

# Hilltop News



*August & September 2009*



# Summertime specials...

*Our cover picture conveys all the fun of the Fair! Summer festivities this year began with the **St Leonards Parish Hall Fete**, in early June, and was splendidly supported as ever - despite the cold and wet weather. Let's hope the **Hawridge & Cholesbury Church Fete** on August Bank Holiday Monday enjoys better conditions.*

*On mid-summer's eve, party-goers enjoyed **Ruby's Charity Masked Ball**. Following last year's hugely successful inaugural event, this was another special night to remember.*

*In early July, the HCCPS put on another **Summer Party**, complete with treasure hunt, hosted by The Full Moon.*

*And just as we go to press, the Parish 75th Anniversary celebrations gathered pace with a rousing **Families Fun Sports Day**.*

*What do these events have in common? Dedication, hard work and generosity of so many people. No wonder our village community thrives!*

*Read all about and savour some of the many snap-shots taken of these events inside...*

**Pushing body and mind to the limit!** Running a marathon is challenging enough. An ultra-marathon is desperately tough. The Marathon des Sables goes further - a massive test of endurance. Neil Thubron from St Leonards attempted this treacherous annual event at the end of March. Find out inside how he got on...



**Plus our regular features...** Nature notes, Curvaceous Cook...plus all the news from our Churches, School, Clubs, Pubs, Councils and Societies.



## THE PARISH COUNCIL

Although the Parish Council has a strong interest in the adequate maintenance of footpaths and bridleways, this is ultimately the concern of Bucks County Council and we report any problems to them as necessary.

Another important contributor to the care of footpaths and bridleways is The Chiltern Society which, apart from carrying out work through its own volunteers, always copies the Parish Council on any issues it has reported to the County Council for action. One of their great successes has been to replace stiles with gates which opens up the footpath network to those unable to cope with many of the stiles. We were pleased to welcome Mrs Cic Upcott to the Annual Parish Meeting on 1st June to hear more about the tremendous work done by the Society to preserve our local environment.

Currently, one area of major concern for the Parish is Bridleway 51, also known as Black Horse Lane. It is the track opposite the Black Horse pub in The Vale which leads to Ashley Green. Over the years this bridleway has been built up to accommodate heavy vehicles and the old drainage structures have been neglected. As a result there has been severe flooding during heavy rain and a build up of rubble in The Vale. Residents' property has also been flooded on many occasions.

The Parish Council escalated this issue to the Cabinet Member for Transportation at County, Mrs Val Letheran. She denied any responsibility for the problem although Bucks has provided the occasional sandbag. We have expressed the view that it is not acceptable for elderly residents being forced to hump sandbags to protect their property in the middle of the night and will, with the help of our County Councillor, Tricia Birchley, continue to put pressure on the County Council to resolve the problem.

On a more positive note, you may have noticed the white markings on potholes throughout the Parish, including Chambers Green Road, Oak Lane and The Vale. Either the County Council is serious about repairing the potholes or there is a phantom sprayer on the loose. Watch this space.

You are warmly invited to meetings of the Parish Council and have your say on local issues. We meet on the fourth Monday in the month but please note we do not meet in August unless the schedule of planning applications requires it.

*David Clarke, Clerk to the Council 758567*

## Cholesbury cum St.Leonards Parish Council 75th Anniversary

The events held in celebration of our anniversary have been very successful and much enjoyed and our thanks go to the organisers for their hard work and enthusiasm. Reports on some of them feature elsewhere in this edition.

Forthcoming celebrations include the following:

**29 August** Horticultural Society Annual Show, which will include '75th Anniversary' classes.

**18 September** St Leonards Church Concert.

**18 October** Civic Service in St. Leonards Parish Hall.

**17-20 February 2010** (provisional) Pantomime sponsored by the Council.

The Council has been successful in obtaining a grant from Buckinghamshire County Council for improvements to the area adjacent to the post box at Buckland Common, which it says will be carried out before the end of this financial year.

*John Allen 758095*

## CHOLESBURY VILLAGE HALL

*After 19 years as chairman of the Village Hall Committee, Paddy Thomas has stepped down, handing over to John Allen. She said she got tired of hearing her own voice. We didn't, and in addition to its pleasant timbre, it reminded the rest of us of all the trying rules and regulations which all public facilities must now comply with: risk assessments, licensing rules, health and safety inspections, insurance for this and that - boring but necessary.*

In that time the hall has expanded with the addition of a new storage room, courtesy of a gift of land from Stewart Pearce, the mud holes along the road have been eradicated, the kitchen refurbished, the lovely old floors sanded and polished, numerous leaks and bursts plugged, and that which should be unclogged, unclogged: all under the calm, considered and always courteous chairperson. All villages ought to have a Paddy. We also now have a new trustee, Ann Johnson, and a vibrant and active committee whom you will soon see outside painting the railings.

The first thing John has done as chairman is to take up Malcolm and Shelagh England's offer to refurbish the sign above the front door. After some protest they agreed to a picture commemorating this, and the change of chairman, for the history records, you understand. We are now only lacking an auditor, as Michael Penn, who used to live in the village and has audited the accounts for longer than any of us, except Stewart, can remember, has also stepped down. If there are any accountants who have a spare hour or two annually to audit the accounts we would be grateful. Alas it



*Under the refurbished sign: Malcolm and Shelagh England, Paddy Thomas and John Allen*

does not involve huge sums of money. To volunteer, or for any other reason, please contact any of the Committee members who now are:

John Allen	(trustees)
Paddy Thomas	Stewart Pearce
Brigid Farmer	Ron Evens
Roseann Vince	Joan Barnard
Sue Haggerty	Ann Johnson

## LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

An early mention that the first of the new season of Local History Group talks kicks off on **Friday, 2 October at 8 for 8:15pm at Cholesbury Village Hall.**



Our talk and exhibition earlier this year on the more recent history of this parish, showed there is a thirst for stories about the local history of the area, so we kick off this season with just that.

In contrast to the hustle and bustle that is Berkhamsted, the tranquil village of Northchurch nearby will be unfamiliar to most of us. It's time to put that right so no excuses; do come and hear **Bert Hosier's** talk entitled 'Hedgehog's Northchurch'. I would have liked to add some words of further explanation here but then that would spoil the surprise and to be honest, I'm none the wiser what it is all about either!

With eight evening meetings, normally on the first Friday of the month, plus a newsletter, other member events and facilities which guarantee to offer something of interest for everyone, and all for just £8 a year, it's great value. If you are new to the area or have just not got round to coming along before now, why not come along to a meeting – non-members are always made welcome, for just £3 on the night.

For further information please contact Chris Brown on 758890 or email us on [localhistorygroup@cholesbury.com](mailto:localhistorygroup@cholesbury.com) PS. Look out for the yellow roadside notices and posters on notice boards to remind you a meeting is imminent!

Chris Brown 758890



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## THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Thanks to local support, I was returned to County Council on 4 June with 59% of the vote. The turnout of 50.4% was the highest in Buckinghamshire and considering that we are a rural community with nine Polling stations this was remarkable!



Since that time I have raised a number of local concerns at County Hall. These include the number of new road signs planned in rural thoroughfares, as the final adjustments are made to traffic orders in the Hilltop villages; discretionary school transport and the impact of red tape on local business. I shall continue to press for better roads and rural bus services and the provision of social housing to enable younger people to move into the countryside.

I would like to record my thanks to the Oxford Diocese for all the work that they undertake to give our youngsters the best possible start in life. The most recent example is the new classroom and IT suite at Hawridge & Cholesbury Church of England School, which was officially opened by Bishop Alan.

My role at County Hall as Cabinet Spokesman for the Adults, Family and Wellbeing Portfolio means helping vulnerable people in our communities to maintain their quality of life. In future, our service users will receive an individual budget and improved choice in choosing their care. Maintaining people to live at home increases their independence but requires support from the community. My role on the Fire Authority and Mental Health Trust continues together with the Standards and Rights of Way committees.

Preserving our environment will be top of the agenda in the next four years and

David Shakespeare OBE, Leader of the Council, is adamant that the Chilterns AONB must be protected from development. I would like to support local business by making more use of local materials in house and commercial building. With a general election due in the next 12 months, it would appear that a Conservative government would give people much more of a say on local development plans. I sincerely hope the 60,000 new homes planned for Buckinghamshire, particularly in the Vale of Aylesbury and Milton Keynes' overspill, will be reduced.

I look forward to meeting you at our summer events and taking up your concerns with officers at County Hall.

Tricia Birchley 01296 621138



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## HOLDING OUR OWN IN THE TOP FLIGHT!

*Mid-way through the season and Hawridge & Cholesbury sit mid-table in the First Division of the Chilterns League. Having run away with the second division title last season, we expected to do well, but the gap in strength between the two divisions is considerable.*



Sean Robinson, Paul Smith and James Cath have been our most consistent batters, with spinners Suranga Daluwatta and Neil Jones picking up the wickets. In the Second XI, former colts are showing their worth, particularly William Jones, Matthew Rutt and Jonathan Channer.

One memorable First XI match ended in a rare tie. At home against the League champions and current leaders Wraysbury, we did remarkably well to dismiss them for

142. In reply we lost our top five batsmen cheaply. As a 'non-biased' observer I could see that the opposition's umpire had a problem distinguishing between bat and pad, and our batsman Suranga was unlucky to be given out LBW for nought: a great 'scalp' for them. But Paul Smith and captain Steve White steadied the ship and edged us up towards 100, before both went in quick succession. That left the Jones brothers at the crease and they pushed on with purpose. With victory in sight, Neil went the same way as Suranga - another 'bat-first' LBW decision from their umpire. Nick Jones then took control and hit a boundary off the penultimate ball to bring the scores level; only to be caught next ball when a full-blooded drive was snapped up inches from the ground by a joyful fielder.

We may be too far behind to win the Championship this year: but the real joy comes from playing, not winning (just ask Alan Brown!).

Pavilion Manager Mick Sargent has masterminded the refurbishment of the clubhouse kitchen. Ellie Redding and our other tea ladies now have much better facilities from which to serve the best cricket teas in the district!

*Graham Lincoln, Secretary, Hawridge & Cholesbury Cricket Club. 758449*



*Sunday XI, with the Colin Parry Memorial Shield: played for annually against Penn Street.*

## Our Sunday best...

Sunday 'friendlies' are generally less controversial than the Saturday league games and this year's captain, Andy Holdsworth, gives his view...

We are just coming up to the half season mark and we have had a very action-packed few months, which has seen some very exciting nail biting finishes. I must say not always going our way, but the Sunday side are not just known for our cricket - it's the socializing, because win or loss we always enjoy what golfers call the 19th hole or to you and me 'the bar' because we always finish the day off with a sizzling BBQ: even if it rains.

The one thing I have noticed in the last few years is that the club is growing in numbers and strength and the good news is that many new local people are joining. We have a range of mixed ability players but all have one thing in common - the wish to have a fun family social afternoon at the club.

## Another anniversary!

125 YEARS! It only seems a short while ago we were celebrating the club's centenary. Next year, Hawridge & Cholesbury Cricket Club is 125 years old. We shall be celebrating the anniversary with a programme of events throughout the 2010 season - look out for further details in Hilltop News, or log on to our website for the latest information: [www.hawridgecricket.org](http://www.hawridgecricket.org)



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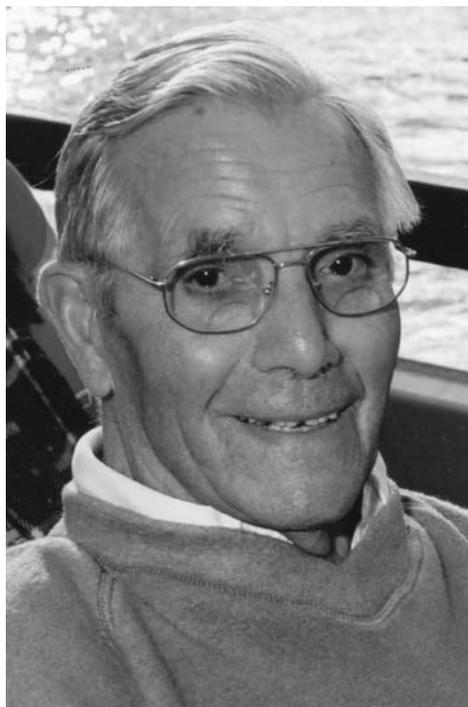
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## CHARLES COLLINS

3 December 1916 –19 May 2009



*In July, the ashes of Charles 'Chas' Collins were scattered by his son Barry on Hawridge & Cholesbury's cricket pitch. The line of ashes marked a bowler's run-up to the wicket, a run that Charles made here many times before the War. This poignant ceremony followed a short service on the pitch conducted by the Reverend David Burgess with members of the family.*

Born in Hawridge, Charles was one of seven children. Of brothers Alf, Jack, Maurice and Bill, only Jack didn't play cricket for the local club. Sisters were Connie and Dorothy – Connie and her husband George Brown living all their lives

in Buckland Common, building the house where Barry now lives. Charles' mother was Rose Penn, whose brothers also were prominent members of this cricketing family.

Charles attended Hawridge School and the family moved to the newly-built Chiltern Cottages in Cholesbury. He worked as a gardener's boy at a farm in Bellingdon, where he met Ethel (Effie) his boss's niece. When they married in 1941 they moved to Chesham, where Effie still lives. They had four children: Barry, Barbara, Michael and Christine.

During the War, Charles joined the Medical Corps, serving in India, Singapore, Hong Kong and then Nagasaki, just after the bomb destroyed the city. Afterwards he worked locally in forestry, then as a contract gardener. Gardening was his passion and he set up a business with Viv Henson from Shire Lane - 'Collins & Henson'. After Viv died Charles worked mainly as gardener for Lady of the Manor, Christine Stott, until he was 82!

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## St Leonards Youth Club Donations

For many years there was a youth club for village youngsters aged between 11 and 18 years, which was based at St Leonards Parish Hall. The club was run by a committee of adult volunteers who, like the children, were mainly resident within the villages, but a minority of both came from the surrounding area, e.g. Bellingdon, Chesham and Chivery. The last group of volunteers took over in 1977 and closed the club in 1984, for lack of sufficient members and also of volunteers. Following closure, three committee members - Sylvia Lee, Frank Butler and Windsor Thomas - continued to serve as volunteer trustees, to safeguard the assets of the youth club, in the expectation that it would be re-opened.

Five years went by and the St Leonards Youth Club equipment, which was stored at Cherry Orchards, Cholesbury, was beginning to age and deteriorate. It was decided to sell it and hold the accumulated funds in the bank account, under the supervision of the trustees. After a further 20 years the youth club had still not re-opened and early this year the trustees met and decided formally to close it. The trustees agreed that the funds would be split equally between between the four village organisations whose primary purpose is to serve the interests of our children from toddlers through to primary school, and including those who attend from outside. As a result, a cheque for £160 was sent to each of the four organisations listed below. There was only one condition, which was that the funds were to be used for the benefit of the children. These bodies are:  
*Hawridge and Cholesbury  
Church of England School  
The Village Nursery, Cholesbury Village Hall  
Little Bears Pre-school, St Leonards Parish Hall*

*St Leonards Baby and Toddler Group,  
Church Room, St Leonards*

I close with a tribute to my fellow trustees: Sylvia Lee, who moved to Chesham ten years ago and to Frank Butler, our popular postman, who is a native of this parish who now lives in Aylesbury. They have each made very fine contributions to the youth of our villages, both as adult helpers and officers in the club's active days and also as long-standing (and long-suffering) trustees. They may both admit with some surprise that in the end I did get organised enough to carry out those mundane administrative tasks which were necessary and sufficient to close down the St Leonards Youth Club and to disburse the funds. Now that is a jolly good thing to have got off one's chest!

*Windsor Thomas 758460*



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# Our Hilltop Parish

*In this year of the Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish 75th Anniversary, Hilltop News asked Chris Brown to outline how our Parish Council came about and he kindly obliged...*

Between 1875 and 1895 the area included in the present Parish was split between five smaller parishes. All were administered by Aylesbury Rural Sanitary District (RSD). Aylesbury Urban (UD) and Rural District (RD) succeeded the RSD in 1895. These were overseen by locally elected representatives and had some autonomy from central government. In addition to Poor Law administration they also had powers relating to local planning, playgrounds and cemeteries.

In 1934 Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards parish was created from the coming together of several parishes. The village of St Leonards was detached from Aston Clinton parish and the hamlet of Buckland Common broke away from its parent parish of Buckland. Meanwhile, the long-established parishes of Cholesbury and Hawridge were incorporated within the new parish together with a small upland area of Drayton Beauchamp parish.

The minute book of the old Hawridge parish for 1932 showed that there had been concern arising from speculation that the properties and land in Hawridge were to be subsumed into Chesham parish or at least be transferred into Chesham Urban District. This was clearly an irritation to the parish council, as Hawridge had preserved its autonomy from Chesham for over 300 years, and they petitioned Bucks CC that they be allowed to remain under the control of Aylesbury RD. In the event, it turned out that Hawridge was subsumed into Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards, which in turn became part of Amersham RD.

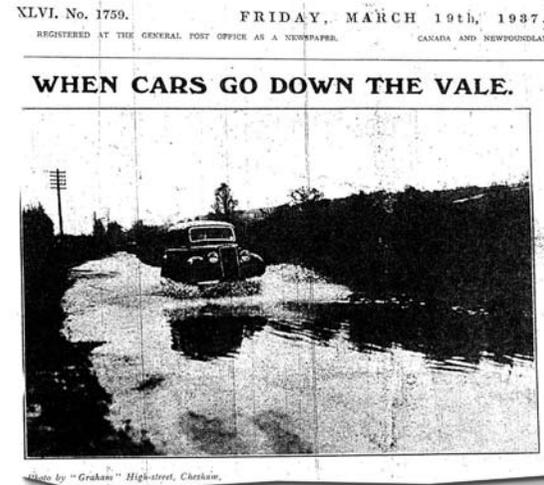
As part of the 1974 local government reorganisation, Amersham RDC and Chesham UDC were disbanded and replaced by Chiltern District.

There was one further significant change to the parish boundaries, initiated in 1984, coinciding with the 50th Anniversary of Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards parish. The section of the Vale from the pumping station to the present parish boundary with Chesham, and just beyond Brown's agricultural merchants, which had previously been shared between Chartridge and Ashley Green parishes, was incorporated into Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards. Again Chesham made a claim on the parcel of land but, following a meeting, conceded it to our parish. Some small adjustments to the county boundary with Hertfordshire at Cholesbury Bottom and Heath End added two other small parcels of land to the present day parish.

Meanwhile, back in 1934, the first ever election of parish councillors was underway. The Bucks Examiner records much excitement as a large crowd assembled at dusk outside Cholesbury Parish Hall to hear the result. The seven elected (which included the local vicar and the Lord of the Manor) were part of a group called the 'Progressive Party', of which nothing more is known.

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*As The Bucks Examiner pictured the Vale floods in 1937*

*Chris has also prepared a time-line of events as recorded by the Parish Council and Bucks Examiner and we reflect on a few snippets...*

## Royal celebrations

In 1935, £10 was budgeted for King George V's Silver Jubilee for expenditure on festivities, including a children's tea party.

The following year, a public meeting was held to discuss coronation celebrations of King Edward VIII on 11 December. The same evening the King abdicated! In 1937, however, uninterrupted celebrations took place for George VI's coronation.

In 1953, a plan of events celebrating the coronation of our present Queen was drawn up. Children of the Parish were given a coronation mug and the local schools were given a bible.

Still relatively fresh in the memory are the events which celebrated the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002.

## Vale floods

Was it really as far back as 2001 that the Vale flooded and the road to Chesham was closed for a couple of months? You may not be surprised to learn that in 1937 the Parish complained to the County Surveyor about flooding on that stretch of road, and the following year the bus service to Chesham was disrupted.

## At your service?

Water mains started to be laid through parts of the Parish in 1936. The original pipework is still subject to frequent leaks. A refuse collection, paid for by the Parish Council, also started this year. In 1951, the PC was

concerned that large quantities of domestic waste not collected by the RDC were being deposited on Hawridge Common. Later

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John Horn gave the Local History Group a copy of this photograph showing his father receiving the trophy for 'Best-Kept Allotment 1978' from Sir Francis Dashwood.

that decade, complaints were received about the smell emanating from clay pits in Cholesbury, also used to dump domestic waste.

In 1990, a new sewerage scheme in Cholesbury, Buckland Common and St Leonards was completed. The same was done for Hawridge and Heath End three years later.

The first mention of re-cycling waste and suggestions of bottle banks in the Parish, were made in 1991. The proposal to site them at Buckland Common didn't go down too well, so the Full Moon became the location.

#### On the roads

In 1951, overcrowding on the 8.30am bus to Chesham leads to call for improved bus service.

A PC request, in 1958, for speed limits on the road through Hawridge and Cholesbury

was rejected by the County Surveyor. After several further requests, we finally get our new 40mph speed limits in 2006 and a further batch in 2009.

#### In the air

Recent NATS consultations about the impact of aircraft over our villages are not the first concerns of the Parish. In 1952, discussions were held with the Station Commander at RAF Bovingdon over low-flying aircraft.

In 1969, a proposed Third London Airport site at nearby Cublington provoked strong opposition from residents.

The PC discussed proposed new Heathrow flight paths in 1975, and the first proposals for flight path changes for Luton Airport, affecting our area, were made in 1999.

On a somewhat smaller scale, model aircraft flyers were recorded as being a nuisance on Cholesbury Common in 1978.

#### Best-kept allotments

In 1976, land adjacent to Brown's Rise in Buckland Common was leased from the District Council and laid out for use as allotments. This land was purchased by the PC in 1982 for £500.

The allotments were voted 'Best in Bucks' in 1978, 1982 and 1985.



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# Fun, fun, fun...

*Continuing the Cholesbury-cum-St Leonards Parish 75th Anniversary celebrations, a Family Fun Sports Day was held at St Leonards Parish Hall and Playing Field on 11 July.*

Adding a touch of nostalgia, the races chosen echoed those of the Fun Day organised in 1937 to celebrate the Coronation of King George VI. These included old favourites egg & spoon, sack, wheel-barrow, three-leg and slow bike. One event in 1937 not repeated this time for some reason was the 'Thread the Needle Race' (for girls only). Wellie-wanging was a modern addition, which the HTN editor - with his dodgy back - wishes he'd never attempted!

The Pony Club put on a quality musical performance, to the tune of the Osmonds 70s hit record 'Crazy Horses'. The races were followed by a succulent pig-roast and, to work this off, strenuous tug-of-war contests for young and old, male and female alike. As with the original Fun Day, tea and ice cream was provided free of charge.

As part of the celebrations, a limited edition of commemorative brick rabbits were donated by HG Matthews, hand-made by craftsmen at the Bellingdon company using local materials. St Bartholomew's School, Wigginton loaned the sports equipment. David Hawkes provided cream for the strawberries. Steven Clark took photos for the parish records (and for HTN). As ever, a whole host of organisers, officials, judges and other willing helpers ensured the Fun Day was enjoyed by the many happy families who came.



## CHOLESBURY-CUM-ST LEONARDS W.I.

July was the 30th Birthday of our WI and we celebrated with an outing to Manor Farm Herbs at Fringford.

In August there is no 'official' meeting but an informal get-together at The Full Moon has been arranged for members.

Looking ahead to the autumn months - in September, Marie Cates is coming to talk about her work in Uganda and in October, the **Annual Meeting** will be held. This is followed in November by Tony Eaton telling us about the Rudolf Hess Cover Up.

These meetings are open to all - men as well! If you would like an evening out, without having to travel too far, why not come along to St Leonards Parish Hall on the 3rd Monday of the month?

Carol Henry can tell you more if you give her a ring on 758435.

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## HAWRIDGE AND CHOLESBURY COMMONS PRESERVATION SOCIETY

### Conservation Volunteers

On 9 August, the Conservation Volunteers will be coming to do some bracken control. Experiments suggest that the best way to deter this rampant plant is to break the stems at a particular time in the growth cycle. Where this has been done, any bracken that grows back is considerably weaker. The hope is that, with persistence, it will give up altogether.

### Managing the grass areas on the Commons

Hopefully, the weather will be good enough this year to do the cutting and collecting of grass in the open areas of the Common. Ideally, this is done in September, when all the finer grasses and heathland plants have set their seed. Only in this way can we discourage the rank and coarse grasses that thrive when the grass is not collected. As these break down, the soil becomes too rich to support the plants that we want to encourage. The finer plants that have thrived through the cutting and collecting regime, such as Heath Bedstraw, Sheeps' Sorrel and acid-loving grasses, look wonderful during the summer.



*In the Swing!*

### Travellers on the Commons

On the day before the party, a fairly large group of travellers' vehicles was driven onto Cholesbury Common, behind the cricket pitch. The police were immediately informed by several residents and they came promptly to ask the travellers to leave. It was agreed that they would leave by 10am the following morning and when there was no sign of them moving at the appointed time, Christine Stott went to see them and was physically threatened. They also said that they would damage the cricket pitch. In the end, several police came to make sure that they left the Common.

Those of you who are not on Grapevine will not have seen Christine's thanks to those who rang the police. The swiftness of the response probably ensured that they will not return. If they had been allowed to stay for longer, it would be worth their while to try to park on the Common again. I am very sorry that Christine had to face up to this situation on her own. She has asked everyone to ring the police as soon as they notice anything like this happening, so that

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swift action can follow. Our Community Support Officer, Lesley Roche, was very helpful. You can leave messages for her or speak to her in person, by ringing 0845 8505505 and asking for her by name.

### Summer Party

This year's party went off very successfully in the paddock next to the Full Moon. Peter and Annie were excellent hosts, providing us with a great deal of practical help in setting up the marquees, manning the bar and cooking the meats. Once again their chef, Mark, carved very professionally (showing us all how it should be done!) and Annie did an absolutely sterling job with the washing up. Those of us who have had to take all the crockery and cutlery back to wash up at the Village Hall in the past, were hugely grateful, I can tell you! Thank you all so much!

The setting at the paddock is lovely, with views to the Full Moon, the Windmill and



*The Master of Ceremonies*

across the valley. It provided a charming environment for the party. From 24 hours before, a cohort of helpers arrived to transform it into a wonderful place to be, for the evening of the party. I would

like to say a huge thank you to Lindsay Griffin and John Caple for all the plans and arrangements that they made to make this such an enjoyable occasion. Thank you very much to all those who printed the tickets, helped with planning, donated raffle prizes, fetched and carried tables, chairs and crockery or who decorated the marquees and helped with the clearing up and also to Ellie for her cheerful flower arrangements.

The weather was kind to us, being warm and sunny throughout; the horseflies gave up after liberal doses of Jungle Formula were



*I said I want a cool beer, not bear!*

applied; Francis did a terrific job as MC, as always; the Cholesbury Swing Quintet played beautifully (we're told that they are available for weddings, funerals, Bar Mitzvahs etc. – just call Paul Nicholson 758164); the salads, quiches and desserts, which were provided by kind volunteers, were terrific and very much up to standard! Thank you very much to all who provided them. (Mushroom quiche will be on any future menu, Clive! And what happened to Cathy's tiramisu?)

This year we had a number of young people who played an active role in helping entertain us all. It is encouraging to see that a younger generation might see that our founder members' vision of a village event might still be valued in the future. Toby and Amy Phillips were in charge of the activities for children and they did a

great job with a variety of props provided by the school, Geoff the postman and Cathy Maund - a big thank you to all concerned. Katie Thwaites took pictures (some of which accompany this item) - we hope that these will be available on the Grapevine and that any proceeds will help in her gap year adventure.

Lindsay's grandson Sam and his friends, Seraphina and Jay sang and played whilst the Cholesbury Swing Quintet had their food breaks. Thank you too, to all of the local individuals and businesses who have continued to support us for many years - your support is invaluable. Chiltern Motors contributed substantially to the meat, MT Loos sponsored the toilets, Pauline and David Hawkes donated delicious cream and many members and friends gave generously towards the costs of providing additional

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items, all of which added to the evening's success. All of the profits that we make will go to the management of the Commons.

Many thanks too to Ann and John Caple for organising the kids' treasure hunt and the honey pot at the end....have you any idea how many bears live on Rays Hill? Lots of local children can now tell you. A highlight of the party was the appearance of the mysterious Honey Bear. Sadly, he had to retire with heat exhaustion part way through the party - he is reputed to have lost pounds due to dehydration. For easy release, try attaching a string to the zip at the back of your costume next time, John!

There are always a few mysteries at the end of the party. If you are missing any crockery, cutlery or anything else, please let Joan Barnard 758365 or Lindsay Griffin 758440 know.

Linden Bevan-Pritchard (758750)  
bvnp@care4free.net

## ***A Lighthearted (but Serious) Message to Horse-riders and Walkers***

To ride the fields and walk the furrows  
Is something all enjoy,  
But spare a thought  
For where you tread  
And I will tell you why.

The farmers' fields may not be gated  
Does this give "open access"?  
The answer is that hereabouts  
There is no Right to Roam  
Therefore, it's seen as trespass.

To grow the crops and feed the stock  
Is what the farmer likes to.  
But now he also spends his time  
In clearing paths across the fields  
To show just where you can go.

The footpath network is well signed  
And bridleways are likewise  
(OS Map 181\* will tell you).  
The farmers' plea is please respect  
And keep the peace between us.

\* Ordnance Survey Map Explorer Series  
No. 181, Chiltern Hills North.

## **Wildlife in (summer) hibernation!**

No Wildlife feature this time, but fear not, Jim Hetherington will have more subject matter in hand ready for the winter issue.

# Braving the elements for another great village show

St Leonards Parish Hall  
Fete 2009

***We knew it had to happen – after five years of fine dry, if not always warm weather – it had to be a wet one! It was pouring with rain when we awoke on THE day: 6 June. It was surely a day for turning over and going back to sleep let alone 'togging up' and getting down to let the Horse Show team into the field and collecting fresh English strawberries from the market at 7.30am!***

At least it had been very fine weather for setting up the field on Thursday and Friday and David Brockett was able to build the Horse Show Jumps in the dry! However the Horse Show **Gymkhana** team really took the brunt of the storm for most of their events during the morning. Congratulations to them and all the supporters who turned up.

The **Dog Show**, ably organised and run by Jonathan Bright, had a very wet start when setting up but again attracted a good following and once more proved a very successful part of the whole event.

As with things that happen in this great community, it was all hands to the pump (almost literally first thing in the morning); by lunchtime the field was set with stalls



and events and the tea room ready with the WI table cloths and a pot of garden flowers on each table. The milk and cream for the teas was very generously supplied by David Hawkes.

The Car Parking and Gate team really took a soaking but by 2pm the rain stopped, it was damp, miserable and cold but the drenching ceased! The new Hall Chairman David Clarke opened the Fete at 2pm and welcomed everyone - there were lots of people! How wonderful of them all to come on such a day: it really was heart warming after all the hard work taken on by so many people over the previous months and weeks.

There was something for everyone! Francis Sanger manned the Public Address System and all was under way. The BBQ, Teas, Beer Tent and Candy Floss did a good trade, as the need for sustenance seemed to be a priority! Even the Ice Creams picked up business as the afternoon continued! There was much to do - enjoying the Hoop-

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weather was very much appreciated.

The Cake Stall sold out quickly as usual. The Bottle Stall and Tombola had great prizes to win and there were wonderful toys and games on the Children's Stall. Caroline was missed this year but Sue Williams did a gallant job in her place. 'Serena the Seahorse' was in her element on the wet day! The coins on her at the end amounted to £50.26 and Chris Brown from Rays Hill won the £6 book token with his close guess of £50.33. The Bric-a-Brac did a roaring trade in difficult conditions under a rather too-small Gazebo and managed to increase their profit on last year! The generous Draw Prizes from Chiltern Motors (BC), Taylor's Tools, The Full Moon, The White Lion and Chesham Fencing along with many others enabled The Annual Draw to exceed previous records by making £1,066, £740 being taken before the day.

A huge THANK YOU to everyone involved. Too many to name individually but John Allen and Brian Mills must be mentioned for their hard work on Thursday, Friday and Saturday and Nigel Blomfield for his most valued assistance with fencing



posts, straw bales and numerous other tasks that would be impossible without him! The generosity of the whole community during the House to House collection, buying draw tickets, making cakes and for moral support all makes the Fete a marvellous village event. It showed 'True British Grit' this year and the end result, although as expected down on last year, is to date, a fantastic **£4,448.00!**

*John and Ann Horn  
For the St Leonards Hall  
Management Committee*



la (new this year), Thomas the Engine, the Bouncy Castle, Splat the Rat, Bowling, Skittles, Beat the Goalie, Coconut Shy and joining in with the Woodside Morris Dancing - all helped people to keep warm! For the less energetic the Book Stall was well worth a browse and the Horticultural Society Plant stall well worth a visit. The Vintage Cars and Motorcycles are always very interesting and their risk with the

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# Why not me?

by the Reverend David Burgess

*Unless you've been  
extraordinarily  
successful or  
supremely fortunate  
you'll have had the  
common human  
experience at some  
stage in your life of not being chosen - in  
work, in sport, in your friendship groups.  
Sometimes the effects of seeing someone  
else in a place where you wanted to be are  
easy to shrug off; sometimes they can be  
devastating.*



It happens in the Bible as well, several times in fact. I'd like to focus this month on a leadership competition between two unsung heroes of the New Testament, and to see what we can learn from it.

After Jesus' Ascension, his closest followers decided it was time to get back to everyday life and get busy working for the kingdom. First on their agenda was filling the gap left when Judas killed himself after betraying Jesus to his enemies. The Bible tells us that two men were suitable, Joseph and Matthias, and that Matthias was chosen to become part of the Twelve who would lead the early Church. But what about Joseph, the man God didn't pick? How do you live with the fact that you are the one not chosen?

I think I know more Josephs than I do Matthiases. They love God, but things haven't worked out for them. What makes this kind of rejection so bad is that it's God who's doing it. The one not chosen must acknowledge the fact that "God didn't pick me." The lesson, whether in Christian ministry or everyday life, is this - we must help people

to understand that being the one not chosen doesn't mean, "I'm a failure, I'm a reject." I think there are two things that'll help us in this.

Firstly, God is interested in who I am. Joseph and Matthias had something in common - they were both up to the job, and that's important. Joseph wouldn't have been considered if he hadn't been ready to be chosen. There are some things that I won't be selected for even though I'm suitable. Why does this happen? It happens because some things are affected by human error or unclear discernment - and in some things God reserves the right to say "no".

Secondly, God isn't manipulated by what I want. He isn't subject to our desires and wishes; he doesn't obey us. That's hard for us to accept because it means God can choose someone other than me, and I have to trust him. How do I do that? God will always do what's right; he'll always do what's best for you; and sometimes, what you think should happen and what he plans to happen coincide exactly. But he won't be manipulated by what you want.

So Joseph had everything necessary to be an apostle, but Matthias got the job. Both men were suitable; only one could be chosen, and God made that choice. "Why not me?" is a cry heard quite often in Christian circles, albeit silently most of the time. "Not for now; I've got something else planned" is the reply. It may be a tough reply to hear, but it's for the right reasons - always, and without exception.

If you aren't chosen here, you may be elsewhere. And that choice will be in God's time, on his terms, and for his purposes. In my better moments, I'm secure with that idea. And in my not-so-good ones I try and trust, as Joseph did, and as countless unsung Christians have done through the centuries. There's no better way, after all.

Yours in Christ,

David



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## CHURCH SERVICES – AUGUST & SEPTEMBER 2009

DATE	DAY	St. John the Baptist THE LEE			St. Leonard's ST. LEONARDS			St. Laurence CHOLESBURY			St. Mary's HAWRIDGE			NOTES
2 Aug	Trinity 8	8.00	Holy Communion	IC				9.30	Joint Service at Hawridge		9.30	Family Service	Lay	<b>Mid-week Holy Communion</b>
		11.00	Matins	IC	11.00	Joint Service at The Lee					6.00pm	Evensong	IC	
9 Aug	Trinity 9		Joint Service at St. Leonards		11.00	Parish Communion Baptism	PP	10.45	Matins Patronal Festival	IC	10.45	Joint Service at Cholesbury		10.00am at The Lee on First Wednesday of the month
16 Aug	Trinity 10	10.00	Family Service	Lay	11.00	Morning Prayer	Lay	9.30	Holy Communion	IC	10.45	Parish Communion	IC	<b>Holy Communion, Matins &amp; Evensong</b> Book of Common Prayer
23 Aug	Trinity 11	10.00	Parish Communion	IC	11.00	Matins	Lay /IC	9.45	Quiet Service	DB	10.45	Parish Communion	DB	<b>Parish / Family Communion &amp; Morning Service</b> Common Worship
30 Aug	Trinity 12	10.45	Joint Service at Cholesbury		10.45	Joint Service at Cholesbury		10.45	Parish Communion	DB	10.45	Joint Service at Cholesbury		
6 Sep	Trinity 13	8.00	Holy Communion	DB	11.00	Family Communion	DB	9.30	Parish Communion	IC	9.30	Family Service	DB	DB= Rev. David Burgess IC= Rev. Ivor Cornish
		11.00	Matins	IC		Sunday School	VO				3.00	Evensong	IC	
13 Sep	Trinity 14	10.00	Parish Communion	DB	6.00pm	Parish Communion	DB	10.45	Matins	IC	9.30	Holy Communion	IC	JH= Rev. John Hull PP= Rev. Patience Purchase
20 Sep	Trinity 15	8.00	Holy Communion	DB	11.00	Morning Prayer	JH	9.30	Holy Communion	IC	10.45	Parish Communion	IC	JuH= Judy Hart VO= Virginia Oldham
		10.00	Family Service in Village Hall	DB										
27 Sep	Trinity 16	10.00	Parish Communion	JH	11.00	Matins	IC	10.45	Joint Service at Hawridge		10.45	Parish Communion	DB	JoW= Joan Walton

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Janet Whittow                                      01296 624568  
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#### St. Leonards

Anne Butterworth                                01494 758700  
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Ann Horn    01494 758250  
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James Watson                                      01494 758914

#### Cholesbury

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## FROM THE REGISTERS

### CHOLESBURY Holy Matrimony

30 May 2009 Francesca Alice Caroline Cartmell and Nicholas Ross McPhedran

### ST LEONARDS Holy Baptism

28 June 2009 Elsie Angela Kathleen Matthews

5 July 2009 Anastazja Jane Gryko and James Henry Gryko

12 July 2009 Jake Philip Matthews

## CHURCH MATTERS

### CHOLESBURY

**O**n the 30 May, Francesca Cartmell of Milton House, Cholesbury, married Nicholas McPhedran of

Croydon, London. The service was held on a perfect summer's day at St Laurence Church and jointly conducted with great affection and humour by Revd David Burgess and the bride's uncle and Godfather, Canon Richard Cartmell.

Many thanks must go to members of the church flower arranging 'team', (Tan Strong, Pauline Allum, Linda Stacey and Joan Barnard) who, even by their own



high standards, surpassed themselves with an extraordinarily beautiful floral display. Friends and neighbours kindly lent good advice, garden furniture, potted plants and hanging



Mr and Mrs McPhedran

baskets to turn the garden of Milton House into a miniature Chelsea Flower Show. It proved how lucky we are to live in such a supportive and friendly village.

Francesca and Nick met at Manchester University and after a spell in Cambridge, moved to Vancouver, Canada in 2006 where they worked respectively as a hospital physiotherapist and a business analyst. By a curious coincidence, both bride and groom have a Dutch mother so the guest list was a truly international affair with friends and family travelling from the USA, Canada, Holland, Dubai, Switzerland and the Cayman Islands. Even more impressive was the fact that Frank (our village Postman) and his wife Angela, were there to greet the bride as she arrived at the church!

If anyone noticed a red, highly polished 'suspicious car in the area' (a la Grapevine), this was the Citroen 2CV wedding car, lovingly restored during the winter in readiness for the 'big event'.

As those who were kept awake by raucous country dancing will be aware, the reception was held at Milton House. Given the number of Dutch 'invaders', there was an awful lot of cheese eaten and the wooden clogs on the floor of the marquee could be heard in St Leonards. The new Mr and Mrs McPhedran took a short break in Tuscany before returning to Canada in June.

It was a memorable day and a true country wedding. Stephen and Dorrit Cartmell have now retired, (exhausted), from their temporary careers as wedding planners.

The **Cream Teas** at the end of May raised £618 after expenses. Thank you to all who made the day a great success!

Our annual **Pets' Service** was again held outdoors as it took place at the start of the heat wave. This allowed children and adults to enjoy singing to a guitar instead of the organ. The dogs were well behaved as was the horse but one of the goats lived up to reputation and ate some service sheets! David blessed the pets with their owners.

All the animals were, of course, well looked after as expected from Proverbs 12 verse 10.

**Appeal letter** - By now, all Cholesbury residents should have received an Appeal letter from the Church. It's a long time since St Laurence has had to ask the Village for financial help as we prefer to hold fund-raising events such as the Fete and Concerts to which you all contribute so generously. We have managed to cover the costs of ministry and maintenance for many years but sadly we now face big bills for fabric repair and the following matters are in urgent need of attention:

**Repainting the belfry - Rising damp on the north wall - Redecorating the interior - Updating the lighting for energy saving bulbs - Specialist work on the stonework - Repairs to the roof.**

We would be so very grateful for help with these vital projects which will enable us to keep our Church in good order not just for your use now but also for the future. You might like to make a contribution to a particular project or simply to the general Fabric Fund.

The **Fete** this year will be held in the grounds of Hawridge & Cholesbury School on **Bank Holiday Monday, 31 August**. We look forward to seeing you there!

The **Bucks Historic Churches Ride and Stride** takes place on **Saturday 12**

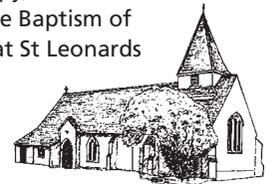
**September** and will be a 'Cycle, Ride and Stride' event around churches in Bucks. Tom Haggerty has already arranged for a group of cyclists to meet outside Cholesbury Village Hall on Saturday morning. They will cycle from Cholesbury to visit local churches. This is a mixed group from the village and others are welcome to join. Please contact Tom - 757283 - for details of the route and plans for lunch.

As usual, our **Harvest Thanksgiving** will be a shared celebration with Hawridge. This year St Mary's will be the host and the service, supper and auction will be held on **Sunday 27 September**.

### ST LEONARDS

**I**t was a very happy, warm and sunny day for the Baptism of Elsie Matthews at St Leonards on Sunday 28 June.

Elsie was brought to church by her parents, Robert and Jakki, and her proud sister and brother, Lia and Mac. The church was full to overflowing with family and friends and David made the service particularly personal to the newest member of St Leonards Church. It was very special to have both Joan Matthews and Janet Harriman, Elsie's grandmothers, read from the prophet Kahlil Gibran and from The Beatitudes. Her Godparents, Angela,



Elsie Matthews baptism

Robyn and John together with all the congregation, gave Elsie great support and a warm welcome into the Church.



Ana and James Gryko

On Sunday 5 July, Ana and James Gryko were received into St Leonards Church. It was a particularly happy Baptism as these young children had already joined us with their parents, Julie (who looked wonderful in a pink hat!) and Stefan, for a number of services and had really enjoyed being a part of the Sunday School. Their shared Godparents, Alison and Kevin Higgs and Joanna and Paul Crook watched with bated breath as the children, carrying their own Baptism candles followed David up and down the aisle as he introduced them to the congregation. During his sermon, David spoke with enormous conviction of the part Julie and Stefan and their children would be able to play in the life of St Leonards church.

It was wonderful to see the Matthews' family filling the church yet again for the Baptism of Jake, son of Hannah and Phillip Matthews on Sunday evening 12 July. It was a beautiful evening and the sun shone through the church windows onto Jake and his four Godparents, Elizabeth, Lisa, Martin and Christopher during the Service



Jake Matthews Baptism

conducted by the Revd Ivor Cornish. A very warm welcome to Jake!

**The boundary wall** – As some of you may have seen, the boundary wall on the west side of the church is in a very bad state of repair. We border onto a public footpath and have a duty of care to make the wall safe. Having consulted three builders, it is evident that the cost of taking down and re-building the wall would be in excess of £10,000. Given the bad state of the external walls of the church itself and the need to spend a considerable amount of money to rectify this, the PCC has decided to remove the boundary wall and replace it with a mixed hedge – in keeping with the other church boundaries. However, the brick piers, over-arch and lantern (all part of the original main entrance) are to be taken down and rebuilt as before.

**The back pew in the church** – After much deliberation, the PCC has decided to remove the right hand back pew – as you enter the church. This will allow David (and anyone else) to stand and talk with members of the congregation while others can move in and out of the church. It will allow us to put a bookcase against the new back pew and to start an adult library as well as providing space for buggies and wheelchairs. Members of the Diocese have been to look at the church and understand totally that we will be able to achieve a

far greater area of welcome, which is so important, while not spoiling in any way the peace and tranquility of St Leonards.

**Family BBQ** – Wow! There were twenty two children in Sunday School at our Family First Service and we fed fifty two hungry people at the BBQ! It was almost impossible to award prizes for the Scavenger Hunt – although Katie Pert and her team moved mountains to find all the items requested.

**Bucks Historic Churches Ride and Stride, Saturday 12 September, 10am to 5pm** - Is there anyone who would be prepared to cycle, ride or walk and be sponsored - 50% for St. Leonards Church and 50% for the Historic Churches Fund? Come on...you can all do it!! St Leonards - and many other local churches in the area will be open from 10 – 5pm, with coffee, tea and soft drinks available all day. Details and sponsor forms from Anne Lake - 01296 620169 – brian.lake51@btinternet.com

**Concert – Friday 18 September** – Joanna Stevens will be giving a concert in St Leonards Church – as a part of the **Parish Council's 75th Anniversary Celebrations**. Joanna, whom many of you will know from the Firework Concerts, is a wonderful contralto. She has sung with the Welsh National Opera and has an amazing voice. The first thirty minutes will be 'serious' - then an interval with wine and canapés – followed by a further and 'lighter' thirty minutes. Do join us! It promises to be a very special evening. Tickets are £10 and available from either Anne Butterworth 758700 or Ann Horn 758250.

We will be celebrating **Harvest at St Leonards on Sunday 11 October**. Our Harvest Festival Service is at 6pm followed by the Harvest Supper in the Village Hall. Everyone is most welcome and we look forward to seeing as many of our families as can come – none of whom need to stay for the auction, given that there is School the next day!

**Tea parties** – we meet on **Wednesday 26 August** and **Wednesday 23 September** as

usual in the new church room.

## HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY CHURCHES'

### August Bank Holiday

**Fete** - The Fete is approaching rapidly and for the first time we are holding it in the grounds of Hawridge and Cholesbury School. Our Bank Holiday Fete is the major fund raising event for our two churches and it is important to make it a success in order to maintain the presence of the churches in the villages. We look forward to having your support either in helping to set up or man one of the stalls – or just coming along to enjoy a true village fete with all the traditional stalls! A list of the stalls will be delivered to all houses in Hawridge and Cholesbury and stall holders will be delighted to receive any donations. If you are willing to help in any way, please do contact either Elizabeth Tomlin 758214, Joan Walton 758332, James Watson 758914 or John Farmer 758715.

**May Fair.** Our May Fair on 4 May was successful despite the weather and lunches and teas were in great demand. Hot soup was particularly enjoyed by those who were rather chilly watching the inter-pub cricket! Thank you everyone for your support.

**Patronal Concert** on 26 June – Once again a very enjoyable evening of music arranged by Iain Ledingham was held at Hawridge & Cholesbury School. Iain brought two first year masters students with him from The Royal Academy of Music, Natalie Chalkly, Soprano (kindly replacing Sara Owen who was ill) and Lawrence Osworth- Peter, Tenor. Ladies were particularly taken with Lawrence's renditions of 'Take a Pair of Sparkling Eyes' and 'Where'er you Walk' and the men were entranced by Natalie's excellent rendition of a wide range of Arias.



Each half of the concert was opened by our own local talented musician, Kenneth Brown, with a trumpet solo. Kenneth was taking his Grade 8 the Tuesday after the concert. Iain's son Angus, gave two amusing readings and a number of us could relate very easily to the 'Arranging Church Flowers' by Arnold Bennett! His daughter, Tess, entertained us with one of her own musical compositions. The Concert, followed by a buffet supper was greatly enjoyed by us all, and for those of you who missed a marvellous evening, Iain will be back again next year at the end of June!

**Patronal Festival** at the Church on 4th and 5th July - In celebration of the Parish Council's 75th Anniversary, the children of Hawridge and Cholesbury School put a lot of thought into the collages and depictions of events covering the last 75 years. Everyone had been involved in making the collage and each class had covered a different event. They were very excited to see their work hanging in the church when they came to visit the following Monday. Thank you so much – pupils and teachers – for helping us celebrate our festival.

The ladies of the church had also shown a lot of imagination in depicting various events and the work of the Parish Council. The more you looked at the displays the more fascinating details you could see – from cornfields to wayside flowers; from the year of discontent to years of celebrations – the Coronation, football, cricket and tennis...not forgetting the aircraft which took part in the Battle of Britain and even the threat of aircraft noise over the Hilltop Villages. Well done everyone!

**Harvest – 27 September.** Our joint Harvest Service with Cholesbury will be held at Hawridge this year. This will be a shortened Family Communion service suitable for children and will be at 10.45am. The Harvest Supper and Auction will be at the School in the evening at 5.30pm for supper at 6pm. Please bring your own drink



*Spot the Planes in St Mary's!*

and glasses. Adults £4.00; children under 14 £2.50 and children under five are free!

**Hawridge Church Walking Group.** As usual there are no walks organized for August and September but we hope to start again on **6 October**: details in the next edition of HTN or contact Joan and Margaret – 758332.

**Bucks Historic Churches Ride and Stride – Saturday 12 September.** St Mary's will be open from 10 till 5 with refreshments as usual. We would love if any of you could cycle, ride or walk – all churches in the area will be open. Half of sponsorship money goes to the Church and half to Bucks Historic Churches.

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*Here we are another year on....the red carpet was laid and the photographers lined up ready for the arrival of the guests. A masked Ball this year, and wow did people make a huge effort, the masks were beautiful, elegant and some quirky, we even had a DIY mask made from a cornflake box! Very imaginative.*

**W**e had the head of the charity and Consultant Radiologist, Dr JJ Bhattacharya come down from Glasgow to give us a short talk on what last year's money was spent on. They have brought specialist software for scanning tiny brains, which Dr Jo explained had been installed and used on a baby for the first time on the Monday before the Ball with huge results! That for us makes it all worth while. This year's money will be spent on research to try and ascertain when the Vein of Galen develops and why.

The main auction got underway with prizes including a signed David Beckham Shirt, a week's stay in a Chateau in France, and a painting by a local botanical artist (A Rose for Ruby). The live band soon fired up and dancing commenced, the silent auction opened for bidding, with lots of interest in the Helicopter ride over the Chilterns and Tea for Two at the House of Commons! The



casino tables were soon open and busy.

The whole evening was a great success and people seemed to be having a wonderful time. With everyone's help we have raised £24,219.00!!! which will help enormously with this vital research for 2009/2010. Thank you to all who donated, and all of you who came along and supported us.

Please note: The Painting entitled 'A Rose for Ruby' can be purchased as a mounted print for £75 and the money will go direct to the charity. We also have small note/writing cards too. Please get in touch via website if you are interested – [www.rubyssummerball.co.uk](http://www.rubyssummerball.co.uk).

*Hannah & Philip Matthews*

# The toughest foot race on earth...

*In a previous Hilltop News we introduced Neil Thubron as he prepared to head for Morocco to attempt the massively challenging Marathon Des Sables. Here is his report on the event...*

**B**efore I started training I set myself four goals: 1. Complete the event, 2. Compete in the event (finish in top 10 per cent of all runners), 3. Enjoy the event, 4. Raise money for charity.

The first thing I did was set about building my training plan. I needed to do lots of miles, and I knew I would have to train with a pack on my back as much as possible. I knew I could run marathon distances: what I needed to experience were multiday events and Ultra distances. The main races I entered were The Jurassic Coastal Challenge – three marathons in three days along the Jurassic coastal path from Lyme Regis to Poole (I came 4th overall): several ultra marathons, including the Tring to Town (40 miles) and Round Rotherham (50 miles). The biggest was the 85 mile Ridgeway - I managed 8th position (1st in the over-40s) in 19.5 hours.

So I went to the desert mentally, physically and technically prepared. What I hadn't prepared for was ...rain, and lots of it.

## **A Freak of Nature**

Within the first two days of arriving, Morocco had its annual rain fall. Rivers appeared from nowhere, cars were washed away, roads were washed away and generally the whole place turned into a muddy, boggy mess.

We arrived at our first night bivvy in torrential rain. The buses could not get

to the site so we had to get on board Moroccan Army trucks. The bivvys are open-ended canvas shelters designed to keep the sun off, not the rain. The ground was very muddy and quickly becoming worse. After about an hour trying to make the tents liveable, we decided to head for the press tents which were much dryer and more sturdy.

As the rain continued and the ground got wetter, the organisers decided that we had to evacuate the site, so we were transported by trucks to a hotel in a local town. The site ended up in two foot of water, because it was built on an ancient river bed!

## **Disappointment or Opportunity?**

Next day we found out that the first stage of the race had been cancelled due to the rain! After two years of preparation and training this was a massive disappointment. I felt upset, angry, robbed. I was now going to take part in a shortened MDS, not what I wanted. There were a lot of unhappy people out there. However, I realised that I could not control or affect the weather. What I could do was focus on what I could control, which was how I felt and being ready when we got the go-ahead. I also reminded myself that it was a race and the situation was the same for everyone.

## **The Race Starts - at Last**

So, after two unexpected nights in hotels we headed out to the start of Stage 2. The sun was out and it was getting hot. The camera crews were everywhere, so it finally felt real. Standing at the start I was excited, nervous, apprehensive, but really looking forward to getting underway.



The first day took us into the famous Saharan Dunes. The terrain in the Sahara is amazing, beautiful and brutal. It is a mixture of the classic huge sand dunes that you see in the movies, sandy/muddy river beds, vast expanses of ancient sea beds covered in rocks and fossils and large rocky climbs: all really tough to run on.

## **Having a Strategy**

The key to surviving and competing is to have a good routine and strategy. Mine was to run for 25 minutes, walk for 5 (at 4 mph, a good pace, but a change in use of muscle groups). I also had a drinking and feeding routine. When I walked I had some food, either a piece of energy bar, some sports beans or a pepparami. I also took a salt tablet every half hour. I was getting through a litre of liquid between checkpoints, half water, half electrolyte drink.

When I reached a checkpoint my strategy was simple. Whilst most people stopped, washed their feet, changed their socks, or sat down and rested, I decided to make up as many places as possible by going straight through. At each checkpoint

I probably gained a minimum of 20 places.

The first two days I felt great as I got into my routine, covering between 20 and 22 miles each day. Back then to the bivvy to eat, wash and disinfect the feet, sort out any blisters and rest.

Day 3 was the longest and, because of the cancellation of the first day, the organisers decided to make it mammoth – 91km! After about 4 or 5 hours I was losing motivation and momentum running into a strong, hot, sandy wind through a never-ending wadi (rocky watercourse). Luckily I met up with a friend and we ploughed on through the day together. With about 20 km to go I started feeling really ill, faint, and dizzy. I had to dig deep to push myself to keep up with the others. I was determined not to stop and not to drop back from the main group. When I got to the final check point 14 km from the finish a doctor tried to pull me out, but I persuaded him I was fine after taking on some water and sugar, so we pushed on. We crossed the line in just over 14 hours in 112th place. I found my tent, got my sleeping

bag out and collapsed. Definitely the hardest thing I have ever had to do (so far).

The determination and spirit of all the competitors was unbelievable. I saw two 70 year-olds cross the line after 34 hours! I saw a Brit, whose feet were shredded, complete the final marathon stage on crutches!

Following the long day, I had a rest day while the other runners/walkers came in, and then the final day was a 42.2km marathon. It was a very hot day, tough terrain and everyone pushed hard. I kept my head and tried to stick to my strategy to get to the finish. As we crested a huge rough hill we could see the finish 3km away. This was a wonderful sight and spurred me on to have a really fast finish.

Looking back at my four goals, I achieved 3.5 of them! I finished 20th out of the 250 Brits, and 126th out of the 850 starters. I did thoroughly enjoy the event and I raised £5000 for charity.

On the final evening, the man whose

vision created the Marathon Des Sables 24 years ago arranged for the Paris Philharmonic Orchestra and an opera diva to perform a concert for us in our bivvy site. It was surreal: 850 dirty, smelly runners lying in their sleeping bags on the desert floor listening to an orchestra and opera singer perform in their dinner jackets and posh frock. Unbelievable!

I would recommend this outstanding event to anyone who fancies pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone and doing something exceptional. I would like to thank all my sponsors:

- Inbuilt
- Universal Telecoms
- The European Marketing Agency
- Up and Running – for providing my shoes
- The Drummond Clinic – for keeping my body in working order!

*Congratulations, Neil. How do you follow that? - ed*

## The Lee Old Church

Over the summer the Church will be the venue for delicious Cream Teas, with proceeds going to the Parish Church. On Sunday 27 September (7.30pm) we are really thrilled to welcome Claudia Phipps who is coming to give an illustrated talk entitled 'Carving a path from stained to engraved glass'. Claudia is a professional stained glass maker, whose family live locally, and she was commissioned to make the glass in the new Church Room at St Leonards. The Lee Old Church has some of the oldest stained glass in England, and it promises to be a fascinating evening.

Tickets available from Trish Swain (837752) and the entry price includes wine and canapés.



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## Ken Swain: a Tribute

Ken was born on 31 Jan 1923, near Hitchin, Herts in The Fox Inn at Darleyhall. He was the youngest of three sons, came of country stock, and was proud of his origins. A bright pupil, he gained a place at Luton Modern Grammar to where he cycled 7 miles there and back.

Leaving school coincided with the outbreak of World War II, and he joined the Army when 18, serving with the Suffolk Regiment in North Africa, then Sicily and ending up in Naples. Leaving the Army, Ken went into the building trade, studying at night school. He found he had a talent for teaching the apprentices, and qualified as a teacher, obtaining a position at Chesham Technical School (now Chesham High). Whilst there, he taught many local lads. He was popular as a teacher, and his methods were typical of the man: a quiet determination which overcame the reluctance of some to learn.

Whilst at Chesham, he met Joyce, a young teacher from the White Hill School, and so began a wonderful marriage lasting 54 years. They complemented each other very well. In 1955 they bought Kingswood Cottages, where Ken lived for the rest of his life. When Chesham Tech became Chesham High, Ken moved to Slough Tech College, where he worked until he retired. There he moved into the science and technology of building. He left his successors with a wonderful legacy of notes and resources to continue.

Ken retired early at 60 and enjoyed gently pottering about at home. He found time to be involved in the Chiltern Open Air Museum, and the Senior Club in the Hilltop Villages as Treasurer, and then Chairman.

Ken died peacefully on 19 May from Parkinson's Disease. He was a gentle person, undemonstrative, but with inner reserves that many never saw, and a man who lived his life to the highest possible personal standards and never prepared to compromise them. Wishing no ill to anyone, he was generous

and polite, undemanding and grateful, wise and unobtrusive.

There was much more to Ken; a vegetarian for 75 years, a marvel with electronics, he built the first television set in the area out of radar parts. He was a conservationist before it was trendy, and a re-cycler. A keen gardener, especially of vegetables and fruit, and never happier than when pottering around the extensive grounds at home, into which he would disappear from sight, happy to be in the place he loved. That was Ken.

*Jon Swain*

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## HAWRIDGE & CHOLESBURY SCHOOL

*Tudors and Greeks seen at H & C School...*

There have been strange goings on during this last term of the school year. First we spotted a large number of Tudors congregating on the playground (even Henry VIII was seen stomping around). We understand they disappeared onto some sort of 'coach' and headed off to Sulgrave Manor where they spent the day working, eating and living every detail of Tudor life. Apparently there were coronations, marriages, deaths and shock beheadings during the day (but somehow they all returned in one piece, quickly dispersed - and not a trace has been seen since!)

Well, just as we'd recovered from that shock invasion, we were accosted by none other than the Ancient Greeks! The hall was turned into a market where stalls full of toga-clad minions were found making mosaics, carving tablets and administrating a variety of herbal medicines to very distressed and noisy patients. In the afternoon the hall was transformed into a Greek theatre where poetry, plays and dance were performed and servants waited on the guests. A variety of tasty morsels were offered as well as red wine (or perhaps it was Ribena) in fine pewter goblets. Mysteriously, as before, the whole crowd disappeared into thin air at about 3.15pm...



*It's all Greek to me!*

However the Greeks were a great sporting race and some of their spirit must have remained with us as we found ourselves embracing 'National School Sports Week'. Secondary school children from Chesham High School ran with a flag which they left (to encourage "extra" physical activity for the week). The brave four, who ran in the hottest temperatures of the week, were greeted by the entire school waving flags and cheering (and all dressed in their school sports kits). The welcome also included performances by two groups of cheerleaders from our Year 6 class who showed off amazing dance and acrobatic skills! In fact the flag must have worked its magic because, despite the high temperatures continuing all

week, the children managed to compete in their annual Sports Day with the usual enthusiasm as well as fitting in lots of other fun sporting activities.

The term raced on until one beautiful summer's evening our Parent School Association held a Summer Garden Party in the grounds. This was principally to have fun but also to raise more funds for our 'Build Us a Stage Appeal'. Families enjoyed a hearty BBQ late into the warm evening with bouncy castle, face painting, rounders and impromptu football games to keep everyone happy. As a result, we



*Say it with flowers - England for the Ashes?*

have enough funds to purchase our new stage...hurray!

Finally, the Patronal Festival took place where, in line with the parish's 75th anniversary, both children and parishioners produced work and flowers to echo events of the last 75 years. These included Man on the Moon, 1966 World Cup and Live Aid. The entire school walked down to visit Hawridge church for a picnic lunch and to view their work in situ.

So, as we finish the term, we wish all good things to those children leaving the school and we look forward to welcoming the new little faces that will join our reception class from September.

*Kay Bass 786016*

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# Hilltop pubs

*All across the UK, the pub trade is in serious decline. Since the pub business is essentially a service business and not simply an outlet for a brewer's beer, pubs spend a lot on manpower for cleaning, serving, stocking, building maintenance and so on. Because the sheds and supermarkets have adopted a strategy of selling drinks at relatively low mark ups to enhance traffic through their outlets, those looking for cheap thrills are bypassing the traditional pubs. Hence, 40 British pubs are closing every week with 4 per cent being lost annually.*

Exacerbating this is the fact that some of our pubs are tenants of national 'pub co's' including Punch and Admiral. Since the pub co's have devolved from being brewers' outlets to City financial investment vehicles which are highly geared with debt they cannot service, pub co's are milking their 'estate' for every scrap of revenue they can squeeze out of their tenants.

Our Hilltop pubs are responding aggressively and, one hopes, effectively by offering more value added services to punters from a greater catchment area than just the four villages. By widening their revenue streams, they expect to cover their overheads and other fixed costs. To this end, all of our local pubs offer good food which is prepared on site. There are also regular beer festivals, hosting of community and charity fundraising events, music, quizzes, comedy, private receptions, etc. By giving support to those added value offerings that interest us and our friends and our families, we improve the chances that our local pubs will still be there for

Christmas. Since the level of trade during the winter would not sustain them all, our village pubs survive on the back of their summer takings.

## The Full Moon

Annie and Peter have a marquee in their garden for the duration of the summer to accommodate events such as the HCCPS Summer Party which was held in July and was again successful. They intend to use it regularly, including on the August Bank Holiday weekend for an end of summer 'spectacular' in the form of a cabaret.

In February, The Full Moon hosted a fundraiser in aid of Help for Heroes based around a game tasting menu using fish and game provided by local fishermen and hunters. The culinary objective was to introduce the guests to a variety of ways to prepare game beyond traditional roasting. Since that proved a popular format for the event, they plan to repeat it when the new season game becomes plentiful and varied in October/November. Look for muntjac, squirrel and wild trout among the more customary game offerings!

## White Lion

During the past winter, there were protracted negotiations between Punch Taverns and Michelle Stratton over the tenancy terms. It has subsequently emerged that the agreement was only extended to 21 September. Since the original *raison d'être* of her becoming co-landlord of the White Lion in January 2000 was that it was an attractive vehicle for a business partnership with her friend, Gary Heap, Michelle has decided to relinquish the licence in September after the sad loss of Gary.

Michelle said that she has much enjoyed her time with the patrons of the White Lion and that she will miss their company very much as she drifts peacefully along in her recently acquired narrow boat. Her friends along with supporters of the White Lion are invited to a leaving party for Michelle on 20 September starting at 3pm at the pub.

There will be drinks and a buffet.

## Black Horse

Life goes on apace for Janet and Mick Goodchild at the Black Horse. Their garden around the back in the Vale is looking very enticing and has been busy with diners and drinkers this summer. With the demise of several family type pubs in Chesham, they could well benefit from orphaned clients.

In addition to hosting regular Lions and Round Table groups, they have developed a new line in wedding receptions. A recent one saw 200 guests in a marquee which was a big success for the newlyweds.

## The Rose and Crown

Congratulations to Marc Heywood who married his business partner, Kerry Inch, in the winter. They are now actively pursuing the development of The Rose and Crown with a series of attractions.

They provide a good example of the local pubs offering value-added services that appeal to people. Following a beer festival in late July, there will be a barbeque on the August Bank Holiday Monday with

a DJ providing music. There is a murder-mystery banquet and an end of term jamboree for kids in the planning stages.

Quiz nights feature on the first Monday of each month. The Comedy Lounge evenings (currently the first Wednesday of the month) have proved a popular innovation with four of the first five having been played before sold out houses. The format is always the same, with a compere introducing three different stand-up acts each session.

## The Bull

Early in 2004, The Bull, with its adjoining land, was purchased by Fortitude Investments (Commercial) Limited which describes the nature of its business in its Companies House registration as 'Development and Sell Real Estate'. After an ambitious start to 2009, the business has been reported to have been party to litigation and planning challenges. Now the pub is closed and the building has been solidly boarded up. *Requiescat in pace.*

*Bill Ingram*

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## September sights and sounds; spangling, semaphore, sheaves, shucks and swallows

*The weather conditions in North Africa are not my usual starting point I admit.*

*However, the wet winter season in Morocco has provided us with a 'once in a decade' display of spangling colour. Painted Lady butterflies are not a resident species in the UK; well at least they're not for the present anyway. Each year we rely on the northern migration of this distinctive butterfly. It is one of the most widespread and well-travelled butterfly tribes around the globe and is related to another migrant, the Red Admiral. Both belong to a genus called Vanessa, the girl's name which had been coined by Jonathan Swift around 1700.*

Anyway, the unusually heavy rainfall in February caused a verdant covering of food-plant in the Atlas Mountains which in turn supported an abnormally large herd of rapacious caterpillars. Emerging a month later from bejewelled chrysalises, the adults departed northwards to France, Spain and Portugal. A second generation left from there northwards. This year, rather than just tens-of-thousands, up to a million or more arrived across the UK. They have been reported as far north as the remoter Scottish Islands and although they prefer open ground they have been plentiful in the more secluded parts of the Chilterns.

In July these generally non-gregarious caterpillars – which are black/grey spiky with a pale cream stripe along each flank

(Peacock butterfly larva is a glossy black) – could be found feeding on thistle and nettle. By the time this imago edition of HTN emerges through your letterbox, the British-born generation of Moorish imagoes should also be about to emerge too. So keep an eye out for this large showy butterfly with its characteristic speedy corkscrew flight pattern.

This UK-born generation do not breed here but disappear and there is debate as to their next destination. Although it has been suggested they head southwards again, there's no confirmation of the theory that they actually return safely back in North Africa. Lepidopterists are hoping to crack this mystery later this year.

This mystery has a parallel with one which puzzled naturalists over 200 years ago. Then there was a theory about where swallows went in winter. The collective view was that they buried themselves in muddy banks until the spring. Today there is no doubt where swallows go in winter. On warm September evenings they can be seen



feeding up on the clouds of insects drifting on the thermals and at dusk congressing as they masse together on overhead wires ahead of their synchronised departure for southern Africa.

A year or so back I commented on the absence of lapwings from our fields in more recent times. This year there have been sightings in an arable field in Heath End and I was also lucky enough, while walking the parish boundary, to see a pair performing a haphazard display, from which they get their name, and aimed at distracting would-be predators from finding their chick(s). Their black and white wings seemingly using a unique semaphore to beat out their message. These were a welcome sight as the lapwing is one indicator of how well or otherwise the local wildlife is faring.

We tend to associate owls with the hours between twilight and dawn and conversely not birds 'of the day'. Tawny owls break this rule. Fledgling tawnies leave the nest early, after five weeks and far too early perhaps, as they then hang around perched on branches in nearby trees for up to three months, relying on their parents to feed them. I think this is akin to serving a kind of apprenticeship whereby the youngsters supposedly are learning how to lay up motionless and unnoticed during the day. However, like all young children, they crave attention and are given to break cover with spontaneous outbursts along the lines of "Keewik" in the middle of the day. Once heard, look out for a gawky-looking fluff ball trying feebly to appear inconspicuous.

To be honest, being a scientist, my appreciation of our English poets had until now sadly not stretched as far as John Drinkwater, whose works were influenced both by his childhood in the Warwickshire countryside and the later horrors of the First World War. I happened across the following poem, called September, which not only reflects these influences and the time of year but is of particular relevance

for another unexpected reason. The verses are believed to have been inspired by the countryside around here, experienced during a short visit in 1915/6. But that's a story I will save for another time, wearing my local rather than natural history hat on!

Wind and the robin's note to-day  
Have heard of autumn and betray  
The green long reign of summer.  
The rust is falling on the leaves,  
September stands beside the sheaves,  
The new, the happy comer.

Not sad my season of the red  
And russet orchards gaily spread  
From Cholesbury to Cooming,  
Nor sad when twilight valley trees  
Are ships becalmed on misty seas,  
And beetles go abooming.

Now soon shall come the morning crowds  
Of starlings, soon the coloured clouds  
From oak and ash and willow,  
And soon the thorn and briar shall be  
Rich in their crimson livery,  
In scarlet and in yellow.

Almost 100 years on, many of these September sights (and sounds) around our villages have changed. There are but a few remnants of those 'russet orchards' and the image of sheaves is an even

### Cream Teas

*Chilterns Dog Rescue Society will be holding their annual Cream Teas at Cholesbury Village Hall on 23 August from 1pm to 4pm. After browsing the giftware and homemade stalls, enjoy freshly baked scones and cakes. All two and four legged friends will be very welcome.*

more distant memory. Although these elements of Drinkwater's rural idyll may have disappeared, the autumnal woodland vista and hedgerows described in his third verse still remain very much part of our September scene today, except where they have been replaced by a monoculture of sterile trees.

So perhaps while out one late September day you'll catch that first glimpse of this year's 'clouds' and realise the timelessness of that view. Meanwhile, there's also that distinctive crunch underfoot as you walk on the remains of nutshells, beneath a hazelnut tree. Those discarded by squirrels have been splintered in their jaws. Others more intact have a circular hole and teeth-marks, having been gnawed through by wood or yellow-necked mice. Amongst the discarded shucks may also be some shells with a tiny circular hole bored in them. This is the work of a third consumer, the nut weevil. One egg is laid by the adult beetle when the shell was small and soft. The larva feeds on the growing nut and, having drilled its way out, continues the journey to adulthood over-wintering under an insulated blanket of leaves.

Thinking of entering a photo in this year's Hort Soc Show? Some well-positioned over-ripe fruit, such as bananas or plums is an excellent way to attract those large butterflies to the garden and get them to keep still while you photograph them. Happy snapping!

*Thanks for the questions and sightings since last time, keep them coming.*  
 chrisbrown@rayhill.com 758890

Tan Strong would like to thank everybody who has sent cards and gifts following the sudden death of her son, James Adams (28 years). Tan and David, Edward and Lillie appreciate all the kind messages of sympathy and 'virtual hugs' they have received from neighbours and friends.

## CHOLESBURY cum ST LEONARDS HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

*It has been an eventful summer for gardeners in the Hilltop Villages with some excellent events and the best weather for over a decade.*

Members thoroughly enjoyed looking around Paddy and Francis Sanger's lovely garden, our obvious enjoyment was a great tribute to their 30 years hard work.

Many thanks to all of you who donated plants and helped us make the St Leonards fete a great success - despite inclement weather. We had another successful stall selling everything from plants to bird boxes and even the heavy rain didn't dampen spirits.

The outing to Pashley Manor and Sissinghurst went well with 47 members and friends setting out on a trip to these super gardens. The roses at Pashley Manor were in their prime, and the various scents drifted across the lawns. Many of us felt we could have stayed all day!

The open gardens on Sunday 28 June were a great success with about 170 members, friends and a number of visitors enjoying the five open gardens in Cholesbury. Just over £1,000 was raised for the Iain Rennie Hospice at Home and the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance and all those who opened their gardens should be very proud of their efforts with the gardens looking spectacular on an overcast but thankfully dry day. We received many extremely positive comments about the gardens so it was well worth all their hard work.

The Society's final event, the **Craft and Horticultural Show**, is approaching fast and will take place on **Saturday 29 August**.

This is a good time to start planning your submissions with classes covering all facets of horticulture, crafts and photography – there are even special children's classes. Please call Roseann Vince on 758764 for a schedule for the show or any other information.

### **Jobs to be doing in August and September**

- Watering – take particular care of containers so they don't go short of water during the summer.
- Dead head roses as the blooms fade.
- Trim back lavender bushes after flowering to remove old blooms and shoot tips.
- Support tall perennials with canes, cut everlasting flowers as they are at their peak and hang to dry upside down.
- Summer prune wisteria in August, shortening side shoots to about 5 or 6 leaves from the main stem.
- In the greenhouse, damp down the greenhouse floor every morning to increase humidity and make sure plants are shaded on hot days to prevent scorch.
- Pinch out tomato side shoots and continue feeding with a high potash tomato fertiliser.
- If you are going on holiday, move any baskets and containers out of the full sun to a shady position, stand terracotta pots on a gravel tray topped with water.
- Continue to take summer cuttings of fuchsias, pelargoniums and tender perennials – they can be overwintered on frost-free windowsills.
- Order spring flowering bulbs ready for autumn planting.
- Give bedding displays, hangings baskets and pots a little attention to ensure their displays last well into the autumn. Remove faded blooms, keep watering daily and control pests when you find them.

- Regularly pick crops so they are always fresh. From August to early September the following crops can be sown directly outside: lettuce and salad leaves, winter spinach, turnips for their green tops, final sowing of green cabbage .
- Protect late crops of fruit with netting to keep birds away but check daily to ensure no birds or animals are trapped.
- Your gardens will continue to look good and green if you use water wisely and keep your plants well watered.
- Keep an eye on early ripening apple varieties and pick the fruit as soon as it's sweet enough to eat.
- Pick any herb stems for drying or freezing.
- Collect seeds produced by perennials by saving them when they are fully ripe. Put them in paper bags and hang them in a warm place to dry out.

Enjoy the late summer and your gardens - we look forward to seeing you at the show.

*Barbara Baddon*

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## 100 CLUB WINNERS

Winners for the month of June 2009

- 1st Prize – £50 Mr and Mrs R Charles,  
Buckland Common
- 2nd Prize – £25 Mrs D Amies, Aylesbury
- 3rd Prize – £15 Cholesbury-cum-St  
Leonards WI
- 4th Prize – £15 Mrs S Cheek,  
Buckland Common

Winners for the month of July 2009

- 1st Prize – £15 Mr & Mrs F Sanger,  
St Leonards
- 2nd Prize – £15 Mr J Lake, St Leonards

Winners for Month of August 2009

- 1st Prize – £25 Mrs M Marchant,  
Cholesbury
- 2nd Prize – £15 Mr W Cole, St Leonards
- 3rd Prize – £15 Mr G Swallow,  
Buckland Common

*New Members always welcome*

*Please contact the Treasurer, Mick  
Mariscotti, 01494 837093*



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## CAR PARKING ON THE COMMON

This is the first year we have held the Fete in the School grounds and we hope it will prove to be a great venue

## Sandy's latest quiz update

As I write this the closing date for my latest quiz is upon me. From various outlets 400 quizzes have been sold and, as all printing costs and prizes have been donated, £400 has gone into the fund-raising pot. In all over £1,500 has been raised by the families of the seven boys from the Sapphire School of Gymnastics in Hemel Hempstead towards the cost of them taking part in a competition in Malta later this month (July).

Two of these boys are my grandsons and, as I write Michael, the younger brother, is attending a week's coaching at the British National Sports Centre at Lilleshall, earned by coming 9th at the national competitions in Newcastle back in May.

As you read this the boys will be back home and I will have marked the returned quizzes - although if 300 are returned (sorry Frank) I may still be at it!

My grateful thanks to all of you who have supported my quizzes these last few years. I do not plan to do another one for the foreseeable future, but who knows - watch this space!

Sandy Clarke

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## THE THURSDAY CLUB

On Thursday 18 June we had our AGM. It lasted seven minutes (!) and just covered a change of committee members. Bev Coulter has decided to stand down to make way for "younger blood" - we shall miss his observations and contributions at our Committee meetings. Sandy Clarke is replacing him, and we duly welcome her.

Bev actually went a long way towards setting up the next meeting and talk on 15 October about 'The Rothschilds and Waddesdon Manor'. Further details and tickets will be made available soon. Thanks to all of you who made the 2008/2009 year so successful. As a result we are intending to donate £350 to a worthy charity - suggestions to any committee member are welcome.

Guy Williams



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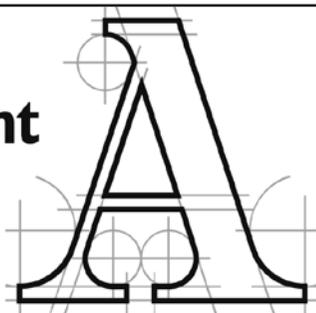
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## CURVACEOUS COOK

### Easy Porchetta

*In Umbria, no little village market is without its own Porchetta van parked under a tree from early in the morning, with the delicious aroma wafting through the air. The Italians tend to eat it in a bun as they wander around the market, and we take it back home for salads.*

*The whole pig is boned out apart from the head which remains whole, and the cavity filled with a mixture of salt, the kidneys and herbs, big bunches of fresh fennel and bay leaves, and then rolled up and roasted slowly overnight. The Italians find the fat to be the prized bit, but frankly we find that a bit too much, and risk their amazement when we ask to have that left off the top!*

*The crackling however is wonderful.*

*I have yet to host a party big enough to do the whole pig, but discovered Jamie Oliver's version in his 'Italy' book. We are now completely hooked on it, and I make up a big batch every now and then and rub it into all pork for putting on the BBQ, and also for roasting. It brings a very special aroma and taste to pork loin steaks, without being chilli hot or smelling of fennel for those who do not like fennel or too much spice.*

### The Mix

*In a pestle and mortar, or in the small bowl of a grinder or processor, grind the following together until almost a powder:*

*4 tbs fennel seeds*

*3 small dried red chillies (if using it all straight away you could get away with fresh ones)*

*5 bay leaves*

*Zest of 1 lemon*

*3 tbs rock salt (1 tbs table salt)*

*You can now either store it in a jar and use whenever you wish, or rub it into the flesh and fat of the pork. I have found it as good after 2 months as when first made.*

*I use good pork, and don't cook it for ages: a thick loin chop only takes 5-7 minutes on the BBQ, so it is still really juicy, but the blood doesn't run. I rub a little oil into them just before putting onto the very hot grid to prevent sticking.*

*I have never tried it with fish, but fennel is lovely with fish, so give it a go! Enjoy.*

**Lulu Stephen [bellington@hotmail.com](mailto:bellington@hotmail.com)**

## Hilltop News

We welcome all news, letters and articles which are of general interest and relevance to the Hilltop Villages. Material for inclusion in the October/November (limited) edition should be sent to Imogen Vallance (Societies), or Anne Butterworth (Church Matters) by **11 September** latest. All other news, views and material should go directly to the editor. Please note that photos sent online must be at least 2,500 x 1,750 pixels in size.

### Editor

Graham Lincoln 758449 GrahamLnc@aol.com

### Societies, Diaries

Imogen Vallance 758552 imogen@cidars.fsnet.co.uk

### Co-ordinator/Church Matters

Anne Butterworth 758700 anne@oldbrunsfarm.co.uk

### Advertising

Ann Horn 758250 annhorn43@aol.com

### Design & Production

Michael Spark 758882 mjbspark@googlemail.com

### Photography

Oliver Parsons 758694 oliver@parsons111.freeserve.co.uk

### Distribution

Rosemary Pearce 758334

### Printer

Strong's, Berkhamsted 01442 878592 info@strong's-printing.co.uk

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