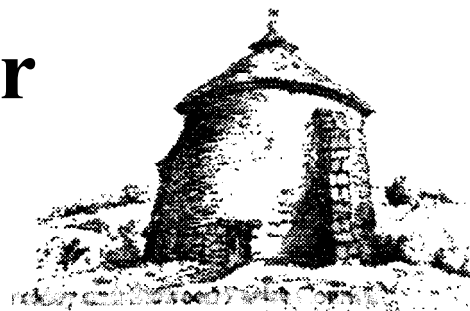


The Beckley Newsletter

News, views and comment from
around the parish
Spring 2009



Produced under the auspices of the Beckley and Stowood parish council

Any comments or opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the council

PARISH EVENTS

Police surgeries

The parish council are paying for the police to hold their surgeries in the village hall. The next one will be on 24 June from 7.30 til 8.30pm. If anyone has any matters they would like to bring up with the police before this date, please get in touch with Sam Hawkins, clerk to the Parish council, and she can arrange for PCSO Ken Cooney to attend the next parish meeting.

Art group

This year will see Beckley art group's first entry to Art Week. We have a good variety of craftspeople participating, and will have a display which will include oil painting, pastels, watercolours and prints, silk painting, acrylic painting, silver and jewellery, photography and painted porcelain.

The exhibition will be open to the public from 1 til 6pm on Saturday 9 May, and from 2 til 6pm on Sunday 10 May in the village hall. There will be tea and cake for sale. We hope local people will support the group by coming along to the exhibition (some items will be for sale). We will be advertising the event nearer the time.

Liz Bixby

Women's Institute

The Oxfordshire Federation of The Women's Institute is 90 years old and Denman College is celebrating its 70th year. Denman College is a gracious building in the village of Marcham. Over the years, new buildings have been added as classrooms and for WI members to stay to take a weekend course or longer. Courses are varied, from lectures on tracing your local history to jazz.

I see that a Strictly Ballroom Dancing course has been added, but who will be the men?! There are also many day courses on offer to WI members.

Beckley WI began in 1925, then closed for the second world war and got going again in 1948. We meet eight times a year in Beckley village hall, on the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm. For the other four months we have a fun summer's walk. We also hold a Christmas party, a summer garden party and a new year get-together when we bring gifts to exchange and enjoy mulled wine and refreshments in a member's home.

As always we welcome a visit with no obligation to join. So if you are attracted to an advertised speaker or event, do come.

Marion Weinstein (351251) and Brenda Lambourn (351793)

Church organ restoration appeal

We are still short of a couple of thousand pounds, although the work is going ahead immediately after Easter. Please support this summer's concerts in Beckley church:

Saturday 9 May

Raymond Burley, solo guitar recital, given by a soloist of world renown

Saturday 6 June

Chris Britton and Peter Ward Jones, music for flute and harpsichord

Saturday 20 June

Virginia de Ledesma, soprano, with Stephanie West, harp

Saturday 26 September

The Banks Quartet

All concerts start at 7.30pm.

Mary Worthington (351270)

Atlantic rowing race

Nick Jackson, 32, and Richard Dobbin, 31, will set off to row 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean this December. The pair will be competing in the Woodvale Atlantic Rowing Race against 30 other teams from around the world. The rowing novices will experience extreme heat, severe weather, 40-foot waves, the possibility of capsizing and the threat of shark attacks. They are also campaigning to raise more than £100,000 for Cancer Research UK and Cancer Research Wales.

On Sunday 17 May at 2.30pm in Beckley village hall there will be a talk about their expedition. The specially designed boat will also be on display. If you would like to know more, or want to make a charity donation, you can phone 07912 653500 or email nickjackson9876@hotmail.com.

Great British fish and chip supper – Friday 15 May 2009

Want to do something different? Want to raise money where you live or work? Want to eat fish and chips while raising money for charity? Hold a fish and chip supper on Friday 15 May 2009 to raise awareness of spinal cord injury and support the Spinal Injuries Association's information and support services.

Every year in the UK over 1,000 people experience a spinal cord injury, and there are an estimated 40,000 spinal cord injured people in the UK alone. The money raised from the suppers will help the Spinal Injuries Association offer support to individuals who become paralysed and their families, from the moment a spinal injury occurs and for the rest of their lives, by providing services and publications which enable and encourage paralysed people to lead independent lives.

You can hold a fish and chip supper in your own home, at work or at your local community centre. SIA will provide a fundraising pack containing hints and tips, recipes, invitations and donation envelopes. By inviting seven friends and asking them to donate an additional £5 you will raise at least £35 from your supper, but we will also give you additional fundraising ideas to raise even more money for SIA.

SIA's donor development officer, Elizabeth Wright, says, 'The fish and chip supper is a wonderful opportunity for a great evening with friends and family. We are also encouraging

people who work to hold a fish and chip lunch in their workplaces to raise even more funds. You may even be part of a local community group wanting to run a fun evening. Be a part of something special and make a real difference to help spinal cord injured people gain access to the information and support they need to enable them to live full and independent lives.'

For more information, or request a fundraising pack, call Elizabeth Wright on 0845 678 6633 (extension 229), email fishandchips@spinal.co.uk or visit www.spinal.co.uk.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Village twinning

We have been approached by a village in France with a view to twinning with Beckley (see letter below). If anyone is interested in becoming involved with this, please contact Pete Gibbons (chairman of the parish council) or Sam Hawkins (clerk to the parish council).

*52 rue de mon plaisir;
St. Louans,
37500 CHINON
France*

12 September 2008

Dear Cllr. Gibbons

I was born in Beckley and lived there for 25 years until my father died in 1975. Many people will still remember our family and particularly my brother John who I know still keeps in contact with several friends at Beckley. Yes I'm afraid it really was us who kept damming the stream in Otmoor Lane!

I now live in a small village in France having retired 4 years ago and it is in connection with this that I am writing to you. The president of our village association would love to make contact with a similar village to ours preferably close to Oxford, with a view to setting up a twinning association. Our village St. Louans is about the same size as Beckley and is set on a small hill overlooking the River Vienne and surrounded by vineyards. We are close to the town of Chinon (10 minutes walk) where Henry 11 and Richard the Lion Heart, kings of England and France lived and died in the magnificent fortress. Of course you will have heard of our excellent wines and you can imagine that the people here are friendly and hospitable.

We have talked about the possibility of twinning with an English village for a long time and accept there would be perhaps problems in generating enough interest in two such small villages. I might add that very few of my neighbours can speak English. However the Association of St. Louans is very strong and Monsieur Le President is very keen.

I should be grateful if you could discuss this letter with your colleagues in principle. If you think that from your side of the channel the idea is viable I will have no problems convincing you of the attractions of our area and the welcome that would await you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Packer B. Vet.Med., MRCVS

RSPB Otmoor nature reserve

Volunteer news

The beginning of December saw the completion of the willow coppice work and the start of the annual blackthorn coppice programme.

Hedgerows on the reserve are cut on a 7- or 15-year rotation, which benefits a wide variety of wildlife, including butterfly species such as brown and black hairstreaks. These species thrive in a mosaic of different-aged scrub, and favour younger plants for egg laying.

Coppice rotation also reduces the overall height of the hedge. Tall hedgerows provide cover for predators, making the fields intimidating for ground-nesting birds. The area that can be used by these birds is increased by coppicing.

Blackthorn coppicing constitutes a large part of the winter work programme and, as anyone who has been involved in this kind of work will tell you, it is not the most pleasant or glamorous task. However, our teams put in a great deal of effort and have so far coppiced 235 metres of blackthorn, equal to the length of two football pitches! It is because of the volunteer's hard work that the thorn management programme is well on track for completion in early March, thus avoiding disturbance to nesting birds.

Bird and wildlife news

December saw a sudden end to the site's starling roost, disappointing many visitors. At the

beginning of the month, counts of starling coming into the reedbed had numbered between 20,000 and 50,000. After the Christmas period, however, not a single bird could be seen. This contrasted with last year, when birds were still numbering tens of thousands toward the end of January.

Although the starlings took an earlier bow than expected, there has still been plenty of other bird activity throughout the winter. The list of raptors regularly seen on the reserve between December and February has been impressive. Resident species, such as sparrowhawk, red kite, buzzard and barn owl, were joined by winter visitors, which included hen harrier, merlin, peregrine and short-eared owl.

This winter has seen good numbers of wading birds on Otmoor, which have provided an aerial display of their own. The numbers of golden plover (1,800) and lapwing (1,600) being seen on the reserve peaked in December. A number of other wading birds have also been recorded, including common sandpiper, bar-tailed godwit, redshank, dunlin, jack snipe and a wisp of snipe numbering up to 90 birds.

Wintering wildfowl species have been as expected. These have included gadwall, pochard, tufted duck, pintail, mallard and shoveler. Wigeon and teal, the most numerous of the reserve's wintering duck species, have had peak counts of 1,100 and 1,054 respectively. Two whooper swan were recorded in January.

This winter's top news has been the presence throughout January and February of a bittern in the reserve's reedbed and network of ditches. Many visitors have enjoyed clear sightings of this elusive and spectacular bird. Towards the end of the winter period the reserve's hedgerows have started to come alive with the chatter of song of great tit, blue tit and chaffinch, providing a tantalizing glimpse of the coming spring.

Judith Lloyd (Office Administrator, RSPB Otmoor Nature Reserve, 351163, judith.lloyd@rspb.org.uk)

Bonfires

Please be courteous towards your neighbours if you're planning a garden bonfire. SODC gives the following advice on bonfires:

Bonfires can be a major nuisance to people for the following reasons:

- * they produce smoke and ash
- * they smell
- * they affect air quality
- * they may cause problems for people with asthma or chest conditions
- * they can stop people spending time in their gardens, opening windows or hanging out washing
- * they can reduce visibility on roads and lead to accidents

If you are planning a bonfire it is important that you follow the following advice:

- * burn dry material only
- * do not burn household rubbish, such as plastic, foam, paint or rubber
- * do not use old engine oil, meths or petrol to light the fire
- * do not light bonfires on damp, still days, or when the wind is likely to blow smoke over roads or neighbours' gardens
- * do not leave bonfires unattended or smouldering

Planning application

Application reference: [P08/W1350](#)

Application type: Minor

Proposal: Replacement four bedroom dwelling. As amended by additional drawings received from the applicant dated 17th February 2009

Address: Hollybush House, Woodperry Road, Beckley

From the editors

Many thanks for all contributions, and for your support during our temporary editorship. Ann Henman should be back from her travels for the summer edition. The deadline will be mid-May. Please send your contributions to Ann Henman, 351492, annhenman@gmail.com.

Julie McCulloch and Gareth Coleman



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