

BARFORD NEWS

February 2015

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Price 30p where sold

The New Year's Day winter walk – now bigger than ever

Fast becoming something of a Barford institution, Leon reports on this year's New Year "hike"....

Each year we get a few extra people and this year was perhaps our biggest turn out yet. If the numbers continue to grow we will need to make more soup. The total made towards the Kathmandu kids' home is £265, however, donations are still coming in.

A big thanks to Martin for allowing us to use the George Inn for feeding the troops. To all that helped behind the scenes (providing game and veggies, washing up etc) but a big thanks to all those that came along and joined in, plus those that couldn't make it but offered donations. Let's do it all again next year!

LSD on behalf of T'committee



Barford Village Market

Saturday 21 February

Back after our Christmas break. 10am to 12noon in the Village Hall.

The Meat Joint prize winning faggots, sausages and meat, artisan breads, scones, preserves, farmhouse ice cream, Green Lane Farm cheeses and yoghurts, fresh eggs. And not forgetting the birds - we have seeds, mealworms, sunflower hearts. Also hand knitted woollies and made-to-measure items. Neals Yard products. Fairtrade items food and craft stalls, Joan's gift wrapped goodies. Paul's Phoenix Cards, gift wrap, stationery and gifts.

Bacon butties/bacon and egg butties - add a sausage for a breakfast buttie! Plus tea and coffee all at bargain prices. Come along and have a cuppa with friends and support YOUR local market

All profits for Village Hall maintenance

Labradoodle do

Vet Sophie Hanmer writes



Labradoodles and other designer dogs have risen in popularity in the last few decades. They have also captured the hearts of the rich and famous with notable Labradoodle owners including Tiger Woods, Jennifer Aniston and Jeremy Clarkson. So what exactly is a designer dog and why are they so popular?

Here's the science bit... designer dogs, or hybrid dogs as they are more correctly called, are the offspring of two different breeds of purebred dogs. For example, a Labrador retriever may be mated with a Poodle to create a 'Labradoodle'. Many breeders are mating different purebred dogs to create new and amusingly named crosses including the Cockerpoo (Cocker Spaniel x Poodle), Cavachon (Cavalier King Charles x Bichon Frise, pictured below), Puggle (Pug x Beagle), Goldendoodle (Golden Retriever x Poodle) and Peek-A-Pom (Pekingese x Pomeranian) to name but a few. Hybrid dogs are not to be confused with mixed breeds which are the offspring of parents with an uncertain or varied breed history.

And why are they so popular? The aim with any designer dog is to take the best bits from two breeds of dog to produce the perfect pooch. Designer dogs are often chosen for their looks but they can offer much more than just a pretty face. Many are at less risk of inheriting genetic disorders and can offer other benefits such as reduced aggression and increased trainability in some cases. Certain Labradoodle's have non-shedding coats and some can be tolerated by those normally allergic to dogs. Nevertheless, the end result can often be unpredictable and in some cases it is the less sought-after attributes that are passed on.

Imagine the attitude of a terrier inside the body of St. Bernard...

Before committing to any new puppy it is a good idea to see the pup's mum and dad first to get an idea of how your puppy may turn out. It is also recommended to have the puppy checked over by your vet to make sure he, or she, is fit and healthy.

Deddington and District History Society

Our January speaker, Deborah Hayter, told us the history of Astrop Spa (or Wells), close to Astrop House near King's Sutton. It has now totally disappeared but from the later 17th century to the early 19th it was a popular resort of gentry and royalty travelling to take its reputedly curative waters.

The accompanying illustration by Thomas Rowlandson and is the only known depiction of the spa. It originated, as so many did, as an ancient holy well renowned for its miraculous powers. Astrop was never a rival to Bath or Buxton. It was one of myriad small establishments across the country: there were more than twenty in London alone, like Sadler's Wells.



On 11 February Hugh Grainger will speak on Notorious Highwaymen.

We meet at the Windmill Centre at 7.30pm - all welcome.

Chris Day (Chairman) 337204
Moira Byast (Secretary) 338637

Down on the farm

At this time of the year we tend to look back to 2014 and forward to 2015. Last year, globally, was a wonderful time for growth, yield and the ability to get things done on time weather-wise. And therein lies the present problem: world markets are brimming with product and prices have descended catastrophically.

I can't think of another industry that contains so much volatility in year on year returns. In 2013 we saw reasonable wheat prices around £160 - £180 per tonne; now we are looking at not much better than £100. Interestingly we got £117 a tonne when we came here in 1983!

Other areas are no better. Sheep prices are up and (mostly) down, we recently had a time when beef producers could not even find a market for finished animals, and the dairy job is on the verge of ruin as supermarkets use milk as a loss leader and sell it for less than the price of production, processing and transport.

So we look at 2015 with some foreboding.

I recall hearing that an American farmer once quipped: 'If you wanna make a small fortune out of farming you had better start out with a big one!'

Farming is a long term job and most of us had seed in the ground and ewes in early pregnancy before the markets collapsed so there was little or no time to make any changes.

In addition many arable farmers were nearly caught out when Brussels suddenly imposed a 'three crop rule' for 2015. This doesn't affect us although we did panic a bit until we discovered that winter barley and spring barley are treated as separate crops!

Government interference is a major problem and a cause of many of the industry's ills. A speaker at the recent Oxford farming conference suggested, rather tartly, that UK farmers, once world leaders and pioneers, are now lagging woefully behind other countries.

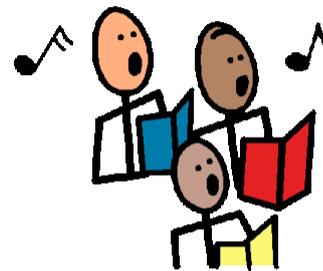
The reason is actually not hard to find. We once had a government advisory service backed by a string of research stations looking at better ways of producing things; a brilliant system containing

real experts in their various fields. This was axed some years back (lack of funds) and replaced by equally costly teams of jobsworths with little or no farming experience who are paid simply to police the industry's many and increasing regulations.

A lorry driver, who also has a smallholding, delivered fertiliser the other day and bemoaned the state of the industry and explained that he had to get a job to supplement his meagre income. I joked that farmers have a reputation for complaining; he replied that the trouble is they still complain when things are good- that is why nobody listens. How true!

Why do we farm then is the obvious conclusion. Well, speaking on behalf of farmers the world over I suggest we do it because we love it to bits and can't think of a better way of spending our time!

Tony Collier



Barford Carol singing - at the George and around the village

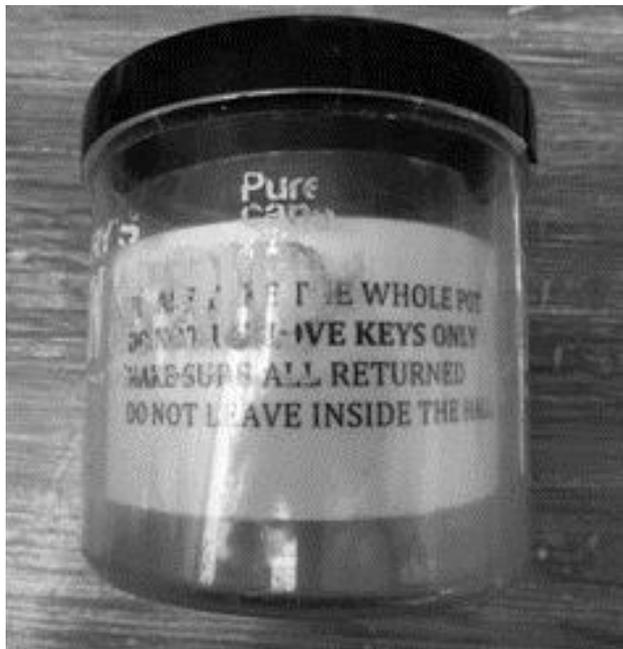
Many thanks to those who sang or played at the George on 22 December and also braved the cold and joined in singing around the village on 23 December.

A special thanks to all those who supported our efforts. In total £270 was raised, which I have sent to Spurgeons Oxfordshire Young Carers.

Here's to next year,

Glynnis

Do you remember this plastic jar?



Well, for those that do remember, it's no longer in use. There will be no more visits to the Edens' front door, to delve behind the interesting pumpkins or animals to get the jar and then return it!

Your village hall now has a new system for the keys. The front door key (and key for the key box), is in a key safe, to the left of the front door.

The code for this will be issued to all hall users by the booking clerk. Once inside the hall, the other keys are all inside a key box on the wall beside the Bar.

Please do not forget to return the keys to this box and the front door key once you have locked up, or you will be in trouble!

All directions for using the key safe are inside it.

The Village Hall Management Committee is required by their insurance company to have the key in a secure place.

Many thanks to the Pete and Maggie Eden for lending us their doorstep.

V.H.M.C.

Barford Picture House film and supper night

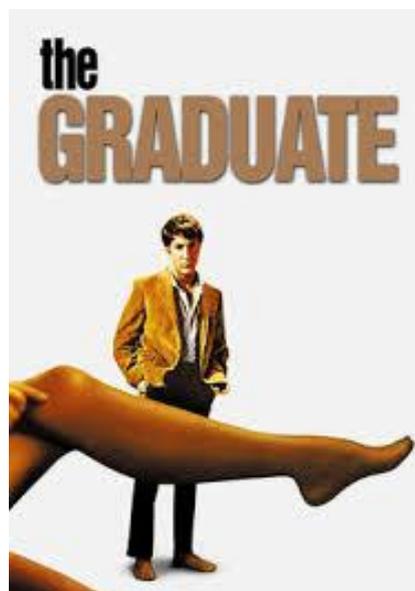
On 14 February we will be showing *The Graduate*. This iconic film from 1967 stars Dustin Hoffman and Anne Bancroft. It won many Oscars in 1968 - Best Director, Mike Nichols; Best Picture; Best Actor in a Leading Role and Best Actress in a Leading Role.

Ben (Dustin Hoffman) has recently graduated college, with his parents now expecting great things from him. At his homecoming party, Mrs Robinson (Anne Bancroft) the wife of his father's business partner, has Ben drive her home, which leads to an affair between the two. The affair eventually ends, but comes back to haunt him when he finds himself falling for Elaine, Mrs. Robinson's daughter.

Before the film there will be an opportunity to eat supper, cooked by marvellous chef Ann Pearson. The menu is lasagne (meat or vegetarian) with salad and garlic bread, roulade, either summer fruit meringue or chocolate and Baileys coffee. Bring your own alcohol or other drink.

To book the supper together with options please ring Claire Cox on 01869 337736 or email her on clairecox@btinternet.com Deadline for supper bookings is Monday 9 February.

If you do not want supper, but just want to see the film it will start at approx 7.45pm. Supper is at 7pm.



The use of e-cigarettes in the Village Hall

Gunilla Treen and Lucy Norman (co-chairs of the Village Hall Management Committee) recently attended an Oxford Rural Community Council meeting.

At that meeting the subject of e-cigarettes was raised. There seems to be no definitive advice on whether they should be banned but it appears that an increasing number of public places are banning their use and EU officials have recently indicated that they are planning to impose a full-scale ban.

The ban on smoking in public places has reinforced in many people's minds that such behaviour has gone from a normal, widely accepted activity to one that is abnormal and unaccepted. There are real concerns that e-cigarettes will undermine this process, threatening the now established practice of smoke free public places.

The Management Committee has given serious consideration to the subject of whether or not the use of e-cigarettes (commonly known as vaping) should be permitted on the premises and, after discussion at its last meeting, agreed unanimously that e-cigarettes will not be allowed in the village hall. Signs will be displayed around the hall to reflect this.

Clearly it is early days and therefore the VHMC see this as a prudent decision at this time however it does not object to it being reviewed at a future date.

The committee would like to thank you for co-operation in this matter.

VHMC



theWI
INSPIRING WOMEN

Tudor times and costumes with Martin Sirot-Smith



7.30pm

Wednesday 11 February

in the Village Hall

Visitors welcome to join us

£4

at our WI meeting

Welcome

to

**Glen Shaw, Jill Randini
and son Nathan**

who have just moved to
their new home in Townsend.

We wish them many happy years here in our
lovely village.

Bloxham Country Market

Open For Business Again

After our Christmas Break

Ex-Servicemen's Hall

Every Friday

10.00-11.30

Parish Council notes

The Parish Council meeting took place at 7.30pm on 7 January in Barford Village Hall and was attended by Cllrs Hobbs, Eden, Styles, Best, Campbell, Hanmer, Mrs Watts (Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer), District Cllr Williams and two members of the public. Apologies were received from Cllr Turner.

Minutes of the last meeting: The minutes of the meeting on 3 December were proposed by Cllr Campbell, seconded by Cllr Best, unanimously resolved as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

Parish Clerk's report

Outages in power supply: The Parish Clerk had written to Western Power Distribution expressing concerns at the number of outages in the two villages. She received a response from the Distribution Manager apologising for the inconvenience. There are two main issues:

a) Trees have been growing into the lines which cause circuits to trip. There is an extensive tree cutting programme and this should assist to reduce issues in the Bloxham area.

b) There is a repetitive issue of large birds, predominately buzzards, landing on overhead towers. Because of their large wing span they can bridge between conductors, causing circuits to trip. Western Power has sourced a specialised insulating shroud and is fitting this along the 66k V overhead line feeding into the Bloxham area. In addition they have upgraded the electrical plant of the main substation and are installing a second transformer at the Bloxham site. The Parish Clerk will respond to Western Power Distribution thanking them for their detailed response.

District Councillor's report

South Lea Barn: Further to complaints from parishioners at the December meeting regarding continuous generator noise from the property, Cllr Williams contacted District Councillor Jelf who represents South Newington and also the CDC Planning Department for an update. CDC Planning is dealing with the issue. The owner has advised her that the usual silent generator is away being repaired and a replacement generator is responsible for the current noise pollution. This will be replaced once the original silent generator has been repaired.

Damage to Barford Bridge: Cllr Williams has contacted Mr Chris Softley at OCC Highways to ask when repairs are scheduled. There has been no response so far and so he is following this up.

Clearing of roadside drains and gullies: Cllr Williams has contacted OCC Highways to arrange a site visit to schedule much needed clearing of roadside drains and gullies at the bridge. There has been no response so far and so he is following this up.

Public participation: Jeff Elliott, the allotment representative explained that there were a number of issues which needed clarification. Following a lengthy discussion the following matters were agreed:

- the rabbit fencing needs repair in a number of places. Users must seek pre-approval from the Parish Council before any repairs are undertaken and if agreed, the Parish Council will pay for any materials purchased.
- a tenant wants to remove an old shed from his plot. It has an asbestos roof. Mr Elliott will ask the tenant to obtain three quotations for safe removal from site. The Parish Council will consider the matter again once the quotations have been provided.
- there is a large amount of rubbish on the site which tenants have accumulated over time. Councillors agreed that Mr Elliot can organise a skip for a few days so that the site can be cleared. The invoice to be made out to Barford St John and St Michael Parish Council and sent to the Parish Clerk for payment.
- councillors agreed unanimously that a tenancy agreement should be sent out to all tenants for signature and return.
- five of the six councillors agreed that the allotment fee for 2015 should be increased by £2. In future allotment fees will be considered annually.

First aid courses: The first St John Ambulance course for 14 participants will take place on 26 January from 10am to 1pm. A second session will be arranged in due course.

Play equipment West Close: Cllr Styles has submitted the pre-planning application to Cherwell District Council and is awaiting a reply.

Planning applications received by the Parish Council since the December meeting

- 14/02015/F, 2 Old Council House, Townsend, St M. Porch, two storey side, part single storey rear

extension with associated external works. One councillor is concerned that this will change the appearance and character of a satisfying group of pre-war houses.

Planning applications/TCA approved by Cherwell District Council:

- 14/01839/F, Coombe Cottage, 1 Rock Close, St M. Demolition of existing shed for replacement with a stone and timber clad garage – re-submission of 13/01590/F. No objections. Granted 22 December.
- 14/01813/TPO, Land adjacent 6 and 8 Summer Ley, St M, 9 x Poplar – fell. Subject to TPO 2/90. No objections. Granted 18 December.

Planning applications refused by Cherwell District Council:

- 14/01684/LB – retrospective, Laurel Cottage, Church St, St M. Replacement of five wooden windows and two wooden doors with PVCU fittings to the rear of the property. The Parish Council had no objection to the application. It was refused on 19 December.

AOB

- a) The stile at the end of Horn Hill leading to Hempton is in disrepair, as is the one further on at the end of the field. The Parish Clerk will contact OCC.
- b) The lid of the dog bin in Summer Ley is functional but needs some attention.
- c) A dog owner is leaving bags of dog excrement on the wall bordering the Potteries to West Close footpath, even though there is a dog bin nearby. People can confidentially report dog fouling offences to help Cherwell District Council's enforcement officers target hotspot areas and fine owners who fail to clean up after their dog. Offenders who fail to clear up after their animal can receive a fine of £50, which may increase to £1000 if the case proceeds to magistrates' court. To report an offence, visit www.cherwell.gov.uk/dogfouling
- d) There is a drain in the middle of High St, near The Ledge, which is approximately 4 to 6 inches below the road level. This is a hazard to cyclists, motorcyclists and pedestrians. The Parish Clerk will report the matter to OCC Highways.
- e) Painted signage on the roads in Barford St Michael is becoming worn (eg, slow signs). The Parish Clerk will contact OCC Highways.

The Parish Council website can be accessed on www.thebarfordvillages.co.uk

Fix My Street – residents can report defects in the highway to Oxfordshire County Council on <http://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk> Once verified OCC's contractor pledges to fix potholes within 28 days, 24 hours in an emergency and within four hours for a severe category.

The next Parish Council meeting will be held on Wednesday 4 February at 7.30pm in the Village Hall.

For Love and For Life

**A concert of songs for
Valentine's Day**
by local choir

'Rhythm is Life'

together with

Freeway Jam's

Ben Bennion and Mick Bullard

in Deddington Church

Remembering choir member Tracey

In aid of Katharine House Hospice

7.45pm 14 February 2015

Tickets £8 concessions £5

**Available from Moira 01869 338 637,
Mariann 01869 338 570, or on the door
Includes refreshments and soft drinks.**

Wine will be available.

Barford whist drives

Judy Hobbs is running whist drives on alternate Fridays in the village hall and is inviting any new players to come along.

Between July and December last year the drives made a profit of £157, of which £78 went to the church, £39 was given to the Bakehouse Shepherd charities and £39 went to Katherine House.

For more information phone Judy on 01869 338 475.

Maggie's 50



It'll be the 4th year of the 50 mile cycle ride on Saturday 13 June. We meet at 12:30pm for 1pm start from the George Inn, Barford St Michael. It's a circular route with a stop off at the half way point at Boycott Farm Shop near Stow School for refreshments. The ride will finish back at the George. Martin landlord has given permission for cyclists to park their vehicles in the pub car park. There's a BBQ from 7pm at the George. £20 ride entrance fee includes the BBQ. The proceeds will be donated to Maggie's website www.maggiharveytrust.com, set up to contribute to funding into brain tumour research.

There will be a meeting at the George on 2 June at 8pm to discuss the details of the bike ride and distribute maps and instructions. The route will be the same as last year.

This is not a race. The riders who have taken part in the previous years vary widely in ability. Anyone who wants to cover the course in a fast speed can do so. The record time to complete the ride is two hours fifteen minutes, but the completion times can vary to over five hours. No one will be left behind - slower cyclists will be accompanied. There will be support vehicles carrying first aid, top up water, and pumps in case of punctures and they will be able to collect anyone who struggles and feels they can't continue. We can collect entrance money on the day of the ride but it will help if you can bring this to the meeting on the 2 June if you haven't paid beforehand.

We plan to start practice rides from Barford, weather permitting, Sunday mornings from mid to late March, and Wednesday evenings when the clocks change to summer time. These will leave from the Barford village hall - details of times to be confirmed.

The BBQ will include a vegetarian option. We are hoping this will also be an enjoyable social occasion, and anyone who can't make the bike ride is very welcome to join us for the evening and pay for food at the BBQ. We welcome your support. Hope to see you!

George Williams and Tony Shrimpton. George:mobile 07801 956642, email gselog@gmail.com

Tuesday Lunch Club - 17 February

Main course

Braised lambs' liver and bacon or coq au vin. Both main courses served with Brussels sprouts, crushed swede and carrot with creamy mashed potatoes.

Desserts

Blackberry and apple crumble and custard or chilled lemon soufflé.

Price £5

Please ring Anne and Mick on 01869 337074 by Tuesday 10 February.

Barford Green Gardening Club



Notes from our potting shed

The **AGM** will be on 2 March at 7.30pm. Possible **Open Gardens** and other activities will be discussed at the AGM; please attend.

18 July; a visit to **Dreamers Cottage**, Little Haseley with a possibility to have lunch at Lassco's in Milton Common for those that want to.

Jobs to be done in and around the garden
There's always something to be doing in the garden, whether it's pruning, tidying or sowing. Here are just a few jobs to keep you busy!

Cut back shrubs such as cornus and salix cultivars (grown for their colourful winter stems) down to their bases.

Cut back the old foliage from ornamental grasses before growth begins - clip them to within a few centimetres of the ground.

Prune overwintered fuchsias back to one or two buds on each shoot.

Prune winter flowering jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*) after flowering to encourage new growth for next year's blooms. Cut back the previous years growth to 5cm from the old wood.

Prune winter flowering shrubs such as mahonia and *Viburnum x bodnantense* after their colourful display has finished.

Lift and divide snowdrops still 'in the green' if you want to move them or create more plants. Plant lilies and allium bulbs.

Plant bare root roses in a sunny position for spectacular summer colour.

Start chitting early potatoes - stand them on end in a module tray or egg box and place them in a bright, cool, frost-free place.

Cut autumn-fruiting raspberry canes to the ground to stimulate new canes, which will fruit in the autumn. Cut the tips of summer-fruiting raspberry canes that have grown beyond the top of their supports; cut just above a bud.

Continue to plant raspberry canes for the coming summer.

Prune apple trees and pear trees whilst they're still dormant. Leave plum trees, cherry trees and apricots until the summer as pruning these fruit trees now will make them susceptible to Silver Leaf disease.

Prune blackcurrant bushes, gooseberries and redcurrants to maintain a productive framework. Currant bushes can also still be planted between now and the spring.

Soak sweet pea seeds in tepid water overnight before planting them, to speed up germination. The weather is still cold this month so hang fat balls and keep bird feeders topped up to attract birds, who will in turn eat pests in your garden.

Finally, if all you can see from your windows are unattractive sheds, composting areas and bins this winter, think about using evergreen climbers such as clematis *armandii* or clematis 'fragrant Oberon' to screen the area, or just to add winter interest. Bamboo plants also make a fantastic screen.



Bye for now

Spade and Fork



Trump, trick, grand slam, rubber.....



Whist is a popular game in the Barfords. The Village Hall hosts this game every two weeks (see page 7).

Unfortunately lately the special tables, which the VHMC have inherited, have become quite unsafe and their surfaces need replacing. The repairs will have to be done on a voluntary basis as the Village Hall cannot afford to buy new tables.

However this has been taken in hand by a motley crew of craftsmen. New hardwood catches have been expertly made and fixed to tables, the wood having been given by Johnson's of Deddington, and new baize has been purchased. All we need now is someone to help replace the tops. The old tops need to be removed, new hardboard cut to fit and the baize glued down.

Please can someone offer to do this work.

Hoping that all will be done soon and that the cards will continue to be shuffled and the whist counters will help to keep the scores.

Please contact Lucy Norman on 01869 337678



The Katharine House Hospice

Care for a cuppa

1 to 8 March. Invite friends round for a cuppa, cake and chat. We'll provide a Care for a fundraising pack with invitations, posters, balloons, recipes and top tips to make your event a success.

Simply ask for donations on the day for coffee and cake, or hold a raffle or sweepstake for something a little different.

Find out more on 01295 812161.

Black Dyke Brass Band

Concert at St. Mary's Church, Banbury on 28 March. Doors open at 7pm. Tickets £20 each. Phone 01295 812161 or visit www.khh.org.uk



Open gardens

We'd love to hear from anyone who would like to open their garden to raise money for Katharine House this summer. Your garden would feature in a programme that will be distributed to all our supporters with our newsletter in March. For further information phone 01295 812161 or email sarah.brennan@khh.org.uk

Lottery

Our lottery has raised over £1 million since 2000. For £1 per week you might get a phone call on a Friday morning telling you that you've won £1000. For more information phone 01295 812161 or email lottery@khh.org.uk

Sarah Brennan, Community Fundraiser

Nature notes 135

The 1st of December brought us back to earth. A heavy overcast, gloomy and cold - a real December day. What did that bode for the rest of the month? We'll find out next month. That's how I ended last Nature Notes . . . so, let's see.



The 2nd started in similar manner. However, cloud began to break around 10.30am giving hazy, wan sun on a NE blow for the rest of the day, reaching 8°. High pressure was taking over, so the air would probably be chilly but the cloud and rain should reduce. The day was enlivened by a flight of Canada geese around St. Michael and buzzards looking for food along Barley Lane and the road beyond Iron Down. Overnight there was a slight frost in sheltered areas, down to 0°.

A flawless sunrise on the 3rd brought a cloudless sky of brilliant sunshine until about 4pm when a front, approaching from SE, introduced dense overcast, but not before a spectacular red sunset. It had been a biting cold day of NE wind at only 5.5°, but a pair of buzzards, oddly operating from the top of a short trimmed roadside hedge at the top of Steepness, remained on lookout.

Next day was one of heavy overcast on cold, light NE airs. A light, mizzling rain fell after dark and the temperature dropped from 6° to -0.5° overnight.

The cold air was being drawn down from the north by the Jet Stream now located across the northern UK. The 5th dawned under an overcast, but a breeze arose from NW, clearing the cloud to give a cold day of flawless sunshine and a beautiful sunset. A day temperature of 5° fell to -4.5° under a brilliant moon with heavy frost.

High pressure on the 6th brought a repeat of the 5th, albeit windless and less cold at 8.5°. A kestrel hunting at Ilbury, and a buzzard (from his hedge-top perch) on Steepness kept things alert.

Rain fell on the 7th from a heavy overcast borne on a cold WNW breeze. A series of fronts moved down from NW as low pressure took over. These had cleared about 10am, but ensuing sunshine was broken by lashing showers around mid-day. These cleared to give full sun from mid pm, a clear sunset and a night down to 0°.

The pattern of early cloud clearing SE, followed by flawless sun, was repeated on the 8th with a bitterly cold WNW wind drawn down from the Arctic.

A substantial frost gave way to brassy sunshine on the 9th. It gave way to a cold overcast, clearing in early pm when the day warmed to 9°.

The sky clouded over from SW to a full overcast, with fine rain on a gusty wind, before sunset. During the warmer spell a kite drifted effortlessly around Swere Villas on the Hempton Road.

The 10th was another full day of near flawless sun, on a WNW breeze, reaching 9°. This was certainly the time for birds of prey to command the skies! A buzzard swapped places with the kite at Swere Villas; the Steepness Buzzard was perched in one of the small roadside horse chestnuts, and a female kestrel held the air; a kite soared beyond Iron Down; and a heron, that had been fishing at Barford House pool, took off and disappeared westward as the light failed.

For the next few days, I stayed with friends in Essex and so made no local notes. However, I must relate this; we spent some time wandering along the seaside piers, which were deserted. That is, except in the evenings when fishermen arrived and cast their lines off the piers. Watching this in the evening light, I became aware of numerous small birds rushing around the fishermen's feet. Moving closer, I realised they were the attractively marked wading birds called turnstones. They were in and amongst the fishermen - and me - looking for scraps, and the chaps were throwing them bits of bait. The birds were very happy - even scooting into the fishermen's tents. Unbelievable! Especially when I've been thrilled to see a few turnstones running and feeding around distant rocks or surf, at the sea's edge. I shall have to revue my ideas of birdwatching!

After my return on the 15th, the wind seemed stuck at due W. It produced alternate days of glorious sun and sunsets, with days of speeding overcast. The sunset of the 20th was particularly magnificent and prolonged, with brilliant red and gold reflected from very high cloudlets, long after the sun had gone. Temperatures remained pretty steady around 11° (day) and 6°(night). However, the 17th and 21st produced unseasonably warm nights of 11.5°. Despite the mildness, there was little movement of wildlife. A few cluster and bluebottle flies, together with midges and

lacewings, enjoyed basking on south facing walls. There was very little bird activity; I only recorded a buzzard just east of Bloxham, a kite at St. John airfield maingate, plus a noisy green woodpecker below Steepness.

For the remainder of the month the wind blew from SW, variable in strength and temperature, as weather systems sped across North Oxfordshire.

The 22nd and 23rd were overcast with a stiff blow, but mild at around 11°. Raptors still held centre stage with a kestrel at The Warren, a kite at Springhill Farm and both buzzards ensconced at the top of Steepness; there was however, a mixed finch flock on stubbles at Swere Villas (about 40 birds) but unfortunately not close enough to be identifiable.

On Christmas Eve, high pressure rushed in on a strange greenish sky with bands of dark cloud clearing eastward, before sunrise. Clear sun followed, eventually giving way to a flawless, starlit night of strangely penetrating cold at 2.5°. Christmas Day arose on a flawless sunrise of white frost. A kestrel celebrated from the wires opposite St. John Airfield maingate. Then, after lunch, wispy afternoon cloud preceded a beautiful sunset, to end a crisp, refreshing day followed by a night at -1°.

On Boxing Day, a deep depression was racing across us. Bright and crisp, a frosty, sunny morning (max 5°) clouded over in early afternoon, when a wind, rising from NW, brought cold, driving rain through afternoon and into night. At higher levels it fell as sleety snow and there was damage even to smaller trees at all levels.

The 27th dawned on heavy cloud still driven by a cold NW wind. Breaking sun during morning heralded the departure of the depression, followed by an incoming high pressure system. A night at -1° brought a white frost, a clear sun-rise, and a virtually non-existent SW wind for the 28th. A female raven set up a spell of deep croaking near sunset, at St. Michael. It was a cold day (2.5°) of flawless sunshine right through to sunset. However, a brilliant quarter-moon sailed over a night at the lowest temperature recorded so far this winter, -5.5°.

The next day was a repeat, with a kite hunting over St. Michael. A night of -5° followed.

The 30th again was a near repeat, but with several hours of extensive mackerel cloud across midday. Bas Butler spotted over 50 lapwing on plough at the bottom of Radwell Hill, which was welcome news, given their declining status.

By now the H.P. area was moving away south eastwards, but there was still a hard white frost and a clear sunrise on the 31st. Through the morning however, the cold SSW breeze became a little softer; banks of cloud started to build leaving only glimpses of sun by sunset. At last, as December, and 2014, dissolved into history, it was becoming a little warmer and the ground was starting to thaw.

It had been a year of changes and unusual weather phenomena. A hint of global warming and climate change; reverberations of changing agricultural practice; the industrial pollution of developing nations; and our own growth of population and the impact on rural countryside. We can only work, hope and pray for guidance toward solutions.

And so "welcome 2015" However, the year opened in a very disappointing manner. Desultory overnight rain, then overcast throughout a gloomy day of blustery SSW wind. It was warm for January (12°) but a miserable, lowering sort of day all told.

With two exceptions, the first half of the month had been characterised by the predominant SW wind. The 2nd was the first out of line, coming from due S, blustery, but not cold. A bank of cloud cleared away south-eastward at sunrise; then on there was brilliant sunshine, warm to 9°. A clear moon in the early part of night gave way in the small hours to heavy bursts of rain. In the absence of frosts, nature began to wake up again. The second exception to SW breezes was the 3rd. A wet morning on a chilly NW breeze turned into bursts of rain followed by light drizzle until late afternoon. A clear moon by midnight presided over a frost of -4.5°. Despite which, the moles were busy everywhere, as they have been all winter, seemingly more so on road verges. I don't understand why, but could it be from salt splash off the roads, stopping verge soil from freezing?

Rabbits of course, are still everywhere (almost) and breeding, but keep your eyes peeled over wide open spaces and you may well see a hare or two. The roe deer are also to be seen grazing by day on both St. John and St. Michael lands; in addition to which, I've noticed a distinct increase in stoats

crossing our roads, I guess this is in response to the burgeoning rabbit population. Weasel sightings in my experience are down, however. The last one I saw crossed the B4031 on the slope up to Steepness, some two years ago.

The 4th was the day of the Banbury Ornithological Society annual winter bird species count. Teams cover each of the BOS grid of 10 kilometre squares for eight hours and record the bird species seen, plus their distribution and quantity, as required. The results are analysed and passed on to the BTO to help build up the picture of changes in the national bird world, so that appropriate action can be taken if and where necessary.

Bas Butler, Ian Hobday and myself are a local team working in OS SP43 and we always commence by surveying appropriate habitats in the Barfords parish. This year despite awful conditions of frost, fog and freezing winds, we identified 43 species of birds in about two and a half hours in the parish. The total for the day was 53, which gives a good indication of the richness of the Barfords wild birdlife and habitat. These species of course were largely repeated in the other 1km squares of SP43.

The BOS is always looking for more members to become recorders, so come on, let's see you help to put your walks and garden observations to enjoyable good use.

The following five days followed a pattern of milder day temperatures around 9°, peaking at a near record for January of 14° on the 9th. Nights were mainly 6° dropping to -5° on the 6th, and peaking at 11° on the 14th. The wind sat solidly at SW. Weather was variable, often overcast and with showers. Apart from warm temperatures, the 9th was also subject to heavy gales overnight.

All this variability was brought about by a super fast Jet Stream dragging deep depressions quickly across the north of the UK.

Once more, wildlife sought the shelter of deep cover, but the kestrel appeared near the airfield again and the buzzard was crouched in its small tree on Steepness. Mrs. Ault reported a sparrow hawk snatching a house sparrow from a bird table at the Manor and Bas Butler was kept amused by a kite visiting his bird table for the remains of a pheasant.

From the 10th to the 15th (as I finish these Notes) the wind remains at SW. Temperatures are a little more variable, 6° to 11.5° by day and 0° to 6° at night.

Very high winds made the overcast 10th cold, with rain showers. It cleared to give a little sun in late afternoon. A flawless sunrise and morning greeted the 11th, but it clouded over at mid-day with drizzle and rain overnight.

Another fast moving depression to NW brought cold fronts moving quickly south-east-ward, their direction of revolution causing the northward curve of the SW winds, introducing rain storms and cold winds on the 12th and 13th.

A morning of clear sun on the 14th suggested improvement, but a bitterly cold wind spoiled things and murky cloud, moving in through afternoon, ended the day. A strong gusty wind and rain storms dominated the night. Now on the 15th, the storm fronts are moving away and there is sun with variable cloud. Nature has hunkered down again and the weather forecasts are forbidding, but very apt for the time of year. Once again, we must wait and see.

Ron Knight

1st Deddington Scout Group



Well we've just started back after Christmas and the cubs and scouts are busy rehearsing for an evening of riotous entertainment, puppets, slide shows, magic and comedy. We have based this on the exploits of the original Scouts that we have been researching recently.

Cubs – coming soon, a trip to Pets@Home for the animal lover badge. Scouts, Cubs and Explorers – the Winter Challenge hike. We will also be attending the Deddington Players panto at the Windmill.

Jo Churchyard C.S.L.

jochurchyard@hotmail.com

Pete Churchyard S.L.

pete.churchyard@btinternet.com

From the Churchwarden

Annie Goldthorp will be arriving to take over as vicar of this parish and her installation will take place at Deddington Parish Church on 12 February at 7.30pm.



The service will be led by the Bishop of Dorchester and is open to anyone to come along to welcome the new vicar. There will be refreshments afterwards when you will be able to meet Annie. I hope as many of you as possible will be able to come to the service.

The other good news is that we have now had a sound system, incorporating a loop, installed in St Michael's Church, so that everyone in the church will be able to hear what is happening and there'll be no excuse to fall asleep during the sermon. We have had an extremely generous donation from a parishioner for half the cost of the installation and the other half is being financed with grants from the William Delafield Trust and the Oxford Historic Churches Trust (for which we raise money each year through sponsorship on the Ride and Stride). This sound system will be a tremendous asset to our church and I hope you will come to our services with renewed enthusiasm and relish the fact that you can now hear what is going on. And all I can say now is a very big thank you to the person who made it all possible and her generosity will be very much appreciated for many years to come.

Cubby Brett

Last call for quiz teams

Some teams have already booked their places, so don't be left out this year if you want to join in the Village Hall quiz night. Maximum number eight per team.

It all happens on 7 February in Barford Village Hall. 7:30pm for an 8pm start. There will be curry served during the evening, but bring your own drinks and nibbles. Book your places on 01869 338061.

T'Committee

Deddington PTA

We start 2015 with a popular fundraising event - a Curry and Quiz night. It takes place on Saturday 28 February in Barford Village Hall and you are cordially invited to join us for this fun packed event. Tickets will be on sale in a few weeks (please email us for tickets or further information). Other events in the spring include a second hand uniform and cake sale and a muddy run; more details to follow.

This year Deddington Primary School are using our fundraising to purchase team sportswear, a choir uniform, new sports and gymnastics equipment and to subsidise some activities in school, including a survival day for Years 3 and 4 and the whole school trip to the Lion King. All the money you donate really is making a difference. We hope to see you at some of our events.

Julia Jackman PTA Co-chair. Email deddingtonpta@gmail.com

W.I. members getting with the beat



28 WI members and guests had a lively meeting in January with Jennie Grierson of Oxford County Music Service. Jennie brought along enough African Djembe drums for everyone to have a go at playing lots of different rhythms, some led by Jennie and others made up by members and guests and then repeated by everyone else. A great evening, with lots of fun and laughter along the way.

Banbury rural update

We have had a report of a dog stolen at a property in Burdrop. Charlie, a 10 year old springer spaniel, was taken from his kennel in his owner's garden. We have also been made aware of a suspicious white van and red car in the village at the time of the offence. The Neighbourhood team are progressing this and will update you when we have further information. We are also liaising with our bordering forces to ensure that information is shared. If you are a dog owner please remain vigilant. Ensure your dog is chipped and if you see suspicious activity in your village please report it on 101.

In December we had a burglary at Sibford School. Two persons have been arrested in relation to this.

The cycle event that PCSO Bailey held at Broadribbs in Banbury was very successful with 29 bikes being marked and registered with Bike Safe.

At the start of December we ran an empty car campaign with the scout groups. We checked vehicles in four villages. We found 81 cars unlocked including over 50 vehicles unlocked in one village alone. Whilst crime is low in the rural area, I implore you all to ensure you keep your vehicles locked at all times.

In October I advised you of a spate of burglaries in the Broughton area. The local neighbourhood team has been working alongside CID and a 35 year old male has been charged with three offences and asked for seven others to be taken into consideration.

Sgt Becky Fishwick

Twitter @_ThamesVP. Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/thamesvp> Get alerts and crime prevention advice at www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk, visit www.thamesvalley.police.uk or call the 24-hour police enquiry centre on 101.

From the fire station



We had more call outs last year than any other, with 260. This cannot be said for most of the other stations in the brigade; it's mainly due to us being available all the time now. I feel that change is afoot in 2015. You may have seen that the ambulance service is being put under more and more pressure. It has been decided that as the Fire Service are now trained in FPOS (first person on scene). When an ambulance can't be mobilised in time, the Fire Service will be first responder. This is a higher level of training than we used to have. It may mean that you may call for an ambulance and find a fire truck on your doorstep. How this will develop in the future time will only tell.

We have had our first chimney fires but they were well into December before they started. The crew were called to Clifton to a chimney fire on Christmas Eve. The occupiers had gone to bed and left the fire in the grate, a log fell out and caught the rug on fire which quickly spread. Luckily they were alerted by their smoke alarms and shut the door to the room and called us out. When the crew arrived Watch Manager Fenemore quickly deployed two BA firefighters (breathing apparatus trained) who dealt with the fire very quickly. If the occupiers had not had smoke alarms and shut the door to the room on the way out, then it would have been a different story. If you have not had your chimney swept yet please do it now and definitely make sure you have at least one working smoke alarm on each floor. They will save your life.

We had a traffic crash just outside Hempton that was nasty. It was at night so the air ambulance could not be used. They are dependent on donations and fundraising by the public. Flying helicopters at night costs much more than flying during the day with training and extra equipment. But the police

are able to fly their helicopters at night so the decision was made to use a police helicopter to get the casualty to hospital. Another example of how the emergency services will work together to keep a flexible service.

For the second time in two months Deddington crew was available for fire calls for 100%. It is usually 98% as the 100% has always alluded us. Our aim for 2015 is to maintain 100% every month. Training is the key to this goal and with everyone now trained in using breathing apparatus it's time to train our newer recruits into more senior rolls. George Williams and Tom Hall are being put forward to do their driving. This can take up to a year. First they need to get on a course, then there are medicals and a driving test with practical and theory. They then have to drive the fire engine for six months in a non-emergency roll. Then it's another training course for them to drive on blue lights. Nicky Isted, Tom Hall and Lewis Mahony will be doing their breathing apparatus Team Leaders' assessments which is a long process too. All of these things take time because of the extra level of responsibility.

We have a new recruit - Barney Alton. This will bring our numbers up to an all-time high of fourteen. We look forward to having him at the station.

Tim Parker Deddington Fire Station



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Want to become a puppy socialiser?

Dogs for the Disabled is looking for volunteer puppy socialisers - patient, dog-loving people to care for a pup for over year, helping to prepare them for a role as an assistance dog.

Volunteers help pups grow into confident, well-behaved dogs, comfortable in many different environments and ready to start training with Dogs for the Disabled.

You'll need to have a fully-fenced, secure garden and devote several hours a day on activities to socialise the puppy.

You'll be asked familiarise the puppy with locations including supermarkets, schools, hospitals, dentists, buses and trains to prepare them for their working life.

The puppy can live with children aged over two years and a maximum of two existing pet dogs.

The pup's food and vet costs are paid by Dogs for the Disabled.

Email liz.stone@dogsforthe-disabled.org or visit www.dogsforthe-disabled.org for more information.

Deddington PFSU and Village Nursery

The Nursery and Pre-School received separate unannounced inspection visits from OFSTED before Christmas and we are delighted to announce that both settings have retained their 'good' grading. Here is just a flavour of the reports which are available to read in full on the OFSTED website.

PFSU

- Children are effectively supported to develop strong relationships with their key persons, who know them well.
- Staff give high priority to safeguarding children and providing a safe and secure environment for them to play and learn.
- There is a strong partnership with parents, which means that parents are very aware of their child's progress and how they can further support their learning at home.
- Staff use effective teaching methods, and a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated play, to motivate children and help them make good progress in their learning and development.

Nursery

- Children demonstrate that they feel secure and settled in the nursery and have positive relationships with staff.
- Staff use observations of children to accurately assess their progress and effectively plan for the next steps in their learning.
- Children enjoy outdoor activities that promote their physical development and help them to explore the natural environment.
- Regular staff training ensures that they are knowledgeable about safeguarding policy and procedures, which helps keep children safe.

Lucy Squires 337484

Foot Health Practitioner Rosie Burland DipCFHP, MPSPract

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