEM

I'd like to have a garden  
With a beech tree on the lawn  
The little birds that lived there  
Would wake me up at dawn

## BOO HEWERDINE

On Friday, 10th June, 60 people were enthralled by Boo Hewerdine's performance at Oxhill Village Hall. Boo took his audience on a roller-coaster ride from 'rock' heights to mellow folk ballads; from upbeat tunes to soulful songs – a true master-class in entertainment that few of those present will forget. Boo was assisted on a few of his songs with some virtuoso tambourine performances from Andy MacDonald, who was that good that he was promptly invited to join Boo's tour. A great evening with many thanks to Pat Crowther who made it happen in Oxhill.

*Derek Harbour*



## OXHILL GARDEN CLUB

Summer is here and the flowers are out! Start snapping your entries for the club's photographic competition.

Entries should be no bigger than 7 x 5 in, unmounted, name on reverse, please.

Compositions should be:

- a) single flower portrait, may include leaf or leaves OR
- b) a general floral composition

Bring your entries along to the September meeting or get them to Ann Saxton (Medway, Green Lane) by 29th September.

## STOUR SINGERS



On 14th May 2011 Mendelssohn's dramatic oratorio *Elijah* was given an electric performance by Stour Singers & The Cherwell Orchestra conducted by Richard Emms in St Edmund's Church, Shipston-on-Stour. The soloists, Sarah Power (soprano), Sofie Almroth (mezzo-soprano), Richard Dowling (tenor) made a fine trio alongside the renowned Welsh operatic baritone, Jeremy Huw Williams in the title role. He portrayed the Old Testament prophet so vividly he had the capacity audience on the edge of their seats. Richard Emms galvanized his choir to respond likewise, transmitting all the emotions of the drama, from despair to serenity, with such clarity that some experienced visitors in the audience declared this to be the best *Elijah* they had ever heard.

Stour Singers' next concert, also in St Edmund's, will be on Saturday 3rd December 2011 at 7.30pm featuring Handel's *Messiah*. Rehearsals start at 7.00pm on Thursday 8th September in the Community Lounge at Shipston High School.

New members are always welcome - no auditions! If you have always wanted to sing or especially to take part in Handel's great work, now is your opportunity. Please contact Vic Twyman on Tel: 01451 870361 for further details.



## THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

Buckingham Palace recently announced the outline of the official programme of events that will take place from Saturday 2nd June 2012 to Tuesday 5th June 2012 to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th will be official bank holidays.

On **Saturday 2nd June**, the Queen will attend the Epsom Derby.

**Sunday 3rd June**, the Big Jubilee Lunch will take place. People will be encouraged to share lunch with neighbours and friends as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations taking the form of a traditional street party or a picnic lunch. Later in the day the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant will take place and consist of up to 1,000 boats assembled from across the UK, the Commonwealth and around the world. The Queen will travel in the Royal Barge which will lead the flotilla.

**Monday 4th June**, the BBC will televise the Diamond Jubilee Concert from Buckingham Palace with tickets being available to UK residents by public ballot. Also a network of 2,012 Beacons will be lit by communities and individuals throughout the United Kingdom. As in 2002, The Queen will light the National Beacon.

**Tuesday 5th June**, there will be a Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral and a Formal Carriage Procession by The Queen.

## Does the village what to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of The Queen?

If you were here in 2002 you will remember the full two day programme that we put together for the Golden Jubilee that nearly 400 villagers, family and friends enjoyed.

If you have come to the community in the intervening years – ask somebody who was there or come along to the meeting to find what Oxhill can achieve!

Many people joined in and made it a great success and if we want to repeat it next year then lots of volunteers will be required.

Interested? – Come to a meeting to gauge the level of support.

Village Hall at 8pm on Thursday 14th July 2011.

It will only happen if we all come together to make it happen! If you can't make it to the meeting then please make your support known.

## VILLAGE HISTORY – Seduction, Betrayal & Intrigue

Carol Clark, (a former Oxhill resident), has unearthed the following story from the Times archive online, drawn from a report of Oxford Assizes for 23rd July, 1819.

The theme of love betrayed is familiar enough, but we are soon reminded that the ways of the early nineteenth century were very different to our own. Young people did not come of age until twenty-one, and until then were regarded in law as servants of their parents.

Considerations of property were also important when considering marriage, particularly among the farming community.

The action brought at the Assizes in 1819 was over the seduction of a young girl. She did not herself sue for breach of promise – although it was intimated that she might still do so. It was her father who appeared as the plaintiff, claiming compensation from her lover for being deprived of his daughter's services owing to the seduction. The girl worked, we are later told, in her father's dairy.

The two young teenagers involved were Elizabeth Cooke from Hanwell, and Thomas Hitchman from Fulready. They had been introduced to each other in 1815 by Elizabeth's cousin, Clark Middleton, who lived with his parents at their farmhouse in Oxhill (now Fexloe House), and the courtship proceeded steadily for over three years. There seems however to have been some reserve between the two families, seemingly owing to the fact that while the Hitchmans owned their own farm (albeit indebted), the Cookes were tenants only. Thomas assured Elizabeth's father nevertheless of his honourable intentions, and after Elizabeth became pregnant in 1818, he renewed his promise of marriage, even naming a day.

On returning home however, he appears to have succumbed to pressure from his widowed mother, and wrote to Elizabeth saying that while he still loved her, “my mother says that if I was possessed of any property...she would not be against our marriage, but to marry at this time would....at last be our ruin.”

When the child was born Thomas visited Elizabeth, and held the baby girl, making no allegations of unfaithfulness on Elizabeth’s part. While still not proposing marriage, he did offer to meet the child’s boarding costs while Elizabeth went into service.

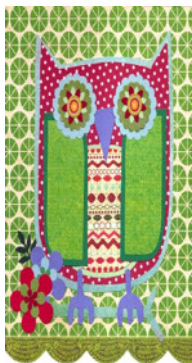
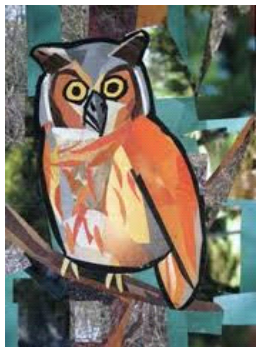
However by the time the case came to court in 1819 the tone had hardened. Thomas’s counsel alleged that when in 1817 Elizabeth had spent the night with her cousins in Oxhill, one of them, William Middleton, had entered her bedroom and spent some time there. This was undoubtedly indiscreet, but Elizabeth maintained that nothing untoward took place. William had sat on the bed “leaning with his arms”, and they discussed her uncle, (also William) who was then very sick. (In fact he was dying – he was buried on 30th May, 1817). The evidence against Elizabeth came from a servant Mary Taylor who said that when she took in the warming pan “she found the parties in such a situation as to leave no doubt what had occurred”. However Mary had an axe to grind, as she was shortly afterwards dismissed, having been caught in a hay-loft with a man at 6am. When asked about this repeatedly in court, she claimed not to understand the questions, and her other answers were sometimes evasive. We can only guess now at the truth, but her story does seem a little contrived, and the whole accusation came very late in the day.

The Judge, in summing up, said that Mr Cooke had demonstrably been deprived of his daughter’s services, and the jury should also consider the injury to his feelings, and the damage to family relationships that had been caused. They could diminish the damages if they believed Mary Taylor’s allegation, and they should also be careful not to completely ruin Thomas Hitchman. In the event, Mr Cooke was awarded £150, which seems quite large, given that Hitchman’s total assets amounted to £600.

I do not know the later outcome of this sorry tale, but it seems likely that the child would have been fostered, (presumably at the expense of Mr Cooke), and that the unfortunate Elizabeth would have gone into service. She was only 20 years old, but her marriage prospects would have been much compromised. William Middleton married a young Oxhill widow, Hannah White, in 1826. Thomas Hitchman would not inherit his half of his father’s estate until he reached 24, and he and his brother would have to pay its debts, and maintain their widowed mother. Life then was full of hard practicalities, but maybe in time he found a match that fulfilled his requirements for both affection and finance!

# OWLS

## Photographic and Art Competition 2011



It's time for all you creative Oxhill people out there to get busy!

This year we are inviting you to submit any creative media such as paintings, collages, sculptures or photos.

There are two categories:

Local nature: Oxhill wildlife, landscapes and people in their natural environment

British nature: wildlife

Open to 2 age groups (12 & under and adults).

Entries, which cost 50p each, should be submitted to Rhian, Weavers Barn, Rouse Lane, Oxhill (680574) or to any other OWLS member.

(Please state which category you are entering!)

Entries will be exhibited and judged in the Village Hall on:

Sunday 9th October, 4pm till 6pm.



Hosted by OWLS

# OWLS

My thanks go to Mike Slater of Butterfly Conservation for an absolutely brilliant talk on Gardening for Butterflies. We had a good turnout of over 20 people and everyone agreed it was a most informative and interesting talk. Mike uses no notes and has many anecdotes and stories linked to butterflies and indeed has a deep knowledge of all flora and fauna - an enjoyable evening.

OWLS would like you all to take part in the 'Big Butterfly Count' which runs from 16th to 31st July, but it will only take about half-an-hour of your time. Between these dates pick a warm sunny day, stroll round your garden for half-an-hour and count the butterflies - like the RSPB big bird count - that's all it entails. You can use your computer to go on to 'Big Butterfly Count' and download the ID sheet and return your count direct, OR contact Rhi Cooper on 680574 and we will deliver to you instructions and an ID sheet - it's dead easy, so please take part. We can also supply anyone who would like one a list of butterfly-attracting plants.

## Churchyard Wildflower Project Update

In 2010, our first year, the survey was done in a bit of a rush and fairly late in the year. The 'fencing off' was done in a rather haphazard manner, so this year we ran the rope slightly further back from the church, but in a straight line from boundary to boundary and erected signs stating what we were doing. One old grave in that area seems to have had some 'attention' so we will cut neatly round that particular stone. This will be the first time we have had the opportunity to measure the fauna and flora from May to September.

August 1984	Wildflowers - 56 Grasses - 4 Trees and shrubs - 8
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August 2010 (after mowing)	Wildflowers - 38 Grasses - 4 Trees and shrubs - 7
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June 2011	Wildflowers - 55 Grasses - 5 Trees and Shrubs - 7
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To date this year we have found five previously unrecorded wildflowers and one escapee and two more grasses. Trees are as before. In 1984 an Ash was noted, but this has since gone. With three months to go I feel sure we will have an equal if not larger number of species than 1984. Whatcote biodiversity group has now joined with our own OWLS group. Whatcote already manage their churchyard for wildflowers, so bring invaluable knowledge to our group. Since the 1940s, 97% of wildflower areas have been destroyed along with many acres of woodland. Butterfly numbers have also declined by 32% and some have become extinct in our area, but by encouraging wildflowers and grasses we may be able to halt or reverse this trend.

By the end of the summer we will have completed a full survey and will draw up and present a proposal to the PCC, and if accepted, this will then be presented to the village.

If anyone would like to see a churchyard in its full wildflower glory, go to St Mary's Church, Oldberrow on Saturday 16th July or Sunday 17th July from 2.30pm to 4.30pm. Tea, coffee, and cakes will be served.

*Grenville Moore*

## NATURE NOTES

The month of haymaking. Traditionally during haymaking rabbits were killed either by the mowers or by villagers with all manner of cudgels, sticks, spades or guns:

*“Fit your rabbit for boiling and seeth it with a little Mutton broth, white wine and a piece of whole Mace; then take Lettuce, Spynach, Parsley, Winter Savory and Sweet Marjoram, bruise them with the back of your ladle (for the bruising of the herbs will make the broth look very pleasantly green). When all is well boiled together, thicken it with a crust of bread and a little sweet butter therein. Season is with verjuice and pepper and serve it to the table upon sippits or toasts”*

The New Book of Cookerie, 1615

What you may ask, is verjuice? It literally means ‘green juice’ and it fell out of favour with the arrival of lemons. Some of the foodies amongst you may have noticed that many new recipes call for verjuice. It is currently made from tiny unripe grapes, but in Medieval Europe and through to the mid 19th century it was made from fallen crab apples which were crushed, strained, and stored in earthenware jugs along with Damask rose leave, so no more wasting all those fallen crab apples!

Nature notes comes from Herefordshire this month. Recently we spent a week near the Black Mountains in a house set in woodland, and nesting in ivy outside our bedroom window was a pair of Redstarts. In Herefordshire they used to be known as Brantails or Kitty Brantails and in Warwickshire as Fire Tail, although it is now fairly rare in this county. It is a bird of open woodland or parkland areas, and is on the decline in Britain. The male is quite dramatically coloured with a red/orange breast, jet black throat and white forehead; the female is basically brown, but both have the most striking red/orange tail. The colour begins at the rump and projects fierily behind them. The ‘start’ comes from the old English for tail. This is a very active little bird, bobbing and flitting from branch to branch and shooting up into the air to catch flies and other winged insects on which it feeds.

We were aware that buzzards and ravens were nesting in the surrounding woodlands and one morning we were watching a low-flying buzzard about 50 metres away, wheeling and mewling above our heads. Suddenly we heard that familiar “pruk pruk” and a raven appeared and started attacking the buzzard. A quite aggressive fight was taking place with some amazing aerobatics.

But then a surprise, a peregrine falcon appeared and joined in the aerial tussle. The two larger birds seemed to ignore the falcon so he rose up to a height and stooped, hitting the raven with a thwack. At this point all three birds flew off in different directions. Was the peregrine breaking up the fight? If so, it worked.

Gervase Markham in the 17th century advised gentlemen in the month of July “and lastly for health, abstain from all physick, bleed not, but upon violent occasions, and neither meddle with Wine, Women, nor no other wantonness”. Perhaps the Earl of Oxford should have taken care of his physick and diet, for on 27th July “Making of his low obeisance to Queen Elizabeth, happened to let a Fart. At which he was so abashed and ashamed that he went to travel, for seven years. On his return the Queen welcomed him home and said ‘My Lord, I had forgot the Fart’”.

John Aubrey, 1680

A fly past: as we were about to start our OWLS meeting, standing chatting in Carol Taylor’s garden, a pair of curlew flew low over her house. These were probably Oxhill’s regular breeding pair. They would, by now, have reared their young and I would guess this was their farewell as they returned to the coast.

*Grenville Moore*

**OXHILL ARTISTS  
SUMMER EXHIBITION**

Wednesday 20th July at 7.00pm to 9.30pm in  
the Village Hall, Oxhill

**YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO COME AND SPEND  
AN ENJOYABLE EVENING WITH THE ARTISTS, WHO  
MEET AND PAINT EVERY WEDNESDAY MORNING  
IN THE VILLAGE HALL  
VIEW THEIR WORK**

Admission only £1 Refreshments available

There is also a COFFEE MORNING VIEWING

on Thursday, 21st JULY, 10.00am to noon

All proceeds to charity

Hope to see you there, Barbara Kenny, 01926 852413

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE OXHILL NEWS

The editors would 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](mailto:news-editor@oxhill.org.uk) or place paper contributions in the box labelled ‘The Oxhill News’ in the Church.



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## WHAT'S ON IN & AROUND OXHILL

### July

Sunday 3rd	20:00	The Peacock - Charity Quiz
Tuesday 5th		Green & Blue bin collection
Wednesday 6th	10:30	The Peacock - Village Coffee Morning
Saturday 9th	19:30	St. Lawrence's Church - Concert by the Warwickshire Singers
Saturday 9th	14:00 - 18:00	Music for a Summer's Evensong - Ilmington Church
Sunday 10th	12:30	Village Hall - Boules Day
Tuesday 12th		Grey landfill bin collection
Tuesday 12th	20:00	Village Hall - Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday 13th	10:00	Village Hall - Mobile Library
Thursday 14th	20:00	Village Hall - Queen's Diamond Jubilee Meeting
Friday 15th	09:45	Weekday Walkers - see inside for details
Friday 15th	23:59	<b>COPY DEADLINE FOR THE NEWS</b>
Saturday 16th	14:30-16:30	St. Mary's Church, Oldberrow - Wildflowers (tea, coffee & cakes)
Saturday 16th - Sunday 31st		Big Butterfly Count
Sunday 17th	14:30-16:30	St. Mary's Church, Oldberrow - Wildflowers (tea, coffee & cakes)
Tuesday 19th		Green & Blue bin collection
Wednesday 20th	12:30	The Peacock - Village Lunch
Wednesday 20th	19:00 - 21:30	Village Hall - Art Exhibition
Wednesday 20th		Garden Club outing to Broughton Grange
Thursday 21st	10:00 - 12:00	Village Hall - Art Exhibition
Tuesday 26th		Grey landfill bin collection

### August

Saturday 13th	15:00 - 17:00	The Old House - Deanery Garden Party
Saturday 20th	13:00	Village Hall Maintenance Day & BBQ (starting at 18:30/19:00)

### September

Thursday 8th		Shipston High School - Stour Singers Rehearsals start
Saturday 25th		A Tapas Safari
Thursday 29th		Closing date Oxhill Garden Club photographic competition

### October

Sunday 9th	16:00 - 18:00	OWLS Photographic and Art Exhibition
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