



**The Cherwell Valley Benefice in the Diocese of Oxford**  
SERVICES IN THE CHERWELL VALLEY

	<b>Ardley</b>	<b>Fritwell</b>	<b>Lower Heyford</b>	<b>Somerton</b>	<b>Souldern</b>	<b>Upper Heyford</b>		
	<b>St Mary's</b>	<b>St Olave's</b>	<b>St Mary's</b>	<b>St James</b>	<b>St Mary's</b>	<b>St Mary's</b>	<b>Chapel</b>	
4-Dec	08:30 1662 HC	11:00 Family Worship	11:00 1662 HC	9:30 Family Worship Communion	11:00 Matins	9:30 Trad Lang Communion & Hymns	11:00 Contemporary Worship	
11-Dec	9:30 CW Family Communion	08:30 1662 HC	11:00 Family Worship	4:00 Christingle	11:00 CW Sung Communion	9:30 Matins	11:00 Contemporary Worship	
16-Dec		19:00 Lessons & Carols (not 18:00)	Nativity & Village Band at 6pm			19:00 Lessons & Carols		
18-Dec	16:00 Lessons & Carols	11:00 Family Worship Communion	18:00 Lessons & Carols	09:30 Matins & HC	08:30 1662 HC	9:30 Family Worship	11:00 Contemporary Worship	
23-Dec					18:00 Lessons & Carols			
24-Dec	23:00 Midnight HC			16:00 Nativity & Carols		23:00 Midnight HC		
25-Dec		11:00 Family Christmas Communion	9:30 Family Christmas Communion	9:30 Family Christmas Communion	11:00 Family Christmas Communion		10:00 Christmas Celebration	
1-Jan	10:30 Benefice Service CW Communion ~ St Mary's Upper Heyford							
8-Jan		08:30 1662 HC		9:30 Bears & Prayers & Sunday Club	11:00 Ian & Erika's Farewell Sunday Contemporary Worship			
15-Jan	9:30 CW Sung Communion	11:00 Family Worship Communion	08:30 1662 HC	09:30 Matins & HC	08:30 1662 HC	9:30 Family Worship	11:00 Contemporary Worship	
22-Jan	9:30 Family Worship	18:00 Evensong	11:00 Family Communion	9:30 Traditional Language Communion	10:30 Souldern Chapel Coffee & Christ	08:30 1662 HC	11:00 Contemporary Worship	
29-Jan	9:30 Benefice Service at Souldern							11:00 Contemporary Worship

Services described as 1662, Matins or Evensong follow the traditional form as laid out in The Book of Common Prayer. Services described as Common Worship use modern language and follow the revised form given in the Common Worship Service and Prayer Book. Services described as Family Worship or Contemporary Worship are suitable for all ages, including children.

For further details about services or requests concerning baptisms, weddings or funerals please contact a member of the Ministry Team

## The Cherwell Valley Benefice in the Diocese of Oxford

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THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Dear Friends,

Have you ever had one of those presents that have had more time put into the wrapping than into the gift itself? Layers of tape that form a bond that even the toughest fingernails struggle to unpick, and a paper so strong and tear resistant that you suspect its design specification was originally something to do with NASA.

Finally through a complicated procedure of cutting and ripping you find at the centre a pair of socks with a red nosed Rudolph design and a scratchy label that says '100% manmade fibre'. You smile at the gift giver, thinking to yourself "It's the thought that counts".

Perhaps this is how you feel about Christmas. The wrapping that surrounds the second most important Christian festival for the year isn't tape and paper, but shopping, the same old Christmas tunes and too many pre-season mince pies. For Christians this is especially hard as the season before Christmas, Advent is supposed to be a time of yearning, prayer, reflection and preparation.

Underneath this layer perhaps we find generations of folk beliefs, like old wallpaper: A stable, a little donkey, kings and aesthetically pleasing shepherds gathered together under a shining star. These can detract from the meaning of a child, born far from home, in the place in a house where the animals were kept (the warmest place in the house), visited by rather disreputable farm workers, and some time later by an unknown number of Persian Mystics.

The story as it is told in the Bible is quite different to how we often understand it. In telling it the season of Christmas doesn't end on Christmas day in the Church Calendar, but runs through Epiphany (the coming of the Magi) to Candlemass on February the 2<sup>nd</sup>. For many Christmas Day is the end of the season, but for Christians it is the beginning of the Christmas season, a celebration of a new beginning.

I hope that you don't find yourself on Christmas Day looking at your pair of Rudolph socks thinking 'at least it is almost over', because it *is* only just the beginning. God present with us in Jesus is the most important event in history, incarnation, God in the flesh. If even with unwanted socks it is the thought that counts then we should all give thought to that miracle and how we can best respond. In Jesus Christ we are offered a new beginning, reconciliation with God, and the foretaste of eternal life. We are offered God's full self in a helpless infant, fully human, that our humanity may be transformed to be like Christ who remains fully human. It is perhaps more than a thought; it is something to which we must respond.

There is one simple way this Christmas that we *can* respond – at the Christ Mass. As we gather on the feast of God present with us, he is fully present with us in bread and wine. The story of Christ's humanity and divinity is told and as he offers himself for us we join with it our own offering of ourselves to God. The layers of wrapping and tape are stripped away, all of our mistakes and failures, and we can discover ourselves to be, not unwanted socks, but most precious children of God loved by him.

*And now we give you thanks  
because for love of our fallen race  
he most wonderfully and humbly chose to be made man,  
and to take our nature as nevermore to lay it by,  
so that we might be born again by your Spirit  
and restored in your image.*

God bless, Eddie



What's on in the Cherwell Valley

# CHOROS

Conductor, Janet Lincé

## Carols for Christmas



Saturday 17 December, 7.30pm  
Upper Heyford Reading Room

## Favourite carols for choir and audience

with wine and soft drinks

In aid of Upper Heyford  
Community Fund

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Win 01869 232793

THE WI  
North Ploughley  
Group



Lessons & Carols  
St Mary's Lower Heyford  
Thursday 8th December at 7pm

## CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

2 & 4 New Cottages  
North Aston

Fund raising for  
Help for Heroes  
Katharine House

## What's going on at Cherwell District Council?

### Councillor Calling

**Bicester: Town Centre** works (Sainsbury, cinema, hotel, etc) will start on 9<sup>th</sup> January, so prepare for the disruption inevitable in such a huge project. The new **library** depends on the outcome of the County Council's current budget round, so fingers crossed. **Parking charges**, meanwhile, came down on 14<sup>th</sup> November, so it's slightly cheaper already: there's a raft of reductions (no evening charges after 7pm, free parking in disabled bays, 10p an hour price reduction in Bicester, etc) so do check the ticket machines to save money. The **rail project** (fast connection from Oxford to Bicester Town and then on to Marylebone) has hit a snag with bats in the Wolvercote tunnel and great crested newts: let's hope Chiltern and Natural England can hammer out a solution.

On the outskirts, the **MoD** have submitted an application for a large new housing estate on their land at Graven Hill: is this too much, with the Ecotown, Kingsmere and Gavray Drive and should the site stay zoned for the jobs Bicester so desperately needs to balance all the new houses? By Kingsmere, Cherwell have started on the new **sports village** to make up the huge shortfall in Bicester's facilities: this will take three years to complete, though it's on the route for 9<sup>th</sup> July 2012 when the **Olympic Flame** comes through, en route to Kirtlington, Kidlington and then Oxford.

**Banbury: ProDrive** the motor sports engineers have become too successful for their current site, the big white building by the M40, and want to move to the old aluminium works site. To pay for this, they propose a **retail park** on their old site by the motorway junction, with **M&S** and other big names lined up. Planners will be asking whether this will divert trade from the town or bring in new customers – and whether preserving and increasing high tech engineering jobs would justify it anyway. In the centre, outline plans have been displayed for consultation to turn the nondescript area North of Parsons Street, officially known as **Bolton Road** but to most people just the multi storey car park, into an attractive new quarter of the town centre. Do look and have your say.

**Financial** news includes the confirmation by the Icelandic Supreme Court that council depositors are “preferential creditors” of **Icelandic banks**, meaning we are to get taxpayers' money back in full with the accrued interest as well – turning this after all into rather a good investment! This is not related to our determination to deliver another **0% council tax increase** – but it doesn't hurt. We were recently told that the **cost of contacts** is 30p by computer, £3 by phone and £8 face to face: an incentive to make the Cherwell website as easy and friendly as possible.

In a complete change of practice, rather than give **grants to voluntary groups** who serve local people, Cherwell has specified exactly what services are needed and invited groups to tender. **Banbury CAB** won the contract to deliver debt and money advice, voluntary driving schemes and services to increase volunteering throughout the District. The idea is to meet needs in the most efficient and effective way. The County Council is doing a similar exercise with the **Dial-a-Ride** services, where expenditure and usage varies widely across Oxfordshire. OCC aim to have the providers selected, up and running on 1<sup>st</sup> April next year.

**Management:** the new **joint management team** for Cherwell and South Northants have completed their induction and are firmly in the saddle. As they get stuck in, further opportunities for “jointery” (and therefore extra savings) seem to be emerging all over the place, which is encouraging as its clear that financial austerity is not going away any time soon. In an interesting innovation, each senior manager has been given a geographical area to look after as well as their line responsibilities, so **Kevin Lane**, whose day job is running legal and democratic services, land charges and elections, will also be taking an interest in the Astons & Heyfords.

**Planning policy:** you'll have found it hard to avoid the controversy over the new **National Planning Policy Framework** with its proposed bias in favour of unrestrained development. I hope the government stops dismissing concerns as “nihilistic” and “nimby” and starts to listen. An urgent implication for Cherwell is that we have to put a **Local Development Framework** in place in a matter of months or builders will be able to ride roughshod over any sensible local planning. Progress on the LDF to date has been incredibly frustrating as new rules and policy u-turns delayed every step along the way: now it's urgent we drive it through regardless. Clearly, we need to consult properly to ensure it embodies your views, but we cannot afford to let it get bogged down again.

On that note, may I wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year. **James Macnamara**

### AUTUMN PRICE FALL!

The leaves are falling and so are the prices

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# NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE CHERWELL VALLEY

## The Oxfordshire Museum Woodstock

County craft makers' work brings festive sparkle to museum



Objects handmade by some of the local area's finest contemporary craft designers will be the subject of a festive selling exhibition. Ceramicists, jewellers, glass and textile artists and wood-turners, all of whom are members of the Oxfordshire Craft Guild, will display their work at the annual exhibition at the Park Street museum.

**The show, which has been staged at the museum for more than quarter of a century, runs from Saturday, 19 November to Tuesday, 3 January**

Councillor Judith Heathcoat, Oxfordshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities, said: "The Oxfordshire Craft Guild exhibition has been a popular attraction at The Oxfordshire Museum for more than 25 years. It is an excellent chance for the public to see some very unusual pieces of art."

The free-to-enter county council-run Oxfordshire Museum is open from 10am to 5pm, Tuesday to Saturday, and from 2pm to 5pm on Sundays. It will be closed from Saturday 24 December to Tuesday, 27 December and on Sunday, 1 January and Monday, 2 December. Opening hours on Saturday, 31 December are 10am to 4pm.

### Valley News is now on the Web

You can now find Valley News on the Web—look for [upperheyford.com](http://upperheyford.com) and click on Valley News. This should enable fewer copies to have to be sent by post.

### Healthy Heyford

Every Monday we walk over fields around the Cherwell Valley. We meet at Upper Heyford Village Hall 10am. Our walks usually take about 2 hours and we walk at a leisurely pace.

All welcome. Please ring to check our starting point if you are a new walker.

**Yoga**  
**Thursday evenings**  
Upper Heyford Village Hall

**Landscape Watercolour Painting Classes**  
Tuesday evening classes are held weekly in Upper Heyford Village Hall

**For either walks yoga or painting please ring Jo 07734562028 for more details.**

## Save the Children

Will be opening a Community Run Bookshop in Woodstock in January



The shop will open in what was previously Dulcies

An unusual feature of Save the Children is that they are the only national charity to run their shops entirely through community engagement. The shop will be volunteer run (the Shop Leader has already been appointed) and all products for sale (books, art and other related items) will also be donated. The shop's ethos is that everybody involved is providing a gift to help children whether it is time (volunteering), books/paintings (donations) or ultimately the money from the customers. In this way the contribution to children is as large as it can be. For those interested, open evenings are planned pre-Christmas and volunteer recruitment and training will start in a couple of weeks time (on opening, four hours of volunteering - half a day - is all that is needed).

**Our first task is to collect all the cherished books that we will probably never read again and give them a new home in this wonderful enterprise – you are encouraged to write personal messages about why you have donated the book or what you love about it should you wish to. Please be as generous as you can.**

**Over two thousand books will be needed to open the shop.**

*Save the Children is the world's largest independent children's charity*

*We work in the UK and in more than 120 countries around the world*

*We save children's lives. We fight for their rights. We help them fulfil their potential.*

Please contact Chris Coe on 01869 232598 or [chris.coe4@btinternet.com](mailto:chris.coe4@btinternet.com)

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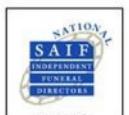
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## Letters: 'Allotment Gardening Then & Now'

When people walk around the Tchure, especially those fairly new to the village, they often say 'I like your allotment' but of course, to me it is a garden although a touch on the large side compared to what you get with a house these days.

The twenty acres of land on the left hand side as you go up Camp Road was practically all allotments and at their height of use there were just a few spare plots against the fence of the former base. The road which you see there now is still much as it was, but it is in a much poorer condition these days. Alas, the road from the allotment barn which used to meet up with the present road has long been ploughed up--something to do with making life easier for large agricultural machines. Shame really, as it used to define what had been there for a very long time.

Of course, in the 40's and 50's, the main feature of that road you see now was Lou Collins' allotment shed--the best one on the allotments. It was big and black and the envy of most of us.

In those days a plot was known as a 'piece' and some of the larger families in the village had several 'pieces' with perhaps one of them laid down with just spuds.

It was also quite common to see a potato clamp. For the uninitiated, a clamp is where you dig out a circular area about a spit deep, line the base with straw and then pile up the spuds in a conical heap finishing the whole with another layer of straw before encasing the heap with soil and leaving a small vent at the top. Only use undamaged spuds or you might have a pile of mush when return to open the clamp. All the damaged spuds were the first in the pot. All the plot holders took great pride in how they managed their land and despite their possible denial if they were still here, there was keen competition for the amount and quality of produce they produced.

It was quite common for some of the winter digging to be done in time for the Flower Show and there was actually a class in the show to judge the best dug plot. It was a massive show in those days and between when you submitted your entry and the show day, a few of the committee would tour the allotments and village gardens to make sure you were actually growing what you had entered. There was the odd suggestion of monkey business but I don't think anyone was that bothered really.

My dad and I finished up with 'a piece' opposite Lou's shed on the top side of the road. We were next to Dan Reeves and if Dan and his son Tony were up there at the same time as dad and I, it was usually an unacknowledged contest to see who could get most done.

My dad's first 'piece' was next to the wall immediately above the bungalow on Camp Road. Big mistake, as he used to take great pride in growing onions. The only problem was that his tenure of that plot coincided with the arrival on the American base of quite a number of cooks from the Indian sub continent and you know how big they are into curries! No onions or unguarded chickens were safe in the village for long. It was then that we moved along next to Lou's shed. So, at least they are out in the open now instead of just jumping over the wall. Gotcha!

Also in those day's, the Skylarks and their nests were in abundance, especially between the current roadway and the top fence and you always reckoned to leave a sizeable uncultivated area around any nests. Each plot was separated from the next by a grass path and the nests were usually down in the trough between the path and the

cultivated land. Of course, activity always disturbed the birds and the air was nearly always full of Skylarks song and very nice it was too.

When the weather was poor, my dad always said it was 'an overcoat colder' on the allotments. The upside was that there seemed to be less pests during the growing season and the soil is slightly heavier than I have now. On the allotments it was fairly easy to produce good heavy cabbages which is something I can't seem to do in my garden. I have tried quite a few types and I've just about given up now. So, if anyone knows of a good strain to grow in sandy soil then I would like to know about it.

Another big difference is that all the Garden Centres now, never heard of them then, are full of fancy stuff to enrich the soil but in those days it was get a load of 'muck' delivered from the farm and you got on with digging it in. Perhaps that's why everything mostly looked in tip top shape and tasted as it should!

With the new interest in allotment gardening, both from the pleasure of growing your own vegetables and the social aspect with other plot holders, we are very fortunate in having no restriction on the number of plots that can be made available. Sadly, there is unlikely to be as many plots under cultivation as when I was a lad but it would be really great to see a big increase over the number currently used.

So, go and get a plot and get stuck in. It is a superb way to counter the stresses of today's workplace and you get something tasty to eat as well.

*Ron Hawkins*

### DEDDINGTON HEALTH CENTRE 2011 FLU CLINICS

#### Have you had your flu jab yet?

**It's still not too late to book up a flu jab at the surgery**

**Saturday morning**

**December 3<sup>rd</sup> 9am -12pm**

**Weekdays**

**Mondays 4 – 5pm**

**Thursdays 2 - 3pm**

Those who are eligible for a flu jab:-

Anyone 65 years old and over

Anyone with a long term condition such as asthma (if on a steroid inhaler), COPD, diabetes, coronary heart disease, chronic kidney or liver disease; have a transplant; on immunosuppression drugs

You are a carer

You are pregnant

You are a frontline Health or Social Care worker

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## The Poetry Corner

When I joined the Upper Heyford Poetry Group I had not looked at poetry since my secondary school days, back in the mists of time. My other disadvantage, of course, was the fact that I hail from the colonies (USA) so I had little introduction to English poetry. The beauty of our group though is that you can start from a position of complete ignorance, and still have a great evening looking at poems for the first time in the company of friends. I have been introduced to some spectacular poetry which stretches the imagination and emotions. Some are very deep and require several re-readings and reflection to fully appreciate. Others are simply little gems that beautifully and concisely express a thought or a scene. This is one of those; that is particularly appropriate in this winter season as Christmas and the New Year approach.

### ***Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening***

*Whose woods these are I think I know.  
His house is in the village though;  
He will not see me stopping here  
To watch his woods fill up with snow.*

*My little horse must think it queer  
To stop without a farmhouse near  
Between the woods and frozen lake  
The darkest evening of the year.*

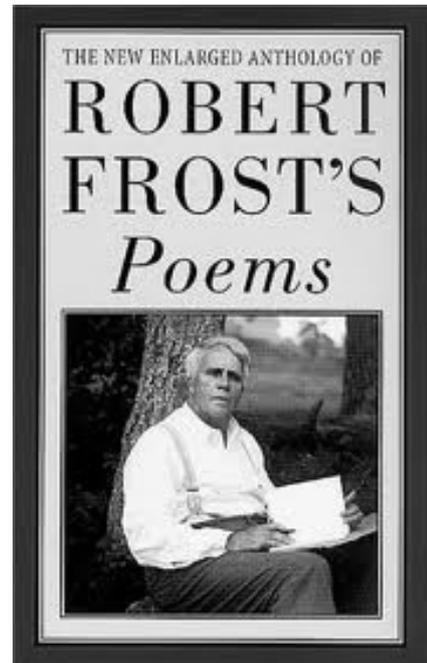
*He gives his harness bells a shake  
To ask if there is some mistake.  
The only other sound's the sweep  
Of easy wind and downy flake.*

*The woods are lovely, dark and deep.  
But I have promises to keep,  
And miles to go before I sleep,  
And miles to go before I sleep.*

Robert Frost  
New Hampshire  
1923

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
Jack Goodman and Family

If you are tempted to come and discover half-forgotten or new poems, we meet fortnightly in Upper Heyford during term time (on a Monday or a Thursday at 8.00) - but you don't have to attend every meeting. One of us introduces a poet, or a theme, and we volunteer to read a poem if we want to – but there is no obligation. You can just sit and listen. If you want to find out more feel free to email Heather and Roger Burt ([handr.burt@virgin.net](mailto:handr.burt@virgin.net)).



## **A Village Medley** **Your Choice of Poetry**

Thank you very much to all who provided us with a favourite poem. As you know, the Poetry Group intends to put on an entertainment, using mostly material submitted by you. We had no idea whether there would be any takers for this, but are delighted that over twenty people of all ages have given us some of their favourite poems. This means that, together with our own choices, we now have a wonderfully diverse and entertaining selection and, what is even more exciting, many people are willing to read their own choices, explaining why that particular poem appealed to them. We think this will make for a fascinating programme, with something to please everyone, young and old alike.

So, even if you think you don't like poetry, please come along on Sunday, January 29th, 2012 (time and venue yet to be fixed) and listen to words which, for a wide variety of reasons, have become important to the people who chose them. There will be refreshments and a very warm welcome for all, and the money raised will go to the Village Amenities Fund..

Details about tickets, time and venue will be sent out nearer the time. For now, please just put the date in your new diaries!  
*Upper Heyford Poetry Group.*

## Thames Valley Police

Here is the latest Bicester Rural neighbourhood update from WPC Caroline Brown

### Crimes:

There was an unprovoked attack in Upper Heyford on a female who was specifically targeted. In Lower Heyford there was a criminal damage and 2 assaults following a party in the village, both people assaulted declined to support police proceedings. In Caulcott there was a burglary to a house where an unoccupied property was forcibly entered and items including cash and jewellery were stolen. In Somerton a battery was stolen from outside a property. Investigations are still ongoing into some of these crimes.

### Good news stories:

A warrant was executed under the misuse of drugs act to a property in Steeple Aston. Officers found controlled substances and a male was arrested and has been released on Police bail for further enquiries to be carried out.

### Seasonal crime prevention advice

During the year we have had several reports of theft of heating oil from domestic properties. As the winter months are upon us and residents are purchasing heating oil I would like to take this opportunity to advise you on security in relation to preventing such thefts.

Here are a few crime prevention tips. Position your oil tank to allow maximum view from your property – this may discourage passing thieves;

Use control switches to stop the flow of oil when the tank is not in use.

Use good quality padlocks, close shackle are often best, to secure your tank.

Buy an oil level gauge which will sound an alarm if the oil level in your tank suddenly drops or falls below a quarter full.

Use security lights to make the property a less attractive target for thieves.

Defensive planting helps reduce crime – thieves don't want to force their way through or over a prickly hedge.

Additional security; a wooden or metal fence, trellis or wall can all offer additional protection, although the tank must be accessible for the oil tanker driver.

### Contact

Thames Valley Police went live on 14th November with 101, the new national single non-emergency number, which will replace the 0845 8 505 505 number. Both numbers will run side-by-side until the end of March, but if demand for the 0845 8 505 505 number drops it may be discontinued earlier.

Calls to 101 (from both landlines and mobile networks) cost 15 pence per call, no matter what time of day the call is made, or the duration of the call.

The routing will be based on the same system as 999 calls which links a caller's dialling code to the police force that covers that geographic area. Calls from a landline will be routed to the nearest police force that covers the area's dialling code. If the caller is using a mobile, the call will be routed using the location of the mast that the phone is transmitting from. If a call is made to 101 within a force area that has not yet 'gone live', the caller will hear a recorded message telling them to redial using the relevant non-emergency number. Neighbourhood Watch / Country Watch Signs - please remove the non-emergency number from Signs if possible or telephone 01295 754611 for a new Watch Sign without the 08458 505 505 number on. New Signs will be delivered to you.

It was good to see so many people present at the Remembrance parade and service in the Heyfords, thankfully we were lucky with the weather which made the views from the churchyard even more spectacular on such a beautiful day.

**I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy and crime free Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.**

## SOMERTON NEWS



Our November meeting in the Village Hall was well attended and we were given an excellent talk by Peter Goss, the Bicester butcher, on Christmas meats. He talked us through different cuts and ways of producing outstanding turkey on Christmas day, some new ways of cooking lamb and an array of interesting ham cuts and joints. By the end of the evening, not only was his dexterity with the knife in no doubt, we were all clamouring to try his meat and the different ways of cooking it. We hope Peter will come back next year and talk us through new ways with pork and beef. Alison and Jo were our hostesses for the evening and provided sustenance to keep us all going.

Our next SWIG meeting is the annual Christmas Supper at 7.30 p.m. on the 13th December. This is SWIG's most popular event, with good food, wine, festive songs and carols and a real chance to celebrate Christmas with old and new friends. Tickets are £3 for SWIG Member and £7 for non-members. There are a very few seats left for this evening, so if you would like to join us, please phone Jo on 01869 345323 and it's first come, first served for the few remaining places.

SWIG (Somerton Women's Independent Group) meet on the second Tuesday of each month in the Somerton Village Hall from 7.30 onwards. If you are not a Member or perhaps are new to the area, we will make you very welcome and hope you can join us.

### Christmas Party!

The Social Club Christmas Party  
**Saturday, 17th December**

A splendid time is guaranteed for all (especially if last years' is anything to go by!)...

Tickets are £5 for non-members.

Members go free!

### CAROL SINGING

We shall be carol singing around Somerton on  
**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> December.** If you would like to join  
us we shall be meeting at the Village Hall at  
**6.30p.m.**

Hope to see you.

If you want further information please ring  
Rosemary. Tel 01869 345439

## La Galette des Rois

Having been an ex-pat for over forty years, I can assure you that there are quite a few advantages, not the least of them being that you can often have your cake and eat it. We always have pancakes on pancake day that is Shrove Tuesday, but the French also eat them traditionally on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February La Chandeur, Candlemas; so we have pancakes again. Tossing the pancakes while holding a gold coin is supposed to ensure prosperity for the coming year, I have never been able to verify this being rather short of gold coins!

At Easter we have the choice of Easter eggs and Easter bunnies (the latter an English custom evolved from the Saxon goddess of spring Eostre and her sacred animal the hare), but also chocolate fish (an ancient Christian symbol) and chocolate bells (the bells, which have been silent between Good Friday and Easter Day bring the eggs back with them from Rome where they have been to be blessed). Christmas in our house is unashamedly English with Christmas stockings (the French put out their shoes!) mince pies, trifle, and Christmas cake. We do manage to fit in the French Christmas cake, a yule log cake of which there are as many varieties as recipes. The patisseries are full of them, each one more beautifully decorated than the other.

There is one festival however that the English seem to have forgotten Epiphany! Here there is a very good cake made to celebrate the Feast of the Kings, Le Fete des Rois. All around the 6<sup>th</sup> January you will find the boulangeries full of these flat galettes decorated with golden crowns. The galette is eaten, slightly warm, and accompanied with a glass of champagne. It is however the ritual surrounding the eating of this cake which makes it so special.

The youngest member of the company sits under the table and designates the part of the cake to be given to each person. This very flaky cake is then eaten carefully so as not to swallow 'le fève' hidden in the cake (rather like charms hidden in the Christmas pudding). The person who finds the fève is then crowned with the golden crown and chooses his king or queen who in turn is crowned with a second crown, usually silver.

Mary Queen of Scots apparently took this custom to Scotland with the bean cake, but the custom seems to have died out there. Originally the fève in the galette was a broad bean seed (fève being the French word for broad bean) but over the years the fève has evolved from seed to a gold or silver coin to a little porcelain figurine. These 'fèves' today can be traditional, a baby Jesus or a king or figures from history or even Walt Disney. Bakeries often do series of fèves which can become collectors' items enticing people to buy more and more galettes in order to collect the whole series.

If you would like to try this charming custom here is a recipe for the Galette des Rois.

Merry Christmas and Joyeux Noël

Anne Truisi née Thomson BON APPETIT

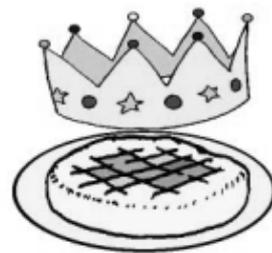
### LOWER HEYFORD WEBSITE

Lower Heyford's website is currently under re-construction and input is required from local organisations and businesses.

If you would like your business or organisation to be included on the website, please email the Parish Clerk, Cathy Fleet at [clerk@heyford.info](mailto:clerk@heyford.info) with as much detail as possible.

## GALETTE DES ROIS

Ingredients (4 - 6people )  
2 x 25cm circles flaky pastry,  
100g ground almonds  
75g sugar, 1 egg  
50g soft butter  
A few drops almond essence  
Egg yolk for glazing  
1 fève



Place the first circle of pastry on a baking sheet and prick all over with a fork.

Mix together all the ingredients butter, almonds, sugar, egg, and almond essence.

Spread this mixture over the **pastry**, leaving a border of about 2cm; place the fève towards the edge of the mixture.

Brush egg or water around the edge of the 1<sup>st</sup> circle and place the 2<sup>nd</sup> circle of pastry on top. Seal the edges firmly and make a decorative edge.

Mark the top lightly with the back of a knife into circles or spirals and brush with the beaten egg yolk. Make several little holes in the top to let the steam escape.



Bake in a hot oven  
210°C for 30 -40 mins.

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**Tribute: Michael John Clist**  
8/12/1931 – 21/10/2011



Michael Clist, known to all his friends as Mick, was born in Oxford in 1932. His parents lived at Stoke Talmage but moved in 1939 to Mill Lane, Lower Heyford, where he went to the village school. It was his teacher Rose Bonham Busby who introduced him to his life-long interest in the birds and flowers of the area, especially of the fields and meadows of the Cherwell Valley, which gave him some of his greatest joy. He was the oldest of four children, Barbara, Patricia and Robin. Both his sisters ultimately married US servicemen, moving to the States, and Robin was to marry Jane Curtis from Baynard's Green.

Mick continued his education at Steeple Aston school where he met Elsie Walton, the daughter of Charlie Walton the well known and respected butcher of the village, whom he married in September 1954 after having completed his National Service. They had two children, Martin, born 1959 and Terence, or Terry as he was known (1961)

After a brief stint working on the railway in 1956 he joined the Oxfordshire Constabulary in 1956 eventually retiring from the Thames Valley Police in 1986 serving at Bicester, Kidlington and Witney. Disparaging his later school education he nonetheless did well in his chosen profession. Despite refusing promotion on more than one occasion he became Chief Inspector of Thames' Valley's North West Traffic Area, which roughly covered most of Oxfordshire. In advisory roles he played a large part in helping to determine the route of the M40, which, through his local knowledge, he was able to steer away from much of the Cherwell Valley, helping to preserve its tranquil nature.

He was well respected both by his superiors as well as his men, many of whom attended his funeral in Steeple Aston church, where he is buried. John Poole, who worked with Mick for many years said:

"He was an excellent supervisory officer – a quiet unassuming bloke with a wry sense of humour who never lost his temper and whose door was always open to junior officers."

Outside the force Mick, was a committed member of the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) and pursued a passion for butterfly conservation, at one time being a committee member of Butterfly Conservation. He also served the community as a parish councillor in Steeple Aston and as a governor at the village primary school.

He died on October 21 at Witney Community Hospital after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease and is survived by his wife Elsie, son Martin (sadly his second son Terence (Terry) was killed in a traffic accident)

**LOWER HEYFORD NEWS**

**LOWER HEYFORD PARISH COUNCIL**

The Lower Heyford Parish Council meeting was held in the Church on 24<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm. All Councillors except one were present but there were no members of the public. Members of the public are **ALWAYS** welcome. The question of Graffiti was discussed and a local resident was volunteered in his absence to re-paint the bus shelter and a vote of thanks made. Highways was the next item on the agenda and in particular the question of the deterioration of the road surface on Station Road. Rousham Bridge will be closed for resurfacing works in the New Year – date unknown – and at this time Station Road may also be attended to. The roadworks in Caulcott have been postponed. The question of speeding was again raised and the Parish Council resolved to purchase a SID ( Speed Indicator Device) for use in various positions throughout Lower Heyford and Caulcott in an attempt to curtail speeding motorists. A report was received from a recent NAG meeting which had been attended by one Councillor. The Parish Plan had been sent to CDC for approval and is now almost ready for publication. There was discussion regarding emergency plans should snow cause problems again this year and the Parish Council will take steps to ensure that road are kept clear wherever possible. The lease for King George Field has still not been finalised but is in hand, after which time hopefully refurbishment of the playground can take place. The new website is still under construction but input is required from local businesses which the Clerk will be happy to receive. Planning applications are circulated to Councillors when they are received from CDC and comments and/or objections made - in recent weeks there have been 5 planning applications for Lower Heyford. Accounts for payment were approved and a date set for the Precept meeting in January. The full minutes of the meeting will be available in the Church and noticeboards or from the Clerk who can be contacted at [clerk@heyford.info](mailto:clerk@heyford.info)

**GRAFFITI IN LOWER HEYFORD**

In recent months there have been increasing cases of graffiti around the village. This is not only unsightly but its removal is time consuming and costly. The bus shelter has been targeted on many occasions and more has appeared recently. The Parish Council has purchased paint to cover it over and a local resident has volunteered to paint it – Thanks to him !!

Wheely Bins and the railway bridge at the station now seem to be the favoured target and Thames Valley Police are aware of this vandalism.

**Whoever the culprit (s) is  
YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE**

**stop doing it because you WILL be caught and  
punished**

## Warreners



Jim cuts his birthday cake

At our harvest lunch on 12 October we celebrated the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of a very well respected member of the club, Jim Smith. Jim is our fourth member to reach this milestone having joined Gladys Gray Lillian Kelly and Vera Castle in the 90+ club. Jim kindly provided the cake and it was a lovely occasion enjoyed by all.

Sadly Barbara & Ron can no longer attend because of travelling difficulties, we will miss them and do hope that they will be with us on special occasions in the future.

On 30th November we will be enjoying our Christmas lunch at Fringford kindly provided by 'The Scullery Maids', we have been before and had a thoroughly enjoyable time.

Our Christmas tea is on 14th December and the entertainment will be by Mo & Maddy, always a lively occasion.

## Bonfire Night

Although the bonfire on the common lacked the fireworks of the neighbouring villages, and there was no guy to burn, quite a large crowd turned up. In the firelight a guitar player played tunefully and old and young seemed quite happy to enjoy the occasion and each others' company. Later at the Reading Room a happy crowd dined on sausages and hot chocolate. A few places, including the green, looks a little better having had a good trim, which provided some of the fuel for the fire.

Thanks to Chris and Nigel Scarrott for organising this event, which could not have taken place without the cooperation of Hugh Jones and his staff at Manor farm. Thanks to them and also to those who helped out in any way.

## History day

The Historical Society would like to thank all who came to the recent history event in the Reading Room. Many aspects of Upper Heyford's history was spoken about during the evening and the society was pleased with the interest shown by the audience. Some have asked for other talks, such as the history of some of the houses in the parish, which seems to be a topic the society will endeavour to bring about in the not too distant future.

Many would agree that the Reading Room lends itself very well to this type of evening.

Our thanks to all who support us. To everyone the blessings of the Season.

## Village Hall

The Amenities Management Committee is delighted to report that a grant of £52,000 has been made by Viridor Credits. This will enable the refurbishment of the hall to be completed during the next 12 months. In order to achieve the maximum value for money a small group of parishioners will be undertaking some of the work on a 'self-help' basis.

As previously mentioned in Valley News the major projects to be undertaken are as follows:

*Fitting out the new extension to provide a toilet suitable for people with a disability, additional storage space for tables and chairs, and much improved kitchen facilities.*

*Installation of double glazed UPVC windows & doors*

*New flat roof covering with additional insulation*

*New cavity wall and roof space insulation*

*The upgrading of the existing toilet facilities*

*Installation of beech flooring (supplied by CDC)*

*Complete redecoration*

The plans are on display in the village hall or alternatively a copy will be provided on request, contact Ian Lough-Scott 232788 or by email: [ianloughscott@btinternet.com](mailto:ianloughscott@btinternet.com)

## STOP PRESS Work has already started

Many hands make light work! So if you are in a position to help with the numerous things that need to be done your help would be appreciated.

## Quiz Night report

The third annual Upper Heyford Quiz Night was held on Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup> of October in the Village Hall. Ten teams of eight competed for an exceptional group of prizes to include tickets to National events and meals with wine in some of the area's restaurants, among others. There was also a blind auction for a flight around the local area. The event raised over £1,000 for the purchase of chairs for the Upper Heyford Reading Room. The organisers would like to thank the numerous people who worked to make it possible, to those who donated prizes and to the teams of players for their participation. A special word of thanks to Simon who was the quizmaster. A great time was had by all.

## Local Firewood & Kindling For Sale



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## OUR ELM TREES

It must be nearly forty five years since we lost our last tree. Some were cut down long before we had Dutch Elm Disease. Where was they all? It would be quite difficult to pinpoint them all as there was some in isolated places.

Let's start at the bottom of the village in the field next to the church. Quite a number were there, always known as The Rookery. They were cut down about sixty five years ago. Going up the track from the farm there were three or four on the left before you get to the road. Going down towards Lower Heyford, some five on the right hand side and seven on the left at the Boundary. They were known as the Seven Sisters. From the Dutch barn up to the Caulcott road, another seven on the left hand side in the hedgerow now removed. Along the Caulcott road another four on the right hand side and quite a cluster in the corner adjacent to Cheeseman's Barn. Here again, rooks nested there.

The bottom of Orchard Lane, in the paddock, was fourteen and up to the bottom of Camp Road another four. Somerton Road - at the hill known as Mudginwell five on the left hand side and some seven or eight just in a cluster in the next field, here again a nesting place for rooks. From here, going up on the right hand towards the Base there was another three, known as Treadwell Elms.

Back at the village, in Mill Lane there was one large tree in the Lough-Scott's garden and another near his entrance in the next door garden. From the Rectory Farm going to the bottom of the lane there was an abundance of trees on either side of the road. During the summer months when all were in full leaf it was like walking through a tunnel of darkness as the trees on either side of the road was touching at a high level. Another three at the bottom, where Rising Hill now stands. Going down towards the canal another three on the left hand side. Note - it is quite easy to see the remaining roots in the hedgerows on either side of the lane.

Opposite the Rectory farm, there was a cluster of three in the Old Dairy Ground, and another four or five in the small fields behind the houses in Mill Lane.

Going along the Common another three in the hedgerows going along the track to the right and another three growing in the middle of the field.

Back to the bottom of Dairy Ground the hedge leading across towards the ditch known as Brawson Gully were another four growing.

As I said at the start, there are quite a few places where only one was growing, the one at the top of Camp Road is a good example. There was a larger one in the boundary to Snowdrop Paddock and a large one at the entrance to South View in Orchard Lane. *Dump Brain.* Note the towering elms to the right (north side) of the church in the above photo on the land Dump mentions as the Rookery



### Floodlighting St. Mary's Church October & November

- |                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> October   | In celebration of the birthday of the late Jimmy James. With love from Maureen, Peter, Paul, Debbie and baby Grace.  |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> October   | In celebration of the birthday of the late Eddie James. 'With love from Mary, Shelly & Shawn, Lisa & Ian, Lee & Tracey and all the grandchildren   |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> October  | In celebration of the 39 <sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary of Ann and the late Jan Woski. 'Missing you on our anniversary and wishing you were here. All my love, Ann.'                      |
| 29 <sup>th</sup> October  | In to the memory of Mum, Dad, Mick & Lesley. 'Missing you all - till we meet again - Valerie'  |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> November  | In memory of the late Grace Smith who died in 2008. 'With love from Jim.'  |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> November  | 'To celebrate the happiness of our life together on this, our wedding anniversary.' Bob and Hansa Menzies  |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> November  | In memory of Dinah Hudson. 'Remembering the saddest day of our lives, your loving husband, Roy, son, Michael, grandchildren, Tracey, John, Megan, Hollie & Lewis, We will always love you.'  |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> November  | In celebration of the birthday of Canary Lord. 'With love from Craig and Tom'.   |
| 13 <sup>th</sup> November | In memory of the fallen, particularly those from this parish. From Mary and Jack Goodman.  |
| 24 <sup>th</sup> November | In celebration of Heather Burt's birthday. 'From Roger, with love.'  |
| 30 <sup>th</sup> November | In memory of Pat Hedges. From the Poetry Group with love.<br>In celebration of the Diamond Wedding of Mr and Mrs C.G. Thakkar, Hansa's parents. 'With much love from Hansa and Bob Menzies'. |

### BINGO IS BACK?

Friday 2nd December  
7.30 pm

Upper Heyford Village Hall

Proceeds in aid of the church fabric fund



## Coarse Gardening.



**The magnificent English Elm at Westonbirt**

Our hedge beside Allens Lane has been well and truly thinned, partly to let in air and light to the young spindleberries and field maples which we planted and partly to provide material for the village bonfire on November 5th. The thinnings were mostly old ivy-covered elder and dead elm saplings - you may notice, if you walk down that way, one tall dead elm remaining, but close inspection will show you that a honeysuckle is using it as a hatstand, so it is worth keeping. Doing this work got me thinking about elms and they have been on my mind ever since. When I was a boy I was brought up with one foot, as it were, in Norfolk and the other in Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire, both of them areas where huge, ancient elms dominated the landscape, as I suspect they did around here. That is, until the 1960s, when Dutch Elm disease struck.

This, as I expect you know, is a fungal disease spread by the elm bark beetle. The fungus grows in the sap-carrying vessels of the tree, feeding on the tree's sugars and rapidly clogging up the tubes. The beetle larvae live under the bark, where they, too, feed on the sugary sapwood, and when they become adult they fly away with fungus spores sticking to them, to infect the next tree they visit. As the older ones among us will remember, the 1960s outbreak was a particularly virulent form of the disease and quickly killed the vast majority of the mature elms in Britain. In what seemed like no time at all, familiar landscapes were altered almost out of recognition.

The trees mostly concerned were the English Elm, *Ulmus procera*, a tall, towering cumulus mass of a tree with dark, dusty green foliage, once very much a feature of hedgerows and parklands. (There is another elm, which grows in woodlands, the Wych Elm, and does not concern us here). Some authorities suggest that this elm was brought to Britain by man in prehistoric times, as its foliage is highly nutritious for cattle and it used to be a valued fodder plant. Support for this idea is also provided by the fact that the elm seldom sets viable seed in this country, as the climate is too cold, and yet there

are many, many different races and varieties of it, in places almost amounting to one type of elm per village! Genetically, it is incredibly variable, although its variability is not due to recent interbreeding, as it doesn't grow from seed - yet *Ulmus procera* itself might well be a hybrid, which possibly arose here when the climate was warmer in the distant past. It seems that elms have been reproducing themselves for thousands of years by means of suckers growing up from the root system, so each stand of elms is usually a clone of genetically identical individuals. They are still doing it. Around here, everywhere you look, elm is present and abundant in hedgerows, growing as a shrub where the hedges are cut and running up to twenty or thirty foot young trees where hedges are not trimmed, until they are big enough to interest the bark beetle. So, the great old trees which died fifty-odd years ago are not yet entirely gone, as new growth still springs up from their roots, though the landscape here in North Oxfordshire must have changed most dramatically with the loss of the mature trees.

Once you 'get your eye in', elm is easy to recognise. The foliage looks like small, dark green stinging nettle leaves, which is not surprising, since they are closely related, and they are borne alternately up long, thin, straight twigs. Side shoots from main twigs are similarly arranged, so young suckers growing beside the road often adopt a characteristic herring-bone formation in their young stages. If you are not sure what they look like, check the hedge at the bottom of Mill Lane in Upper Heyford, which is almost all elm, and round the corner into Allens Lane, where there is elm on both sides. The roadside hedges between Somerton and Lower Heyford are full of elm, too, as is the road to Bicester. The hairy, dark green leaves stay on and stay green later than almost any other deciduous shrub and, this year at least, some turn a strong, Colman's Mustard yellow before they fall. Actually - I must just slip this in - Colonel Colman - who also came from Norwich - had a small country estate not far from Melton Mowbray, and in fact it was surrounded by billowing elms: sadly, not any more.

When young elms die their skeletal remains stand for many years. Elm wood is very slow to rot, hence its traditional use for making coffins. Standing dead trees become covered in daffodil-yellow lichen (as does elder bark) which, in the low light of winter sunshine, makes them one of the brightest features in the colour-starved landscape.

The day of the great elms may yet return. The disease has struck before - there was a famous outbreak in Oxford in the 1780s and it came again to much of England in the first half of the 1800s. Italian landscape paintings of the period around 1500 also often feature dead elms. Palaeobotanists speak of a period called the Great Elm Decline at around 3000 BC, where pollen analysis shows that half the elms in the British Isles abruptly disappeared. Numbers then slowly recovered. The present disease may become weaker in time. The fungus and the beetle which carries it both have diseases of their own which affect their vitality and, perhaps more importantly, the elms are variable stock, some being quite resistant to the fungus. Plant breeders have got at them, too, and there are now elms available for purchase which, it is claimed, can stay disease free.

This is a more serious piece than usual, something of an elegy for elms, but I do hope you will agree that it is justified. I love trees, and it grieves me deeply that these magnificent wonders of nature are currently gone from our lives. If you are now seventy, you will remember them well: if you are seven, you may never see one in your native country, but you may be able to promise your own grandchildren that, when they are seventy, they might. I really hope that they do.

Roger Burt.



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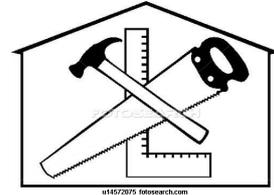
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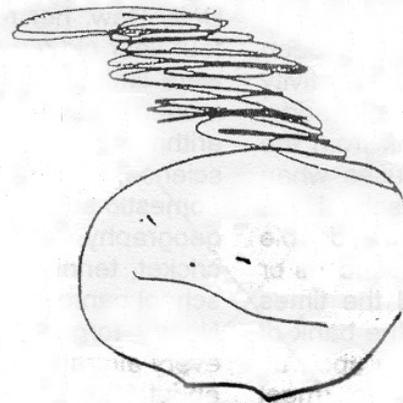
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## Caulcott in the 40s

We used to have our local Policeman, PC Woodley make frequent visits in those days. He was a giant of a man. His bicycle was specially strengthened for him. He was based at Middleton Stoney and rode all around the villages. If he saw any children misbehaving he would not only tell them off, but give them a 'cuff' around the ear. The offending child wouldn't dare go home and tell their parents because they would have had another to go with it. Those were the days....

We had a weekly visit from a mobile grocery shop, 'Kings of Syresham'. They came from Brackley and the man who brought it was Alfie Blencoe. It was only very basic food stuffs then following the war. He also carried a supply of paraffin in a front compartment. This was needed by most families to fuel their lamps and provide light. Electricity was only put onto the village in 1950. Water was heated in a copper or by a boiler on a stove. A few houses with baths in them were a luxury. Most had a weekly bath in front of the fire in a tin bath.

There was an order to bathing to, children first, then more hot water followed by mother and then father who was usually the dirtiest last. Most children were dirty every day and had to sit on the kitchen table and endure a wash from mother. It was the only way to ensure the bed clothes didn't suffer. Other than that it was the dreaded hankie that was licked and used around the face. Thank heavens for wet wipes now.

Washing up was usually done on the table, not every house had a sink and draining board. No washing up liquid either or dish washers. It was usually soda and a few soap flakes to remove the grease. Not much in the way of hygiene but we are still here sixty or more years later. Without electricity washing up and ironing was a great chore. No spin dryers just a wooden roller mangle, that would 'ping' buttons off like shots from a gun. The irons had to be heated in front of the kitchen range. Most clothes were made of cotton or linen, so no worry about the iron being too hot. Mostly they weren't hot enough.

If families had them, wirelasses were the only entertainment you could have. My uncle at Lower Heyford used to visit Caulcott every week with accumulators that were needed to work the wireless. He would exchange the spent ones and take them home and recharge them ready for the next week, I cannot

remember what he charged for that but not much I expect. Lower Heyford had electricity before the war. There was a hardware seller who made weekly visits from Bicester, he carried all things that were useful to families in those days. Pot menders being one of the most asked for items. Families had to repair saucepans and kettles then as the open fires burnt them through. He also carries all manner of cheap eye catchers for children in the side windows of his van. We tried on many occasions to persuade our mother to buy us something whenever we were at home when he called.

Magic painting books or cut-out doll dressing books. Boys would go for windmills and bat and ball games. They were alright until the sawdust came out of them. We also had a greengrocer who came around with a variety of fruit and veg. Bananas were a luxury, Oranges were usually full of pips and not very sweet. He also had a large basket full of bags of sweets. They were left open for you to choose which one you wanted. When you had chosen he would then remove your points from your ration book.

There was a bus that went to Bicester only on Fridays and Saturdays, one in the morning and the other around midday and finally in the afternoon. Market day was on both days. The winter of 1947 was very hard with snow on the ground for weeks. Although it seemed like months at the time, we didn't go to school for maybe a week or more. The milk collection lorry couldn't get through for some time either. Farmers had to pour the milk away that couldn't be used by the locals. Then a group of farmers decided to take the churns to the station at Lower Heyford to be taken by train to Banbury. There must have been a shortage of milk by then for people who relied on daily deliveries.

I remember going to Lower Heyford with the churns to call at the school for some work to do at home. The tractor had to across about three or four fields to get there. Then one of the farmers used his slurry scoop to clear the road. Even the grocery van had to come over the fields to bring the meagre rations to the villages.

Next time: an idyllic childhood without computers and TV. and life on the farm, those were the days! *June Messenger*

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