

BARFORD NEWS

DECEMBER 2009

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A Happy and Peaceful Christmas

To Everyone

From the News Team

Parish Council Notes

THERE WAS A FULL COUNCIL at the Parish Council monthly meeting held on 4th November. In attendance were County Councillor Ray Jelf, District Councillor Paul O'Sullivan and one member of the public, Mr Terry Deane.

There being as yet no parish clerk Councillor Sandi Turner volunteered to take the minutes.

The minutes of the October meeting were passed without amendment and there being no matters arising, the chairman went on to brief the council on the recruitment of a new parish clerk. There were three applicants for the position one of whom had already been interviewed. The remaining two were to be interviewed within the week. Hopefully a new clerk would be in situ for the December meeting.

Councillor Bullard, acting as receptor of all council correspondence, had forwarded pertinent letters to the council there was nothing outstanding. So far there has been no word on the general maintenance of the footpaths from OCC. She reminded councillors that there was a CDC liaison meeting at Bodicote House on Wednesday 11th November. Councillors Hobbs, Lane, Bullard and Langlands will attend.

The council discussed the issue of child safety and road markings within the parish. A council request for a halt sign at the junction of Townsend and Nether Warton road and the painting of SLOW on the roads at points thought to be a risk to pedestrians and drivers had received short shrift from the OCC Senior Traffic Technician (STT). The decision of the STT was, to quote the email:

"Regrettably I cannot justify expenditure in a location where there is not a demonstrable need"

The reasons provided were:

There is no recent record of accidents in the Barfords; it was illegal for children to play in the street and parents had a responsibility to control their children.

The Halt sign at the junction of Nether Warton Rd and Townsend was unnecessary as the view down Townsend was full and wide

Each SLOW sign would have to have an upright sign to accompany it and the policy was non-proliferation of signs.

When the HGV signs were erected a year or so ago one disenchanted parishioner had seen fit to dismantle at least one several times.

An astonished council wondered why it was not made aware of this extraordinary action at the time. Was it a case of "no names no pack-drill"?

The parish council was not prepared to let the matter rest. Councillors were of the opinion that the STT when dismissing the Halt sign had not taken into account the proximity of the Broad Close

junction which was the main concern of the council. Being so near to the Nether Warton Rd it was often overlooked by drivers.

Mr Deane representing the concerned parents said this junction was doubly dangerous because twice a day primary school children embarked on or got off the school bus on the corner of Broad Close. Further, notwithstanding children should be road safety educated they still walked, ran and played on the roads in the parish and there was a duty to maximise their care.

Painting SLOW on the road did not really need an accompanying sign and as to proliferation of signs, if the full 30 mph restriction was imposed over the bridge four signs could be removed. County Councillor Jelf suggested that the Speed Reference Group be approached for support in this instance He further suggested that he ask the STT to visit the parish to see for herself, and that the Parent Group write to Tony Baldry expressing their concerns about the response of OCC with a copy to the STT. The council accepted all three suggestions and Councillor Lane said he would liaise with Alison Duffy on the matter of a letter to Tony Baldry.

Moving on to Planning, an application for internal alterations to Barford House had been circulated during the month and had received no objections. This information had been forwarded to CDC. It was noted that the application for fitting tie bars into the fabric of The George had been approved.

The financial aspects of the council remain sound. The chairman said that there should be a start to the preparation of the budget and proposed he and Councillor Lane assemble figures for the December meeting, a proposal unanimously accepted by the council.

A cheque for £125.32 covering the emptying of the dog bins for six months was approved.

In Any Other Business Councillor Woolgrove said that it seemed the bus for Banbury School had arbitrarily changed its route from South Newington with a result that it was eroding the corner of the Barford/South Newington road as it turned to come into Barford St Michael. It was agreed that action should be taken to ensure the bus followed its original route.

The chairman reminded councillors of the Remembrance Day Service on 8th November. He also reminded the council that County Councillor Waine is to attend the December meeting to talk about the provision of primary school places. The council meeting would be followed by a Village Hall Trustees' meeting which the new VHMIC Chairman and the Treasurer were due to attend.

There being no other business the date of the next meeting was set as Wednesday 4th December and the meeting closed

.B.E.L.

Deddington PTA

DESPITE THE INCLEMENT weather, the crowds still came and enjoyed a fabulous fireworks evening once again! Mulled wine and hot chocolate kept us warm whilst the BBQ did a roaring trade with delicious sizzling sausages and burgers. It was fantastic to see the field full of children and adults laughing and having fun. Thank you all so much for supporting this event and we sincerely hope you enjoyed the evening. We raised the amazing sum of **£2,150**. Special thanks must go to the Co-op and Farmer's Market Committee who very generously supported us. Finally a huge thank you to all those who gave their time to help organise and put on the event - we are very grateful.

Christmas is rapidly approaching and, once again, we have our ever popular range of Christmas cards designed by the children. Samples of the cards are available should you wish to 'try before you buy', just contact Janet on 337135 or e-mail janet@janetwatts6.wanadoo.co.uk for a sample pack or to place an order. The cards can also be viewed on the school website www.deddington.ik.org

Santa's Float will be winging its way from the North Pole and landing in Deddington on the weekend of the 12th and 13th December. As usual, your generosity is greatly appreciated. Please see posters around the villages for the route plan and the advert in this edition.

Santa's Magical Grotto will be in the Town Hall on Saturday 19th December during the Farmer's Market. Santa is really looking forward to meeting all the children so please come along and help him make your Christmas special! Please see posters and advertising for further details.

Our dedicated carol singers will be, once again, singing in the Church during the morning of the December Farmer's Market. Do come along and listen to the spirit of Christmas or even join in!!

The fun continues into the next decade..... dates for your diary include our ever popular Quiz Night on Saturday 6th March, The Deddington Walk on Sunday 16th May and the School Fete on Saturday 19th June.

In the meantime, on behalf of the PTA, I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a Healthy and Peaceful New Year.



Janet Watts
PTA Chair



1st Deddington Brownies

WELCOME TO Millie, Megan, Ellie and Emma, who joined us after the half term break. For Halloween we came to Brownies in fancy dress, had a pumpkin lantern competition, and then lit the pumpkins outside in the dark.

We are hard at work preparing to lead the family service in Deddington Church on Sunday 6th December. We hope as many people as possible will be able to join us there to see what we have been up to.

Well done to all the Brownies who turned out for the Deddington Remembrance Parade. You did yourselves (and Brown Owl) proud.

Lucy Squires

Barford VHM '200 Plus' Club

**Tickets For 2010 Available Now
£6.00 Annual Subscription**

~ ~ ~

12 Monthly Draws offering
Guaranteed Prizes

***£5.00, £10.00 & £15.00 Every
Month**

**** £25.00 Once each Quarter**

***** £50.00 Twice a Year**

*****Christmas Bonus prize of £100.00**

~ ~ ~

Have a go! - - - - Help raise funds to maintain **your** Village Hall - for 50p a month you can really make a difference.

Current members will be contacted soon.
New members **NEEDED** to help swell the funds!

To reserve a ticket ring **Mariann**

Village Panto

IT'S THAT TIME of year again - oh no it isn't!!!!



Oh yes it is..... **Panto Season!!**

By the time you read this, spare Panto tickets will be as rare as youtube footage of Mother Teresa pole dancing. Though we did manage to find some - not a pretty sight

Well this year's panto is on schedule and as ever, I'm sure Austin and Gwen will do a magnificent job of the production. But let's not take our eye off the ball by getting wrapped up in the actual performance. The amount of work that goes on behind the scenes should not be overlooked. Most people do not see the stirring effort that goes into producing the actual set. Hours and hours of work from a tireless crew that would rather just get on with it, than bask in the lime light - they even shy away from reflected glory. Our thanks go out to you. Then there are the crew that help put the programme together. The ones that collect the prizes for the raffle (our raffle prizes are always worth winning - no recycling here). Then the costumes department. The band (yes we have a live band again!!). The people that help with props, selling the tickets, setting out the hall, manning the door and the bar. Oh and yes - the ones that get up there and don't mind people having a laugh at their expense. Then where would we be without our locals that give us material to write gags about (Thank you so much Kevin for this year's nugget!) Then there is our wonderful audience who can shout "He's behind you" right on cue! We look forward to seeing you all for yet another Panto.

T'committee

Barford Green Garden Club

Present

'Batsford Through the Year'.

A talk by

Sue Burn

from Batsford Arboretum

at the Village Hall

on

January 14th 2010

All Welcome to this Open Evening

WI News

THE NOVEMBER MEETING was well attended, with members old and new and a visitor or two. After President Janice had welcomed everyone and gone through the business of the evening, she welcomed our speaker, Annie Phillips, who gave a slide-show and talk on "The Great Wall of China".

Annie had walked on parts of the Wall seven years ago and talked of her experiences walking for the Children's Society charity. A party of some 40 people had spent two weeks walking on both the 'easy' part of the wall in Beijing where the celebrities and important visitors are always filmed (the only part of the whole Wall which is flat) and then climbing up and down in the less frequented and less well-maintained parts of the Wall in the countryside; indeed, some parts were in such disrepair that the walkers had to leave the Wall itself and trek alongside.

The most important message that Annie gave us was that walking the Wall is not as easy as it seems – in fact, her party climbed up and down an estimated 28,000 steps as the Wall rose up one side of a mountain and down the next. Her slides showed the Wall going off into the far blue distance, tracing the tops of the hills, plunging up and down as it clung to the straight line of the summits and valleys. Not for the faint-hearted or the weak of leg!

We enjoyed our brief but illuminating trip to China and had a long question and answer session over refreshments. Helen and visitor Maggie won the raffle, and honours were shared between Lavinia and Helen for the Flower of the Month.

The date for our annual dinner to be held at the Saye and Sele Arms, was set for 20th January 2010

Our final meeting of 2009 will be on 9th December is our annual Social Evening, and this year our Treasurer, Sue Broughton, has kindly offered to host this in her home. All members are warmly invited for a little pre-Christmas festivity and entertainment.

SRT

1st Deddington Guides

WITCHES, FAIRIES, cats, and ghosts were all present around Halloween time!

The Cheetah patrol organised some super games, and, as usual, food seemed to play a major roll!

We learnt a lot about the life of a young soldier in WWII from Capt. Ted Johnson, which certainly helped to concentrate our thoughts at the Remembrance Day parade.

Well done to our wreath and flag bearers and colour parties, who did a great job. Also, well done to Laura and Ellen in the band, an excellent, very smart turn out.

The aptly named 'Mr. Storm' came to one meeting, to tell us all about the work of the RNLI. We also picked up many tips for water and beach safety. We are all much more aware now of precautions to take to keep safe.

We held a surprise presentation for Rachael Winter (of Barford) who has gained her Baden-Power Award! CONGRATULATIONS! This is the highest award a guide can obtain. Rachael, we are all very proud of you!

Guiders: Maggie Rampley, 01295 810069 Marion Trinder, 01869 340806

Congratulations to Rachael Winter on Achieving the Highest Award in Guiding



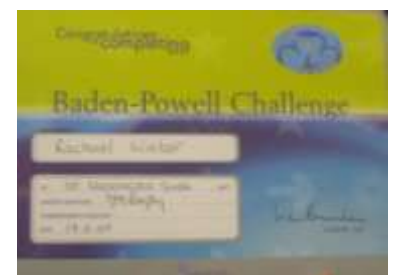
The Baden-Powell Challenge is the ultimate achievement for a Guide. It is for Guides who wish to stretch themselves as individuals to achieve the very best that they can. It is not about achieving a set standard, nor is it about being academically able.

The Baden-Powell Challenge has two parts: the ten challenges and the Baden-Powell Challenge Adventure.

A guide must complete ten challenges of her choice, at least one of which should be from each of the programme zones of Discovery, Healthy lifestyles, Celebrating diversity, Global awareness and Skills and relationships.

The Baden-Powell Adventure is a special guiding event.

Rachael joined Deddington Guides with 6 other bubbly brownies from Barford roughly 6 years ago and remained as fun loving, lively and enthusiastic to this day. She was very soon elected to become a patrol leader and led her patrol through various nasty activities. She has a great sense of fun but still



has the maturity to know when to consider more serious issues.

Rachael supported the Guides on many occasions, carrying the flag on church parades, and taking part in quizzes and competitions, always in a generous and fair spirit. Whatever the situation Rachael could be relied upon to pitch in and help out. Since moving on from Guides she became young leader with the Rainbows and is now taking a full part in Guiding as young leader with our Guides and as a Ranger in Banbury.

Rachael was selected from many in Oxfordshire to go to

Poland and attend the international camp there. Whilst working on her Baden-Powell Award Rachael completed a huge variety of activities including disability awareness, craft & international food and many many more. One particular accomplishment was completing the adventure weekend where she made a huge impression on the Guideleaders.

Well Done Rachael!

From the Vicar

ON BEHALF OF the Parochial Church Council and all at the Churches of St Michael and St John may I wish Barford News readers a Happy Christmas. Details of Church services over the Christmas period will be found in the Christmas Card distributed in this issue of the Barford News. We look forward to welcoming you at some of those services.



The PCC has decided that in the New Year for an experimental period the services each Sunday in Barford St Michael and Barford St John will be at 4.00pm. (as to place, the service on the 4th and 5th Sundays of the month will be at Barford St John, as hitherto.) We understand, of course, that this timing will not be convenient for everyone, but hope that, overall, it will enable greater attendance at the Barford churches. It should certainly be easier in 2010 than it has been recently to remember when the services are! A further consideration in this move to 4.00pm services has been a desire to create an integrated rota of services for the Benefice as a whole, as part of an endeavour to work in closer co-operation with Deddington parish. The new arrangement will mean an increase in the range of options for churchgoers in respect of the style and timing of services in the Benefice which we hope will be found advantageous.

Hugh White, Vicar,



Rainbows

WE SAID GOODBYE to Ellie, Izzy and Megan before the half term holiday and welcomed Indigo, Lilli and Phoebe this half term. We attended Deddington Remembrance Sunday parade and had a super turnout as usual. The girls were very smart and a credit to the unit.

We have had two weeks of great activities- a big thank you to Sandi Turner again for helping the Rainbows make fabulous pottery Christmas Decorations. Parents ask to help at this meeting and are very happy when it appears on the following years programme! This year I finally get to keep one- lovely painting Connie!

Thank you also to Claire Cox for teaching us Willow Construction. It was lively, but we did have a ceremonial lighting of our decorated willow lanterns at the end of the evening... We're very grateful to both of you.

Hazel and Gillian 01869 337822



Sponsored Walk in aid of the Nepalese Orphanage in Kathmandu

The Walk on 13th September raised a total of £142.80 for the 'Helpless Children Mother Centre' in Kathmandu.

Many thanks to all who participated and helped

Deddington CE Primary School

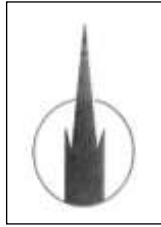
DECEMBER IS UPON US already and the children are getting ready for a well-deserved break. There has been a lot going on this term including many trips: years 5 and 6 enjoyed visits to Banbury Museum, the focus being on the Victorians (Year 5) and the Second World War (Year 6). Year 4, to support their Tudor Topic, are visiting Sulgrave Manor and Year 1 are looking forward to going to the Pantomime at Chipping Norton Theatre to see *Rumpelstiltskin*. We have also been busy fund-raising, and the children managed to raise an outstanding £2800 for the NSPCC. Each class is also doing its own Class Challenge, hoping to raise £50 per class to go towards a new sports kit for Thelesho School, our link school in Mmabatho in South Africa. We are also still collecting Morrison gardening vouchers (there is a box in the school reception).

Last, but not least, we are busy preparing for our Christmas productions, which are as usual a mixture of modern and traditional, with singing, acting and narration. The children, as always, are working extremely hard and are looking forward to performing in front of friends and family. F1 and F2 production will take place on Monday 14 December at 2pm, Key Stage 1 will take place on Tuesday (15th) at 4.30pm and Key Stage 2 will be on Thursday (17th); all performances will be in Deddington Church. I'm sure they will be well supported and you will find plenty to enjoy!

Jane Cross

Bloxham CE Primary School

IN SEPTEMBER WE WELCOMED 2 new teachers to Bloxham Primary School. Mrs Hodgins joined us in a newly created role of Assistant Headteacher. Mr Smilie also started as a year 5 teacher. In addition Ms Boswell was promoted to being Deputy Headteacher. I know that all 3 are enjoying their new roles at our school.



Last night we had our fast becoming traditional firework celebration at school. Over 1100 enjoyed the evening, with the wonderful combination of great fireworks, bbq food as well as the highly popular (with the children anyway!) glow sticks. Once again we were lucky with the weather – beautiful, starlit still evening. As Headteacher I am continually grateful and full of awe for the commitment of our Friends of Bloxham Primary School group. For example I know that members of the committee started working at 6.30 am preparing for the Firework Night and finally finished approximately 9pm- on behalf of the whole school community - thank you.

One of the highlights of the year so far was “Wendy Day”, held just before the October holiday. The day was in memory of Miss Clark, a wonderful teaching assistant who tragically died earlier in the year. All the children as well as the staff took up the opportunity of donning the clothes of characters from Peter Pan. During the day the children did many learning activities based on the book, as well as enjoying cakes made by members of staff. All the proceeds from the day will go towards funding an extension to our school garden that we want to make as a lasting and living memorial to Miss Clark.

Back in August Fiona Richards (Chair of Governors) and I went to a Bloxham Parish

Councilmeeting regarding the Rural Children’s Centre which is planned to be sited at our school. The Children’s Centre will provide support and services for young children and their families’. Since then the formal request for planning permission has been submitted and the date for responses has just passed. In addition the building work for the project has gone out to tender, with the tenders received last week. Dependent on planning permission being granted and at least one of the tenders being acceptable, work is scheduled to start on the Children’s Centre in January 2010 and be completed in early summer.

One of the things that we pride ourselves on at Bloxham Primary School is children’s behaviour, both in school and when the children are away from the school. Following our year 6 visit to Stowe Gardens I was really proud to hear that the staff who work at the Gardens told us that our children were the best behaved they had welcomed for many years and that many members of the public had commented on the positive and well-behaved nature of the pupils of Bloxham Primary School.

Finally 2 special events happened today. At 11am approximately 380 children, aged 3-11 years old, along with 50+ adults stood still outside for 2 minutes of silent reflection. It was very moving moment, with the only sound coming from the rustle of the tissue paper of the giant red poppies that some of the older children had made. Approximately 45 minutes earlier the newly formed Bloxham Big Band, comprising 12 very talented musicians aged 7-11 years old gave their first public performance in a school Assembly to a combined audience of parents, children and staff. Both were very special memorable moments.

Matthew Ingall, Headteacher



Visit To Thenford House

THE BARFORD GREEN GARDEN CLUB concluded its visiting programme for 2009 with a trip to outer Middleton Cheney when Thirty members and friends visited the gardens of Lord and Lady Heseltine's splendid Georgian pile at Thenford. It was a lovely afternoon, with plenty of Autumn sunshine to illuminate the colours of the many acers which grow in the arboretum there, and although the throng was large, the numbers were hardly noticed in the vastness of the grounds.

Of particular note was the enormous (and I *mean* enormous) walled kitchen garden, complete with diaper beds and faux moghul architecture disguising bird cages and seating. The hothouse was crammed full of orchids and other exotics; the water garden, complete with ten rectangular pools, each with four fountains and connecting rill, was quite spectacular, and the sculpture garden showed every kind of work, from the Wounded Elephant in sparkling granite to a monstrous bust of Lenin, complete with waving Russian flag, by Dzintra Jansone which had somehow arrived here from a town square in Preili, Latvia after the fall of communism!

And which must have required several cranes to position it.

My particular favourites were the five or six midgets masquerading as suits of armour and lying 'where they fell' under a huge tree. This was a real gem. We also saw 'Tarzan' himself, resplendent in his golf cart and talking to the Hoi Polloi who had invaded his domain for the afternoon. The Arboretum is only opened occasionally by Michael Heseltine for charity and this year's donations were to go to the Ashmolean. We were all vastly entertained by the whole thing, and wished we all had the 14 ground-staff who do all the hard work!

Chairman, BGGC



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WEDDINGS, PARTIES, CANAPE RECEPTIONS, FUNERALS

1st Deddington Scout Group CUBS

All our current Cubs have been invested and two have made the transition to Scouts. At the moment all upcoming places are already reserved, but, please put your child's name down if you would like a place in the future.



The collection for Shelterbox was a huge success, many thanks to all the market users for contributing, we raised £311 even though the weather was a bit dismal. We hope to raise another £150 which will pay for an entire box and allow us to track it's use.

Recently the Cubs have found out where their parents were born, marked it on a map, measured the distance and made a finger post indicating the direction from Deddington, some of them were quite exotic! We shall be doing some Christmasy things and having our party at Horley campsite, wrap up warm.

Jo Churchyard C.S.L. 338071
jochurchyard@hotmail.com

SCOUTS

The Scouts welcomed Mika and Olly from Cubs they have joined in as if they've been there for years.

We have spent a great deal of our time this term organising the quiz night, so come on, sign up your team and help us raise even more money for Shelterbox. There's a prize for the winners of pizzas kindly donated by Peppers, a raffle with loads of prizes and unhealthy refreshments, what more could you want?

Pete Churchyard S.L. 338071
pete.churchyard@btinternet.com

Christmas post boxes will be out on Dec 5th for 2 weeks. Same recession busting price as last year, 20p per card, please note we do not deliver in Duns Tew. Boxes will be located in Eagles Barford Post Office and Deddington Library. Lot's of cards please, the Cubs and Scouts need the exercise.

Deddington PFSU and Village Nursery

THIS TERM we are thinking about celebrations, including Fireworks Night, Diwali and of course Christmas. As part of our Christmas celebrations our PFSU children will be doing a Christmas production of Happy Birthday Jesus with the F1 (Reception class) children, in the church on Monday 14th December at 2.00pm. Join us if you can! We will also be holding special 'decorations' afternoons at both sites where parents can join their children for a creative afternoon and help to make the settings look festive.



We will be holding a fund-raising quiz night, at the Unicorn, on Sunday 29th November. Tickets are £2.50 each and are available from the DVN, PFSU, the Unicorn Hotel or on the night. This is open to everyone and was a really enjoyable evening last year. The staff will be looking to retain their winning form!

Our special reindeer food made to Santa's secret recipe will be on sale during the last week of term and at the December Farmer's market. Only £1 a bag! We will also be raffling a Christmas hamper, so keep a look out for us at the market on December 19th. All money raised goes to support the PFSU and Nursery.

Lucy Squires
337484

WHIST PLAYERS

Please note, that due to unforeseen circumstances the Christmas Whist Drive will now be held in Wigginton village hall, on Friday 11th December at 7.30pm. We apologise for any inconvenience caused and look forward to seeing you all in Wigginton.
Avril and Judy.

Deddington Fire Station News

WELL, THERE'S BEEN A LOT happening at your station over the past two months. We said a fond farewell to watch manager Anne Waters at the end of September. She has decided to further her career within the brigade and is currently stationed at Witney fire station in a fire prevention role. We wish her well for the future and will be eagerly following her progress over the coming months.

This has meant that acting watch manager Chris Fenemore is now leading from the front so to speak, and was last seen swamped under a pile of paperwork – poor fella.

He has a tough job on his hands maintaining the high standards that we have achieved under Anne's leadership, but we're all keen to keep moving in the right direction. We understand that we have recently come second in the best retained station in the brigade. It was a very close call between ourselves and Witney station, and our aim is obviously to take first place next year. We hope that you are as proud as we are to know that you have a first class fire station in your area.

We are pleased to report that we now have a new recruit (Richard Day) from Barford st Michael, who has just passed his selection day and medical tests. Just the interview to go now and we hope to have him on his basic training in January. Firefighter Parker also passed his breathing apparatus phase 3 assessment in September and had been studying hard for it. Well done Tim!

Fire fighter Sharon Wilson has proven that Adderbury is not a step too far when it comes to responding to the station, there has been some new interest from people living in Adderbury which is great to see and this may result in another successful recruit for the station in the future. We will soon be having a mini recruitment campaign to try and fill the kit pegs in the muster bay as there are a couple now available, but these places are limited so don't miss your chance to join this exciting and vibrant station

With regard to recent incidents, September and early October saw us attend a fire at RAF Croughton, an aircraft crash at Bicester, a road traffic collision at Steeple Aston involving a car, scaffold lorry and a pedestrian trapped between the two vehicles.

We also had a bizarre day out that started with a call to standby at Bicester station, followed by a call to standby at Buckingham fire station, as the Bicester pumps and half of Bucks brigade were involved in a barn fire at Water Stratford. The fire had spread to an electrical switchroom feeding a mobile phone mast and specialist foam appliances were used to extinguish the fire in the switchroom,



whilst other crews directed jets to stop the fire spreading to adjacent barns.

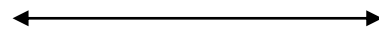
Personally, I've never been to standby at another brigade's station and I think we were all very pleased that we never got an emergency callout from there as familiarisation of local road names and numbers could have been an issue

After spending most of the morning there, we went back to standby at Bicester, before returning home, only to be turned out to the barn fire as a relief crew later that night.

The remainder of October and early November has seen us called to a single vehicle road traffic collision south of Deddington where we found a car wrapped around a tree. Hydraulic cutting equipment was used to release the driver. It is believed that the cause of the accident was due to the driver using his mobile phone. We have also attended a chimney fire in Middle Barton, followed immediately by a head-on road traffic collision involving two cars near Hopcrofts Holt. This was a serious incident and one driver was airlifted to the John Radcliffe hospital using the Thames Valley air ambulance whilst the other was taken by road ambulance. Again, hydraulic cutting equipment had to be used to free the casualties and we were backed up by the Woodstock appliance and the rescue tender from Kidlington who were already in the area dealing with an animal rescue at Adderbury.

We have also been across the border to two incidents in Northants, backing up their Brackley appliance. The first incident involved a faulty electrical meter in a house which caused smoke to pour out from underneath the stairs, and the second involved a call to an elderly gentleman's house where a small amount of paper had caught fire. Luckily he had a panic alarm system which automatically connected him to an operator at a control centre, who in turn alerted the fire service.

Fire fighter Graham Harding



Barford Film Night

Sat 9 January

7.45pm

In the

Village Hall

Is anybody there?

Starring Michael Caine.

Well scripted and beautifully shot this film is sure to appeal to audiences of all ages.

Non-member welcome £3.50.



To All Village Carol Singers



**Carol Singing around the village
Tuesday 22nd December**

Meet at Church Gates (outside Church Cottages) at 6.30pm.

~ ~ ~



**Carols in The George
7.30pm, Wednesday 23rd December**

Both in aid of local charities

BARFORD CHRISTMAS MARKET

With Mulled Wine on **December 12th.**

10.0 until 12.30 – Village Hall

There will be lots of produce, cakes, vegetables, meats, cheeses and gifts of all sorts, Bacon Butties, **mulled wine, spiced apple juice and mince pies**

Come and see what we have to offer – no need to buy, just meet up with friends to enjoy Bacon Baps, Tea, Coffee & Biscuits

Profits will be shared between the Afghan Heroes charity.



THE CHARITY SUPPORTING BRITISH

Swimmers Invited

To join our Private Morning Session at Bloxham School Pool



Mondays 8.15 – 9am

If interested Contact Verna Lane 338956



We would like to wish all our friends and neighbours in the village a Happy Christmas and a healthy and successful 2010.

From Aggie, Jim and Ella xx



DOG WALKING

If you are unable to exercise your dog during the day I can provide walks, whatever the weather.

Responsible care and reasonable rates.

Please call Susanne to discuss: 01869 338575

NATURE NOTES 83

IHAVE MY WORK CUT OUT! How do I compress Nature's goings on around the Barfords from mid-April to mid-November in two pages of *Nature Notes*? Certainly, I used three editions to relate my tales of the Orkneys, so the answer is to try and bring us up to this year's end similarly.

Mid-April was a period of unsettled weather; of chilly showers and wandering winds. The hedge-row blossoms and the early Spring bulbs had given a good display; the Swallows were coming in, the Cuckoo was awaited and the excited expectancy of Spring was everywhere.

The third week of April was generally sunny and warmer. Nature responded accordingly with Holly Blue, Green-veined White, Orange Tip and Speckled Wood butterflies appearing, Primroses and Cowslips were putting on a show and the first rich bursts of song came from Blackcaps in the shrubberies. Buzzards circled and called by day and the Tawny Owls were busy and noisy by night. A new pair of Roe Deer fawns appeared below Steepness but were quickly taken away by the doe because people were running their dogs around the meadows. The Cuckoo arrived to stay on 21st, below Steepness (Peter Turner). This bird has a distinctive call with an abbreviated first syllable, easily recognisable and was here last year. The weather grew more unsettled through the next few days as a big weather system crossed the country, the wind 'boxing' the compass anticlockwise from the east. Bas Butler noted the 'Steepness' Cuckoo and another at Mar Pool on 26th.

April had been as April should be, loveable, yet all teenage moods and attitude. Night temperatures were very low, between -1°C and 5°C with day temperatures relatively high, at least fourteen days peaking at 15°C to 21°C . This meant that the young shoots of many garden plants were seared by day and shriven by night, inducing continued dormancy and contrasting with the very early budburst of the hedgerows responding to the very warm daytime conditions.

April made her exit on a milder note with the 'Steepness' Cuckoo singing gloriously, his calls punctuated by the laughter of Green Woodpeckers.

And so, enter May, with similar weather and temperatures to April, in thrall to the endless passage of high and low pressure weather systems crossing the British Isles.

On no less than seventeen days I described the wind as 'chill' regardless of background temperature. Fifteen nights registered 5°C or below (0°C min., 10°C max.). Daytime temperature was 15° or above on eleven days and above 20° on four more (14°C min., 25°C max.). The wind was in a



westerly quarter for twenty four days. This persistence of cold nights and chill winds continued the almost zero growth of most garden plants and many a potato patch suffered blackened tops.

I had a marvellous view of the Cuckoo as he flew and called, low over my house, early on the 1st. On the cold (2°C) but bright sunrise of the 2nd this 'Steepness' Cuckoo sang almost without pause from 5.00 am until 8.30 am, intermittently through the day and then almost ceaselessly from 8.00 pm until about 9.45 pm! And he did so throughout the month.

On this day also, the first House Martin arrived at my artificial nest and was joined next day by the second bird; on the 4th they were busily repairing the entrance hole!

Male Reed Buntings and Yellow Hammers were still coming to Shirley Cedarland's bird tables and Sylvia Butler reported Tawny Owls calling for many nights in the vicinity of Lower Street. Green Woodpeckers were noisy below Steepness, Blue and Great Tits were foraging everywhere and a pair of Canada Geese set up home at the Manor.

With high pressure building and a cold showery night, the 8th produced a savage hail, rain and wind storm with thunder in the morning – not very promising for the first Swifts of the year that I saw over Deddington! Next day was our annual 12 hour bird species count covering 100 square kilometres around the Barfords. Of the 65 species we recorded, 43 were present in Barford Parish!

Various sightings revealed foxes moving freely and unconcernedly about the Parish by day and night, probably making the most of the rabbit population to feed their growing cubs.

'My' House Martins appeared to have little inclination to raise young and seemed to disappear for days at a time throughout the month. Was this from the absence of flying insects brought about by the cold nights?

In contrast, the Cuckoo sang loud and long through May, particularly in the third week, often starting around 4.15 am, and I had several good views of the bird. His voice 'broke' in the last week and the last record I made of his calling was surprisingly early, on June 1st!

But to return to mid-May. Local Sparrow Hawks by now had young and snatched prey birds from garden feeding stations, to feed their own offspring. That is why it is so important to position feeders very close to thick shrubbery so that small birds can dive into cover. It is also important to change the position of feeders now and then, to disturb the Hawks' flight paths – remember, the death of one small parent probably means the death of a whole brood of chicks. There is enough carnage from

marauding cats without facilitating easy pickings for hawks, magnificent hunters though they may be.

Talking of feeding, people at this time started asking me where all the Swallows were. Apart from tragedies in their winter quarters, this I think was probably due to a lack of flying insects – their food. As mentioned, this may have been due to persistent low night temperatures over a long period, but I have a further theory:– Few cattle = little rough grazing = no barns = no appreciable manure deposits = few ‘flies’. This means there are no nesting places in areas of rich food reserves in the form of flying insects. A parallel situation exists for House Martins. In the absence of muddy puddles on rough tracks and yards in today’s concrete and metal surfaces, distances are often too far to be economically viable for the birds to collect mud for nests and such sites as there are may not be open enough, thus allowing the birds to be ambushed by cats and other predators. The dearth of flying insects is the same as for Swallows.

By the start of the fourth week, early and increasing numbers of Painted Lady butterflies had become obvious. And they weren’t lingering, the majority flying rapidly north in an urgent, determined manner. Soon the national Press was reporting the phenomenon, together with pictures Presumably from a coincidence of favourable environmental conditions, the butterflies’ had undergone a population explosion in North Africa earlier in the year. Successive generations having crossed the Mediterranean, their offspring had moved up through France, across the Channel, and on through England, many thousands passing through Oxfordshire on their way north.

As the month drew to a close, the weather warmed with pressure rising, of which soaring Buzzards took full advantage. Sparrow Hawks were also much in evidence, hunting and soaring around the Barfords. Bas Butler even saw one, together with Jackdaws, chasing a Red Kite.

Despite the warming temperature, all nature seemed to be in suspended animation, with little activity observable in any class of wildlife and the month ended on the hottest day so far – 25°C.

June opened with east winds and extreme variation between day temperatures (28° and 29°) and night temperatures (5° and 1°) on 1st, 2nd.

‘My’ House Martins disappeared and as already stated, Cuckoo song finished. Almost immediately pressure started dropping, cold fronts moved south over the country reducing day temperatures to 11° but quickly rising again to 17°. The House Martins returned on 8th and showed a renewed interest in nesting with much coming and going and excited twittering from within the nest.

At this point I left for my holiday on Orkney, upon which I wrote extensively in Barford News. Suffice to say, having encountered a good number of Painted Lady butterflies there, it was intriguing to surmise as to whether I’d seen any of them before as they passed through Oxfordshire!

I returned to Barford on 21st to pleasantly warm weather and the sight of a Raven having fun at the Rooks’ expense on Steepness. The temperature started to climb steadily from 21° on 21st to an unpleasant 31° on 30th, and at last, night temperatures started to lift from 6° on 22nd to a sticky 14° on 30th. Winds were essentially SE but there was torrential rain, thunder and heavy mist, with periods of extreme humidity and unstable air with breezes all over the compass. In the last week of the month Blackbirds were still feeding young and there were bursts of song from a Garden Warbler near the Hempton Road. Juvenile Green Woodpeckers called from Robins Close and Great Spotted Woodpeckers were noisy with young around St. Michael’s Church and the Manor.

Muntjac deer were squealing and grunting as they moved around Steepness in the dusk on the 23rd. On the 28th a Roe buck was barking on Steepness all day long, as he came into rutting season following the birth of fawns.

June ended in extreme heat and humidity. A Buzzard circled lazily over Steepness and, in a burst of exotic emerald and magenta colours, a Ruby Tail parasitic wasp was frantically searching over the walls of my house for the nests of solitary bees in which to lay her eggs. Finally, at dusk, as I was having a last look around, I became aware of a strange, very faint sibilance in the air. It took me several seconds to locate and identify it as the screaming of many Swifts, swirling round at an enormous height in the darkness overhead!

More catching up next month!

Happy Christmas!

Ron Knight

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