

August 2019

# WHADDON QUARTERLY

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## For comments, queries and articles

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Advertising Rates and Publication Policy – page 51

## Whaddon Jubilee Hall

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### Final deadlines for forthcoming issues:

18<sup>th</sup> October 2019, 17<sup>th</sup> January, 17<sup>th</sup> April and 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

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**Cover: Great oaks, as at Snelshall, were sent to Nash sawmill (p. 22). By John Mortimer.**

# SNIPPETS

**SCOOP.** Coming to Whaddon in the not-to-distant future is a new music recording studio. Watch this space and remember; you read it here first!

**NEXT YEAR** will see major nationwide celebrations to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day, victory in Europe day.



**NOT COMING** to a house near you: the Co-op's grocery delivery robots. The retailer has been using autonomous robots for a year to make deliveries within an hour from Monkston, Milton Keynes. It recently added its Emerson Valley branch. Anyone walking in Emerson Valley Park may spot one of these robots as it silently negotiates redways and footpaths – but not the Shenley Road to Whaddon!

**SIGN OF THE TIMES?** Early each morning, some 30 or so newspapers are delivered to households in Whaddon courtesy of wedelivernewspapers.com. The number has fallen over the years; in one village the number has more than halved from 70 to 27. The Winslow business delivers 1,000-plus daily in Steeple Gaydon, Gawcott, Thornborough, Nash and Milton Keynes.

**WHADDON'S D-Day** Commemoration saw the arrival of two US Jeeps on Windy Ridge. One is photographed (**right**) by Ron Gingell. It is seen here with two Teas on Tuesday regulars: Eileen Gingell, Ron's wife, and Margaret Barrie.



**IN JUNE** it was announced that Britain's population had increased by 435,500; that's equivalent to adding a city like Coventry every year. Net migration, according to the Office of National Statistics, rose by 275,000. Such an increase indirectly has knock-on implications for infrastructure, housing (Shenley Park), schools, hospitals and medical centres and so on.



**BLATENT SPEEDING**, and at times flagrant, remains a feature of Whaddon life; vans and cars, they are all the same. Seemingly, nothing has changed since August 2017 when the *Whaddon Quarterly* last reported the matter. Here two drivers were caught, by this publication's snapper, in Stock Lane



within three minutes of one another in late June.

**HUGE THANKS** are due to all those who, over the past three-plus years, have put forward photographs of one kind or another. Without such illustrations the *Whaddon Quarterly* would be much impoverished of information. This issue in particular benefits from such generosity. ■



## PARISH COUNCIL REPORT

July 2019

**H**AVING spent more than half my life in Whaddon, I can say without doubt that in the whole of this period the village has faced and beaten off the threat, so far successfully, of becoming suburban and losing its independence. I recall being told about "the proposed North Bucks new town" which might be right on top of Whaddon. That was Milton Keynes but, as we know, we were not swallowed up at the outset. However, there has been a never ending war, for half a century, for the Parish Council to thwart moves to gobble us up. This has been, so far, successful and the phrase, "The ridge is a natural planning boundary" (thanks to Graham Stewart coining it) came to be accepted in Planning circles.

The latest Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP), due to be announced in the next few weeks, is almost certain to propose the development of a site known as Shenley Park. This would bring housing to within touching distance of Briary View on both sides of Shenley Road. Nevertheless, I know that Whaddon will continue to assert successfully its rural independence.

If this development is confirmed, it will be part, strangely, not of Milton Keynes but of Aylesbury Vale/Buckinghamshire which will collect the Council Tax; but my expectation is that the residents will use the services provided by Milton Keynes.

I have asked, (but not received an answer) as to how our roads will be able to cope with the extra cars from 1,500 extra houses. When one is told that there will be a new exit onto the A421, I have visions of eternal traffic jams; we all know that at present the A421 is hardly coping with demand.

Luckily, we do not have to fight the HS2 railway, like many other North Bucks residents, but we shall, in due course, most likely find that the Oxford to Cambridge Expressway comes between Whaddon and Mursley, following the line of the railway. The road, once just a dual carriageway, is now expected to have branches which will provide both jobs and houses.

I hope that residents will not find this too gloomy a prognosis, but I know that Whaddon residents will relish the battle ahead. As your Parish Council Chairman and Aylesbury Vale District Councillor, I shall fight for Whaddon's independence; and hopefully next year as a member of the new Buckinghamshire Council. ■

*Billy Stanier*

July 2019

## FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

IT IS mid-May and skies are azure; small birds twitter gaily as rooks squawk from lofty nests in a nearby spinney with its own fresh canopy, lambs skip, cattle tug at lush grass in a nearby field, wheat ripples idly in a gentle breeze and thoughts turn to.....er this issue.

A theme emerges: anniversaries, underpinned by a groundswell of local history which comes to life either through the words of those who were there or, through their meticulous research, pull forward words and pictures of the past. Each one is a little cameo to help join up the dots of Whaddon life over the last 150 years. Reflections such as these unlock events of the past and give *Whaddon Quarterly* its unique signature; even a strong sense of place.

By amazing happenstance, in the early 1970s, this editor and a former editor, Peter Spooner, were employed as magazine editors by the same publisher; and shared the same open-plan office complex in dreary Woolwich overlooking Thames Barrier and daily river traffic. There is, therefore, a certain irony in being able to extend, again through the happenstance death of a former Whaddon resident, an invitation to Peter's son, Philip, to write for this issue.

Leeds-born Alan Bennett, playwright, actor and author, once wrote: 'Every family has a secret, and its secret is that it's not like other families.' Sure enough, Peter Spooner *had* a secret. He, like many other men of his era, never spoke of his experience of war: World War 2. But in this issue, Philip, through his own research, proudly brings to life Peter's war years in the Royal Air Force, long before his father embarked on a business career in computing and publishing. With this year's anniversary of D-Day and the 75<sup>th</sup> next year of the end of the Second World War in Europe and Japan, it is appropriate to include Philip's tribute.

In the same way, Billy Stanier recalls his father's vital part in the D-Day operations. This year, Billy again returned to Normandy to take part in their commemorations; his recollections are on these pages. One way and another, there are other little secrets scattered hither and thither within this publication; little secrets normally occluded by the mists of time.

Nearer to home, Whaddon's D-Day commemoration on 6<sup>th</sup> June certainly spawned much activity, some details of which are recorded in this issue.

Continuing the aeronautical and anniversary themes, a chance remark by a neighbour brought to life another Whaddon secret: the Whaddon glider, and a question: how did the pilot manage to avoid the overhead cables? Did he even see them?

Modern gliders and helicopters had yet to be invented when men, and boys, toiled to fell the great oaks near former Snelshall Priory; great oaks just like that on this issue's front cover. Timber from those oaks, and other nearby woods, found use in all manner of places, from sheep-folds to houses, as we discover from Ron Unwin of Nash. He brings to life a nearby long-forgotten sawmill started by George Varney, who moved to Whaddon 130 years ago.

Then, mighty, powerful carthorses plodded majestically, tirelessly, awesomely and rhythmically along silent nearby lanes; without question, they performed the work now the domain of modern four-wheel drive tractors. In these behemoths, the equivalent of 300 cart horses lurk concealed beneath their bonnets. Ron shines a light on another aspect of George's life rarely seen today; George and his wife had a very, very large family.

Speeding traffic continues to blight Whaddon. Figures from MVRs only confirm visual and photographic evidence. It was not always thus. Derek White records here (**p. 58**) the days when traffic through the near-silent village was so light that local lads could play football in Stock Lane as they awaited the arrival of the bus to school.

Meanwhile, Whaddon's own present-day school is proof that one Whaddon light shines brightly; there are also others. A report from Ofsted, following its latest inspection, awards 'Outstanding' to Whaddon C of E First School. How fantastic for the school and well deserved.

But there is potentially some gloom on the horizon: the results of AVDC's Local Plan. It is clear from the Parish Report there are big challenges ahead. Meanwhile, enjoy summer. ■



# Clerk's Corner

Helpful information from  
Whaddon Parish Council



## Improved street lighting

There is a new street lamp (**right**) located outside Nos. 33a/33b Stock Lane. It replaces an obsolete lamp for which spares are no longer available. There will be electricity savings from the improved efficiency of the LED lamp. The Parish Council (PC) has been advised the unit is more reliable with correspondingly lower maintenance costs. The PC plans to press ahead replacing more older-style street lamps in the near future.

## Reporting maintenance problems on footpaths

Bucks County Council has recently launched a website page where you can alert footpaths officers to problems with footpaths, byways and bridleways. Use the search engine of your choice to search for "Bucks CC rights of way issues", and the website will pop up and lead you through, identifying the footpath concerned and describing the problem. Subsequently, you will get progress updates from Bucks CC to keep you informed of the progress.

## Another plea for dog owners to clear up after their dogs

Once again dog faeces are a topic of concern for Villagers. The place to report repeated dog fouling is AVDC website. Use your preferred search engine to find "AVDC Report Dog Fouling", and use the on-line form to fill in the details. It will help if you have photographic evidence and a diary of dates and times of the occurrences. Dog Wardens will deal with the complaint, and can instigate fines of up to £1,000.

We need to tackle these problems as a community; personally, I'd strongly urge Villagers not to just post complaints on Facebook, but to get on line, report the problem to the authorities, and get some positive progress towards a solution. A few minutes of your time is very well spent!

## SIGN UP FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION AND UPDATES BY EMAIL

Many residents of Whaddon Parish are not getting up-to-date and timely information about very important issues affecting our Parish. You can also get *Whaddon Quarterly* by email, and lots of useful notices and information; e.g., refuse collection delays, road closures, planning applications, etc.

Send a short email to [ParishClerk@WhaddonBucksPC.org.uk](mailto:ParishClerk@WhaddonBucksPC.org.uk) asking to be added to the list. We promise absolutely you will NOT be 'spammed' and your details will NOT be passed on or used for any other purpose than this one.

## Date of next Parish Council meeting(s)

The next meeting(s) of Whaddon Parish Council take(s) place at Whaddon Chapel, Stock Lane, at 7.30pm 11/7/19, 12/9/19, 14/11/19, 9/1/20, 12/3/20. Please check Village Notice Board on the bus stop to confirm dates and location, as these can be subject to change. All Welcome!

### Whaddon Quarterly

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**Printer:** Harlequin Press Ltd., 12 Beacon House Farm, Warren Road, Little Horwood, Milton Keynes, MK17 0PS. Telephone 01908 506722

The views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of Whaddon Parish Council. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the editor does not accept liability for any errors within contributed material. The editor's decision is final.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Dave as postie: the end of an era

A NEW chapter begins: retirement. I have mixed feelings about it; I've had the best of times being your postman since January 2010. What a great bunch of people you are.

But things are changing within Royal Mail. Postmen are now being tracked; they know exactly where I am in the village, and how long I stand chatting.

They want their pound of flesh and they are not bothered in the least about old Mrs Jones, who hasn't spoken to anyone for a couple of days. But hey ho, we've got to keep the shareholders happy. You live in a very special place with a great community spirit.

So what are you going to do with yourself, people ask? Well, I have four daughters, the current Mrs Percival and four grandchildren. They keep me on my toes.

What else? I shall join a golf course, and try and improve my game. There is also metal detecting: I'm looking for the second Whaddon hoard. You never know.

Thank you for looking after me. And thank you for the best sausage rolls, mince pies, the wedding, the parties, pints at the pub, the entertainment at the village hall, the choir and tea and cakes at the church. But most of all, I thank you for your friendship. I shall keep in touch with the village; I'll see you in the pub, or events at the village hall.

Your new postman is Paul; he's a seasoned postman of 34 years. Be gentle with him.

All the best.

*Dave*

### A lovely insight into Whaddon

THANK YOU for a copy of the May 2019 *Whaddon Quarterly*. It is a very interesting read and gives a lovely insight into life in Whaddon today. It feels like a good place to live.

An interest in Bletchley Park led us to visit many years ago. Having heard of developments since then, we took a few days' holiday to visit again. John had read about the Whaddon connection, and so we included a visit to the village on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May to seek out the plaque on the village hall.

We certainly found more than we were looking for: a Doomsday Plaque (**right**), lovely welcoming people in the village hall for Teas on Tuesday, and an understanding of the radio masts on Windy Ridge and the great importance of Whaddon – more than we had previously understood.



John has investigated your [whaddonquarterly.blogspot.com](http://whaddonquarterly.blogspot.com) and was very impressed. We will be able to keep tabs on Whaddon through its *Quarterly*.

Thank you and your friendly knowledgeable villagers for the welcome tea and friendship. ■

*Sue and John Holton*

Kent

### 'Likes' for Bucks bellringers' practice

SEVEN members of the North Bucks Branch of the Oxford Diocese Bell-ringers held their monthly Branch Practice at St Mary's Church, Whaddon, on 15<sup>th</sup> June.

The sound of church bells being pealed brought enjoyment to some Whaddon residents; indeed a positive comment on the Whaddon Facebook Group brought more than 15 'likes' within the first day.

There are plans to hold one practice a month at different towers in the region. Whaddon's tower was the first of these occasions. Over 250 members of the branch are eligible to participate. ■

*Phillip Starr*

## Sadly missed: Primrose Havis

PRIMROSE was a cousin to my husband David King, who is also buried at St Mary's, Whaddon. She was also my cousin.

Primrose never married, so was never a King in that sense. She moved to Whaddon in approximately 1942/3 to help with David's sister and David, when he was born in 1943.

She lived with the King family at Shenley Common Farm, until we all had to move in 1993. Primrose lived with my husband and myself at Finmere until he died in 2006. She continued to live with my daughters and myself at Finmere until we moved to Grendon Underwood in 2014.

She then moved with us, and lived with us until she went into hospital last August. She then had to go into a home. She is sadly missed, being like a grandmother to my two daughters. Primrose managed to reach the age of 91 years and is always in our thoughts. Her wish was to be buried next to David; they are together again.

*Shirley King*

Grendon Underwood

(See also p. 27 – Ed)

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## Whaddon School May Fayre – 2019

**As chairperson of Friends of Whaddon School, I would like to take this opportunity of offering a huge thank you to all those who helped at our May Fayre.**

THIS year, the final total for money raised was just over £3,600, which will help the school with new projects in the next school year.

This year the theme was **Real life superheroes** and we saw some amazing and creative costumes, and beautifully decorated floats.



**Millie Masterton, Stevie Taylor and Charley Daniels: voting for women**

Thank you to the WI again this year. You put together a superb 'Whaddon Women's Institute plaque', and at such short notice. And a thank you to the kids of Whaddon School who decorated their float beautifully and had some amazing costumes. Thank you to all the teachers who worked so hard during the term; and for teaching kids the maypole dancing. They were brilliant.

The Winslow Concert Band performed again this year and did a great job at entertaining the masses.

Huge congratulations are due to all the winners of the Raffle, the winner of the fancy dress, Stevie and the two runners up, Archie Stevens and Dylan.

A special thank you goes to the Governor of Whaddon School, Liz Julier, for judging the fancy dress and to Steve Short for driving the May King and Queen in the procession through the village to start off the festivities.



**May Queen and King: Claudia Wood and Harrison Vallance**

The following list of thanks is by no means exhaustive: I would firstly like to thank all the teachers of the Whaddon School: Selina Davies – the Headteacher, Helen Nash, Kirsty Cartwright, Lucy Gyau-Awuah, Kim Swain and Kajal Wright for their dedication to this wonderful day. It would not have been successful without all their help, as well as the BBQ & Bar Maestros: Paul Williamson, David Vallance, Ed Mitchell, Alex Markwick, Dom Taylor and Guy Birch-Jones.

A massive thank you is due to Taylor Walsh and First Facilities Management for sponsoring the BBQ and bar; we can't thank you enough.



**Whaddon First School float: decorated by them**

Harris, Adam Mills, Steven Mapstone, Dave Taylor and Dan Taylor.

Thank you to Barbara from Cowley & Co for towing the school float throughout the procession; we appreciate your help and hopefully you will continue to be a part of the May Fayre for years to come.

Thank you to Baird and Denise McClellan for their amazing Plant Stall, Bob Adams (Arts & Events Management) as our PA for the day, Paul (Oldbrook Inflatables) for the Bouncy Castle; the kids absolutely

A huge **Whaddon's WI on parade** thank you to all the parents, grandparents and other volunteers who helped man the stalls during the afternoon and provided donations for the tombola and tea and cake stall. We couldn't have such a great day without your help. It is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to the road closure guys, led by George Phillips of Phillwell Developments and his team which comprised Guy Birch-Jones, Paul



**First maypole dance opened the festivities**



**Ollie Enright, Sam & Rupert Giddings and Dylan Dooney**

loved it.

Thank you to the raffle prize donators: Rachael MacIntyre for the gorgeous hamper, Bletchley Park, Daytona, Planet Ice and many more.

Also, a massive thank you to Friends of Whaddon School Committee and partners, as well as other families who worked hard to make the day possible.

Thank you to the Mitchells, Harrises, Markwicks, Guy Birch-Jones, Shavaun Enright, the Vallances, the Taylors, Charlotte Calder, the Williamsons, Edmondsons, Gurneys, Lorna Orr, the Stoddart-Scotts, Lorraine Sharrock and her family, Clare and Helen Wallace-Fisher

and lastly myself: Samantha Iacono. Weeks of work happens in advance of the day and it simply would not be possible without this unique team and their families' support.

A big thank you goes to the villagers of Whaddon for all your support, donations of cakes, bottles, jam jars, teddies etc to make the day a lot easier to plan, and for coming to the May

Fayre to celebrate on May Day with all the children of Whaddon School. You all make the day very special and we couldn't raise the money for Whaddon School and the kids without you.

Thank you and we hope to see you next year. ■

*Samantha Iacono*

Chairperson, Friends of Whaddon School

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## **'Outstanding' for Whaddon School**

**In a report published on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019, Ofsted awarded an 'Outstanding' classification to Whaddon C of E First School. John Mortimer outlines details.**

OFSTED has awarded Whaddon C of E First School an 'Outstanding' grade for each of its five categories under its classification of 'Overall Effectiveness'. In a previous inspection, Ofsted gave the School a 'Good' level in overall effectiveness. The school has 46 pupils.

The categories are: Effectiveness of Leadership and Management: Outstanding; Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Outstanding; Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare: Outstanding; Outcomes for Pupils: Outstanding; and Early Years Provision: Outstanding.

In its report, Ofsted notes "This is an outstanding school. The Headteacher provides very strong leadership. Leaders and governors have created an outstanding school where all pupils thrive." The report adds: "The very experienced governors have an excellent understanding of the school. They are frequent visitors and gather pertinent information to inform their view of the school. As a result, they know the school extremely well and support and challenge leaders very effectively."

The report points to "Visionary leadership in Reception ensures that children make strong progress in their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children are extremely well prepared for their learning in Year 1."

The Ofsted report continues: "Subject leaders play an important role ensuring that pupils gain appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding in their respective subjects. The school's curriculum, including homework, provides rich experiences that stimulate pupils' interests and desire to learn. Exciting themes develop pupils' skills in English and mathematics across a variety of subjects. Teaching is of a consistently high quality. Lessons are very well planned and often highly imaginative and stimulating."

It adds: "Leaders and governors are diligent in carrying out their duties for safeguarding. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe. Pupils' welfare needs are very well met. The precise tracking of pupils' progress across the curriculum enables leaders and teachers to have a detailed understanding of how well pupils are doing and where support may be needed."

To which the report adds: "Leaders are rightly focused on ensuring that the most able pupils have further opportunities to write at the higher standard across the curriculum. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This helps to sustain a nurturing environment in which pupils can thrive and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They take great pride in their school and their work. Pupils say that bullying is rare. Parents are extremely supportive and strongly appreciative of the school."

What can the school do to further improve? According to Ofsted it should: "Provide further opportunities for the most able pupils to write at the higher standard across all subjects."

The full report can be found at [reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/110415](https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/21/110415) ■

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# The future remembers the past



**C**HILDREN of Whaddon Under Fives Playschool (**pictured**) were joined on Windy Ridge on a bright day in June by the reenactment of the Home Guard team and a former MI6 officer, Geoffrey Pidgeon, to commemorate D-Day. They were able to learn of some momentous events of 75 years ago, writes David White.

Geoffrey Pidgeon, it may be recalled, worked at Whaddon Hall for several years in WW2; a few years ago he unveiled a plaque at Jubilee Hall to commemorate the work of MI6.

A member of MI6 (Section VIII) with its HQ in Whaddon Hall, Pidgeon helped fit out the wireless trucks (SLUs or Special Liaison Units) used by Allied Military commanders on and after D-Day.

On D-Day, itself, he went with one truck to carry out tests before it, too, joined the build-up in France.

This year, 75 years later, he returned with son Michael (both seen here in the centre) for the D-Day Commemoration.

Geoffrey, 93, still writes daily, including material for his SCU-Newsletter which he started in 1997.

Of course, the vital role played by the MI6 (Section VIII) wireless station on Windy Ridge should not be forgotten. All ULTRA texts arising from Bletchley Park and intended for Allied Military Commanders in the field went out from there.

From D-Day onwards, these secret messages were mostly to Allied Army Commanders in France; this included Generals Montgomery and Dempsey. They were also directed to US forces under General Patton and his 3<sup>rd</sup> US Army, and General Simpson's 9<sup>th</sup> US Army. ■

# Windy Ridge D-Day commemoration

Children from Whaddon C of E First School were among many to attend D-Day commemorations on Windy Ridge, as David White reports.



John Pether using vintage transmitter/receiver

THE day of 6<sup>th</sup> June, the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day, began with excellent weather and our group of five people arrived at Windy Ridge at 9.00 am, where we set up a vintage wireless station on the site of Bletchley Park's original radio station.

That station was used to send encoded messages to our invasion forces sailing to the beaches of Normandy in northern France. The aerials were set up next to St Mary's Church's fence, and in our gazebo type tent we laid out a display of wartime radio sets.

To add to the sense of occasion, some re-enactors of the Home Guard arrived with a display of rifles and Sten guns. In addition, two American wartime jeeps (**right**) arrived to enhance our display.

By means of Morse Code, we managed to establish many contacts with commemoration stations in France, Holland, Germany and in the UK. Suzanne Lindsey, Whaddon's Parish Council clerk, helped to arrange matters for us while Hazel Hedges and her ladies kindly opened the Jubilee Hall for us.

The many visitors from Whaddon village and other places too were able to take advantage of refreshments



from 11.15 to 7.00 pm. This was most welcome and greatly appreciated by everyone, including us.

Both Jenny and Marion very kindly answered Hazel Hedges' appeal for volunteers to help on the day. They did most of the shopping while Joanne, (from Whaddon Under Fives Playschool Committee) kindly made sandwiches.

Children from Whaddon CofE First School were brought to our exhibition by all their teachers who explained to them what it was all about. They also learned some of Whaddon's secret history during the Second World War and the role it played for Bletchley Park and the SIS - the Secret Intelligence Service.



Mk3 transmitter used in garage of No.1 High Street, home of chief engineer Bob Hornby; a house with an air raid shelter

our exhibition and said he was here on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944 also. The plaque presented previously by Geoffrey Pidgeon is shown **right**.

Many people inspected our display and watched as we operated vintage communications equipment, all of which was assisted by the day's excellent weather. This helped make it a very successful day indeed.

We closed down the station at 7.00pm following 10 hours of

Geoffrey Pidgeon worked at Whaddon Hall during WW2; he attended



continuous operations. ■

*David White.*

(The next celebration will be the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of V E Day on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2020 when the radio operators will set up their equipment on Windy Ridge. Please make a note of the date – Ed)

## Working conditions at Windy Ridge

**An old photograph gives some indication of life on Windy Ridge during the Second World War, as John Mortimer observes.**

ALTHOUGH seemingly no photographs were taken of working conditions within the Windy Ridge radio communications station (staffed entirely by men) some idea can be gained from the photograph here.

Taken inside the radio room at the signals unit at Grendon Underwood, Buckinghamshire, in 1944, it shows women of the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry working alongside agents of the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in France.

In 1946, the units at Whaddon Hall and Windy Ridge were closed down but there was no end to the work for those attending the units. They continued their work through their transfer to Hanslope Park, then site of Special Communications Unit No. 3 (SCU3) from 1941 to 1947. On 1<sup>st</sup> April 1947, the name of Hanslope Park's SCU3 was changed to that of the Diplomatic Wireless Service.

When in government service, Whaddon Hall was known by the Foreign Office as Main Line but in 1946 most of the staff from Whaddon Hall were transferred to SCU3.

At about the same time, namely when chief, Richard Gambier-Parry, sought to demilitarize the operation; men wearing the uniform of the Royal Corps of Signals handed in their kit and changed into



Reminder to all at Grendon Underwood: Remember – The enemy is listening

civilian clothes as they continued with similar work but on civilian pay scales. ■

## Whaddon's unique WW2 Dower House

**During WW2 the words *Dower House* held special significance for a group of experts based in Whaddon.**

ANYONE who attended the D-Day Commemoration on Windy Ridge on 6<sup>th</sup> June, might have noticed a small map showing radio transmitting stations within the village. The little map (**right**) revealed an unusual 'property' situated in Kennel

Lane: Dower House. What *was* the Dower House and who lived there? David White takes up the story.

Dower House was nothing grander than a shed; with code words rife in the village in those days, Dower House was the code name for the timber building which housed radio transmitters for the Whaddon Hall receiver site, itself located some 300 yards to the north of the Hall.

Hector Kempton 'presided' over the Dower House radio transmitter station in Kennel Lane.

Dower House opened in 1940 and closed in late 1944, only to be demolished in 1945, when the move to the new larger building at Creslow Manor was complete.

Whaddon Hall was leased from the Selby-Lowndes family in September 1939 following negotiations conducted by Richard Gambier-Parry, then communications supremo of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS).

One edge of the aerial field was the then newly-constructed road of Briary View, which was started shortly after the war. Until recently, it was possible to see the huge concrete blocks with their iron rings which were used for holding the support stays of the aerial masts.

●● David White spent 35 years working with the same group which had worked at Whaddon Hall during WW2 but later was employed under the new name of The Diplomatic Wireless Service at Hanslope Park. All Whaddon Hall staff were transferred in 1946. David joined as a radio operator, but later moved to the engineering department having been recruited by Richard Gambier-Parry. The latter passed away in 1965. David attended the funeral service at Milton Keynes Village Church on 19<sup>th</sup> June 1965.



## St. Mary's Church Whaddon

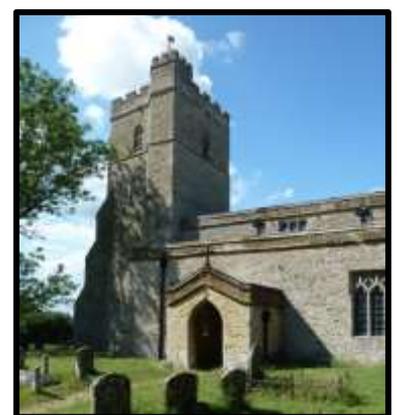
**AUGUST 2019**

### REGULAR SERVICES

1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	10.30am	Family Worship
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	10.30am	Holy Communion (Common Worship)
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	10 for 10.30am	Sunday Special
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	8.30am	Said Holy Communion
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday		Benefice Service (time & venue to be confirmed)

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

Tuesday	2 pm	Tea on Tuesday + Post Office in Jubilee Hall
Wednesday	1.45 – 2.45pm	Toddler Church - Parents/grandparents/all welcome
1 <sup>st</sup> Wednesday	2pm	Women's Institute in the Jubilee Hall
3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday	8pm	Whaddon Night Owlers WI in Jubilee Hall



1<sup>st</sup> Saturday 10am-noon Coffee shop in church

### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

Sat Aug 3 <sup>rd</sup>	10 – 12noon	Florrie's Village Coffee Morning 3 Church Lane
Sat Oct 5 <sup>th</sup>	10am - 4pm	Annual Open Day, with displays, quizzes, archives,
Sun Oct 6 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Harvest Festival with Rev John King
Mon Oct 7 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Harvest Supper & Auction of Produce in Jubilee Hall
Sat Nov 30 <sup>th</sup>	2pm	Annual Christmas Fayre in Jubilee Hall

THIS year, the Church Fete was held in Jubilee Hall because of the forecast of heavy rain. As many stalls as possible were set up in the hall with teas in the small hall. Sadly, Woburn Sands Band had to be cancelled. When the rain eased off, some games were set up in the front gardens under the shelter of our gazebos.

Fortunately, the village still turned out in force to support it and the atmosphere was good. Grateful thanks go to Clare Garland for the organisation and to all those who gave raffle prizes, manned stalls on the day, or helped to set up and clear away. In total, £1,126 was raised which will fund church maintenance.

The Church Open Day will take place on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October. In addition to coffee and biscuits during the morning, light lunches of soup, bread and cheese, etc. will be available, with cream teas and cakes in the afternoon.

There will be the usual attractions, including the church archives from Aylesbury Museum, quizzes and games. Please join us between 10 am & 4 pm and bring your friends along for a sit down and chat.

Harvest Supper and Auction of Produce will take place on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30 pm in Jubilee Hall. Tickets are available from Hazel Dudley on 01908 505727

This event is always well attended and the auction of the harvest produce is enjoyed by all, thanks to our two hilarious auctioneers. The funds raised are sent to charity.

**Churchyard:** We are desperately in need of more volunteers to mow the churchyard. All machines and petrol are provided and you would be mowing only one section. Please contact Barry Dudley on 01908 505727 for more information if you can help at all.

**Flower Rota:** If you would like to provide simple altar flowers on a rota basis, please contact Janet Spencer on 01908 502540 or Beryl Evans on 01908 502567.

If you can help with cleaning the church, please contact Hazel Dudley on 01908 505727.

Church cleaning consists of dusting furniture and hoovering carpets on one rota, and polishing the brass on another. You do not have to be on both.

The Parish Profile 2019 is complete, save for the addition of some pictures. It gives details of the church building, its history, church attendance, services etc, as well as information about village facilities and the community. It also has our wish- list for the kind of person we hope to appoint. This will then be combined with those of Nash, Thornborough and Beachampton to form a Benefice profile. The advertisement for Gussie's replacement will be published in *The Church Times* and online. Applications will be shortlisted in October, with interviews being held in November. Please pray for a good outcome for our new benefice.

To arrange weddings, baptisms, and funerals during the interregnum, please contact Rev John King from Nash, at buckinghamvillages@gmail.com or on 01908 501860.

We look forward to meeting you very soon at any and all of our services and social events when you will receive a warm welcome. Thank you for your support. ■

*Hazel Hedges* (Churchwarden) 01908 501729 or [hazel.hedges@gmail.com](mailto:hazel.hedges@gmail.com).

## Parochial Church Council

Hazel Hedges	Churchwarden.	Tel. 01908 501729
Linda MacIver	Hon. Secretary.	Tel: 01908 330964
Barry Dudley	Hon. Treasurer	Tel: 01908 505727
	Electoral Roll Officer.	
Frederick Hayward	Jubilee Hall Repr'ive	Tel: 01908 506083
Hazel Dudley		Tel:01908 505727
Clare Garland		Tel: 01908 501732



### TODDLER CHURCH

Calling all Toddlers, Mums, Dads, Grandparents & helpers too.  
We meet at St Mary's Church, Whaddon.

**FIRST Wednesday of every month** (term time only from 1.45 - 2.45pm)

The hour consists of arts & crafts, songs & story time plus of course refreshments!  
A warm welcome awaits you: no one is too old or young. So come along and join in the fun!  
We look forward to seeing you.

**Autumn Term starts again on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

*Sally Green (01908 526033)*



**DATE FOR YOUR DIARY...**

**FRIDAY 27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 9.15 – 12**

**Chapel School Room. Whaddon**

**Come and help us make sure  
that no one faces  
cancer alone**

*(Sally Green 01908 526033)*

## Thrift Farm revisit for Toddler Church

**F**OUR children and their Mums and Grannies from Toddler Church went to Thrift Farm again for their summer outing. It was another lovely opportunity for the children to get close to and feed some of the animals (**see over**).

This year there were some tiny little ducklings only 5 days old for us to see, but the expected piglets had not yet arrived! After exploring the play area we all ended up in the cafe for tea and cake.



## WHADDON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

**D**ESPITE short notice, those members who could make it joined in and proudly displayed our WI banner in the May Fayre parade of heroes that represented some famous women. Our heroes were Marie Curie (Jane), Mary Seacole (Mala), Mary Woollstone (Mary), Emmeline Pankhurst (Margaret), Florence Nightingale (Marion) and "Every Mum" (Sue). A good time was had by all, although the weather could have been a bit kinder.



The weather was also a feature in May when we had our BBQ with our own home-made sausages. Perhaps we should have whispered "BBQ", because of course it poured!

Did that put us off? Definitely not! Even if it needed five of us to get started including a stuffer-inner and a puller-outer and a knotter – technical terms – we were off and quickly graduated from making little chipolatas to sausages that any delicatessen would have been proud of; then we got to taste them. Were they good? Oh yes! Will this be a new enterprise for Whaddon WI? I couldn't possibly say! Remember, Wall's have ears .... (sorry).

Sadly, in June and at short notice, our speaker couldn't come along due to illness, but we were so lucky that Mala, one of our members, stepped in and gave us an Indian cookery demonstration on how to make an easy Chickpea Masala.

Below you will find Mala's recipe.

The aromas were amazing and, forming an orderly queue – well, elbowing our way in actually – we had the chance to taste the finished product; boy it was good! We also had



our very own take-away portion as well. Well done Mala!



In July we spent a lovely afternoon making decorative boxes from two pieces of patterned paper. Linda, our tutor for the session, patiently showed us how to fold, cut and mark the paper; then *viola*, our little boxes appeared right before our very eyes. We added the finishing touches:

wrapping a piece of pretty ribbon around them. We all agreed that these would be very useful not only for gifts but for our future fundraising plans. I think a good time was had by all.

So on to August (are we really so far into our WI year?) This month, we are planning a garden party, but will the weather be kind to us? Watch this space...

If you would like any information about joining our small group please feel free to contact me or just pop along to the Jubilee Hall on the first Wednesday of the month at 2.00 pm. You will be sure of a great welcome! ■

*Jill Aitken*

01908 502781

## Chickpea Masala

### Ingredients:

Tin of chickpeas

Onions: 1 medium, chopped; Garlic: 3 cloves, crushed; Ginger: very small piece, chopped fine

Tomatoes: 2 medium, chopped or 1 tomato

1/2 tsp tomato puree

Spices: 1/2 tsp curry powder of your choice + 2 cloves + cinnamon, either small piece or 1/4 tsp powder + cumin seeds (optional)

Coriander to garnish, if available.

2 spoons of oil + salt to taste

### Method:

Open can of chickpeas and drain half the water from the can. Heat the oil in a pan and add cloves, cinnamon piece, cumin seeds.

When they are spluttering, add onions, garlic, and ginger.

Fry them until they are slightly brown, then add tomatoes and cook until tender.

Sprinkle water, if you need more gravy.

Cook for a few minutes. Add curry powder and salt.

Add the can of chickpeas and cook a further 10 minutes until gravy is thick; if the gravy is watery, mash some of the chickpeas while cooking.

Garnish & serve with rice or naan bread.

### Variations:

Add one small cooked potato, coarsely chopped.

Chopped green and red peppers can be added while cooking the curry

### Fried Rice

Rice of your choice:

Cup soaked in water for one hour

Spices: 2 cloves, small piece of cinnamon, cardamom, if it is available + cumin seeds. 1/4 tsp garlic and ginger are optional

Oil: 3 tsp + little butter (as much as you like)

Drain the rice and keep it ready

In a heavy bottomed pan, heat the oil and add the spices to splutter.

Add the rice and fry along with the spices for a couple of minutes on a low flame or heat.

Add 2 cups of water + butter if desired.

Add salt according to your taste and bring it to boil.

Boil until the rice absorbed half the quantity of water.

Reduce the flame right down, close the lid and leave it for 10 to 15 minutes.

Switch off the hob.

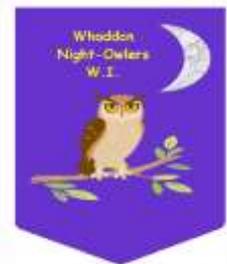
Make sure all the water is absorbed and mix the rice with a spoon.

Serve with spicy chickpeas curry.

## Stock Lane's spy in the sky

FOLLOWING the recent arrival in the early hours (3am?) of a surveillance camera in Stock Lane, alert residents soon spotted it and asked what was going on! It appears the camera was recording traffic levels for the Department of Transport (DoT) in connection with its National Traffic Survey, undertaken periodically to monitor levels of traffic throughout the UK. These data are then fed into the Government's future national traffic policy. The contractor, deeply apologetic for disturbing residents at such an unreasonable hour, explained that installing cameras at night was against company rules. He added that the camera was used to take a 7am-7pm snapshot of traffic levels in the village, and these data would be made available on the DoT's website at some point in the future. This raises the question: Who has access to the website and how will these data be used? Apparently, the village can expect another traffic survey in the future, but there is the promise that Whaddon Parish Council will receive prior warning next time! ■

## Whaddon Night Owlers WI



**D**ON'T be fooled by the waterproof coats in the photographs – we had a beautiful evening walk in Howe Park Wood, guided by the wonderful Parks Trust.

We met at their education centre and set off to learn more about this ancient woodland. The wood covers over 21 hectares and is known to be from medieval times when it was a source of wood for the locals. The Milton Keynes Development Corporation took over the wood in 1968 and the Parks Trust from there. It is now a managed woodland which is a superb place to visit. (I can personally recommend the cakes in their café, even if it was closed when we visited!)



There are trees that are hundreds of years old as well a huge range of wildlife too: birds, badgers, butterflies and even deer. Over 200 species of plants can be found there and thus it has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest as there is such a range of wildlife.

Our guide explained how and why the wood is managed and detailed and about the ancient techniques now used to keep trees healthy and paths clear. The ponds are kept clear and accessible to small mammals but it was sad to see that a natural fence, built by volunteers to keep dogs away from the water, had been kicked in repeatedly.

In July, we welcomed Jack Sheffield, a Yorkshire author. He wrote the *Teacher* series about his early career. He was a very entertaining speaker who made everyone laugh. In August, we are off to Woburn for an evening tour of the gardens, again with a specialist guide. September sees us before a local magistrate. No, we haven't been bad – she is making a return, following an excellent talk to carry out a workshop to see how justice really works.

If you would like to join us for any of our sessions, please contact Daphne on 01908 502088 or come along to Jubilee Hall on the third Wednesday of the month at 7.30 to see what we are up to. ■

*Alison Cross*

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● **SIGN OF THE TIMES?** The board of Milton Keynes City Orchestra has decided "with deep regret" that the orchestra will close at the end of the season after 44 years. Despite pro-active fund raising and reorganization, audiences have not grown enough to sustain it. The orchestra performed its farewell concert on 23<sup>rd</sup> June under director Damian Iorio. ■

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## WHADDON BOOK CLUB



**F**OR June, the Book Club chose *Cider with Rosie*, by Laurie Lee. A classic, published in 1959, that most of us had read in school or certainly during teenage years, it is an autobiographical novel of life in a Cotswold village just after the First World War, and of how Laurie's mother manages to bring up a large family on her own.

Written in the voice of Laurie Lee as a young boy, the book reminded us of the life our parents or grandparents would tell us about: quite nostalgic and describing a time of simplicity that is now lost to us. A time when only the horse and cart or our feet were ways of travelling; when the children chopped wood for the fire, scavenged food from the hedgerows and fetched water from the well; when the village school educated the young until old enough to be sent to work: "The narrow school was just a conveyor belt along which the short years drew us. We entered the door marked 'Infants', moved gradually to the other, and were then handed back to the world."

But this was also a time when subtle changes were occurring; when village life became less centralised around the squire, church and the well-to-do, and when cars brought a greater sense of freedom. At times sad, at times funny, the book is always highly descriptive, bringing tales of murder, incest and crotchety neighbours always with the knowledge that, in a village, nothing can be kept private. The book was enjoyed by most and occasioned reminiscences of our own childhoods and earlier lives.

This month's book is *Eleanor Oliphant is completely fine* by Gail Honeyman. ■

*Jenny Smithson*

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**IT IS HARD** to believe that nearly twenty years have elapsed since Peter Spooner produced his 100-page (no advertisements) *Whaddon Quarterly magnum opus* – the Millenium Special Edition. This excellent booklet reflects the meticulous attention to detail and care that Peter poured into this definitive epic; surely an ideal first port of call for anyone seeking secrets of Whaddon's past, both history and people. Through Peter's research and writing the book offers a challenge to anyone who follows in the editor's chair; a challenge to find something new. That is difficult, if not near impossible. But the challenge remains and, as time goes by, subsequent editors no doubt will rise to that challenge. And so it is by the happen-chance of idle conversation that tiny nuggets of gold emerge and are offered in this issue. They fall, however, into the abyss of insignificance compared with Peter's monumental effort. ■

## George Varney and the Nash sawmill

**Silverstone-born George Varney arrived in Whaddon shortly after his marriage to sweetheart Louise. With a father employed as a woodsman, it was perhaps only natural George would enter the timber supply business, as Ron Unwin explains.**

GEORGE VARNEY was born in Silverstone, Northamptonshire in 1868; the second of 12 children. In 1889, aged 21, he married Louise Brunt at the Wesleyan Chapel in Caldecott, near Towcester.

Shortly afterwards, the couple moved to Whaddon where they took up residence in a cottage just beyond Bottlehouse Farm (**below**); George's cottage, and his neighbours' dwellings were later demolished. However, it was at that cottage that George launched his timber business and where the first three of the couple's 17 children (Kate, Harry and George) were born.

By 1895 the family had moved to Nash, in particular to No. 32 High Street; a part of the village then known as Hillside. At that time, houses in Nash were without numbers; those did not arrive until about 1956.

But it was in Nash that George Varney took the unusual step of renting two adjacent properties; these he could use to house his ever-growing family. He also rented an orchard opposite which he turned into a place to store timber.

Some 15 years later, in 1910, a renovated cottage at Wood End became vacant, along with a paddock. By that time, the family had grown substantially, made up of no less than 14 children. By then too George had also moved his timber business to Wood End and, as one by one his boys left school, so they were 'encouraged' to join the family's expanding timber business.

Much-needed time for a break, after loading giant oak trunks onto trailer



Bottlehouse Farm with the cottage beyond where George Varney started his business

It was customary among countryside communities in those days for the eldest daughter to remain at home and help look after her younger siblings; her sisters either went into service or took up some other form of

employment. The Varney household was no exception in that respect.

In the early days of the business, when he had accumulated sufficient timber, George hired a traction engine to drive the 45-foot long saw bench. However, following the end of the First World War, eldest son Harry used his gratuity to purchase a portable steam engine (**below**). He set this up to drive the main saw bench, as well as several other



Mary Varney, Fred's wife, with Pam her daughter on horseback in the mid-1930s



smaller saw benches.

The business sourced its timber from nearby woods such as Shenley Wood and College Wood, as well as farms in the area. Varney's woodyard became well known for miles around; it supplied coffin boards to local undertakers, as well as timber to local businesses like E & H Roberts of Deanshanger; that company used the timber for their agricultural machinery.

Varney's timberyard also made gates and hurdles and supplied timber to farmers, and firewood and peasticks to householders in surrounding villages. Mr Middleton, from Great Horwood, was employed to make the gates while George himself specialised in making hurdles.

George died in 1946 and his wife Louise two years later. Sadly, of their children both Dora and Pearl died in the first year of their birth. Of these, Dora was buried on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1897 in the churchyard of All Saints Church, Nash, aged four months, while Pearl is presumed buried in the Baptist Church graveyard. She died in 1913 aged two months. Nancy Varney died in Essex on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1995.

Meanwhile, the business continued to thrive until 1956, being run by eldest son Harry and his brother Wilfred. Harry then also turned to making hurdles at Windy Ridge; he used one of two brick buildings left over on the Whaddon site

Headed postcard to Odell & Co of Stony Stratford. The handwritten note stated: Dear Sir, We can supply wooden Sheep Troughs @ 7/6 each, 9ft 6in long. G. Varney & Son

after WW2.



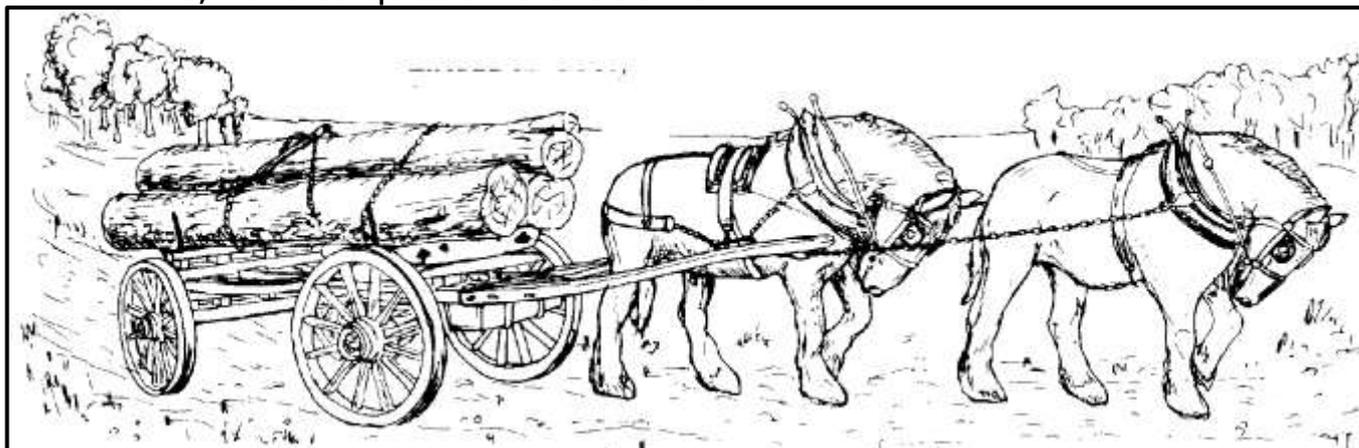
Harry died in 1970; Wilfred 15 years later in 1985. ■

# Logging the great oaks of Snelshall

**At the end of the last war, giant oak trees in Snelshall Wood were felled for use in the war effort: most likely for the reconstructions of houses in London.**

**T**ODAY, all manner of vehicles use Kennel Lane: combine-harvesters, giant low-loaders piled high with bales, poo lorries, builders' merchants trucks, Anglian Water vehicles, light delivery vans and passenger cars.

But there was a day, within living memory, when Kennel Lane, then known as Mill Lane, handled quite different traffic.



Three carthorses, not two as shown here, were employed to haul Snelshall's great oaks, some hundreds of years' old, across fields to Mill Lane, Whaddon, and thence to George Varney's sawmill in Nash

Derek White, then a seven-year-old lad, recalls how three carthorses, between the shafts, were employed to haul the giant trunks from the wood, along the narrow Mill Lane and past his parents' house, thence to George Varney's sawmill in Nash.

Such was the weight of these behemoths that they required all the effort the three strong horses could muster: the lead horse, known as 'forest', the young colt in the middle and learning his 'trade', and finally the mare or 'filler' bringing up the rear – for obvious reasons.

As a youngster, with a great grandfather (William Hopkins) who had been a huntsman, Derek enjoyed a privileged position; he was allowed to ride astride the 'forester's' neck until the combination reached Stock Lane. At that point he was reluctantly, but firmly removed from his lofty perch: he could not remain there on public roads.

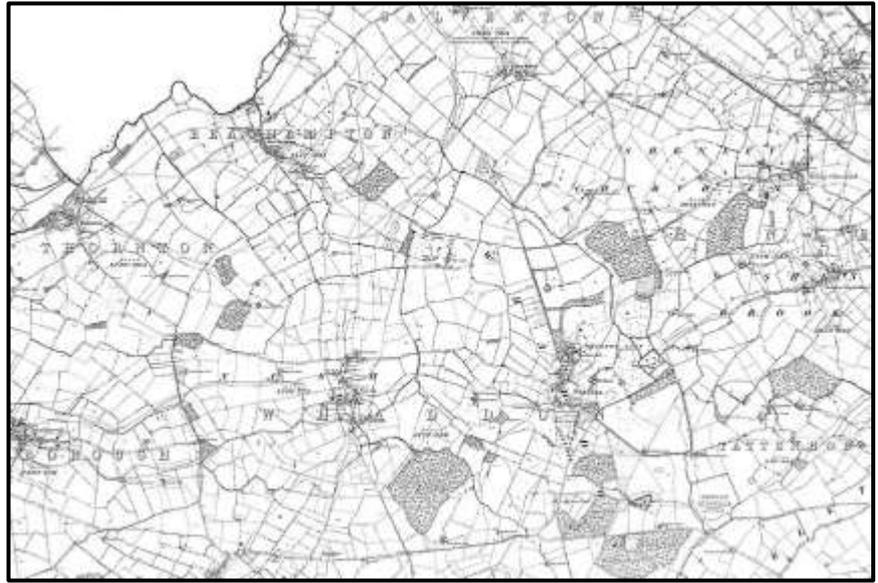
The combination, horses and waggon (the latter sometimes bearing a single, giant oak on its sturdy frame with its iron wheels and rims) then, lumbering along, slowly made its tortuous way to Nash.

Negotiating hills en route required great skill on the part of the handler, especially when descending the hill leaving Whaddon. At that point, the mare, still positioned behind, would be used to steady the combination to ensure it did not run away with itself.

At the sawmill, the giant oak required technique as well as effort of a different kind by both horses and handlers: this time to unload the trunk, weighing many tons, from the trailer, to then be hauled in front of the giant saw-wheel driven by belting from the nearby stationary traction engine.

To be part of such a bone-shaking experience was any boy's dream.

The woods at Snelshall and elsewhere in the environs of Whaddon were owned by the Selby-Lowndes family. The family devoted much time and effort to maintain them to a high standard, both as part of normal husbandry of the countryside and, of course, for their own ends in terms of hunting and shooting. Even footpaths in the woods were carefully maintained, but only the chosen few were allowed to venture therein.



*Ordnance Survey map published in 1881 shows the proliferation of woods around Whaddon*

The great oaks were replaced with conifers; they can be seen today but are a poor-man's replacement for one of the great trees of the Kings of England, and which characterise the quintessential English countryside.

An Ordnance Survey map published in 1881 shows Whaddon and Whaddon Park surrounded with woods: Oakhill Woods, Snelshall Wood (alongside the former Snelshall Priory), Thickbare and Thinbare Woods, Coddimoorhill Woods which bordered Hogpound Wood, Broadway Wood (on the opposite side of what is now the A421) and Thrift Wood (opposite Woodpond Farm). Not to be forgotten were College Wood (beyond Church Hill Farm) and Oldland Covert, adjacent then to Whaddon Park.

And Mill Lane? How did it come by that name? And where was the mill? ■

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● **HEARTFELT** sympathies are extended to the residents of Whaddon, Cambridgeshire, who experienced thieves stripping lead from the roof of their church, leaving it open to the elements. The raid took place at St Mary the Virgin Church between Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June and Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June. Parishioners discovered the loss of the lead when the church was opened for morning service on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June. Churchwarden David Grech said: "The thieves stripped the roof over several nights because images from a drone showed half of it to be still covered." Reports suggest it will take at least £100,000 to replace the lead. "The insurance company is likely to pay only a proportion of that," he added. ■

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davetaylorhandyman@gmail.com



**Dave Taylor**  
Handyman

# COUNTRY FUNERALS

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## LOCAL INTERMENT & FUNERALS

**Vilma June Turner**  
1928 – 2019

VILMA'S ashes were interred in St Mary's churchyard on 3<sup>rd</sup> July alongside those of her husband, William (b.1922), who died in 2011. ■

**Lilian Annie Jane Selby-Lowndes**  
11<sup>th</sup> November 1921 – 27<sup>th</sup> April 2019

ANN'S funeral took place at St Mary's Church, Whaddon on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019. The service was conducted by Rev David Hiscock, Rector of Claydons and Swan Team with Mr Nick Read at the organ. Afterwards mourners joined Ann's family at *The Lowndes Arms*, Whaddon, to share memories. ■

**Primrose Elizabeth Jessie Havis**  
26<sup>th</sup> February 1928 – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019

PRIMROSE'S funeral took place at St Mary's Church, Whaddon on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019. The service was conducted by Rev John King of nearby Nash. Primrose Havis (née King) was born and lived in Whaddon for some years. She reserved a plot in Whaddon churchyard next to her family and relatives some years ago. ■

## ***The Italian Job*: four different endings**

**Talking of anniversaries: this year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing on 20<sup>th</sup> July, but closer to home, the British cult classic movie *The Italian Job*.**

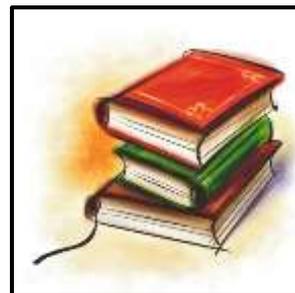
LOADED with 1960s swagger, and famed for its endlessly quotable dialogue and one of the most impressive car chases in movie history, *The Italian Job* is, perhaps, the ultimate celebration of long-since disappeared 'cool Britannia'.

The film script allowed for four different endings; the need for frugality on an already over-budget film demanded the cheapest: filmed in a studio in Twickenham, not in the Swiss Alps.

Based on more than 50 in-depth interviews with the cast and crew, and lavishly illustrated with hundreds of never-before-seen photographs and production documents, this new book, published on 6th June, takes a fascinating, behind-the-scenes look at how the film made its way to film and tv screens. The film opened in June 1969 to lukewarm reviews; only following a TV debut in 1976 did it climb to cult-status by the 1990s.

The foreword is by Sir Michael Caine with an introduction by Oscar-winning producer Michael Deeley.

*The Self Preservation Society – 50 years of The Italian Job* by Matthew Field and published by Porter [Press Ltd.](#) £45.00 ■





## Through difficulties to the stars

It is perhaps appropriate to look back exactly 30 years to 1989 when Peter Spooner became joint editor of *Whaddon Quarterly*. Not only because of the coincidence of that anniversary, but also through another; the 75th anniversary next year of VE and VJ Days. Here, Philip Spooner looks back at the role his father (left) played in those war years.

**F**ORMER *Whaddon Quarterly* editor Peter Spooner, my father, rarely discussed his wartime experiences. Like all young men of his generation he did what he needed to do, then put the bad memories behind.

War was declared in 1939 and, in 1940, the UK Parliament under Neville Chamberlain passed legislation introducing conscription; this made military service compulsory for all fit young men. The inevitable call-up papers arrived soon after Peter had taken his final school exams.

Still a teenager and blessed with 20:20 vision he elected to join the RAF; he held every young man's dream of becoming a pilot. A crafty recruiting officer, however, crushed that dream when he posed the question, "That clock on the wall has a 7-inch-long minute hand. How far does its tip travel in one hour?"

When Peter immediately gave him the correct answer he was told, "You're good at maths. You can be a navigator!" There followed a training period, flights ferrying aircraft, and other non-combatant flying duties.



Training was not without its dangers, however. A crash in the Red Sea during one practice flight killed the pilot and left Peter afloat in his Mae West for eight hours; he prayed desperately for rescue. Had the sharks been hungrier, I would not have been here to write this article!

Then in 1943, a posting to overseas combat service arrived. With only a few days' preparation, Peter married his childhood sweetheart, Pamela, who would later become a long-time active member and Secretary of Whaddon WI.

Two days after their marriage (**above**), Pilot Officer Peter Spooner left England and Pamela resumed her job at the War Office. It would be a long time before they would see each other again.

Peter was posted to 211 Squadron to fight against the Japanese in Burma. He flew 27 operational sorties with the squadron, principally as navigator and wireless operator in two-seater aircraft. Initially these were Bristol Beaufighters but later he flew in de Havilland Mosquitoes (**facing page, top right**).

Based in Chiringa, India, the squadron was tasked with attacking military road transports, railway locomotives and shipping.

In the final years of his life, Peter recalled his feelings of apprehension before any briefing, accompanied by a release of tension when his aircraft was not picked. He also experienced a rather guilty feeling of 'thank God it wasn't me' when an aircraft failed to return from a mission.



FI/Lt Spooner (right) and Mosquito RF756 R

The 211 Squadron suffered losses of 134 men during the war; the fear of what might happen never quite left the crews but that fear had to be conquered.

VE Day in May 1945 proved not to be the end of Peter's wartime experiences; hostilities against Japan continued for another five months. As a result, combat operations continued with the arrival of new Mosquitoes, namely FB Mark VI fighter-bomber aircraft (**cockpit below**).

Peter recalled being told at one briefing, 'Mosquitoes are made of wood, so bullets can pass straight through the fuselage without causing significant damage'. The briefing officer was somewhat perplexed by the derision poured upon this remark by the assembled group of young aircrew who would be sitting inside those wooden 'crates'.



Wartime 'office' of 152082 FI/Lt Spooner

Suddenly, out of the blue, an order arrived with a posting home for Peter and his pilot. Realising that this was clearly a mistake the two men left hurriedly; they eschewed normal RAF transport aircraft in favour of hitching a seven-day, multi-stop trip on a Sunderland flying boat, to avoid being caught up by the inevitable order cancellation.

Arriving home and eventually demobbed, Peter was proud to have 'done his bit'; he then put it all behind him. He kept a few mementos packed away in a box, but by the time I arrived on the scene, he would no longer discuss his wartime experience.

In 2003, following discovery of a 211 Squadron website (<http://www.211squadron.org>), I made email contact with the webmaster.

This revived Peter's wartime memories; the ensuing email exchanges by proxy also prompted Peter's purchase of a computer, gamely fought with the same determination and grim commitment that he gave to his war service, but this time with considerably more ill-humour. However, it did make his contributions to Whaddon Quarterly somewhat easier.

Peter and Pamela moved into Old Manor Close in 1988 and enjoyed many happy years in Whaddon. Peter began co-editing the *Whaddon Quarterly* with Trisha Tunnicliffe in 1989 and continued in that role for many years. Peter died in 2008 and Pamela four years later. ■

*Per ardua ad astra* – Through difficulties to the stars

# Unforgettable Normandy experience

**In the first week of June, Billy Stanier travelled to Normandy to participate in the 75<sup>th</sup> and final commemoration of D-Day. Here, he describes his experience.**

MY FATHER, Alex Stanier, was the first British Brigade Commander to land on that day: 6<sup>th</sup> June 1944, at the small village of Asnelles-sur-Mer.

Though he was a Welsh Guards officer, he was chosen to command the spearhead 231 Brigade on Gold Beach (**below**), which consisted of men from the regiments of Devon, Dorset and Hampshire.



It was his third encounter with the German army, having been a teenage platoon commander at the very end of the First World War in 1918, when he was awarded the Military Cross (MC).

He remained in the army and by the time the second war started, he was commanding a battalion of Welsh Guards. They went to France in 1940, to Boulogne, until the whole British army had to withdraw back to England in the face of heavy German opposition.

For this he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

Although he lost an eye in a training exercise, he was still considered fit enough to be given the D-Day command. Despite sustaining intensive enemy fire, his troops, aided by artillery and engineers, had reached a mile inland by the afternoon. Thereafter, they turned westward to free up Arromanches, which they accomplished by the evening (and where nowadays all the main commemorations take place).

His personal memorial (**right**) is in the sea wall on the north side of the square. He commanded 231 Brigade all the way through France, Belgium and Holland and into Germany whence he returned home just before Christmas. When he arrived, the press asked him for his thoughts on returning to the battlefields of Normandy to which he replied "I think foremost of all those who never came home".

On returning from Europe, he was awarded another Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

In addition to these awards, my father received America's Silver Star from General Omar Bradley, Commander of American Forces in the invasion of Normandy (**facing page, top right**).

The full citation, from The War Department, The Chief of Staff, Washington D.C., reads: "Brigadier Sir Alexander Beville Gibbon Stanier, Bt, 231<sup>st</sup> British Infantry Brigade. For gallantry in action during the initial landings in France on 6 June 1944. By his resolute and skillful handling of his Brigade he contributed largely to the successful attainment of all objectives. His courageous leadership was an inspiration to all."

On D-Day, he was accompanied by Howard Marshall, the BBC commentator, who managed to get home to do a report for the 9 O'clock News on 6<sup>th</sup> June.



Also travelling with them was the King's observer. He duly reported that evening to His Majesty on the progress of the invasion; King George VI was then kind enough to telephone my mother to say that Alex was OK.

As my father could not speak a word of French, he had with him another officer (whose mother was French) who was bi-lingual.

With this help, my father made many lifelong French friends in Normandy, some of whom are good friends of mine too. My father made many trips back to Normandy in subsequent years. On the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, he was in the BBC studio describing many of the events and on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, by which time he was 95 years old and somewhat frail, he decided initially that he couldn't face going. However, he changed his mind and hired a helicopter.

He said to me, "It will cost a fortune but at my age, what the hell!"

I waved them off and headed back home. What my father never knew, and which I learned only subsequently, was that the British Embassy had failed to issue security clearance. His pilot therefore had to fly low, beneath the radar, skimming the beach to get him to his destination. When he arrived, the Press asked him for his thoughts on returning to the battlefields of Normandy, to which he replied "I think foremost of those who never came home."

I went to D-Day this year, another 25 years on, accompanied by Mrs Annabel Moss, widow of that helicopter pilot. Having crossed to Cherbourg, we then drove to Caen where, on the eve of the D-Day Commemorations, there was an evensong at which I gave an address (in English!). Additionally, Welsh Guardsmen paraded in full dress.

We stayed two nights just outside Asnelles, at St-Côme-de-Fresné in a large house in the grounds of which my father spent his very first night in 1944.

We had several different commemorations, laying wreaths in Asnelles; there the village square is named Place Alexander Stanier.

In the evening we went down to Arromanches and laid a wreath on my father's memorial which describes him as "Le Libérateur d'Arromanches" and where his uniform is displayed in the D-Day Museum in the square.

The next day, we returned to Cherbourg and home after a brief but never-to-be-forgotten visit. Technically, this is the last official commemoration, though I am sure the French will continue to mark the day. The Normandy French, in particular, are still

incredibly grateful for what we and the Americans did for them. ■

*Billy Stanier, July 2019*

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**ALAN TURING**, mathematician and founder of modern computing and artificial intelligence and whose image will appear on £50 bank notes, was accommodated for much of the war years at the *Crown Inn*, Shenley Brook End; a pub since at least 1820. Sometimes he would help behind the bar and certainly from the *Crown* he would cycle to Bletchley Park where he played a pivotal role as a code breaker. Towards the end of the war, Turing became involved in another secret project, and for two days a week for six months he would cycle to Hanslope Park, moving to the Officers Mess in 1944.

**AT CALVERTON**, in the autumn, there is the possibility of a full peal being rung on the new bells at the church. A full peal requires 3,060 changes and usually lasts three hours, give or take five minutes. A quarter-peal usually occupies 45 minutes. ■

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Abbey Church of Saint Étienne, Caen

# Joshua and the Whaddon glider



**SIX-YEAR-OLD Joshua Jaworski couldn't quite believe his ears; he had heard his parents' excitement about an aircraft which had landed in the field behind their house in Briary View. John Mortimer imagines the scenario.**

AFTER ALL, it's not every day an aircraft 'drops' out of the sky, especially one so close to home. Had the local council suddenly given Whaddon permission for an aircraft runway he had not been told about?

Many a young lad has dreams of piloting an aircraft; a lifetime ago the yearning would have been to drive a railway engine. To be able to soar freely in the sky, just like a bird, floating above towns, villages and countryside. Even crossing oceans would be magical.

But now, with an aircraft on the ground just outside his house, here was a heaven-sent opportunity for young Josh to clamber into the pilot's seat and imagine for himself that immense feeling of freedom.



Sailplanes rely on high-aspect ratio (wide but narrow) wings for lift; weather conditions too affect the ability to gain height and remain aloft. Without an engine, much depends on pilot skill, prowess and an understanding of prevailing weather and atmospheric conditions that play such a vital part in the whole proceedings. Pilots must, for example, take advantage of thermals, columns of rising air, if they are to soar and travel hundreds of miles.

However, on that fateful but glorious August day in 1991, something went awry in the sailplane's cockpit as the pilot struggled to remain aloft. With a sinking feeling in the pit of his stomach, he knew of his impending doom: he would not be returning to his launch airfield. Ouch!

Circling above Whaddon and rapidly losing height, the pilot scanned port and starboard for a level strip of some sort in which to safely 'ditch' his aircraft.

Perched on the top of a hill in the north Buckinghamshire countryside and peppered with woods of various sizes, not to mention various assorted undulating pastures, Whaddon had few 'flat' fields to offer the beleaguered pilot. The only one he could spot nestled at the back of a line of houses, thankfully near to a road and what looked like a farmhouse.

In the split seconds available to him, the pilot aimed for that.

The field was nothing like the grass strip from which he had been propelled skywards by the winch, but it *was* flat with just a small wood to avoid. As he drew ever closer he could see it had just been combined. What a blessing. What a relief.

And so it was; after much scrunching, scraping and grinding, the Astir CS glider came to an abrupt halt: its pilot hugely relieved.

From one of the nearby houses, he hoped he could contact friends who, he also hoped, would come to rescue him – and his glider. The nearby road thankfully would offer access for the tow vehicle and trailer.

Not entirely to the pilot's surprise, as he raised the canopy and emerged from the cockpit he was joined by a group of people, including a young lad who later expressed a keenness to inspect the inside of the cockpit.

The pilot had to wait some time before his friends at the airfield arrived, but as soon as they did, derigging the glider and manhandling fuselage and wings into the trailer could begin.

With a wingspan of 15m and an overall length of 6.75m the glider was bigger than anything Josh had seen.

In old money, the wingspan measured 16.5 yards; that would be the equivalent of three-quarters of the village cricket pitch at nearby Bottlehouse Farm.



Finally, the glider was derigged (**above**) and packed away in a trailer (**left**) and, with much difficulty, bearing in mind its overall length, the tow vehicle with its trailer nosed out into Shenley Road and disappeared. But not before everyone bid their farewells – even a cheery wave from Josh.

What a fun day it had been for Josh. Not so for the pilot; he would have some explaining to do!

Three unanswered questions remain: the launch airfield: Cranfield or Dunstable Downs; how did the pilot manage to avoid the overhead power lines that stretched across the field; and the make of vehicle towing the trailer? For two of these there are no answers. However, research shows a vehicle with registration number E344NRU might, at the time, have been a blue, diesel-engined Ford Fiesta!

●● **SOME** years before the glider incident, an army helicopter landed in the 'Rec'. Its arrival caused much excitement amongst local children. ■



THE Astir CS (Club Standard) was made by Grob Aircraft of Tussenhausen in Bavaria, Germany, a company which exists today having built over 3,500 sailplanes and small light aircraft.

The CS first appeared in Britain in 1976 and became an instant hit despite the "eaten too many doughnuts" look. It answered most clubs' requirement for an easy-to-fly glass fibre glider suitable for those with few hours flying under their belts and who could cruise about and get to use the "land before the far hedge" technique, rather than the "just through the hedge".

The sailplane, with water ballast tanks in the wings, weighed about 5cwt. While ideal for beginners, the Astir CS was poor for competitions and aerobatics. Likewise, rigging and derigging, (assembly and dismantling) were not for the faint-hearted; in fact not easy at all.

So taking the sailplane apart alongside Briary View and stuffing it into the trailer is likely to have been an arduous operation. ■



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**In June, Frederick Hayward made a return visit to the farm in Essex where last year he attended a photographic course. Here, he gives an account of some of the week's events.**

**W**ITH the arrival of June, the weather turned out to be rough. This was unfortunate, as I had booked to go the farm I went to last year when the weather was very much different. In fact, it was really hot with blue skies.

On Monday the weather was indeed rough, wet and dull. Following taking a taxi to Central Milton Keynes station I boarded a train to Euston. From there, I walked in the pouring rain to St Pancras station. As I did so, I began to sing to keep myself cheerful; I hope I managed to cheer up other people as well and those who were getting soaked.

At St Pancras I boarded a very posh train bound for the Kent coast. I decided to stand as I wanted to get off the train at the first stop: Stratford International. On arrival I left the train and visited the Westfield Shopping Centre for refreshments and to buy some goods.

Then I went to Stratford railway station where I had to wait for the train to take me to Braintree in Essex. On arrival, I took a taxi to the farm, a journey of some six miles.

The farm itself is very beautiful, being surrounded by trees and fields, and very much set in the country. I was met by the couple and their son: very nice people.

The weather continued to be cold, wet and windy, but the cottage where I was to stay was nice and warm and ready for me to go into. The couple had turned on the radiator.

A gentleman who also arrived on the Tuesday shared the cottage with me. We had separate rooms and we had good chats about photography.

Some other people also arrived on Tuesday. Some of them I had met last year and they remembered me. The weather was much better then.

The people had come from a long way away. A couple who were on the course came from Durham; some came from London and one person came from Worthing; others came from various parts of the country. The gentleman who stayed in the cottage with me had come from Ireland.

Both Wednesday and Thursday were course days. People gave various talks and cameras were on show.

A video was shown on how to take photographs – and how not to. Another speaker gave a talk about if you want to take photographs of people, and how to go about it.

I now know the difference between landscape and portrait photographs. After the talk, some people on the course photographed buildings while other people took photographs of life

in the country, such as trees and chickens. There was one duck to photograph. With the weather as it was it is no wonder there was not much wildlife about.

After the photographic sessions our photographs were shown on a screen and people spoke about them.

The farm had a games room with a lovely snooker table, a lovely swimming pool and a nice hot tub.

On Wednesday evening, there was a fantastic BBQ as well as lots of lovely food, chats and drink. On Friday, I returned home after a good week. ■



## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH - WHADDON

### Remove ALL valuables from parked cars

Property, particularly if on display in vehicles, can tempt opportunist criminals to break in.

Common items stolen from parked cars include bags, wallets, mobiles, power tools and laptops. Please help yourself by not leaving valuables in your vehicle.

No-one wants the inconvenience of having to deal with insurance companies and to have their premiums inflated as a result of a claim, not to mention the stress and inconvenience of losing personal items so please take a moment to double check you have removed everything.

If you see anyone acting suspiciously around parked vehicles make sure you call the police at the time that you see them.

**Try to obtain a description of them, their direction of travel and details of any vehicle they are using. Call the police on the 24 hour number 101, or if a crime is happening at that time, dial on 999.**

If you suspect someone of being involved in this sort of crime, or think they are handling stolen property, please call the police on the 24 hour Police Enquiry Centre number 101.

If you don't want to speak to the police or give your details you can contact the independent charity [Crimestoppers](#) anonymously on 0800 555 111, or report it online. No personal details will be given, information is not traced or recorded and you will not go to court.

Advice and information about preventing crime can be found on the [Thames Valley Police](#) website. ■

#### YOUR LOCAL CO-ORDINATORS

Graham Stewart	2, High Street. Tel. 01908 501973
Peter Beckwith	6, Old Manor Close. Tel: 01908 503194
Sally Green	Bellsbrook, Church Lane. Tel: Ex-directory
David McIntyre	2a, Vicarage Road. Tel: 01908 867836
Howard Jones	8, Ladymead. Tel: 01908 501871
Sally Telford	4a, Stock Lane. Tel:01908 336960
Pauline Winward	1, Whaddon Hall. Tel: 01908 502559

● **TO WINSTON CHURCHILL** (who, legend has it, once came to Whaddon in WW2) the word "secretary" referred to someone quite different to the secretary described by Roger Porter in the last issue. A number of Churchill's secretaries kept diaries and these form a deep well of Churchillian memoirs from which authors can draw, the latest of whom being Cita Stelzel; she has written a 400pp epic *Working with Winston*, published by Head of Zeus at £20. ■



## Whaddon Chapel

***Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever.***

**Hebrews 13 v. 8**

THINGS change; seasons, places, attitudes and even people. Sometimes, things change for the better, and sometimes not. But things will always change.

Amidst changing circumstance, it can be a comfort to return to something familiar, something that remains despite the changes around us. It can give us security.

So where can we look for constancy in the face of change? The Bible tells us that God never changes. He does not have different attitudes or seasons: He is not unpredictable or unreliable. Throughout all the ages that have been, He is constant – and He will remain so for eternity.

God is not unknowable. He has shown himself fully to us through the Lord Jesus. Jesus is the only way to God: as the verse above reminds us, He always has been and always will be.

So, if you are looking for something certain, predictable and secure, look to Jesus. Through faith in Him only can we know every good and perfect gift of God for which we were created. And through faith in Him only we can be changed for the better – into the people God intended us to be.

*Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sister. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth; that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

**James 1 v. 16-18**

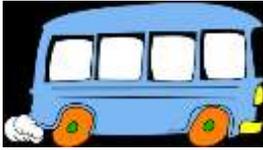
Why not join us to find out more? ■

### **Harvest Thanksgiving service**

29<sup>th</sup> September, 4pm-5pm

### **Regular meetings:**

- Every Sunday, 4pm-5pm in Whaddon Chapel.
- Bible Study & Prayer meeting 7:30-9pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of every month at 3 Briary View.

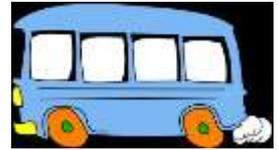


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**Everyone is eligible to come on the bus. We pick up near to your house.**

**Please ring Sue for more information.**

**\*Denotes bus pass accepted.**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> August – **Lunch out at The Oak Aston Clinton** – lovely pub with traditional pub food. £4.50 travel.

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> August - **Buckingham Bus** – 1 hour in town then 1 hour in Tesco, or 2 hours in Tesco. Door to door service, bus passes accepted, otherwise £4.50 return.

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August - **Westcroft Shopping** - Morrisons, Boots, Aldi, etc., bus passes accepted, otherwise £4.50 return. Departs Winslow 9.30am, village pick-ups. Ring to book.

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> August – **Bournemouth** – Join us on our annual trip to Bournemouth – £20.00

Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> – **Cotswolds Tour** – join us on another fact-filled drive through the Cotswolds countryside with pub lunch. £8.00.

Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> August – Visit **Aldeburgh** - my favourite seaside on the Suffolk coast, with a stop at Snape Maltings on the way. £20.00

Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> August – **Visit Yarnton Home and Garden** – formerly Yarnton Nurseries – Garden centre for plants, seeds, bulbs and gardening supplies, plus gifts and a restaurant. £5.00

Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> August - **Westcroft Shopping** - Morrisons, Boots, Aldi, etc., bus passes accepted, otherwise £4.50 return. Departs Winslow 9.30am, village pick-ups. Ring to book.

Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> August – **Asda Shopping MK1** - option to go to M&S, Primark, etc., £4.00.

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> August – **Visit Stratford-upon-Avon**. Do your own thing – laze by the river, shop or visit some of Shakespeare's residences. £6.00 travel.

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September - **Buckingham Bus** – 1 hour in town then 1 hour in Tesco, or 2 hours in Tesco. Door to door service, bus passes accepted, otherwise £4.50 return.

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September - **Westcroft Shopping** - Morrisons, Boots, Aldi, etc., bus passes accepted, otherwise £4.50 return. Departs Winslow 9.30am, village pick-ups. Ring to book.

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> September - **Stony Stratford Shopping** – lots of lovely shops and places to eat – only £4.50.

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September – **Lunch at The Pheasant Brill** – pub with a view! £5.00 travel.

Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> September – **Asda Shopping MK1** - option to go to M&S, Primark, etc., £4.00.

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September - **Westcroft Shopping** - Morrisons, Boots, Aldi, etc., bus passes accepted, otherwise £4.50 return. Departs Winslow 9.30am, village pick-ups. Ring to book.

**Milton Keynes Theatre** - please book as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

All prices are for tickets in Band A price range (circle or stalls) and travel.

Performances start 2.30pm unless otherwise stated. Door to door service.

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> September- **The Entertainer** – starring Shane Richie 'one of the greatest plays of the 20<sup>th</sup> century'. £27.00

Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> September - **9 to 5 The Musical** - £33.00

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October – **Priscilla Queen of the Desert** – starring Joe McFadden - this smash hit show features a dazzling display of stunning costumes, fabulous feathers and a non-stop parade of dance floor classics. £30.00

Wednesday October 9<sup>th</sup> - **Dr Dolittle** - £34.50

Wednesday October 30<sup>th</sup> – **Kinky Boots** = 'Dazzling, sassy and uplifting'. Winner of the Olivier Award for Best New Musical. £33.50.

**AYLESBURY MARKET BUS** - No parking – no hassle AND help on and off with your shopping if needed! ALL WELCOME, young and old alike. Pickups around Winslow and in the villages.

**Every Friday and Saturday morning** the bus travels into Aylesbury from Winslow, through the Horwoods, Mursley and Swanbourne arriving just after 10am and departing 12.15pm. It's **FREE** with a bus pass, otherwise only £4.50 return. We drop off outside Sainsbury's or at the bus station. You also have the option to go to Broadfields Tesco and Aldi.

We can pick up near to your home.

Ring Sue for more info or a timetable! **01296 715786**

# Under Fives busy on several fronts

**The Under Fives Playschool is busy on several fronts, as Joanne Walker explains**

**First Friday Bake Sale.** The playschool parents and grandparents are pleased to offer a regular bake sale and cafe at Jubilee Hall on the first Friday of the month during term time, between 10am and 12pm (closed in August).

There will be home-made cakes and freshly baked scones for only £1 and a free cup of tea or coffee included. If you'd like to pre-order scones to take-away (50p each), please contact Joanne by email: [committee.whaddonplayschool@gmail.com](mailto:committee.whaddonplayschool@gmail.com)

**Exciting Opportunity Available.** An opportunity has arisen to join the Whaddon Under Fives Playschool Team. We are looking for a friendly, Level 3 qualified, enthusiastic Early Years practitioner to join our team. The hours are: 24 to 30 per week, available between 8.45am and 3.15pm (term time). Recent experience of working with the Early Years and excellent knowledge of the EYFS curriculum is essential.

To find out more about our setting please visit [www.whaddonunderfives.org](http://www.whaddonunderfives.org)

Please contact us for an application pack at [committee.whaddonplayschool@gmail.com](mailto:committee.whaddonplayschool@gmail.com)

**Afternoon Tea.** The playschool committee organised a wonderful Afternoon Tea at Jubilee Hall on 18<sup>th</sup> May. It was well attended and many compliments were given for the decoration, food and entertainment. A big thank you to Daphne Willis and Esme Hopson for their invaluable help and advice; and to Liz Walker for making delicious sandwiches, scones and cakes.

Date for your diary: Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February 2020 for a Valentine's Afternoon Tea.

**D-Day.** The children had an amazing time visiting D-Day commemorations at St Mary's Church on 6<sup>th</sup> June. They met veteran soldiers and handled 100-year-old rifles and weapons. They heard stories about pigeons which carried secret messages, and were able to tap out the alphabet in morse code on a real machine, as well as listening to some real coded messages being communicated using the original equipment.

They met Geoffrey Pidgeon who was an employee of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS), helping with communication equipment. He is a remarkable man who told the children about his own family and having a great-grandchild of the same age as many of the children. A big thank you to everyone who made this wonderful experience possible.

And a special thank you to Sally Green who welcomed the children into the church and read them a story, as the Jubilee Hall was "borrowed" from Under Fives Playschool for the day to offer refreshments to the D-Day visitors. ■

*Joanne Walker*

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## A public first for 'A Million Dreams'

**Chase Choir was delighted to be asked to join the congregation of St Mary's on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> June for a benefice service.**

WE LENT our voices to the hymn-singing and performed four extra pieces at the end too. One of the pieces (A Million Dreams) got its first public airing, which is always a little daunting, so many thanks to the congregation, who were an attentive and enthusiastic audience.

By the time you read this, Chase Choir will have performed their summer concert, had their summer barbeque and settled down for a well-earned summer break for the month of August. This year, we're raising funds for two local charities: Harry's Rainbow and the MK Hospital Cancer Unit, and that fundraising will continue to the end of 2019.



But we'll be back, as the saying almost goes, on the first Monday in September (2<sup>nd</sup>) all ready for what's usually a busy section of the year. No, we're not going to say the 'C' word: for goodness' sake, it's barely August yet!

A reminder: we meet from 7pm to 9pm on Mondays in the village hall. The cost is £2 per session. No audition is required. Do come along and be part of a friendly group and take part in something which doesn't involve running, weightlifting, bending your body into impossible shapes, but is still incredibly good for your mental and physical wellbeing!

Contact Karen – 01908 501922 or Marianna – 01908 503194 for further details. ■

*Marianna Beckwith*

## WHADDON PLANNING BRIEFS

### **19/02530/APP: 3 Stratford Road, Whaddon.**

Demolition of rear sunroom and construction of two-storey side and rear extensions.

**Brief description:** The proposed two-storey rear extension builds on what currently exists in single- and two-storey parts, and will incorporate a small decking area which 'squares off' the built area without extending the basic footprint. The two-storey side extension is subservient to, and adjoins the existing gable end and sits between the existing dwelling and garage which will remain. The property is not listed nor does it lie within a Conservation Area.

### **19/02309/APP: The Oaks, Stratford Road, Whaddon.**

Demolition of existing dwelling and outbuilding and replace new dwelling. Timber-framed garage and associated works.

**Brief description:** The property stands within open countryside, some 1000m. back and to the west of Stratford Road (opposite the track to Shenley Dens Farm). It has not been occupied for very many years, is semi-derelict and was fully 'boarded up' some years ago. The new house will basically stand on the same footprint area, but will be approximately 32 sq.m. larger than that which currently exists – an increase of about 45% in ground floor area. A new garage and cycle store (where none exists at present) will be built approximately 12m to the north, accessed by a new driveway off the existing concrete roadway.

### **19/02345/COUAR: The Oaks, Stratford Road, Whaddon.**

Determination as to whether prior approval is required in respect of transport & highway impact, noise, contamination risk, flooding and locational consideration for the conversion of an agricultural barn into 4 dwelling houses (Class Q(a)) and in relation to design and external appearance of the building (Class Q(b)).

**Brief Description:** The property stands within open countryside, some 1000m. back and to the west of Stratford Road (opposite the track to Shenley Dens Farm), and some 40m further on from the semi-derelict house (see 19/02309/APP above). The description is self-explanatory, and the application is a result of recent changes in Government planning laws to encourage the drive for, and to ease the pressure on housing in rural areas, by converting existing agricultural buildings. Matters for consideration in line with the description include: convertibility (is the building sound and capable of supporting the conversion), sustainability, location, landscape impact, practicality, desirability and precedent.

### **19/02291/COUAR: The Oaks, Stratford Road, Whaddon.**

Determination as to whether prior approval is required in respect of transport & highway impact, noise, contamination risk, flooding and locational consideration for the conversion of an

agricultural barn into a single dwelling house (Class Q(a)) and in relation to design and external appearance of the building (Class Q(b)).

**Brief Description:** The property stands within open countryside, some 1000m. back and to the west of Stratford Road (opposite the track to Shenley Dens Farm), and some 40m further on from the semi-derelict house (above). The description is self-explanatory, and the application is a result of recent changes in Government planning laws to encourage the drive for, and to ease the pressure on housing in rural areas, by converting existing agricultural buildings. Matters for consideration in line with the description include: convertibility (is the building sound and capable of supporting the conversion), sustainability, location, landscape impact, practicality, desirability and precedent.

## **PLANNING DECISIONS AND ONGOING APPLICATIONS.**

### **CM/0068/18: Park Hill Farm, Bletchley Road, Little Horwood. (Location on A421, opposite turning to Little Horwood.)**

Recontouring of agricultural land using tipped inert waste.

Bucks C.C. finally decided to REFUSE this application based on six very sound reasons.

**19/00074/ALB: The Gatehouse, 28 High Street, Whaddon.** This application for two skylights remains undetermined but is expected to be approved when further designs are considered by the AVDC Historic Buildings Officer.

### **18/01333/APP: Land off Stratford Road, Whaddon. (Almost opposite entrance to Whaddon Hall)**

Temporary change of use from agriculture to animal training (dogs)

The officer at AVDC planning department dealing with this application recently has had to deal with numerous appeals and committee reports; these have taken precedence over her general workload. WPC are informed that things have quietened down now and, whilst it is difficult to provide an accurate timescale for a decision to be made, it is fairly imminent.

### **18/02929/APP: Land off Stratford Road, Whaddon. (Almost opposite entrance to Whaddon Hall)**

Retrospective application for: retention of reconstructed barns and installed Klargestor biotreatment plant.

This application was REFUSED on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019. Reasons include 'The proposed use of the building does not fall within the definition of agriculture, is not justified and fails to respect the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside'. The biotreatment unit would result in an unacceptable risk of land especially when the building is adjacent to a sewage pumping facility.

**PLEASE REMEMBER** that you can view these, or any other planning applications on the AVDC planning web-site, by simply Googling : Planning>>simple search-Aylesbury Vale District Council; then open this link and type in the planning application number in the box provided, then click 'search'. Open the documents and inspect the papers of interest to you. As with all planning applications, residents are able to inspect all plans and certain correspondence, together with statutory consultee responses, by following this procedure.

**The next meeting of Whaddon Parish Council, where any new planning applications will be discussed, is on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September at 7.30pm in the village Chapel. All are welcome.** ■

# Calverton Lane closure disruption looms

**Recent erection of security fencing along the northern end of Calverton Lane suggests construction works may be commencing soon on this part of the rapidly expanding MK Western Expansion Area. Graham Stewart has been 'digging' to discover what is going on.**

BEFORE construction of housing on site can commence, infrastructure (roads and drainage, etc) must first be put in place; work is likely to commence on Phase 1 of the Calverton Lane diversion in autumn this year.

The actual dates are yet to be confirmed as master developer L & Q Estates (previously Gallagher Estates) continues its detailed discussions with MK Highways.

As soon as accurate dates are known (and your Parish Council has asked for as much notice as possible to ensure residents can plan their future journeys accordingly), details of the full closure period and diversion routes (via Calverton for Stony Stratford, and Shenley Road to Central MK) will be made available on noticeboards, the village email list, etc with, hopefully, plans displayed in the village hall or on village noticeboards.

Phase 1 works (September – October?) will require 2-3 months of full road closure (this is our best guess until full details are confirmed by the developer/MK Highways). The existing Calverton Lane/V4 Watling Street roundabout will be completely removed and the top 400m stretch of Calverton Lane diverted to intersect with the remaining – but enlarged and improved – second roundabout, some 100m away, where Monks Way/H3 heads towards CMK and Newport Pagnell/M1.

Once these works are complete, Calverton Lane will re-open and operate fully along its new route, whilst development and other new road alignments are built behind hedging and security fencing.

Eventually, in probably 5-6 years from now, a further major closure of Calverton Lane will occur, at which time part of Calverton Lane (about half way along) will be closed for good, and the new diverted route to the V4/Watling Street will take traffic through a fully 'traffic calmed' residential area – similar to present-day trips to Morrison's.

As plans and timescales emerge your PC will try to keep you fully informed. For further information to view current detailed plans, please contact Graham Stewart direct. ■

## Whaddon Refuse Collection Dates

**Food waste:** Every Tuesday

**Recycling:** Tuesdays: 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> August; 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> September; 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> & October.

**Waste refuse:** Tuesdays: 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> August; 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> September; 8 & 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

**Garden waste:** If you have subscribed to the garden waste service, all collections will be the same day as the waste refuse collection, viz: 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> August; 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> September; 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> October; 5<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> November.

If AVDC misses a collection; report within 48 hours by phone to AVDC (01296 585858) or via the website. [www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/find-your-bin-day](http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/find-your-bin-day)

● **Waterside Festival** returns on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 11am – 5.30pm. Many favourites are returning: the floating market, top musical entertainment and free canoeing, kayaking and paddle-boarding sessions. There will be waterside-themed arts & crafts, as well as free bike hire, family-friendly wildlife activities, a merry-go-round and swing boats – and the fabulous food court! Find out more at the official Waterside Festival website, or follow @watersidefestvl on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. ■

# Whaddon set for 1,150 new homes

**Leaked information points to a future whereby an additional 1,150 houses could be sited within a short distance of the village, as Graham Stewart reports.**

**W**ITH a current housing stock of some 180 homes, Whaddon parish faces a minimum six-fold increase in its housing stock, if the Government Inspector for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) approves AVDC's proposed modifications to site 1,150 new houses at 'Shenley Park' – on land bordering Shenley Road, adjacent to Briary View.

This is based on 'leaked information' from AVDC. Full details are not yet publicly available but are due to be published before the next *Whaddon Quarterly* appears.

Accordingly, we must be very careful about what is printed; however, we urge all readers to visit the AVDC 'Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan' website, and inspect the 'Main Modifications'; specifically the 'Amended Spatial Strategy' section. This will include plans and details of 'Shenley Park' as the preferred 'Close to Milton Keynes' site, a specific requirement of the Inspector following his report on the Interim Plan 12 months ago.

Since then, AVDC has undertaken a detailed review of the three main competing sites, (any one of which could make up the housing deficit), but has chosen 'Shenley Park', due mainly to 'Comparative Landscape' and 'Strategic Flood Risk' assessments.

So, what next? Once the documents are made public all residents should carefully consider and discuss the proposed plans. Everyone will have a view, good, bad or otherwise on this major development area.

Although sited in Aylesbury Vale and alongside Whaddon village, Shenley Park will be seen as – and expected to function as – a sustainable Urban Expansion of Milton Keynes.

Perhaps a Special Parish Council Meeting, or a simple exhibition in Jubilee Hall will help, but whatever your view – 'Object', 'Support', 'Uninterested' or any combination thereof – we are told that there will be a 6-week Public Consultation period.

This begins after the summer holidays; from mid-September until the end of October. Then everyone can make their views known to AVDC.

Your Parish Council would like to hear your views, as Whaddon PC's response should reflect the majority views of the village's residents, not just those of its elected councillors.

Many residents may recall that 15 years ago the village faced a similar M.K. expansion plan involving a massive 2,250 housing site which threatened to spill over the Shenley Ridge into the Whaddon - Nash Valley to the north of this village.

The 'Over the Ridge' campaign received the support of the entire village, together with AVDC. Also, some very helpful comments by the then Milton Keynes Local Plan Inspector ensured the site was 'scrapped' for landscape and topography reasons.

This time, the 1,150 houses to the south of the village may be more difficult to fight, especially as it is worryingly proposed by our own local authority. This is on specific instructions from the Inspector. The preferred choice of site follows detailed landscape assessments of all three competing sites.

For further information please contact Graham Stewart. ■

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● **ROBOTS** will take over Bucks County Museum in Aylesbury this summer (27<sup>th</sup> July – 31<sup>st</sup> August), alongside cyborgs and androids as it plays host to the spectacular ROBOT exhibition. The museum adds that this family-friendly exhibition showcases awe-inspiring robots, including some iconic robots from movies, TV and beyond. It adds that this "must-see" exhibition is expected to capture the imaginations of sci-fi fans and visitors of all ages. ROBOT opens on 27<sup>th</sup> July and runs throughout the summer holidays, Monday to Saturday, 10am – 5pm until 31<sup>st</sup> August. For admission charges and robot activities visit [www.buckscountymuseum.org](http://www.buckscountymuseum.org) or call 01296 331441. Bucks County Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury HP20 2QP. ■

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# Calverton's new belfry – 2

In this, the second part of insight into Calverton's new bells, David Muston resumes his report, picking up after the complete bell frame, retuned bells and associated fittings had been pre-assembled and tested at White's Bellhangers' factory in Abington.

**A**FTER that, everything was taken apart and the main sections of the new bell frame transported to Calverton.

The next stage required fitting the main girders into prepared pockets in the tower walls and cementing them in place before bolting together various cross girders to form

the complete framework (known as a 'griddle') ready to receive the rest of the bell frames.

While the cement hardened in the wall pockets, a completely new, thick wooden sub floor was installed just below the griddle framework. This would moderate the sound in the ringing chamber below and help project upwards the main volume of sound.



Eric West helps push half-ton tenor bell up Calverton Church path

During March and April, one by one, the new cast iron bell frames were bolted down onto the girders and individual bells hung between each pair of frames. The lower half of each new wooden bell wheel was installed with each bell (as it is impossible to fit them later).

This activity, as seen in the illustration **top facing page**, epitomises the idea of 'bell hanging' and fully justifies White's of Appleton describing themselves as 'Bellhangers' as part of their full company title.

However, this is a relatively small part of the overall process of fully renovating a peal of bells: something which probably has not witnessed any major intervention for a century or more, or 114 years, in Calverton's case!

Finally, new bell ropes were strung on to each wheel and large holes drilled down through the new floor, and the old ceiling. The new ropes were threaded with their colourful woollen sallies (which the bell ringers use to pull on) down into the bell ringing chamber below.



New steel girders span inside the tower, in the 'spare' storey below the old belfry

In March, the refurbished bells were returned to Calverton to be put on display for the Blessing Ceremony on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March.



Fr Ross blessing and naming Calverton's new bells



One benefit of the new bells being mounted lower in the tower, is that the ropes are shorter and less likely to stretch; this makes them more sensitive and easier to control by the ringers.

However, one odd outcome of the shorter ropes, is that the tops of some of the colourful sallies now make a brief appearance in the

White's engineers fit side parts and hang the first bell belfry. This happens as they are pulled up the tower and out of the floor-holes at the top, as the bell ropes wind on and off the bell wheels with each full circle stroke!

Once the bells were operational, each one had to be adjusted (or timed) such that its clapper would strike the inside of the bell

at exactly equal moments in time as it rotated, first clockwise then anticlockwise, in relation to its bottom dead-centre rest position.

A full band of eight ringers was assembled to test the bells as a complete peal. They rang two short pieces: a Grand Sire Triples followed by a half course of Cambridge Surprise Major. To an untutored ear the sound was fuller, smoother and truly melodic compared with the old bells (several of which, in fairness, had become more than a little flat!).



Bells in motion for the first time

However, from their new lower position in the tower the sound has to travel up through an aperture cut in the floor of the old belfry above, and then out through the old bell-frame and the four large louvred windows at the top of the tower.

The resultant sound outside the church is therefore better mixed and much smoother, but also quieter. Several additional apertures have now been cut out to improve the volume, so all may appreciate this wonderful new sound. ■

## Employment termination agreements

**FROM time to time, an employer may wish to enter into negotiations with an employee (or vice versa) to settle a dispute or agree the terms of an employee's departure.**

**E**VIDENCE of any such negotiations can be used as evidence in any subsequent litigation. However, there are now two possible ways of protecting the negotiations and keeping them confidential; in this case they cannot be used as evidence. These are:

- Using the without prejudice rule – communications cannot be used as evidence.
- Under the rule regarding “pre-termination negotiations” under section 111A of the Employment Rights Act 1996. These are sometimes referred to as “protected conversations”, which applies only in respect of ordinary unfair dismissal claims. These conversations can only be prevented from being used as evidence in certain circumstances.

The two rules differ as follows:

The “without prejudice” rule can apply only where the parties are already in dispute and are seeking to resolve such dispute. The written or oral communications must be for the purpose of a genuine attempt to settle the dispute.

With the “pre-termination negotiations”, there need not be a position that the parties are already in dispute. This rule applies to any offer made or discussions held before the termination of employment, with a view to the employer and the employee agreeing terms on which the employment will be terminated.

The pre-termination negotiations usually result in a Settlement Agreement between the Employer and Employee to terminate the employment.

If you have been through pre-termination negotiations and have received a Settlement Agreement, we can provide you with the necessary advice and guidance required to make it legally binding.

*(This article is not intended to be legal advice and you should seek independent legal advice for your own individual circumstances.)*

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## Jubilee Hall is your village hall

**T**HE Jubilee Hall was built on land donated by the Selby-Lowndes family and opened in 1935. It has strong historical connections as detailed previously in this magazine. It is governed by a committee of trustees and has charitable status. A group of volunteers from the village takes care of the administration and maintenance of the Hall.

As well as offering facilities for many and varied activities for villagers to enjoy, it is available also for private hire. It is currently in regular use by the weekly Post Office, the pre-school, Chase Choir, Whaddon Entertainers, St. Mary’s Church, WI afternoon and WI Night Owlers, as well as for fun physical activities such as yoga classes, Pilates and table tennis.

For booking enquiries, please e-mail address [whaddonvillagehall@googlemail.com](mailto:whaddonvillagehall@googlemail.com) or message through the Hall’s Facebook page “Whaddon Jubilee Hall”



## Fundraising

In order to carry out improvements and to maintain and protect the hall, the committee continually works hard to create fun events to raise funds; the committee is extremely grateful for the terrific support that they receive from the local community.

So far in 2019, events have consisted of a Curry Night, a Spring Social Evening and a Summer Barbecue (**right**). Each had fantastic attendance and, along with coffee and cakes sold at the D-Day event in June, funds of almost £2,000 have been raised.



Further events in the pipeline are as follows:

- Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August: **Summer Social Night**. Doors and licensed bar open at 7.30pm. Games and music. Please come along and bring your friends.
- Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December: **Save the Date for a Christmas Village Social Evening**.

Other events are being planned and will be advertised when arranged. For those of you on Facebook, there is a page dedicated to the hall. Search 'Whaddon Jubilee Hall', 'like' the page and you will be kept up-to-date with what is happening. Please keep an eye also on noticeboards inside and outside the hall. ■

*Jubilee Hall Committee*

## Nash Events

### August 2019

Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 6.30pm to 10.30pm

Nash PUMP – Pop Up Micro Pub – 50th iteration of our popular monthly event serving ales, prosecco, wines & spirits as well as great Nash spirit!

Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 10.30am to 4pm

Nash Community Café – drinks (now licensed) and cakes, light lunches, co-working space

### September 2019

Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> September, 6.30pm to 10.30pm

Nash PUMP – Pop Up Micro Pub – popular monthly event serving ales, prosecco, wines & spirits as well as great Nash spirit!

Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> September, 10.30am to 4pm

Nash Community Café – drinks (now licensed) and cakes, light lunches, co-working space

Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> September, 2-5pm

Nash Produce Show

### October 2019

Saturday, 5<sup>th</sup> October - 6.30pm to 10.30pm

Nash PUMP – Pop Up Micro Pub – popular monthly event serving ales, prosecco, wines & spirits as well as great Nash spirit

Friday, 18<sup>th</sup> October - 10.30am to 5pm

Nash Community Café – drinks (now licensed) and cakes, light lunches, co-working space

For information on the Produce Show contact Pam King at [pam@king199@gmail.com](mailto:pam@king199@gmail.com). For all other events please contact [infoatnashvillagehall@gmail.com](mailto:infoatnashvillagehall@gmail.com)

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## Shakespeare and a 'lesser known' worthy

IN a recent item, in the *MK Citizen*, discussing the relevance or otherwise of schools studying Shakespeare in this modern age, the newspaper drew attention to a 'lesser known literary worthy' (than Shakespeare), notably Edmund Spenser.

In 1580, the item noted, Spenser was appointed secretary to Arthur de Grey of Whaddon Hall. This followed Arthur's appointment as Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Today Spenser is more remembered for his 'monumental life's work', the *Faerie Queene*, the first books of which began to appear in 1590.

Before his departure for Ireland, Spenser stayed as a guest at Whaddon Hall and, by tradition, on the south side of the garden composed a part of his notable work beneath 'a most venerable oak'.

The tree has long since disappeared but an ancient volume of the *Faerie Queene* could lately to be seen in the library of Ascott House, near Wing.

Mention of Spenser appeared in the *MK Citizen* of 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019 under an item headed Way We Were. ■

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● **WHADDON**, at the time of Doomsday Book in 1066, enjoyed a population of 33; this comprised 14 villagers, 9 smallholders and 10 slaves: a total population then described as 'very large'. By 1801, according to Genuki, the population had climbed to 545, a figure which, 100 years later, had dropped to 321. Nearby Nash's population in those two years was stable at 265 and 263 respectively. ■



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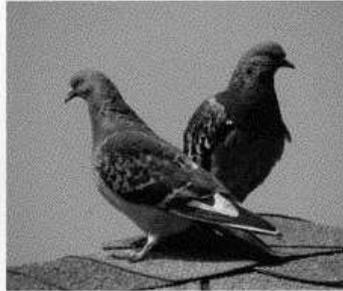
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**Continued from p. 58**

warm summer's day. About a dozen lads are playing cricket. No one ever went up to the Rec in those days; the grass there was a foot tall and mowed by a local farmer for hay. All the kids played on Church Hill.

The cricket gear was makeshift: three old wickets at one end and a pile of coats at the bowler's end. There was an old bat tied up with string and the ball was a cheap hard one. As there were no pads or gloves, the boys all had plenty of bruises. The rules were very simple: you scored two if you hit the ball into the churchyard and a four if it went down the pit by what is now Sir Billy Stanier's garden.



For some near by 1947 was a bad winter indeed

Everyone had to look out for old Mr Jack Taylor. Bill Taylor's father, who would shuffle up from the farmhouse on two sticks, would shout at them to "clear off".

But as he was so slow, the boys had plenty of time to pack up and disappear around St Mary's Church only to reappear later.

It was a hard game. Alec James, all arms and legs trying to imitate Fred Truman, would hurl the ball down from one end while Mick Green, now sadly no longer with us, was even quicker despite having a bad leg. Both went on to play for the village cricket team.

School holidays would find us all in the wood alongside Stock Lane and opposite the Congregational Chapel. We would take our bikes into the wood and ride around a dirt track we had made around a large pond.

Any old bikes would do; most of them were made up from bits we had found. Very few had brakes. This was well before the emergence of Raleigh Chopper bikes.

The pond had its own population of great crested newts; these we would net and then put back into the water. We soon discovered they would die if we tried to keep them. I think the houses nearby would not have been built today as now there are laws to protect the species.

It must be hard for today's villagers to image Stock Lane being so quiet that we could play football in the road by the village hall. We used piles of coats for goalposts and an old tennis ball. But that's what we did to while away the time on some very cold mornings every morning while waiting for the school bus, which arrived at 8.15.

This even included the very cold winter of 1947. Notwithstanding the severity of the weather, old United Counties buses continued to arrive from Stony Stratford. The buses and their drivers were made of much sterner stuff than those of today as most of the crews had just come out of the forces. ■

**To be concluded in the next issue.**

## When Whaddon had its own Mr Fixit...

Many in Whaddon have fond memories of Mick Green, who lived in the village for most of his life. As a lad, Mick would play cricket on Church Hill with his chums. Living in Laburnum Cottage in Stock Lane at the time, he had but a short distance to travel to enjoy fun.

KNOWN locally as Mr Fixit, there are many with good reason to be grateful for Mick's skill, especially when it came to mechanical parts and automotive matters.

Knowledge of his expertise stretched far and wide, even as far as Saxmundham in Suffolk from where a man would bring his car to Whaddon for repair because "it was economical" so to do.

Mr Fixit became the focus of attention in early 1975 when he took on AVDC in his fight for planning permission to continue his repair business in Church Hill, just behind Laburnum Cottage.

A petition with 257 signatures coupled with 103 letters bore testimony to his popularity, not to mention his value to the community.

The planning enquiry heard that Mick had, for many years, been cheaply repairing cars belonging to Whaddon's pensioners and old people.

A local clergyman was among those who gave his endorsement of Mick for his work. The Rev George Meek, Rural Dean of Mursley, described Mick as an "unbiased court of advice on mechanical matters to the village."

Eventually, in 1976, permission was given for a workshop to be sited behind the village hall (now of course Jubilee Hall).

Michael Howard Green was born on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1937 in Bow Brickhill; he and his parents came to Whaddon in 1945 or 1946. The family lived at Laburnum Cottage. Mick passed away on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2015 and is buried in St Mary's churchyard alongside his son, Christopher Howard Green, who died on 4<sup>th</sup> February 1991, aged 18. ■



Village row in *The Gazette* of 17<sup>th</sup> January 1975

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## And we played football in Stock Lane

**Derek White recalls boyhood days when life for young lads growing up in the village was rather different from that of today.**

**I**MAGINE if you could be transported back in time to a summer evening in the early 1950s. The sun is going down like a big red ball over Nash; a cool summer breeze is blowing on Church Hill alongside the churchyard after a warm summer's day.

**Continued on p. 57**

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**Outside back cover: Flanders poppy? No, a wild poppy in Whaddon. John Mortimer**

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**STOP PRESS.** Late breaking news. AVDC is likely to face stiff opposition to plans to site 1,150 houses in Shenley Park on land adjoining Shenley Road and close to Briary View. Of three possible sites, Shenley Park (or WHA001 as it was formerly known) with its implications for A421, is preferred by AVDC. It will go ahead if the Government Inspector for the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) approves AVDC's proposed modifications. Details emerged at a briefing meeting for parish councillors at Oculus in AVDC's head office, Aylesbury, on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Read Graham Stewart's report on p. **43**.

