

The Beckley Newsletter

News Views and Comment from
around the Parish
December 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 COUNCIL NEWS

Thames Water Sewage Connections

All residents who had lateral connections laid to property boundaries received packs from Thames Water explaining the process for final connection.

An application needs to be sent to Thames Water asking for permission to connect to the sewer. The cost for this is about £375.

The resident will then get a letter from Thames Water confirming that a connection can be made.

In parallel with this, building regulations application forms need to be sent to SODC with the appropriate fee for inspections, etc, as is normal with any building works.

Anyone who has connected but not applied to Thames for permission to make a connection should be encouraged to retrospectively complete a form and get the letter of confirmation/agreement from Thames.

New co-opted Parish Councillor

Due to a resignation from the council we still have a vacant seat. Anyone who feels they could contribute to the village please contact either **Sam Hawkins on 872328** or **Pete Gibbons on 351466** or any councillor. Closing date will be 31 January 2010.

Next Police Surgeries

Our next surgeries in Beckley will be done by PCSO Chris Ratcliff 7.30-8.30pm on Thursday 10 December 2009 and 7.30-8.0pm on Thursday 11 February 2010.

Notice Board

We would like to thank Mrs Tasker of The Grey house, High Street for her generous donation of a new general Notice Board in the High Street.

Bonfire Night 7 November

Bonfire Night was a great night for all. The BBQ and Drinks did very well and we had 500 people turn up for the night. Thank you to everyone for coming. Proceeds go to the 2010 bonfire night and we hope to see you all there next year.

Pete Gibbons Parish Council Chairman
Sam Hawkins Parish Council Clerk

POPPY APPEAL 2009

I am delighted to report that the result of our collection this year is a grand total of £740.44. This is an increase of £170.70 over last year which I am sure is due to the increased interest in the Afghan war and tragic loss of so many of our troops. The money will be well spent to help those in need.

Thank you all so much for being so generous and a particularly big THANK YOU to all my collectors who have surpassed themselves this year and also had to contend with some pretty foul weather.

As always I am in desperate need of more collectors and if anyone feels they might be able to help in the future please do let me know, I would be so grateful.

Liz Reis 351259

We need a new Village Hall



Our village hall is an important place, it is used for lots of things by lots of people and is a focus for life in the village. But sadly it is elderly. Despite major repairs ten years ago and again two years ago, and everyone's best efforts to maintain it, it now has a very limited life.

We need to build a new village hall. So the Village Hall Committee is setting up a group to start looking at all the possibilities, and we would like you to be involved. What sort of hall? Eco friendly? What facilities does the village want? What size? Sustainability? Design? What else could we use it for? How to raise the money? What funding is available?

We want as many people in the village as possible to be involved in this project. The "new village hall group" will meet early in the new year. Maybe you have seen an interesting village hall somewhere, or have expertise, ideas, or experience of fund raising.

If you would like to be involved in any way, or to find out more, please contact
Kate Carruthers

BECKLEY VILLAGE HALL COMMITTEE

Marion Weinstein Chairman and Joint Clerk of Works 351251
Clair Marsh Vice Chair 351134
Pat Moss Secretary 358849
Gillian Westbury Treasurer 351659
John Baker Booking Secretary 351514
Peter Carter 150 club Secretary 351352
Kate Carruthers Joint Clerk of Works
Mary Ashdown 358352 358711
Sue Cox 351415
Pru Dickson 358237
Susan Roberts 351898

(Many thanks to John Baker for his interim chairmanship!)

FUTURE VILLAGE HALL EVENTS

**Winter Warmer Supper
Saturday, 6 March**

**'Call My Bluff' Wine Tasting evening
Friday, 23 April**

**Millenium + 10 celebrations:
Saturday, 10 July**

Watch this space for further details in 2010.

Clare Marsh
Moorleys, Woodperry Road,
Beckley, Oxford OX3 9UY
tel. 01865 351134
clare@moorleys.wanadoo.co.uk

OTMOOR RIDING GROUP

Otmoor Riding Group install new gates to improve access to Otmoor with support from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment and Oxfordshire County Council.

Otmoor Riding Group is a British Horse Society-affiliated bridleways group and as such our main aim is to help improve access to local bridleways so that they can be enjoyed by walkers, cyclists and horseriders alike. Everyone was thus understandably excited when we learnt we had won funding for a local access project from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) through the Landfill Communities Fund, with sponsorship coming from Viridor Credits.



The existing small gates at the very top and bottom of the Otmoor bridleway running from area known as 'the hundred acre field' southwards towards the Beckley rifle range (bridleway no. 14) were narrow and rusty, and were becoming particularly difficult to negotiate on horseback.

With the kind agreement of the MOD, the vital funding from TOE and OCC has allowed us to purchase and fit two brand new special bridleway gates in place of the old substandard gates; these have now been installed ready for use.

These new gates are much safer and easier to use as they are proper bridleway-width gates, and not only have a catch at normal height for walkers and cyclists, but also have a long handle that can be reached by horseriders and is lifted to allow easy opening of the gate.



This project has much improved the access to this key Otmoor bridleway, and we hope this will encourage more people to enjoy a walk or ride in the fantastic local countryside.

Otmoor Riding Group 358363

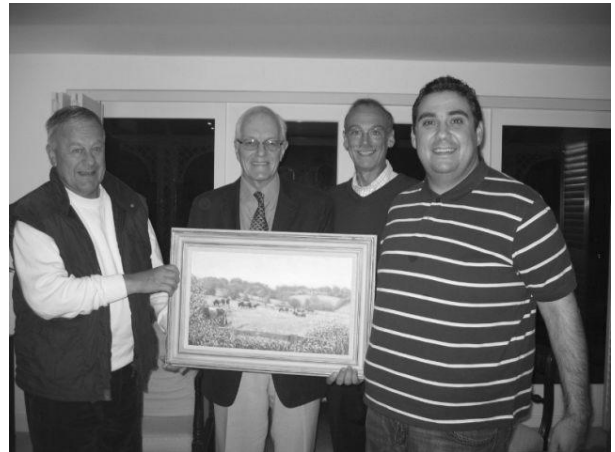
BECKLEY-ST LOUANS TWINNING

The harvest/autumn supper, held this year on 10 October, marked the first occasion on which the village was able to welcome guests from St Louans under the twinning arrangements reported in the last edition of the newsletter. Richard Packer, whose initiative provided the impetus for twinning our two villages, accompanied by Jean-Claude Beauvilain and Christophe Cerceira, arrived with a methuselah of Chinon wine that most of those attending the supper will have sampled. The Cabernet Franc grapes that were brought to decorate the tables reminded us also of what drives the local economy around the village of St Louans. There was a gesture that we shall have difficulty in matching when we make a return visit!



Although the supper was a good opportunity for the 'Loupenciens' to meet a large slice of the Beckley population their short visit included much more. An informal welcome on their arrival allowed them to meet their hosts and others including representatives from the Parish and District Councils. On the first day, before the supper in the village hall, they walked the village, lunched in the Abingdon Arms and surprisingly lost a game of boules to the Beckley team!

On the second day, guests and their hosts came together for 'brunch' and supper and a guided tour of Oxford was arranged. On this final evening, the visitors were presented with a painting, featuring a view of the village, generously donated by Beckley artist Tim King. The president of the St Louans village association tells us that the painting now hangs in the fine heritage building housing their village hall. They hope that as many as possible of us will find our way there when a return visit can be arranged.



Discussions continue to identify opportunities for exchanges in the future and the twinning group would be pleased to hear from anyone who may be able to contribute to the planning or from those keen to participate in events organised in St Louans and in hosting return visits to Beckley. **A firm date is 5 June 2010**, when a group from Beckley is invited to attend the St Louans summer feast.

Mary Ashdown 358971

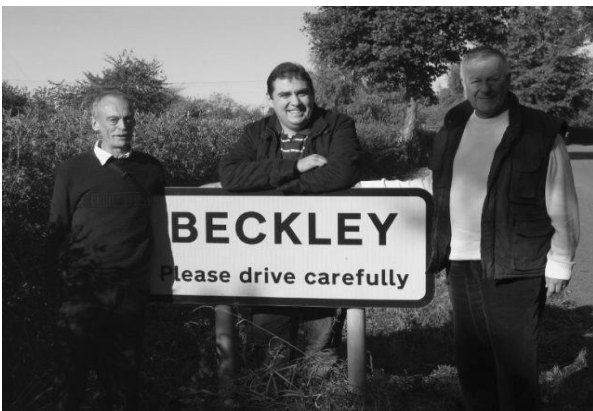
Peter Dickson 358237

Susan Roberts 351898



To Our Friends in Beckley from St Louans

The delegation from the village returned safely from its visit to Beckley. It had been a hectic and immensely enjoyable weekend for all three of us. We took back memories of the outstanding hospitality that was given to us by our hosts. The magnificent picture of Beckley given to St Louans by Tim King now hangs in our village hall and there is much talk in the village about the links we have made. It was interesting to see that several preconceived ideas about English life have already been changed by the visit and this deeper understanding of each other is one of the important aspects of a twinning arrangement.



The delegation arrived back in St Louans to find that over the weekend most of the grape harvest had been picked. The sugar content has been high this year owing to the near perfect summer. The viticulturists are talking about 2009 as being a very good year, perhaps exceptional for the Chinon wine. On 18 October the village organised a "Bernache/Châtaigne" afternoon.



Chestnuts were roasted on the barbecue outside the "maison de quartier" and we drank the first wine of the season. Bernache is a cloudy, sugary, alcoholic wine that is the result of just a few days of fermentation. To the accompaniment of an accordion and intermittent tunes on a trumpet the villagers gathered and chattered to each other. The trumpeter, an ardent French rugby fan, dressed in an English rugby shirt agreed to play "swing high, swing low sweet chariot" as a tribute to the English members present (although he did admit that he would later have to sterilise his trumpet).

The calendar of events for next year has been finalised, copies of which will soon be sent to you. The highlight will be the summer dinner held on the **5 June** when we hope to welcome some of you to an evening of wining, dining and dancing. Marquees are erected close to the vineyards next to the village, a wooden dance floor is built and about 150 Loupenciens gather to enjoy themselves.



The vines have now taken on their autumn colours and our houses are surrounded by the red and gold of their leaves. We have been fortunate in not having the rain that you have seen in England and the sunny autumn days have extended well into November. The river is still at a fairly low level and the remains of the barrage that crosses the Vienne at St Louans is still visible and used as a perch for the cormorants and gulls.

We send our best wishes to you all at Beckley.

Richard Packer

VILLAGE GOSSIP (for which the editor takes no responsibility!!!)

I am a lifelong resident of Beckley and I have been asked to share with other residents, particularly newcomers, what I hear is going on in our village.

You will be aware that next year we shall have a General Election. All parties are keen to attract the 'grey' vote and one of the parties has proposed that some areas of greenbelt be allocated for building rest homes for the elderly with a warden on site. One of the sites under consideration is the land west of the village hall in Woodperry Road. I understand that there will be about 50 units and will be available for purchase by male residents who have lived in Beckley for at least 10 years and have a gross income of under £100,000. Also they will be advertising for a warden who must be female and under the age of 30. I tell you that I have already got my name down.

A couple of weeks ago I was having a quiet pint in the Abingdon Arms and I overheard two members of the PCC talking about the church. Apparently they are hoping to start tea dances in the church in the New Year, and on Saturday evenings there will be a disco for the younger members of the village. As you know they are keen to attract younger people to the services! To meet the requirements of the Health and Safety they will have to install a toilet, about time you may say, and this will have to be connected to the sewer in Church Street (underground of course). The cost will be about £10,000, so if you have some spare cash give them a call.

There have been a number of complaints to the Parish Council from older walkers about how steep Roman Way is. Someone has proposed that the Parish Council install a moving staircase which would be activated by inserting 20p to take you up to the beginning of Woodperry Road. Of course this would only be one way.

Wishing you a warm winter. **Syd Nose**

PS. Email me if you have any gossip which you would like to share with your fellow villagers syd.nose@btinternet.com

BOOK CLUB

The Plague of Doves by Louise Erdrich had a mixed reception but provoked a lively discussion. Many thanks to Donna and Chris for hosting the evening.

The group chose two books to read next time: *The Boy with the Topknot* by Sathnam Sanghera (paperback £9.99) about a Sikh boy growing up in Wolverhampton and *The Book Thief* by Marcus Zusak (£7.99) about the Second World War written from the perspective of a German.

The date of the next meeting is Friday 29 January at The Gables, Otmoor Lane, 7.45 for 8pm. Happy reading over Christmas!

Mary Worthington 01865 351270

BECKLEY WI

Beckley Women's Institute celebrated the end of the year with a seasonal celebration dinner with friends and husbands at The Abingdon Arms on Tuesday 8 December. The new year begins with a members' party at the president's home on **Tuesday 5 January** with each person to bring a gift for a lucky dip as a going-home present. New members are always welcome.

Marion Weinstein President 351251

Brenda Lambourn Secretary 351793

JAN WELLER PRE-SCHOOL

There will be a grand raffle at The Talk House in Stanton St John on the evening of **Friday 18 December**. Please contact **Hazel on 358076** for further information.

FROM THE EDITOR

Many thanks to all who contributed to this issue of the newsletter. Please do keep articles and news items coming. **Deadline for the next issue will be the middle of February for a 1 March publication.** As I will be away, Gareth Coleman and Julie McCulloch have once again generously volunteered to handle the editing. They can be reached at garethandjulie@yahoo.co.uk.

**CAROLS AND CLARET
ST MARY'S CHURCH
BECKLEY
6PM DECEMBER 20**

Please join with the village for this time of carols and readings by candlelight followed by mulled wine and mince pies

A choir will be formed for Carols and Claret and all are asked to join. There will be a short practice on Wednesday 15 December and a final one in church at 10.30am on 20 December. **John Baker 351514**

johnbaker245@btinternet.com

**TEARFUND - RESULT OF
TEARCRAFT AND TRADCRAFT SALE
IN BECKLEY VILLAGE HALL, ON
SAURDAY 31 OCTOBER 2009.**

We were lucky with the weather and it was another good "Village" occasion - the eleventh year running. So lovely to see so many people attending from Wheatley, Holton, Forest Hill, Stanton St John and Horton-cum-Studley and we sensed everyone appreciated the new venue, particularly for refreshments.

Once again everyone was very generous in their purchases and the total money raised was just under £1,100, which all goes direct to the producers in the developing world. Also donations for refreshments (which this year included soup and rolls) totalled £95, which is being given to Tearfund's Children at Risk Programme.

A big thankyou 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 30 October 2010.

**Ian and Erica Cave, Whistlers Cottage,
Common Road.**

**ST MARY'S CHURCH SEVICES
DECEMBER-JANUARY**

**6 December 9.30am All-age
Communion**
**13 December 9.30am Parish
Communion**
20 December 6.00pm Carols and Claret
24 December 4.00pm Crib Service
**25 December 10.00am Family
Communion**

3 January 9.30am All-age Communion
10 January 9.30am Parish Communion
17 January 8.30am BCP Communion
**17 January 6.00pm Iona Evening
Service**
24 January 9:30am Parish Communion

**Morning prayer every Wednesday
8.30am**

Rev. Stevie Cross Team Vicar 351142
Rev. Brenda Knight 351227
Gina Robson Church Warden 351637

**CONCERTS IN BECKLEY CHURCH,
2010**

Dates for your diary.

Saturday 15 May: The Galliard Trio
Andrew Morris *flute*, Martin White *oboe*
and Alec Forshaw *harpsichord/bassoon*

Saturday 5 June: Raymond Burley,
solo guitar recital, postponed from last
year

Saturday 12 June: Family concert –
Keith Fairbairn *marimba* and Malcolm
Pearce *organ*

**Saturday 4 September: Free inaugural
organ recital by Carl Jackson,** organist
of the Chapel Royal, Hampton Court.
Time to be announced.

All concerts except the last start at
7.30pm

Mary Worthington 351270

RSPB OTMOOR AUGUST TO OCTOBER 2009

Volunteers

The seemingly never-ending task of pulling ragwort and willow saplings from the reserve's grassland was brought to a close in August. Our stalwart teams of volunteers then moved on to the even more laborious task of willow pulling in the reed bed.

Whilst contractors were moving and shaping soil to turn the Ashgrave field into a valuable wetland habitat, volunteers were removing an old fence line, which separated the field from its adjacent ditch. Much patience and tenacity was required, but good progress was made and the removal of the fence now allows the ditch and new lagoon to act as a natural system.

Otmoor volunteers helped the reserve in a slightly different way during this summer, by making visitors aware of a temporary diversionary trail. This route, usually closed to the public, went across Greenaways and around the southern edge of the reedbed. The route was designed to give visitors the option of avoiding the path enhancement works taking place along the bridleway.

Volunteers, who had lovingly cared for a batch of wild flower seedlings since the spring, finally planted the various species in our meadows. These plants will be great for insects and biodiversity in general.

Removal of a stand of non-native grey poplar trees had a marked effect on the tree line along the Oddington bridleway, to the north of the reserve. Although felled by contractors, volunteers' additional hard work enabled the project to run smoothly and to be completed on time. New elm growth can already be seen in the gap created, so a new habitat is already in the making.

Bird/Wildlife News

In the period between August and October, we waved goodbye to the species that spend the spring and summer on the reserve, but at about the same time were lucky enough to see many species, which use the reserve as a

stopover on their way to their wintering grounds. These 'passage' migrants included many species of wading bird, such as sandpipers, greenshank, dunlin, plover, spotted redshank and black tailed godwits as well as various passerine species like wheatear, yellow wagtail and whinchat.

There have also been a number of unusual birds on the reserve. A young spoonbill, which spent a couple of days on the reserve in August, was seen on the Flood field. Another large white bird made an appearance in September, as a great white egret could be seen moving all over the reserve. Slightly less conspicuous, but no less enthralling, were a party of bearded tits, which stayed very briefly in the reedbed in October.

To the delight of all, kingfishers frequented the fishing perches in front of the screens at the reed bed. September was a fantastic time of year to see this exotic-looking bird and revel in its stunning plumage and expert fishing skills.

The close of summer was signalled throughout the period by the climbing numbers of wintering birds such as lapwing, golden plover, teal and wigeon. These numbers will continue to rise throughout winter.

The chuckling and whistling of fieldfare and redwing, as they fed on the glut of berries in the hedgerows in October, was another sure sign that summer was at an end. As was the return of the starlings roosting in the reedbed, in numbers of 5 to 10 thousand birds. This is sure to grow into the mass roost we expect in the heart of winter.

Large Scale projects

This summer the reserve has been a hive of activity. Work on the Ashgrave field continued throughout August, and after a number of frustrating years caused by the weather, the new wetland is finally finished! The next few years will be an exciting time, as vegetation re-colonizes the area, providing a large expanse of rare habitat.

Continued next page

RSPB continued

To allow visitors to enjoy this brand new landscape, a hide is being constructed on the edge of the wetland. This should be completed in December and will be opened to the public shortly afterwards.

Parallel to the Ashgrave wetland creation, the adjacent field Big Otmoor, was modified to reduce bank height. This will make the field even more appealing to birds and wildlife. The excess soil was used to create islands in the new Ashgrave lagoon.

Enhancement of the footpath, which forms a section of the visitor trail along the bridleway, was carried out. Along with this improvement, new pathways and tracks were created into Ashgrave. These will allow access to the hide for visitors, as well as allowing access for reserve vehicles, so essential management works can be carried out.

The Closes field was reseeded with a native mixture of grass seed. With the help of volunteers acting as markers, a very even coverage was achieved and very quickly new grass could be seen sprouting. The Barn Ground field was also reseeded with a native grass and wild flower seed mix.

Martin Randall, RSPB Otmoor Warden**BECKLEY & STOWOOD WEBSITE**

Over the next few weeks the Beckley & Stowood website (beckley-and-stowood.gov.uk) is going to be completely redesigned. The idea is to make it a bit more current, dynamic and hopefully interactive.

This is your website so I would welcome some feedback on information you feel you would like to see. Also if you run one of the villages many clubs or groups please give me the details so that I can offer all the details.

We are also going to include a local businesses/services page so if you offer a service from the village email and I will include you in the directory.

gary.r.chalmers@btinternet.com

BECKLEY VILLAGE HALL 150 CLUB DRAW**APRIL DRAW**

£25 Simon Hogg Meadow Cottage
 £20 AndI Sheeka Joycot
 £15 Mr Mrs Ross Church St.
 £10 Mr Mrs Jackson The Grange
 £5 David Talbot High Street

MAY DRAW

£25 Kate Carruthers Park Wall
 £20 Simon Felix 6 Beckley Ct.
 £15 Mr Mrs Crowley Northway
 £10 Mr Mrs Roberts Leigh Bec
 £5 Mary Ashdown Penny Cotto

JUNE DRAW

£25 A.MacIntosh 11 Beckley Ct.
 £20 Bob Johnson High Street
 £15 M. Partridge Tangle wood
 £10 Mr Mrs Weller Glenray
 £5 F Vallentine Middlefield

JULY DRAW

£25 Mr Mrs Buckingham 8 Beckley Court
 £20 John Wing Stonycroft
 £15 Joan Johnson High Street
 £10 Emilie & Frankie
 £5 Dave Axford Fair Winds

AUGUST DRAW

£25 Dorrie Gethings Corner Ways £20
 Debbie Bailey Sandford
 £15 J.C.Hoyle Cripps Barn
 £10 V.Rust Lavender Cottage
 £5 Janet Carter Rowan Lodge

SEPTEMBER DRAW

£25 Claire Marsh Morleys
 £20 Mr Mrs Dickson Fen House
 £15 Mr Mrs Day Springfield
 £10 Simon White Pound Cottage
 £5 Mr Mrs Hampshire Dove Cottage

This a very worthy local fund raising activity and not only will the Beckley Village Hall benefit from your contribution, but you may find yourself in the winning seat.

For more information, please contact Pete Carter 01865 351352

**NEW YEARS EVE AT THE ABINGDON
ARMS**

There will be a New Years Eve party at The Abingdon Arms at £35 per person to include buffet dinner, comedian, and dancing.

The Abingdon Arms 351311

BECKLEY OPEN DAY 2010

Beckley Open Day will be on 13 June NOT 20 June as previously printed. Please contact **Gina Robson 351637** if you would be willing to open your garden. Also, we should be most grateful for contributions for the plant stall (cuttings, seedlings, etc) – please could you put them aside for Julie Ross, who will be organising the stall at Prospect Cottage during the week before the Open Day (but please not before that!)

**SCIENCE IN A NEW LIGHT 11-29
JANUARY**

“Science in a new light” a temporary exhibition at the North Wall Arts Centre, South Parade, Summertown, will bring together the work of local artists and community groups inspired by research and architecture at the Oxfordshire-based national synchrotron facility, Diamond Light Source. The exhibition features stunning textiles, paintings, and sculptures using reclaimed materials. **www.diamond.ac.uk**



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The last few issues of the Beckley newsletter have been 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 annhenman@gmail.com and you will be invoiced after publication