

BARFORD NEWS

JANUARY 2010

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**To All
From the News Team**

Parish Council Notes

IT COULD BE SAID in this Pantomime season that the parish council played to a full house at its monthly meeting on Wednesday 2nd December. The main attraction were County Cllr Michael Waine OCC Cabinet Member for School Improvement and Alison Milward who had come to brief the council on the future planning for places at Deddington and Bloxham primary schools. In the supporting cast were Mr Jonathan Watts a governor from Deddington School and Fiona Richards Chairman of Governors Bloxham Primary School

The audience comprised the full parish council, County Cllr Ray Jelf and concerned parents, altogether a gathering of some 17 people.

The Chairman began the meeting by welcoming everyone especially Ro Watts the newly installed parish clerk. He hoped that she would enjoy working with the parish council. He then invited County Cllr Waine to address the meeting.

Cllr Waine acknowledging the concerns of parents in the parish said that there was on going research into the need for primary school places for local children. The conclusions of the research were that Bloxham would have adequate provision for new entrants if a single classroom were built. Fiona Richards supported this saying that given the newly agreed entry figure of 60 children per year, one new class room would enable the establishment of two classes of 30 per age group throughout the school.

As to Deddington, Alison Milward said a desk top exercise had indicated four classrooms would be needed in the near future; however there were several depressing factors to be taken into account before this was achieved. Current financial restraints allied to the speed of local building affected development. Difficulty with the school site which was small and inconvenient was adding to the problem. A change of government regime at the next election in mid 2010 might exacerbate these problems. Planning, from conception to execution generally took about three years. Mr Watts said that notwithstanding these problems, talks were underway between the school, the Church Diocese and the OCC on expanding Deddington Primary. in achieving this aim.

Concern was expressed that children from outside the catchment areas of both schools were being given preference for places. Cllr Waine assured the meeting that children within the area were a first priority. There was an order of selection. Places for children from outside the catchment areas were only allotted if there were still spare capacity pursuant to every local child being satisfied.

It was confirmed that places at the Warriner were available under the same terms. To a question as to whether the Warriner would ever have a sixth form it was indicated that it was under consideration.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Waine and Alison Milward for giving a clear résumé of the OCC's policies and planning. It had been a very full discussion and everyone had their say. It was now up to the county council to bring their plans to a swift and successful conclusion.

The meeting moved on to the general business of the evening. The minutes of the November meeting were accepted without amendment. .

The clerk being newly installed had little to report other than the Precept must be presented to CDC by 25th January and a new electoral register was now to hand.

Correspondence notifying the public discussion of the plans for "The Regeneration of the Canal Site" in Banbury had been received. There were no takers for the meeting.

In public discussion points were made about West Close and its attraction for children's play. Lisa Styles asked for better access for mums with prams especially the field gate at the lower end where the approach up the slope was in a poor condition and the gate almost impossible to move. Derek Styles and Hazel Neal both expressed an opinion that the grass was left too long, and that with a more regular shorter cut and the cuttings removed it would be more amenable to children's games. The Chairman said that there had been much discussion already on this subject and it was intended to seek advice from the contractor on what to do in the new season.

A parishioner had complained about the use of the South Newington Road (The Park) by Worth's school bus. The bus, a 53 seater, filled the carriage way forcing pedestrians, cyclists and cars off the road. Pull-in places were few and far between making the situation more difficult. It was thought that the original route which was via the Nether Worton road had been arbitrarily changed without consultation although OCC and Worth's were of a different opinion. It was decided that the Clerk should write to OCC copy to Worth's, seeking clarification and requesting that the original route be restored.

There had been no resolution to the problems of erecting a Halt sign at the junction of the Nether Worton/Townsend roads and the painting of SLOW on the roads at various danger points throughout the parish. In the general discussion other potentially dangerous areas were mentioned together with the possibility of another speed survey at the top of The Rock. In an attempt to make progress on this

sensitive subject it was agreed that Cllr Lane should arrange with County Cllr Jelf to meet the OCC Senior Traffic Technician responsible for signs and road markings. The clerk was asked to contact Steve Woods to make arrangements for use of his speed apparatus to monitor The Rock.

There were no objections to a recent planning applications from 2 Red Roofs for the construction of a small office in its grounds or to internal alterations to Barford House. This information had been notified to CDC. The removal of trees at Orchard House had received planning approval

The chairman and Cllrs Lane and Langlands had attended the CDC Parish Liaison Meeting. During the month Cllr Lane had also attended the OALC winter general meeting, and a Standards Committee meeting. The news from OALC meeting was that the 2010/11 subscription to OALC would increase by 1%. In a talk on the legal requirements for provision of allotments by local councils it was stated that rental for some urban allotments was as much as £120 per annum and hide bound by bureaucracy, conditions which convinced Cllr Lane that the Barfords' friendly, relaxed parish arrangements were far superior to those of other areas.

At the Standards Committee meeting the independent members had professed a desire to attend parish council meetings to introduce themselves and observe procedures. The parish council was looking forward to the event if it happened.

As councillors had not had time to read and digest the budget and precept proposals it was unanimously agreed that discussion and final approval should be deferred to the January meeting.

In Any Other Business Cllr Woolgrove raised the subject of dog fouling on the footpath between St John and St Michael. He asked that owners be reminded it was their responsibility and duty to clear up after their dogs leaving the paths and surrounds clean and clear for all. There were ample dog bins in the Parish which cost a considerable sum to empty.

There had also been two complaints that dogs were also being allowed out uncontrolled without collars. They ran wild interfering with pedestrians and animals. It was agreed that dog fouling and collarless dogs should be brought to the notice of owners through Barford News.

Comment was made that there had been some casual clay pigeon shooting in the area of St Michael, the noise of which was frightening horses in the fields and other animals. The shooters who ever they were, were asked to stop the practice. Should the nuisance continue it would be referred to the firearms officer.

There being no other business the next meeting was set as Wednesday January 6th and the meeting closed at 9.35 p.m.

B.E.L.

Village Hall Trustee Meeting

THERE WAS A full attendance of the Parish council at the Village Hall Trustee meeting held on 2nd December in the Village Hall. The Minutes of the last meeting having been passed without amendment and with no matters arising the Chairman welcomed Jim Booth, the Chairman of the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC) and its Treasurer Lisa Styles.

Invited to give his report Mr Booth said that he had only recently taken over the position of Chairman. He felt that there was a harmony in the committee which was settled and keen to increase the value of the village hall as a centre of parish activities.

Over the last year there had been expenditure on redecoration and installing good sound and lighting facilities in the hall which had reduced capital. Future policy would be to cap further expenditure for the foreseeable future and work to restore the capital position. Whilst rent from letting the hall met maintenance costs it did not increase reserves. Over the next year the committee would organise fund raising events. The annual grant of £200 from the Parish Council was a welcome input and Mr Booth hoped it would continue. Mr Booth ended his report by asking for the continued full support of the Trustee

Lisa Styles then reported on the funds which at over £6,000 were satisfactory if not as much as the VHMC would like. Income from rental covered the running costs of the hall of which heating lighting and cleaning were the greatest recurring expenditure. Capital expenditure on improving facilities had been augmented by various grants and income raising events such as the BBQ

In general discussion afterwards the question of hall maintenance was raised, particularly possible repairs to the roof. Jim said that VHMC was aware of the possible need to undertake repairs but there was no immediate requirement. Until this was evident it was not intended to take action.

As rentals covered running costs and they were mainly from parish organisations the VHMC did not think it beneficial to those organisations or the parish to increase rentals in the foreseeable future.

The Chairman of the Trustee thanked Jim Booth and Lisa for their clear and informative reports and closed the meeting at 10.05 p.m.

B.E.L.

Welcome

to new resident
Janet Payne

who has just moved to
her new home in Lower Street

We wish you many happy years
here in
our lovely villages.

W.I. News

OUR DECEMBER MEETING was a social evening held at the home of Sue Broughton. Business was dealt with in double quick time and we moved on to mulled wine and refreshments provided by members of the committee.



The evening progressed happily on to a seasonal quiz of 'Secret Santas' which caught one or two of us 'on the hop' followed by more mulled wine and a picture quiz of village buildings – which, surprisingly, some of our long established residents didn't recognise, possibly as a result of quaffing the mulled wine made by Verna!. The last brain teaser was a sheet of Dingbats, which caused much puzzlement and fun. The overall evening was won by Lavinia and her group, so well done to them! And, we look forward to sharing their chocs at the next meeting??!

Everyone had a very enjoyable evening and Sue was warmly thanked for her hospitality – her home was so warm and welcoming, some felt that our meetings should take place there every month.

Our next meeting will be on 13th January, when Gunilla Treen will come to talk to us on 'Photography with a Difference'. After that we look forward to our Annual Dinner to be held at the Saye and Sele Arms on 20th..

(Like all W.I.s, we have a regular programme of talks and demonstrations etc. Our meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month (except August) in the Village Hall. On paying your subscription members receive a copy of our latest programme, a copy of the monthly Oxfordshire newsletter 'News and Views' and the national magazine will be delivered by post each month. If you would like to hear more about us contact the editor on 338 570, or simply turn up to meet us at our next meeting on 13th January.

Happy New Year to All from members of
Barfords W.I.

Barford Green Garden Club Report

Speakers

Richard Hopkins came and talked to us on a very wet evening on 12th November and although raining 19 still turned out , Inc. 3 non members . Richard talked initially on the Bumblebee conservation Trust and gardening for bumblebees but due to a power point problem we were unable to enjoy the visual presentation and hope this may be rearranged in the New Year . However, the evening continued with a question / answer theme which took off and a variety of questions were put to Richard. If you were unable to attend but have an interest in bumblebees look at www.bumblebeeconservation.org

January talk

Note your diary for Thursday 14th January , a talk will be given by Sue Burn of Batsford Arboretum " Batsford through The Year " and we hope to follow up with a visit there in 2010

Seed Orders

Rodney has offered again (thank you Rodney) to manage a Dobies seed order if anyone is keen to make up a group order. Please contact Rodney Hobbs direct if you are interested (tel 338078)

AGM

Another reminder the AGM is on 4th February in the village hall at 7.30pm.

2010 membership renewals

I will be writing to all members in the New Year re 2010 subscriptions and also circulating the AGM paperwork.

If you wish for anything to be included on the agenda please let me know by 5th January. Also if you are keen to join the committee

Or wish to propose someone please advise.

Finally please note I shall be stepping down as secretary at the 2010 AGM so we are looking for a secretary to take over. If you are interested please contact me.

May I take this opportunity of wishing all Garden Club members a happy and healthy New Year

Jill Bunce 337577 / 337550
Email jill@ridleymarreco.co.uk

New Parish Clerk

A new Parish Clerk has been appointed, her contact details are as follows:

Mrs Rosemary Watts
Foxglove Cottage
Kings Road
Bloxham
Banbury
Oxon.
OX15 4QE

Tel: 012965 722647

Availability Mon/Tues/Thurs 6.00 -7.00 pm
or leave message on answer phone.

Email: rwattsbarfordspc@hotmail.co.uk



Deddington Village Nursery and PFSU

DURING DECEMBER we held successful decorations days at both sites, where parents joined us to help decorate the settings and make some Christmas goodies! We made stained glass from tissue paper, baked cheesy stars, decorated biscuits, made tree decorations and many other activities, and our rooms now look really festive. The PFSU children joined their friends in the Primary School reception class and put on a production of 'Happy Birthday Jesus' in the Parish Church. They sang beautifully – definitely some stars in the making!

Thank you to everyone who supported our successful quiz night at the end of November and to all of you who have supported us by buying raffle tickets and reindeer food.

Thanks also to the Fenemore family for their kind donations of Christmas trees for both sites and to all the parents who have helped us with running activities for the children this term.

Next term we are thinking about animals and as always would welcome visitors who could bring in interesting animals to meet us. Please get in touch!

Lucy Squires
337484



1st Deddington Guides

SINCE HALFTERM we have had Ted Johnson in to talk about his time in World War 2 and he told us lots of interesting stories! Mr Storm from the RNLI came to tell us about his worst times when he had to rescue people. It sounded quite scary but other times very exciting.



We have also chosen patrols and voted in Patrol Leaders and decided what each patrol will be called. I'm in the Starfish patrol.

Last week we had a Christmas party and we made coke floats or orange juice cocktails (mine overflowed). A parent visited us to help us make Christmas centrepieces, which looked great.

Tilly Neal, aged 10

(Thanks to Tilly for this report, hope there will be many more to come! Ed.)

Barford Green Garden Club

Present

'Batsford Through the Year'.

A talk by Sue Burn
from Batsford Arboretum
at the Village Hall

at 7.30pm on

January 14th, 2010

All Welcome to this Open Evening

Members £3.00, Visitors £4.00

The Bakehouse & Shepherds Trust

would like to thank
those villagers who kindly made donations during
December
and
Barford Whist Drives
for their donation of £51.

17 students benefitted from our charity in 2009
and your continued support is very much
appreciated.

BARFORD ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH 2009

48 PEOPLE enjoyed the Annual Christmas Lunch in the Village Hall on Saturday, 5th December. The menu was Potted Shrimps with Melba toast; followed by Braemar Pheasant served with Baked potatoes with soured cream and Red Cabbage. Dessert was Fruit salad and cream, then came Mince pies, Christmas cake and coffee or tea.

After the lunch, there was entertainment from Glynnis's Singing Group, pictured left, (formerly Milltown



singers and possibly still are, but Glynnis isn't sure!!) which was as popular as ever. Once again The 'Twelve Days of Christmas' got everyone involved but I have to say that my table only managed a pale imitation of the 'Partridge in a Pear Tree', compared with the rendition from the unruly lot on Carol's table in 2008!

The hall had been beautifully decorated by members of our VHMC (under the guidance of Gunilla), and with wine flowing

freely, it gave the whole occasion a lovely festive atmosphere which was much enjoyed and greatly appreciated by all who attended.

A HUGE THANK YOU must be said to everyone who worked so hard to make the day such a success. Firstly to Aggie Morrison-Booth, Mary Brodey, and Sarah Best who plan the whole thing, also to Sue Brown for helping with the cooking before and on the day,

A very big thank you to all the waitresses, who gave up their day to serve the food and wine, and stayed behind to clear up. These were Sue Brown, Lyn Daly, Glynnis Eastwood, Lizzie Eden, Maggie Harvey, Julia Streeter, Lisa Styles, Kathryn Wheeler and Rachael Winter. Thanks also to Ella Booth, Emma Brodey, Tessa Dodwell and Maggie Eden, for setting up the tables.

Another thank you to the Barford fruit salad makers: Barbara Allen, Lavinia Crowther, Nic Harte, Hazel Neal, Hetta Nicholson, Julia Streeter and Carol Warner.

Also, we are very grateful to Lorraine Langlands for making and donating another delicious Christmas cake, Sandi Turner for making and donating the excellent mince pies, Barbara Alt for donating the cream and Wykham Park Farm, for supplying the pheasant for the casseroles. Thank you also to the singers for the entertainment which was very much enjoyed.

A really wonderful village occasion with ladies of all ages (from 8yrs up) giving their time to entertain us to a proper Barford 'do'.



Back Aggie, Rachael, Mary, Lisa, Lyn and Glynnis. Front: Kathryn, Maggie, Lizzie, Sarah, Sue and Julia

The Warriner School News

Work on the development of a 6th Form at the Warriner trundles on and has been slowed by the departure, after two years in post, of Janet Tomlinson (Director for Children, Young People and Families), but we continue to have strong, and broad, support for this from the community. I will be meeting soon with Janet's successor in an attempt to regain lost momentum.

Before February half term we will be consulting with parents, staff and other local stakeholders about the proposal to form an educational trust for the benefit of the students here. I am delighted to announce that RM (formerly Research Machines) will be one of our Trust partners. We have three other probable partners lined up; more of this once everything is tied up in January.

On the Farm Chris Holloway has been bogged down in bureaucracy surrounding planning and building regulations. We still expect to see the new build in place for September but alas not in time for the Open Weekend in April. (Date for your diaries – 24th and 25th April 2010)

The Local Authority have now commissioned some exciting designs for a new Design and Technology facility and we hope to have a decision on this, with a time scale during 2010.



Possible new build.

Clearly the prospect of new, appropriate facilities after several years lobbying, is one that excites the Design Technology Team.

We have two international partnerships that move forward significantly in January and February 2010. In January two colleagues and I will be visiting Sicily to complete the planning for our Comenius, EU, partnership. This involves staff and students from Poland, Italy, France, Spain and Sweden all coming together to better understand one another's lives and cultures.



In February we start the first part of a 3-year curriculum development project with Kigezi High School (KHS), our partner in Kabale, SW Uganda. We have had links with KHS for several years now and have built up both professional and personal friendships with their staff. I will write more of this in my next submission to the newsletter.

Nick Hindmarsh
Jan 2010

Barford VHM '200 Plus' Club

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

~ ~ ~

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

New members NEEDED to help swell the funds!

To reserve a ticket ring Mariann 338 570

We Need YOUR Support!

Barford Film Night

Sat 9 January

7.45pm

In the
Village Hall



Is anybody there?

Starring Michael Caine.

Set in 1980s seaside England, this is the story of Edward, an unusual ten year old boy growing up in an old people's home run by his parents. Though it deals with some of life's toughest moments, this is a film is well-scripted and beautifully shot and is sure to appeal to audiences of all ages.

Non-members welcome £3.50.

DICK BARFORD SPECIAL AGENT

FOUR VERY ENJOYABLE PERFORMANCES of the Village pantomime took place in the village hall between the 10th & 12th of December.



Left – ‘HMS Yarg’, just one small part of the magnificent scenery and props.
Right – Basil flashing those shapely legs again!
Below: The cast with Gwen



With 23 actors, supported by a host of others behind the scenes, the classic tale of Dick Whittington was given many twists by Austin’s creative writing. Dick Barford is a special agent! With a name like that he can only come from a very special place. But that place is under threat. A nasty bug starts doing the rounds causing wide spread ‘piggy panic’ and only Dick can help. Will he travel the world in search of a remedy? Will he save the nation and us? You bet he will!

Lots of opportunities for audience participation this year, with Leon (Sir Archie Cuddles) giving encouragement and keeping score of how each audience performed. All this plus wayward pigs, mischievous mice and a slightly soppo ‘Lesley the Lion’ not forgetting Basil sporting his fishnets and garter once again – how could it fail?

It is impossible to mention everyone individually, suffice to say that it all came together to give us a very special production. Congratulations to all concerned, but in particular to Austin Lawler and Gwen Van Spijk who gave us another super village event. The props and scenery have always been excellent but this year were absolutely superb and worthy of special mention

Well done, to one and all!!



Deddington History Society

THE LAST MEETING of the year of the society was begun with a talk on the history of pantomime – quite appropriate for the time, it was given by Lynda Maud, who works at the theatre in Milton Keynes but spends a lot of her time giving talks about the history of theatre and promoting productions.

It is known that some form of theatre was in existence as far back as 500 B.C. but the main history is from the Greek period when performances of plays were given in what we know as amphitheatres, large open areas of grass with banks of stone steps and seats very cleverly constructed to ensure the performers could be clearly heard throughout the whole area. The plays were mainly divided into two types either tragedy or comedy.

Later, with the growth of the Roman Empire, theatre was taken more seriously and to greater depth, still being performed in similar locations but much more comprehensively constructed viz: the Colosseum in Rome. With the Romans who were far more aggressive in nature, the plays became more violent and it was not uncommon during the intervals for convicted criminals to be brought into the arena and executed much to the apparent delight of the audience.

There appears little record of theatre during the Dark Ages and up to the Middle Ages when they began to emerge again, but the general format had changed in that there began to be a lot of interaction between the cast and the audience with the latter sometimes intruding on the stage. This brought about the habit of the players having a separate area for changing etc". and they started using tents which could be easily moved from place to place; these came to known as the 'green areas' this subsequently gave us what is now known as the Green Room.

There was a time when the Church became worried about the popularity of the players and theatres and made efforts to curtail them and barr them, often refusing to baptize their children. However, they later decided it would be better to actually join with them and thus started the beginning of what became known as mummers.

There are many traditions associated with the theatre and acting, for instance it was always arranged that the 'good' characters entered from the right of the stage and the 'wicked' ones from the left - this is still kept up today; notice the wicked witch in any panto.

There was a time when speaking on stage was not done and the whole performance was done by miming, for a long time women were not allowed on stage and all parts were taken by either men or

boys, however King Charles made a change to this when he insisted his lady favourite, Nell Gwynn, was permitted to perform. He also brought about the change in the seating by wishing to sit down on the level of the stage, bringing with him the people of society, thus the auditorium at the lower level became known as the stalls. Later there was another change when the side boxes were introduced, these also being used essentially by the more well to-do. Once again this changed because Queen Victoria would always insist on sitting in the centre of the theatre thus this area became known as the Royal Circle or Dress Circle because the people who used the seats there were expected to 'dress', for the theatre.

The first production, which would be classed as a pantomime, this name being derived from the two Greek words 'pantos' and: 'minos' was in 1806, developed from the Harlequinade.

It was a version of the story of Mother Goose produced at Covent Garden and included the famous clown Grimaldi, it proved to be a great success and is recorded as having taken a sum of £20,000.00. Grimaldi became famous in subsequent shows always taking the part of the Dame, very often playing in more than one production at a time, rushing from one theatre to another through the streets wearing his costume.

Pantomines became more and more popular when people were looking for amusement on Boxing Day after their Christmas festivities, thus it became a regular practice for the shows to open on Boxing Day the 26th Dec'.

A common question continually asked over the years is have pantos gone done? - a difficult question to answer - it has certainly changed over the years in some respects, we still have the old saying 'He's right behind you - Oh no he isn't, but now it seems essential to include a pop star or **T.V.** personality probably to publicize their latest hit song.

Another question which seems always to go unanswered is 'why is panto so essentially an English tradition, not found anywhere else in the world despite that many English people have gone to live abroad in the Dominions.'

Before the meeting closed a very enjoyable social with excellent refreshments and mulled wine followed.

Should anyone think of going to the Cinderella panto, in Milton Keynes there is a special performance being held for groups on the 4th January 2010 at 1.00 **p.m.** price £20. per ticket to include a cup of tea and mince pie on arrival and an ice cream in the interval. Call the Group Hotline 01908-547609 and quote 'Mince Pie'

A.C.M.

Rainbows

RAINBOWS HAVE HAD a wonderful time this half term, one of the highlights of which was our 'sleepover'. Rainbows cannot stay away overnight unless their leader earns the Overnight Licence (!), so we did it for an hour instead, which proved to be quite long enough!

We all came in our pyjamas and dressing gowns with teddies and sleeping bags and had a hilarious meeting playing games in the dark, Sleeping Lions (well done to Laura and Hannah who didn't stir even when tickled) and drinking hot chocolate with marshmallows.



Our Christmas party was great fun too; lots of dancing and games and more... chocolate! We finished the term with a visit to Woodworm Studios (Thank you Rachel and Steve) where we recorded a Christmas CD for parents, which was a great experience. We look forward to starting back on January 15th. Our waiting list is growing again, so please contact us to put your daughter's name down if she would like to be a Rainbow. They are girls aged 5-7 years, but feel free to put names down as early as you like!

Hazel and Gillian
01869 337822

1st Deddington Brownies

ON 6TH DECEMBER the girls presented the morning family service at Deddington Church. This was on the theme of 'giving' and included a number of small sketches as well as some Brownie songs. The girls presented a hamper of craft materials to be given to Helen House Children's Hospice. We spent the rest of December doing Christmas! We look forward to 2010 when we continue the celebrations for the centenary of Girl Guiding UK.

Lucy Squires



Congratulations To Paul and Rachel Gruber



on the arrival of
Finlay Logan
who weighed in at 6lbs 10oz

at 4.11pm on Wednesday 25th November

Here's wishing little Finlay a long and
happy life.

WANTED

Share Travel to Banbury

Does anybody commute into Banbury from Barford on a regular basis and perhaps would appreciate help towards fuel costs?

I would be happy to share travel costs and fall in line with your travel pattern even, if it's variable.

Call Terry on 01869 337274

Whist Drive Profits

Our profit from the Whist Drives held over the past six months is £204.

This has been donated as follows:

£102 to Barford Churches

£51 to Shepherds and Bakehouse Trust

£51 to Barford News

Our first whist drive of 2010 will be on Friday, 8th January, starting at 7.30pm, with proceeds going to the Student charity. New players very welcome to come along.

Avril Green & Judy Hobbs
(Grateful thanks to Avril and Judy for their continued support for Barford News. Ed)

Deddington Fire Station News

IN THE PAST MONTH, we have had 22 calls in total comprising of 2 chimney fires, 1 small barn fire, 1 car - smoking caused by mechanical defect, 1 bungalow fire), 2 road traffic collisions, 1 bus - smoking caused by mechanical defect, 1 pub fire, 1 flat fire.

The small barn fire was in Middle Barton and believed to have been caused accidentally after a night of drinking by a group of teenagers. We were first in attendance and backed up by the Woodstock pump. Prompt actions by the crews managed to prevent the fire spreading to the whole barn and limited the damage caused.

The bungalow fire was at Bodicote and started around 5 p.m. destroying the roof of one bungalow, and also destroying about 20% of a neighboring property. High winds that day may have helped the fire take hold quickly. Banbury pumps were first in attendance followed by ourselves and then Hook Norton. The incident support unit from Eynsham also attended and provided salvage equipment and spare B.A. cylinders.

The pub fire was at the old disused Cricketers Arms in Middleton Road, Banbury and luckily was spotted by drinkers leaving The Bell Pub opposite, who called it in. First crews in attendance were the two pumps from Banbury, followed by ourselves. Again, prompt actions by the crews prevented the fire from spreading up the stairs and taking hold of the rest of the building. As it happened, nobody was inside and fire investigators are investigating the cause.

We were called to a small block of flats in south bar, Banbury where it is believed an electrical under floor heating wire had caused a rug, sleeping bag and carpet to catch fire in a flat,(luckily no one was in the sleeping bag). Breathing apparatus was used to extinguish the fire and cut into the flooring to check for fire spread.

The weekend of the 12th December also saw us split our crew in two with half of us going to sleep at Banbury fire station for the night to cover the retained pump whilst the normal crews celebrated an early Christmas with a night out in town. This resulted in one fire call for us to a house fire in Bretch Hill with persons reported. As we were already at the station, we were only seconds behind the whole time pump and ready for action. Upon arrival it turned out that this was a hoax call, one of many that they have had recently.

We can now officially welcome our latest recruit, Richard Day from Barford, who has passed his brigade interview and eagerly awaits his basic training in January. As I type, I am (not so eagerly) awaiting my phase three B.A. assessment in a couple of days at Rewley Road, Oxford. I'll let you know how I get on next month.....



Speaking of people getting on, we have received a lovely letter from a lady who was involved in the head-on collision last month at the junction of Steeple Aston on the A4260. From her hospital bed at the John Radcliffe, She took the time to write to our chief fire officer, John Parry, and thanked him for the care that she had received from ourselves and the Woodstock/Kidlington crews after her collision.

It's always nice to hear from people that we have been able to help and to find out how they are recovering.

Well that's it for us for 2009, apart from wishing you all a happy and safe new year!

F/F Graham Harding
Deddington Fire Station
338281

Deddington CE Primary School

AS WE ENTER 2010 I think most of us at school are looking forward to a quiet term after a hectic December! Our Christmas productions were a great success, they were very well supported by our parents and the children were fantastic (but very tired afterwards!).

During November/December our school decided to raise money for a new sports kit for Thelesho School in Mafeking, each class was set the challenge to raise £50 – it was left up to the children to decide how. The children, as always, rose to the challenge, they raised money in a variety of ways, we had: milkshakes on sale; Christmas decorations made and sold; a bring and buy sale; a cake stall; a dressing up day; a photographic and art exhibition and computer games made- each class not only reached the target set of £50 but went on to surpass it, by quite a considerable amount! We at Deddington are thrilled with the innovation and the commitment of all the pupils and the generosity of our parents- a big thankyou for all of you who supported this worthy cause.

January promises to be a lot less hectic than December, the children (and staff) have come back rejuvenated after their break ready to work! Hopefully the weather will be kind and not hold any nasty surprises like last year!

Jane Cross, Deputy Head



VHMC Meeting Report

OUR NEW CHAIRMAN Jim Booth welcomed everyone to the meeting November 18th 2009. Apologies were received from Austin. Minutes of the last 2 meetings were read and approved.



The only matter arising was the excess of beer purchased for the BBQ, which various members agreed to buy it for themselves. Regarding licences, it was agreed that 'Donations' for alcohol at events would not be advisable and that Barford Picture House evenings could only serve soft drinks, but people could bring their own alcohol.

Sam Harding, booking clerk, has now finalised booking forms and letters to be sent to all the groups. Some groups had not confirmed dates for next year. Instructions for Sound System etc. would be available for all groups and a 'hirer' of the hall would be shown how to operate it. Austin, Mariann and Sam's husband Graham are all able to show the hirer when necessary. Our Treasurer Lisa reported a bank balance of £6,315, but we needed an oil refill (1,000 litres) and other expenses for maintenance, electrical work etc. She anticipated an even year financially but said that we should consider a 'reserves policy', and stressed the need to plan ahead. Lisa, and Jim will be reporting to Trustees at next meeting.

Tony Williams, electrician, attended the meeting and explained his plan for the lighting. There has been some difficulty with the lighting outside the Hall and the sensor is not functioning properly. A new light for the front of the hall will be installed and the existing one moved to the back. The new light will not shine into people's houses opposite and cause a nuisance. Softer lighting for the interior is still planned. Tony has PAT tested all sockets etc. in the hall and kitchen areas and issued a certificate. It was agreed that Basil Butler should be given a pay increase for cutting the grass. He will also be asked to quote for hedge trimming.

Parking outside the hall continues to be a problem and some people are very inconsiderate. It is the responsibility of everyone to remind people about parking!

Under AOB, the blockage of the bar sink is being addressed. The rent paid by Barford Market was discussed, and agreed to charge £15 per Market.

All were asked to help to decorate the hall on Sunday 29th November at 10.30. Gunilla will co-ordinate.

Date of next meeting will be on January 27th 2010 at 7.30 pm. The meeting closed at 8.45pm

For Sale Electric Fire - £20



01869 338835
(can deliver anywhere in the village)

News from The Fernhill Club

AS I WRITE Christmas is almost here. By the time you read this you will have enjoyed your brussel sprouts, and a glass or two of wine.



We had our party on 16th December in the village hall, our last meeting until the New Year.

We return on 13th January at 2.30pm, as usual, in the hall. Hope you will return after having a happy new year.

Our thoughts go to Pam and Rita, we wish them well and hope that they will be able to return to the club in 2010 in good health.

Stay warm and Happy New Year to all.

M.P.H.

Robert Harrison Handy Man

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your windows cleaning,
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Just a little catch up for the mad Barford Bikers.

WE HAVE JUST HAD the final tally up of the sponsorship money from the challenge way back in the summer, a fantastic £ 2,233. All the aches and pains of walking, canoeing and cycling may have long since gone but the money raised for the children's home in Kathmandu will continue to help the children there. On behalf of our little committee thanks again for the great support.



Report on the Ely ride. (ok so it's a bit late).

I didn't realize just how many gullible people there are in Barford until I suggested the Ely ride. 100 miles, all down hill, wind at our backs, etc they all fell for it. Glynnis and myself drove the route, Buckingham, Milton Keynes, Woburn Abbey and off across the flat lands to Ely. I hadn't realized until that day what a sadist she is. I had the route looping around Bow Brickhill but Glynnis was adamant that she wanted it to go up a near vertical cliff with a bit of tarmac clinging to it. (I think it's called Brickhill because you can roll bricks down it.) The other problem we faced was trying to get the ride to work out at 100 miles. From here to Ely is about 95 miles but as the only accommodation she could find was in a college in Cambridge, the ride would work out to be about 115 miles. I wanted to tell everyone but she convinced me it would be better to keep quiet about the extra miles, and her a church goer!

After loads of training rides, and every one experimenting with different gear and bikes, we were ready. The morning of Saturday the 5th September we all gathered outside the village hall, perfect conditions, dry and rather dark, I always think 4 o'clock is a great time to start an adventure but I caught a few glances of some other riders who I am sure didn't agree with me. I had spent months telling everyone how easy it would be and how they could all manage it. Only then as I climbed on my bike did it dawn on me I was also one of this gullible lot, I feared I had believed my own bullsh-t!

Other than a few troubles with Chris's gears, everything went according to plan as we headed for our first short break at Bletchley. Re-fuelled with loads of chocolate (the only reason I do this

sport) we struck out for Bow Brick Hill. Unfortunately, we didn't get there, as I got a little bit lost, help from the sat. nav. and we got really lost. I think it was trial and error that finally got us out of there.

On to Glynnis's hill at Bow Brick Hill. Now there is some lovely countryside to be seen from this hill so a few of us took the opportunity to have a good look at it as we walked up the hill. Others who don't appreciate fine views cycled past us. (you never have a broom handle when you need it). All got to the top, regrouped had a photo taken, ate more chocolate and got on our way. We were about 40 miles into the trip with the billiard table flat lands of Cambridgeshire in front of us.

There are some great sights at Woburn, a fantastic church, the deer in the park which you cycle right through the middle of, but I think the best sight was Paul Christmas, our star back up man, with the truck waiting for us at the top of the park. More refuelling, god it's hard being a highly tuned athlete. From here on it was just a nice down hill ride to our halfway point at Biggleswade. Just enough time for a full English and George to pour his coffee over himself. After a few hours and countless little villages we could see Ely cathedral in the distance everyone got excited and for no apparent reason half the group promptly went in the opposite direction. Evidently another sat. nav. incident. We all streamed into Ely together and gathered around the magnificent cathedral understandably on quite a high as we had all made it. Some of us had time for a little look around the cathedral others had a look around the pub opposite. We found Paul in the coach park a little way off and readied ourselves for the final 20 odd

miles to Cambridge. Just time for a few photos and another bar of fuel.

The wind had been behind us all the way from Barford but now we had to turn into the wind and slug it out all the way to Cambridge. The last few miles seemed to take forever. It's obviously not as pretty a city as Oxford but we were glad to see it.

We loaded our bikes onto the truck and staggered off looking for our accommodation walking like trail weary cowboys. When we had finally found the college we were treated to a show of wonderful British aloofness. The head porter was obviously not keen on having to let such a smelly, common lot into his college during the hols. As he handed out the keys he looked down his nose and called out our names, Maggie Moron and Mickey Bollocks were the worst he came out with.

Refreshed, we gathered in the bar ready to go into town for a meal when we realized what a friendly city Cambridge is. The sky lit up as the people of Cambridge laid on a 20 minute fire work display for our weary party on the sports ground near the bar. I hope the noise didn't upset the hundreds of scouts and guides camped on the other side of field. Brilliant! Thank you Cambridge.

Thank you's must also go to Glynnis for doing so much of the organizing, and of course Paul who gives his time so that we get to do our hobby.

Now I know 115 miles isn't such big deal for serious cyclists, but for a gang of villagers who just want a laugh and chance to keep a bit fit the 100 miles box is a great one to tick. Well done everyone.

This leads me neatly onto THE 2010 CHALLENGE it has the makings of the best one yet. The idea is the same basic route as the old Malvern route but done in reverse. We start at the north end of the Malverns, walk along the flat ridge to the south end, get on our bikes it is of course all down hill to Evesham, canoe to Stratford on Avon and cycle home, all with the prevailing wind behind us. It couldn't be easier. Oh! and I forgot to mention that we won't be having one of my early starts either, in fact we can have a late one - I thought midnight. A night hike to start along the Malverns how good is that!

So everyone get those bikes out, dust of the walking boots and keep a sharp eye out for canoes as we will need more this year. We are looking forward to getting the old gang back together and hopefully welcoming new folks as well. Just ask anyone who took part last year you don't have to be an Olympic athlete just have a lot of enthusiasm. Keep a look out in the next Barford News as we will need a date for a meeting to get it all moving.

Cheers, Pete

New Chief Appointed

Barford Village Market was very unfortunately cancelled in December, much to the dismay of many stallholders and punters. An alternative venue was sought but none was immediately available or suitable. We apologise to all concerned and very much hope that 2010 will be a new start and another successful year.

We do have a significant following both within the village and in neighbouring areas and would very much like to think that this will both continue and increase.

The first Market in 2010 will be in early spring, NOT JANUARY, so please watch out for the notices that go up on all approaches to the village.

We shall continue to have the wonderful French bread, our Cake Ladies, the Amazing Jam and Preserve Queen, the Egg Man, the Cheeses, the Veritable Vegetables, the Bookworms and of course the Meat Joint. There will also be gifts, cards and welcome refreshments. We hope to introduce some new produce so come along and check it out.

We have come to the end of our time as 'organisers' of the Market and wish to thank you for all your support. We have managed to raise, with your help over £2,300 for various charities during the last two years. From our October and November Market we were able to give £ 250 for Afghan Heroes. (see www.afghanheroes.org.uk).

We are pleased to announce that after some earnest 'head hunting' and a very strong field of applicants we have appointed Peter Bird, as chief-in-charge. He has some willing muskateers who we trust will assist. They are planning some exciting new ventures and the funds raised will go to other local projects.

Contact Peter Bird on 01869 338630 for more information.

Happy New Year, Anne and Gunilla

Thanks to Anne and Gunilla

On behalf of the other stallholders at Barford Market I would like to thank Anne and Gunilla for all their hard work in getting the village market off the ground.

I shall miss their monthly contributions, as will the villagers who attended regularly, but hope that they will be visiting us as customers when we re-start the markets.

They have managed, via the market, to raise useful sums for various charities and village concerns. I think they deserve a rest!

Stephanie Collier

From the Vicar:

A REMINDER that from January 2010 onwards services in the Barford Churches will all regularly be at 4.00 pm. On the first three Sundays of the month the venue will be St Michael's, on the 4th and 5th Sunday, St John's. First date, then: Evensong Jan 3 (Feast of the Epiphany, 4.00 p, St Michael's. See you there!



But if you don't fancy 4.00pm. why not try Deddington at 10.30 am (1st Sunday, All-Age worship; 2nd and 3rd, Eucharist; 4th, Service of the Word; 5th, Choral Mattins} or Hempton (9.00am, 1st and 3rd Sundays, Eucharist; 6.00pm, 4th Sunday, Evensong)?

Wherever it takes you, just follow that feeling that being in a Church on a Sunday will do you good. It will - and it will help others; and God will be pleased too.

A Happy New year to you all.

Hugh (01869 349869; vicarhugo@hotmail.com)

NATURE NOTES 84

HOT! HOT! HOT! As June ended, so July began, the first two days being the hottest of the whole year . . . 32°C (90°F) with high humidity and a light SE breeze. Minimum night temperature on 1st was 18°C (64°F).



The net result was the most wonderful flight of grassland butterflies that I had seen for years. The grass was full of dancing insects and the bramble blossoms were crowded with their rustic beauty – ochre tinted Meadow Browns, shy, chocolate coloured Ringlets, pristine Green-veined Whites and tawny Large Skippers, the latter appearing and disappearing with bewildering speed around the Scabious and Knapweed flowers.

Quite suddenly, about 5.30 pm on 2nd, there was a change to cooler fresher air and over night the wind went to SW. It stayed there, apart from two brief spells at NW, for the rest of the month. Day temps. ranged between 20°C – 25°C with 8°C – 11°C at night. By the 5th it was plain that change was coming and the next three days produced vicious downpours with hail and thunder interspersed with hot sunshine on a NW airflow.

Buzzards occasionally soared over Hempton Hills and, on the 10th, two broods of Swallows, each with two youngsters, appeared on the telephone wires in Townsend.

A return to SW winds on the 11th brought little relief from the unsettled weather as the flow of the 'Jetstream' had become fixed south of the Britain instead of migrating north of Scotland as is usual. The position of this high level 'river' of air, constantly blowing from west, largely governs the weather conditions we experience at ground level.

On no less than nineteen days out of the next twenty three we had rain, frequently prolonged, often heavy and vicious and mostly in the afternoon or overnight. Everywhere was thoroughly waterlogged. Thankfully, St. Swithun (15th) only managed 17 days' rain instead of his supposed forty, otherwise we would have had real trouble!

At last, after much hm-ing and har-ing and shall we, shan't we, the first brood from 'my' House Martins flew the nest on the 18th. By the 22nd the parent birds had cleaned the nest and, judging from their activities and conjugal twitterings, were intent on producing the next brood.

Mike Budd told me that a juvenile Raven had visited his garden on the 25th and at about that time the Mute Swans returned to the moats at the Manor with one cygnet. In the afternoon, something startled a Little Owl into shouting shrilly up on the Nether Worton Road then, as suddenly, lapsing into silence once more.

**Thank you
for Donations to Barford News**

To a Broad Close couple for their
cheque for £25.00

~

Thanks also
To two other families in Broad Close
who each donated £20.00 to funds.

~ ~ ~

Also thanks to **Mick Cook**
of Summer Ley
for a very generous donation
to mark his Golden Wedding
All gratefully received

DOG WALKING

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Responsible care and reasonable rates.

Please call Susanne to discuss: 01869 338575

On the same day, warm and sunny (the last of three such in this rainy period) my garden was again full of butterflies. The Browns were still there, but now there were numerous Small Tortoiseshells – again more than I have seen anywhere for many years (I counted fourteen on my small Buddleia!). There were several Peacocks, a single Red Admiral (*not* a good year for them) and seven Painted Ladies, the offspring of the earlier influx! The Large Skippers had been replaced by Small Skippers and a female Common Blue had become addicted to the flowers of wild Marjoram. How I hope she has laid some eggs on the Bird's-foot Trefoil nearby! As indeed I hope the Small Copper has done, on the Sorrel in a damper place.

For the next few days I watched with interest as the House Martins, adults and newly flown offspring, manifestly played with each other in a kind of aerial tag game, chasing each other with chattered squeals of excitement. I was intrigued by the number of times the newly flown youngsters tried to enter their old home, including vigorous attempts to roost in the nest by the youngsters in the evening, but each time they were denied access by both parents, now in the early stages of raising another brood.

Mike Budd informed me that he had both adult and juvenile Great-spotted Woodpeckers visiting his garden feeders and also a Nuthatch, a bird I've not seen in the village for a long time.

And so a stormy July washed itself away in a welter of sudden stormy downpours and extended periods of rain, the longest being for a full twelve hours on the 29th.

August wallowed its way in, hot and oppressive, in like mode. A clear spell of warm sun after 5 pm on the 5th produced phenomenal swarms of winged ants which had obviously been waiting for this opportunity to indulge their nuptial flights. Such a surfeit of protein was irresistible to the local Swallows and House Martins which appeared in good numbers to indulge the feast! In fact, when I first went outside next morning, there was a gathering of at least fifty such birds on my roof (many of them youngsters) about fifteen of them Swallows, probably awaiting a repeat performance. But it wasn't to be, a prolonged thunder storm left the skies deserted.

By now everyone was talking about the large numbers of young Toads in their gardens. In fact, they were everywhere. From whence they had been spawned and then developed I have no idea; the Toad is not a numerous animal around the Barfords, and the same explosion in numbers was certainly not evident in Frogs. I think Toads are very appealing and I get the idea that many of us feel the same way – it will be interesting to see if

the numbers persist into next year. From observations I received, it seemed that Toad numbers peaked around the 13th.

Throughout the month the familiar unsettled weather continued with daytime temps. around 23°C. There were hotter days, 27°C on 7th and 11th and a noteworthy 30° on 19th. Nights were generally in the 11° to 13° bracket, but there were sudden drops, a chilly 5° on 21st and 7° on 24th, 28th and 29th. The wind was stuck in the SW except for two one-day blips to NNW and a longer, rougher spell in the NW at the end of the month going on into September, being the remains of a violent hurricane in America.

But, back to the wildlife . . . On the 8th, a full day of hot sun, the mowers moved in to make what they could of this year's grass crop. Hay, or anything like it, having ceased to be a reality five weeks ago, silage being the probable answer. They were accompanied by three Red Kites (only one last year) and a Buzzard – on the look-out for mowing victims. Next day saw a Raven croaking all over Steepness, two juvenile Sparrow Hawks flying hesitantly north over St. Michael and a Red Kite soaring over Horn Hill. In the afternoon three Buzzards were soaring over Little Barford Mill and a huge vertical column of Gulls (mostly Black Headed) formed over Ilbury. I didn't see the cause but suddenly the entire column collapsed and scattered in a few seconds!

On 14th, after substantial mist and low cloud had quickly burned off, there was much movement of Gulls with yelping and crying. I wonder with hindsight, if this had anything to do with preparations for the closing of Alkerton Tip as a landfill site. It is likely that Gull numbers will be much more limited locally now that the site has been surface sealed.

Green Woodpeckers seemed to be everywhere, their calls coming from all directions. The appearance of a female Small Stag Beetle on my doorstep made me think that, with the heat and moisture, beetle larvae must be very active in old and damaged trees and probably accounted for a lot of the woodpecker activity.

'My' House Martins had gone into one of the worryingly quiet periods when one wonders if they are still in residence! Buzzards, both adult and juvenile were in evidence over Steepness.

The 14th to the 25th was a generally warmer, drier spell. There were good numbers of Green-veined White and Speckled Wood butterflies on the wing as were bumblebees including some *B. lapidarius* queens. A pair of Tawny Owls hooted and 'kewicked' on several nights in the early hours below Steepness. On one night in particular a male produced sounds I had not heard before. This was

cooing rather than hooting. Very quiet and conversational, it was a beautifully modulated, rhythmic, musical ululation.

On the 25th I discovered a dead juvenile Great-spotted Woodpecker, just over the wall from the churchyard extension. I could not see any obvious injury, so it's death is a mystery, which is a shame as this is a traditional site for these birds.

By 27th I was debating whether the local Swallows had departed, despite 'my' House Martins still closely brooding their young.

After many weeks of seemingly endless, active weather fronts, the 31st of August seemed set to continue the theme into September with the wind veering to NW. My last note for the month was: 'What an *odd* year. Primroses in bloom!' (Under my front hedge).

The first few days of September were mild enough with a Kestrel calling on Steepness and a lone Swallow flying south, fast and silent on the morning of the 1st. Through the afternoon there were heavy showers and thunder. Next day, a showery morning developed into torrential rain with near gale-force winds in the afternoon and for half of the night! After asking several folk, and discussing things with Bas. Butler we concluded that the Barford Swallows had gone. So early!

The weather quietened and for the next few days Buzzards could be seen everywhere and anywhere around Barfords Parish, as single birds moved out to find territories of their own. September at last provided us with calm, stable spells of weather as areas of high pressure began to dominate. Day temps. for the whole month ranged between 18° and 21° except on three days when it reached 23°C. Nights were much more variable dipping as low as 3.5° and as high as 12° but mainly between 8° and 10°. After the first (unstable weather) week at SW, the wind shifted to an often stiff breeze, first NE then slowly anticlockwise to SE over ten days, then on through SW to NW for the last week. After the 6th there were just the lightest of showers on three days only! With warm sun and a chilly breeze the land started to dry. At last we could get on it and dig, plough and sow! No sooner was the seed in than it seemed to sprout and was through. Meanwhile every bird in creation seemed to disappear into the fields and hedgerows, feasting on the harvest of berries and headland seeds and they didn't start to come back into our gardens again until late November! Having said that, I watched three Swifts – the latest I've ever seen them – catching insects and screaming round over Easington in Banbury on the 7th! The Rooks on Steepness put on some great displays of formation flying and Buzzards soared over the hill, with disastrous results when both species tried it at the

same time! Audrey Turner counted eight Buzzards together over Steepness on 15th and on 26th I watched one over St. Michael enter a thermal and within a minute the bird was reduced to the size of a skylark. Still around Steepness, Green Woodpeckers called and Tawny Owls hooted and 'kewick'ed occasionally. On 14th a Sparrow Hawk was seen to take a Wood Pigeon at The Warren.

I failed to see 'my' last House Martin brood fly the nest but at least four of the birds were still roosting in the artificial nest on 22nd. Within three days they were gone, hopefully to return in 2010.

Small Toads were still looking for winter housing and Clare Cox found a Common Newt on her doorstep on 21st, obviously doing the same.

Despite chill nights, numerous butterflies still abounded, mainly the colourfull *vanessids*, now augmented by the dashing, intricately shaped, tawny Commas. For this year's wonderful display of butterflies, we must thank in no small part, the reduced mowing of our roadside verges. Nettles and smaller roadside and hedge-bottom plants are the only food for their caterpillars, and from them they also suspend their chrysalises. Long may this reduced mowing policy persist!

However it was Bas Butler who came up with a winner on two counts. First, Bas watched a Clouded Yellow butterfly visiting his garden on the 8th – the only one I have heard about this year and probably the offspring of insects that crossed the Channel with the Painted Ladies, and second – Bas looked out of his bedroom window, early on 9th, to see a strange, clumsy looking bird scrambling about in a bush trying to feed on Haws. He had very good views of it before it flew off toward West Close. It was a very rare visitor from Central and Eastern Europe called a Nutcracker. (We kid you not – this aint April 1st!). Dark brown and closely covered with white spots, it has a short black tail, wings like a Jay but all black, and a pickaxe for a beak. It appears to have been designed by a committee and its favourite food is hazelnuts and pine seeds. These it stores and feeds upon all year round. Bas has sent a full description and drawing to the relevant authorities and is awaiting a reply. Only one or two Nutcrackers are seen in UK each year and it would be so good for this discovery to be ratified.

My last good observation for the month was a Barn Owl hunting at the top of Steepness around midnight on the 27th. The 30th displayed a flat, even overcast, cool and still. It became threatening in the afternoon and a much appreciated September slipped away on an angry sunset.

More catching up next month!

Happy New Year!

Ron Knight