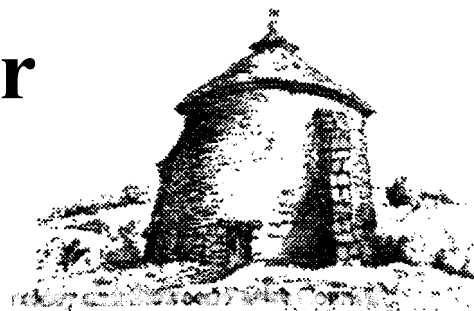


The Beckley Newsletter

News, views and comment from
around the parish
Winter 2008



Produced under the auspices of the Beckley and Stowood parish council

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

Mains drainage

Update on first time sewage works, as of 31 October

Woodperry Road

- 483m of gravity sewer and rising main laid in dual trench
- 56m of rising main laid in single trench
- road fully reinstated

Bungalow Close

- 63m of gravity sewer
- work complete

Otmoor Lane

- 300m of gravity sewer laid
- road fully reinstated
- 67m of gravity sewer remain to be completed

High Street

- 280m of gravity sewer laid and road reinstated

Roman Way to Woodperry Road

- 378m of gravity sewer laid and road reinstated

Church Street

- 348m of gravity sewer laid and road reinstated
- tidying up works to be completed

Field work

- 840m gravity sewer laid and complete
- boundary fences to be reinstated

Pumping station on Woodperry Road

- shafts, manholes and pipework installation almost complete
- mechanical and electrical installation works progressing
- hard and soft landscaping works continuing
- commissioning planned to start in January 09

Treatment works on Otmoor

- temporary access road being constructed
- wet well construction commenced
- internal site pipework nearing completion
- commissioning planned to start in January 09

Woodperry Road compound and Folly Farm compound

- Woodperry Road compound being reduced in size
- Folly Farm compound being demobilised w/c 17 Nov with some cabins being moved to Constables Piece

Richard Maggs, Construction Team Manager, Provinces Waste (07747 642378)

Playground

The grand opening of the new playground (see below) went very well. It was featured on the Thames Valley ITV news, and was also covered in the Oxford Mail. Judging by the number of children who now regularly use the playground, it has proved a hit with its target audience! Many thanks to everyone who helped with this project.

Sam Hawkins



Abingdon Arms

We've received many contributions from people wanting to express their sadness at Neil and Michelle Wass's departure from the Abingdon Arms, and to wish them well in the future. Here are a few:

We are both very sad that Neil and Michelle have gone. They will be truly missed – and are already missed. They've only been gone a matter of days and the whole feel of the pub has changed.

Bill and I have been in the village for nearly 20 years and their presence at the Abingdon Arms added something intangible to Beckley – at a time when even villages struggle to maintain a sense of community. Neil and Michelle's professionalism, personalities and sheer hard work did a huge amount to keeping that spirit alive. We really appreciate what they have done for the village – it's often only after something is no longer there that you realise how good it was. We wish them every good wish for the future and all the luck in the world.

Jane Markham and Bill Broomfield

Michelle and Neil Wass brought a breath of fresh air to the Abingdon Arms. Then the traditions began: boys at the bar on Tuesdays, girls' night out on Wednesdays, Friday families. The men of Beckley lunched once a month, so old and not so old got to know each other on these and many other special occasions.

Yet in spite of the initial publicity, when Brakspear and Wychwood merged, saying that the village pub was the heart of the community, the rent was punishing. How can you make a thousand pounds a *day* in a village pub without changing its whole ethos and operations? Do we want such a pub?

For now we need to thank Michelle and Neil and wish them well.

Marion Weinstein

We would just like to express our sadness that our friends Neil and Michelle have left the Abingdon Arms. It was a great surprise and we know they will be sorely missed by everyone. We fondly remember all the events they supported with enthusiasm and great generosity. Neil and Michelle always embraced the essence of village life and added so much to parties, quiz nights, Hallowe'en, Christmas events and many more. It

is a tribute to them that the children of the village will miss them in the pub as much as the adults!

We would also like to take this opportunity to wish them both every happiness and success in the future, and look forward to enjoying their company on 'our' side of the bar. They will certainly be a hard act to follow!

Peter, Debbie, Charlie, Millie and Rosie Burt

I know I am not alone with the sense of sadness and anger that Michelle and Neil have had to leave the Abingdon Arms. Is this another example of commercial interests versus community good? Without doubt we will miss them and their support of the village community.

John Edmonds-Seal

Tearfund

In November, for the tenth year running, we held a sale of Tearcraft and Traidcraft goods in Beckley church. We were lucky with the weather, which was not too cold, and it was another good "village" occasion, including people attending from Wheatley, Forest Hill and Horton-cum-Studley.

The total money raised was £930, which all goes direct to the producers in the developing world. Additional donations for refreshments totalled £25, which is being given to Armonia, a charity who run community centres in the poorer areas of Mexico City.

A big thank you to all who attended and those involved in running the occasion, for the part you played in making the morning such a success.

Next year's sale has been set for Saturday 21 November 2009.

Ian and Erica Cave

WI

Beckley WI holds its meetings on the first Tuesday of the month in the village hall. We are lucky and can call on a number of excellent speakers about four or five times a year. Yet we also have talented members, including Mauveen Pether, who at the last meeting reminded us how to make Christmas crackers with decent fillings, and Liz Bixby, whose talents range from patchwork quilts to making beads and buttons

plus her silver work and jewellery. Next we will indulge in a Christmas dinner with guests and a new year party.

The next meeting in the village hall is on Tuesday 3 February at 8pm, when Jenny Bullimore will give a talk on 'The streets of India'.

Marion Weinstein (351251) and Brenda Lambourne (351793)

Yet more jottings

This season's jottings is to finish the word play on the house names and other objects of interest as you wander the High Street, Church Lane and Otmoor Lane. The idea is to construct a 'treasure hunt' especially for visiting family and friends on Boxing Day or New Year's Day, when some fresh air and mental rehabilitation after the festivities may be in order! You might like to give out prizes! During the walk, see how many houses and objects you can identify from these cryptic clues. The answers are printed elsewhere in the newsletter (original idea by Susan Hill).

1. I come in the spring with the daffodils to knock away the winter blues!
2. Worth 100 pennies at least.
3. On the ecclesiastic bend I stand.
4. You will always find me on my way to school but I never get there!
5. This is my name, but I have no money to lend.
6. Not brown, not yellow, but somewhere in between.
7. A buzzing and in the belfry too.
8. I blush all day as I stand waiting for a call; or maybe you can make one.
9. John or Charles would be quite at home.
10. Virtus Ariete Fortior; where is that?
11. Nearly at the end, yet the flowers attract the bees and also you.
12. It must be May: I'm out.
13. The owls have flown and the straw bales gone
14. Actually Kate doesn't live here any more.
15. The centurion marched his men along here
16. Not black, not white, but mixed together.

17. The horses no longer stop here for new shoes.
18. Leave your car and climb over.
19. The dog doesn't like creepy crawlies
20. Only one (see 2. above)

(Note: not in 'geographical order'; keep your eyes open and work as a team or two.)

John Edmonds-Seal (351582)

Book club

The next book club meeting will be on Friday 12 December, 8pm, at Marion Weinstein's house. The books for discussion will be Billy Bragg's 'The Progressive Patriot' and an essay by George Orwell: 'My country right or left.' The Orwell essay can be found on the internet at the following address, or it should be available in any edition of Orwell's collected essays:

http://www.orwell.ru/library/articles/My_Country/english/e_mcrol

Donna Dickenson (351223)

Beckley Bells

Readers may remember that earlier this year the Beckley Bells Group said farewell to our musical director, John Caldicott. Music has played a large part in John's life and he has been used to making music with others, particularly in the Bicester Band, for many years. Some seven or eight years ago he indicated that he would like to get together with other musicians in the village to make music locally. Little did he know at the time that, within two years, twelve bells would be unearthed from Jessie Ponting's attic and bequeathed to the WI. In turn, a group of twelve ladies came forward to try to play them. John, with a lot of good humour and the patience of a saint, shaped the group so that we could perform, albeit with lots of nerves, at small village functions, and later entertain at homes and day centers. Subsequently a lot of fun was had in fundraising to refurbish the bells, buy suitable music and eventually apply for grants to purchase another twelve bells to extend the range to two octaves.

In the early days, John, like the bell ringers, knew little about the technique of ringing a hand bell, and so many evenings were spent at specialist classes with Gaye and Alan at Wallingford, who are masters of the art. Initially, the music we used

was numbered, with each number corresponding to a numbered bell. This technique proved useful for many of the players who, though keen, did not read music. John transposed, adapted and even wrote small pieces that were appropriate for us to play. However, his ambition was that we should all read music and, as people's knowledge improved, we were able to extend our repertoire.

Two years ago John moved away from Beckley, but until early this year he still committed himself to supporting the group. We were saddened when he told us that he felt he could no longer continue. We have appreciated the enormous amount of time, enthusiasm and energy John has given to us, and will miss his cheerful leadership of the group. However, he leaves behind a cohesive and supportive group, enthused to continue making music together.

So began our search for a new musical director. At first we relied on two of our players, and were very pleased that Heather Wilson and Mauveen Pether were prepared to take on shared musical leadership during this period of uncertainty. However, we are very grateful that Gill Meyers from Horton-cum-Studley came forward in September to try her hand at directing us, and the few sessions we have had so far have been most enjoyable.

Liz Bixby

Village hall

Autumn supper

On Saturday 11 October, 72 of us gathered at the village hall to enjoy an Autumn supper. The food was provided by a bevy of ladies, and Neil Durrant organised the music of two acoustic guitars. It was a delight to have a mixture of old and younger, and to welcome some new villagers. Including the draw we were able to declare a profit of £414 for the coffers of the village hall. Many thanks to all who helped and attended.

Bonfire night

All those who attended will be aware of the dreadful weather for the whole evening. Despite this we were able to make a profit of £81.54 for the village hall. Thanks to all those who showed their support.

Colin Day

Friends of Beckley School

Bonfire night

The FOBS hot dog and burger stall broke even, despite the weather.

Quiz and curry night

FOBS held a successful evening at the pub, which was enjoyed by all, and raised over £300 for the school.

Men of Beckley

The Men of Beckley, the MOB, continue to meet on the first Wednesday of the month at the Abingdon Arms for 'a pie and a pint' and chat. All welcome. Do come, bring a friend and let us put the world to rights!

John Edmonds-Seal (351582)

Christmas carols

Come and sing carols around the village on Christmas Eve. Meet at 'Otway', Woodperry Road for a brief 'warmer' at 5.30pm before moving out into whatever the weather for an hour around the village. All welcome.

Pam and John Edmonds-Seal (351582)

Jan Weller Pre-School

On Friday 14 November we held our main social / fundraising event of the term, the 'Winter Warmer' at Horton-cum-Studley Millennium Hall. It was a very enjoyable evening which raised valuable funds to support our work. Thanks to all those who bought raffle tickets and those who came along on the night. Special thanks to the talented Wheatley Park Soul Band for providing the entertainment. Thanks also to the many local businesses who supported the event by donating raffle prizes, and in particular Oxford Dining who provided the food.

The pre-school Christmas show will be on Wednesday 17 December. Past pupils and parents are welcome – please let Hazel Christian know if you plan to come: 01865 358076.

The Jan Weller Pre-School now has a web site:
<http://www.janweller-pre-school.org.uk>

Tim Ault (Committee Chair)

RSPB Nature Reserve (September – November 2008)

Volunteers

During September, the Otmoor volunteer team were valuable in aiding some of the larger scale land-forming projects, through the erection of electric fencing to marshal livestock. The volunteers' patience and flexibility has been an essential component to the progression of these larger scale projects.

September at Otmoor also saw the beginning of the willow coppicing works. A good start was made to this phase of the reserve work calendar. This work continued through October, and was aided by the Milton Keynes Phoenix group, whose help was gratefully received.

The flexibility of the reserves volunteer force was demonstrated to great effect through the repair of one of the access tracks to the reserve. A rare task, but the results will have great benefits for access for both reserve work and neighbouring landowners.

Time has also been spent clearing the Malt Pit lagoon islands of vegetation, involving use of machinery and physical labour. The islands are key nesting areas for lapwing in this field, so clearance is of high ecological importance.

Bird/wildlife news

Autumn has once again been an interesting season for birds on the reserve. In September, remnants of the summer migrant populations remained, with a number of species of warbler noted feeding in the hedgerows in preparation for their outward migration. Good numbers of house martins and swallows were also seen feeding over the reedbed and grassland.

Autumn passage brought interesting sightings. Passage waders included three species of sandpiper: green, wood and common. Little ringed and ringed plover have both been recorded, along with little stint and dunlin. Some of the reserve's smaller passage species such as whinchat, wheatear and high numbers of meadow pipit have been recorded using the grassland and hedgerows.

Many of the reserve's over-wintering species started to arrive in September, with numbers increasing during October. Fieldfare and redwing

have been recorded for the first time this winter, feeding along the reserve's network of hedgerows. Golden plover were also noted, with a peak count of 500. Good numbers of snipe were recorded throughout October, with a maximum count of 98. Jack snipe have also been seen on a number of occasions. Wildfowl, such as teal, shoveler, pintail and wigeon, started to flock up in September, but by October they had been joined by pochard, gadwall and mallard. Their numbers, although still relatively small, are now starting to resemble the community composition that would be expected throughout the winter.

Large-scale projects

The restoration project on the Closes field, started in July, was completed in November. In spite of the wet weather, work managed to continue, albeit at a slightly slower pace than would have been ideal. Some proactive water pumping and innovative working practices made this possible, such as the excavation of two ponds in Moorley's field next to the Closes, which will also provide a valuable habitat.

Unfortunately, the project to re-profile Ashgrave has had to be delayed again until next year. The wet weather, combined with the topography of the work site, has meant that contractors were unable to continue working. On a positive note, some good progress has been made, and a large amount of soil was moved from higher dryer areas of the field, in preparation to complete the lagoon islands next year.

Judith Lloyd (Office Administrator, RSPB Otmoor Nature Reserve)

Driving

Please could we remind drivers to watch their speeds on the High Street (particularly on the sections where there is no separate pavement) and Common Road around the blind bend.

Maeve Bayton and Sam Hawkins

Planning

Application Reference: PO8/W1159

Application Type: Other

Proposal: Two storey front extension

Address: Appletree House, Woodperry Road, Beckley, OX3 9UY

Church organ restoration appeal

Thank you for your generous support for the concerts in 2008. The provisional dates for 2009 for your diary are as follows:

Saturday 9 May

Raymond Burley, solo guitar recital

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

The restoration work on the organ will start immediately after Easter and will probably continue into early autumn. Don't forget to visit the church once it is all finished to see the magnificent decoration on the front organ pipes finally uncovered and restored.

Mary Worthington

From the (temporary!) editors

Many thanks for all contributions to the winter newsletter. If we've left out anything major, many apologies. The deadline for the Spring 09 edition will be mid-February – please do get in touch with anything you'd like us to include. Our contact details are: Julie McCulloch and Gareth Coleman, 1 Upper Park, Woodperry Road, Beckley, Oxford, OX3 9UZ; 01865 358899; garethandjulie@yahoo.co.uk.

Merry Christmas and a happy new year!



The poster is framed by a decorative border featuring a central wreath and two large bows on either side. The text is centered and reads:

Beckley School Christmas Fete
Friday 12th December
3.30pm - 5.30pm

Flanking the central text are two identical illustrations of a lit candle on a small table with a sprig of holly.

The activities and food items are listed in a grid-like fashion:

- Face Painting
- Craft Tables
- Cakes, Jams etc..
- Tea/Coffee
- Santas Grotto
- Beanie Baby Tombola
- Mulled Wine
- Mince Pies & Jam Tarts
- Christmas Hamper Raffle
- Lots of Childrens Stalls
- Christmas Wreaths
- Chocolate Tombola
- Glow Bracelets

At the bottom left is an illustration of a decorated Christmas tree. At the bottom center, it says "and much much more...".



Answers to jottings quiz



1. Yellow Hammer Cottage
2. Pound Pottage
3. Church Corner Cottage
4. Boy's head in the wall of the school drive
5. The Bank
6. Amber Cottage
7. Bee & Church Cottage
8. The telephone kiosk
9. The old chapel
10. Abingdon Arms
11. Lavender Cottage
12. The Blossoms
13. The Old Barn
14. Kate's Cottage
15. Roman Way
16. Grey House
17. Smithy Cottage
18. Park Wall
19. Bark Beetles
20. Penny Cottage





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Contact Julie McCulloch or Gareth
Coleman at garethandjulie@yahoo.co.uk

This is the second issue of the Beckley newsletter that is carrying advertising for businesses run by local residents.

It represents a good opportunity to promote your business or trade to people who may not know you are on their doorstep.

Cost of advertising is really good value at £15 for a single 1/8th page or £50 for the year (4 issues). Other size combinations are available as can be seen above.

Please Note that copies of the newsletter are also published on the website at

www.beckley-and-stowood.gov.uk.

Email copy to garethandjulie@yahoo.co.uk and you will be invoiced after publication