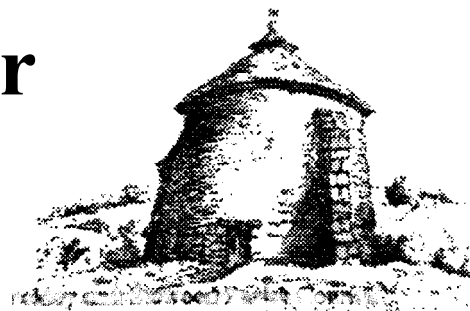


# The Beckley Newsletter

News, views and comment from  
around the parish  
Summer 2010



Produced under the auspices of the Beckley and Stowood Parish Council.

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

## **Beckley & Stowood Parish Council**

The parish council meets on the first Thursday of the month at 8pm in the village hall. All are welcome. If you wish to add an item to the agenda, please contact me a week before the meeting.

The meeting dates for the rest of this year are:

July 1

(No meeting in August)

September 2

October 7

November 4

December 2

**Sam Hawkins**

**(samedena@hotmail.co.uk)**

## **Beckley School – letter from Grace Zawadzki, headteacher**

It is with mixed feelings that I say goodbye to Beckley School at the end of this term.

It really doesn't seem that long ago since I first started my post as headteacher at Beckley School, in January 1993. I remember how elated I was when the job was offered to me, but I had no idea then that I would be so happy here – so much so that I have not been able to move from it in 17 years!

I have been very fortunate to have the privilege of working with first class staff who love their jobs and continually strive to improve and give their best for the school; supportive governors who have ensured that, not only are statutory requirements met, but the views and welfare of staff, parents and children are central to the running of the school; parents who, because they care deeply about their children's education and welfare, have supported the school in so many ways; the church which provides the spiritual and moral elements of our ethos; the village community which has supported us and, at times,

patiently put up with us; and most importantly, the fantastic, polite, bright, kind, resourceful, cheerful children who have been a pleasure and joy to be with.

Thank you to everyone for turning what could have been a nightmare of Ofsted, league tables and endless, pointless paperwork into such a pleasurable experience which I will never forget. Beckley School is a very special place and I will miss you all.

The new head, Ms Claire Bishop, starts in September. I wish her the same joy and happiness that I have had, and look forward to hearing of the school's continuing success in the future.

**Mrs Grace Zawadzki**

## **Beckley School – letter from Kate Kelly, governor**

Tributes are tricky: it is hard not to make them sound like a sombre obituary or a froth of empty superlatives. But in the case of Mrs Grace Zawadzki, the main thing is to say A GREAT BIG THANK YOU for everything she has given to our community.

When my family first came to Beckley, many years ago, we didn't know there was a school in the village. Tucked behind the church, on a quiet road leading to the open fields of Otmoor, the primary school was almost invisible. But every now and then, when the wind was in the right direction, we would hear laughter and shouts of children playing – their voices carrying far beyond the school boundaries. In the same way, although Grace is self-effacing, her tireless work in Beckley has had an impact far and wide throughout our community.

It is almost impossible to imagine Beckley Primary School without the warm, strong, guiding presence of Grace at its heart. In her years as headteacher she has seen generations of children,

parents, governors and staff come and go – all with different futures ahead and with different memories of their time with Grace. In that time the school has grown, both in size and reputation. Education policies have changed, bureaucratic initiatives have rained from above and been replaced by others, there have been (one or two) years of plenty and other years when budgets were pared to the bone, there have been a few crises and many high points.

When I asked my daughters what they remember about primary school, most of their high points seemed to have had little to do with formal education, and much more with small personal moments of fun and achievement: perching high in the trees on the pitch (PE?), counting frogs in the pond (numeracy?), singing at harvest festival (RE?), listening to the wind and writing moody poetry (literacy?), building snowmen (DT?), surreptitiously tasting bits of salty ice (science?), roaring with laughter when yet another Year 6 boy dressed up as a caricature of Mrs Z on the last day of term. These happy moments don't happen by accident. It is Grace who has made them possible because she, more than anyone else, has made the school what it is.

I am sure we all have different stories to tell. But for each of us, Grace has been at the centre of Beckley School, unswerving in her commitment to the values of a good primary education in a caring environment where every single person matters. She has devoted her considerable energy, intelligence and integrity to making the school a happy, safe place where hundreds and hundreds of children have been equipped to take their first exploratory steps towards independence. A great team-builder, she has also had the courage and vision to lead from the front when required. And she has done it all with good humour and good sense. She's a hard act to follow, and we will miss her.

**Kate Kelly**  
**Governor, parent, Beckley resident**

### **Beckley book group**

The Beckley book group meets roughly every six weeks and welcomes new members. The next meeting is on Friday 18 June at The Gables, Otmoor Lane. Books to be discussed are William Fiennes' *The Music Room* and Anton Chekhov's *Selected Short Stories*.

**Mary Worthington (351270)**

### **Wheatley Park School summer art exhibition**

Wheatley Park School will be holding their summer art exhibition on Saturday 3 July from 2pm to 6pm at Holton, Oxford, OX33 1QH. The exhibition is an afternoon of art, music and drama with food and drink. Wheatley Park School is renowned for its arts and creativity. For the third time running, the school has recently been awarded Artsmark Gold by the Arts Council of England.

**Jo Hatfield, AHT Director of Specialism,  
Wheatley Park School, Holton, Oxon OX33  
1QH (01865 887650 / 07872 604223)**

### **Tearfund craft sale**

In aid of Created (Tearcraft) and Traidcraft on Saturday 30 October, 10am to 2pm at Beckley Village Hall

This is an early reminder that, for the twelfth year running, the above craft sale is due to take place in Beckley Village Hall. This gives Beckley and surrounding villages the opportunity to purchase attractive fair-traded handmade crafts, dry foods and Christmas cards/paper. The money raised all goes direct to the producers in the developing world. Should anyone wish to see a brochure ahead of the sale date, please contact Heather & Richard Moore, Created/Tearcraft representatives from Tetworth (01844 281305), Janet Hulett, Traidcraft representative from Thame (01844 216457) or Erica & Ian Cave (Whistlers Cottage, Common Road, Beckley, 01865 351226)

### **Shoe box appeal – Operation Christmas Child**

Another early reminder that, as in previous years, there will be a shoe box collection for Samaritan's Purse International Relief Project for poor children. Leaflets describing the project (size of boxes and appropriate gifts) will be issued in September/October and will be available from Erica & Ian Cave, and also on the table in Beckley church). Visit the Samaritan's website ([www.samaritanspurse.uk.com](http://www.samaritanspurse.uk.com)) for more information. Made-up boxes of small gifts should be delivered to Erica Cave between 1 and 17 November. Further notices regarding timing, etc. will appear in the September and October issues of the Four Parishes newsletter.

**Ian Cave (Whistlers Cottage, Common Road,  
Beckley, 01865 351226)**

### **Beckley Church summer concert series**

Three concerts have been held so far this year in aid of the church fabric fund. The Galliard Trio (flute, oboe and harpsichord/bassoon) performed on 15 May; Raymond Burley gave a solo guitar recital on 5 June; and Keith Fairbairn (marimba, vibraphone and tubular bells) and Malcolm Pearce (organ) a highly unusual duo recital on 12 June. On Saturday 4 September there will be a free inaugural organ recital by Carl Jackson, organist of the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court. Come and celebrate the restoration of our magnificent organ, played by a master. (Please note early start time of 6.30pm.)

**Mary Worthington (351270)**

### **Wildlife film viewing**

Beckley wildlife cameraman Steve de Vere is holding a free viewing of his recently finished film *Through the Garden Gate: A Diary of the English Countryside*. The film, about Oxfordshire wildlife, was filmed in and around Beckley. The viewing will take place on Sunday 27 July in Beckley Village Hall, at 5pm (for younger children) and 8pm. Everyone is welcome.

The trailer can be viewed online at [www.stephen-devere.co.uk](http://www.stephen-devere.co.uk). For more information please contact Stephen de Vere at 07859 829971 / [sales@stephen-devere.co.uk](mailto:sales@stephen-devere.co.uk).

### **From the editors**

Many thanks for all contributions to the summer newsletter, and for your support during our temporary editorship. Ann Henman should be back from her travels to take the helm again for the autumn edition – although I'm sure we said the same about this summer edition ;-). The deadline will be mid-August. Please send your contributions to Ann Henman, 351492, [annhenman@gmail.com](mailto:annhenman@gmail.com).

**Julie McCulloch and Gareth Coleman (358899, [garethandjulie@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:garethandjulie@yahoo.co.uk))**



# **BECKLEY VILLAGE MILLENNIUM + 10 SUMMER PARTY**

**7.30pm in Beckley Village Hall  
on  
SATURDAY 10 JULY**

**Live music: Johnny and the Jive  
Tones**

**Tickets: £10 to include a two course buffet supper  
Pay bar**

**Tickets available from the following village hall committee members:  
Marion Weinstein (351251), Pru Dickson (358237) or Pat Moss (358849)**