

# Valley News

## February 2011

### No 193 News & Views from the Cherwell Valley



Photo: Philippa Rowe 15



The Canal in winter

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Wanted: Piano Accompanist

The Cold War!

Talk 20 March Somerton - Historic Churches of Oxfordshire

Upper Heyford Mill demolished in 1911

Sadly we report the passing of Eric Glennie & Rosemary Williams

**Valley News is delivered FREE to every household in:**

**Caulcott – Heyford Park – Lower Heyford  
Somerton – Upper Heyford**

Editor: Ian Lough-Scott, The Rickyard, Upper Heyford, Bicester OX25 5LH  
Telephone: 01869 232788 Email: [ianloughscott@btinternet.com](mailto:ianloughscott@btinternet.com)

Treasurer: Stan Morris, The Orchard, Water Street, Somerton OX25 6NE  
Telephone: 01869 345544



Carol singing Lower Heyford 2010

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

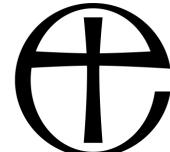
	Ardley St Mary's	Fritwell St Olave's	Lower Heyford & Caulcott St Mary's	Somerton St James	Souldern St Mary	Upper Heyford St Mary's	The Chapel
30-Jan							11:00 Contemporary Worship
6-Feb	08:30 1662 HC	11:00 CW Communion with Hymns	11:00 Family Worship	9:30 Family Worship	11:00 Matins	9:30 Family Communion with Choir	11:00 Contemporary Worship
13-Feb		08:30 1662 HC		11:00 St Valentine's Eve - Celebrating Love & Marriage The Chapel, Heyford Park			
20-Feb	9:30 CW Communion with Hymns	11:00 Family Worship	11:00 1662 Communion	09:30 Matins & HC	08:30 1662 HC	9:30 Family Worship	11:00 Contemporary Worship
27-Feb	9:30 Family Worship	18:00 Evensong	11:00 CW Communion with Hymns	9:30 Family Communio n with Choir	10:30 Souldern Chapel Coffee & Christ	08:30 1662 HC	11:00 Contemporary Worship
4-Mar				Women's World Day of Prayer			
6-Mar	08:30 1662 HC	11:00 Family Communion with Choir	11:00 Family Worship	9:30 Family Worship	11:00 Matins	9:30 CW Communion with Hymns	11:00 Contemporary Worship
9-Mar	7:30pm Ash Wed Imposition of Ashes and Communion with Choir				10:00am Imposition of Ashes & Holy Communion		
13-Mar	9:30 CW Communion with Hymns	08:30 1662 HC	08:30 1662 HC	9:30 Bears & Prayers	11:00 Family Communion with Choir	9:30 Matins	11:00 Contemporary Worship
20-Mar	9:30 CW Communion with Hymns	11:00 Family Worship	11:00 1662 Communion	09:30 Matins & HC	08:30 1662 HC	9:30 Family Worship	11:00 Contemporary Worship
25-Mar					Souldern Patronal Festival		
27-Mar	9:30 Family Worship	18:00 Evensong	11:00 Family Communion with Choir	9:30 CW Communio n with Hymns	10:30 Souldern Chapel Coffee & Christ	08:30 1662 HC	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

Rev Paul Hunt, 346739 paul@cherwellvalleybenefice.org.uk;  
Rev Edward Green, 340562 edward@cherwellvalleybenefice.org.uk;  
Rev Ian Biscoe, 232439 ian@cherwellvalleybenefice.org.uk  
Mr John Hine (LLM) 350272;  
Scott Goosen (YW) 233087 flockofgeese4@yahoo.com  
Benefice Office Barbara@cherwellvalleybenefice.org



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Dear Friends,

*"Between you and me I could honestly say  
That things can only get better ...  
And I guess that's why they call it the blues"*

Apparently the saddest day of the year is a Monday in January. Although 'Blue Monday' originated as a publicity campaign for a travel company it now makes its way into the tabloids every year. The date is traditionally on the last Monday on where there is a full week after in January - This year the 24<sup>th</sup>. However some folks can't work this out so have taken to making Blue Monday the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday in January – This year the 17<sup>th</sup>. So this Year we have managed to have two blue Mondays.

Most of us suffer a little from the January blues. The combination of post-Christmas come down, cold damp weather and a lightness of the wallet adds up it seems. Most of us would suffer from it earlier if it wasn't for Christmas, certainly friends from Australia have shared with me how difficult Winter is without Christmas to lift the spirits. I also suspect that the way we celebrate Christmas before the feast day rather than for the weeks following doesn't help either. By January we are tired and exhausted, broke and ready for spring.

I don't find the January Blues any easier than anyone else – if I had a choice I would hibernate - but there are ways to beat them. Like taking more exercise, which lifts our spirits, contacting an old friend or relative we have fallen out of touch with, or starting a new course or joining a new group – and perhaps you can guess where this is going – even making a regular commitment to being more involved in your local churches. You could try our Wednesday night Choir, Monday night Faith in Art group, Saturday morning Men's Breakfast, Steps our monthly spirituality group, or one of the many other activities that happen across the villages.

*"But I'm quite sure that you'll tell me  
Just how I should feel today "*

For 1 in 5 of us though beating the blues isn't that easy. From Pastoral experience depression probably affects far more of us than that, often going undiagnosed. For some of us it is something that lasts a period of time. For some of us it is something that we struggle with throughout our lives. For some of us depression is triggered by events in our lives, for others the causes are more complex. Someone once told me that Christians should always be happy, but this seems to me a long way from the realities of life. Psalm 45 speaks of the almost unbearable weight of depression:

"My tears have been my food  
day and night,

Why are you cast down, O my soul,  
and why are you disquieted within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,  
my help and my God."

God is no stranger to this weight, as Christ experienced such pain in the garden, sweating blood, before his arrest and trial. Faith is not an easy answer to depression, but God can walk with us on the journey. If you are concerned that you are suffering from depression and more than just the usual blues, if it is affecting your sleep, your work and your relationships then the most important thing is to seek help and to talk to someone. And having walked some of that path myself I am more than happy to listen.

God Bless, Eddie

**Create  
faith in  
Art**

The 'Create' group, which evolved from last year's 'Lifeline' exhibition is planning another event and is looking for other like-minded artistic/creative people who would like to be involved in this year's exhibition.

If you would like to find out more or would like to come along on Monday evenings please contact: Barbara McGarry, Deepwell Cottage, High St., Souldern Tel: 01869 345931 or email: barbaramcgarry@btinternet.com

**The group and the exhibition is open to anyone who has an interest in creative arts**

## What's on in the Cherwell Valley

### Break a World Record

If you would like to have fun, learn some First Aid (which could save a life) and win a world record for Britain, put **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> March** in your diary. At Oxford's Kassam Stadium that morning, St John Ambulance are going to try and teach the world's largest First Aid lesson and qualify for the Guinness Book of World Records.



### Caring for Life

You will need to register, but that's easy on St John Ambulance's Oxfordshire website [www.sja.org.uk/sja/counties/oxfordshire](http://www.sja.org.uk/sja/counties/oxfordshire) and there's a small registration fee – which will go to BBC Oxford's 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday appeal for a new 4x4 ambulance to enable SJA to save lives both off-road, at events like the Blenheim Horse Trials, and in snow and ice, when conventional ambulances cannot get through to villages like ours.

So, please spread the word – all welcome, especially groups of families, friends, work colleagues and neighbours – sign up and come along to be part of something really big!

James Macnamara

### GARDEN OPEN

#### Wonderful display of snowdrops

Hordley, Wootton-by-Woodstock off B4027  
in aid of St. Marys Church, Wootton.

19<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup> February 1 – 5 p.m.  
Teas Plant Stall.

Kind permission of Miles and Mary Tuey

In Aid of the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust  
and St James's Church, Somerton  
An illustrated talk on

### The Historic Churches of Oxfordshire

by  
**Richard Lethbridge**

**6.30 for 7pm St James's, Somerton**  
**Sunday 20 March 2011**

**Tickets £7 at the door**  
**Wine and soft drinks available**  
**(donations welcome)**

*Richard is the author of Oxfordshire Churches and the New Shell Guide to Oxfordshire and Berkshire.  
He was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 2000.  
His talk is part of the Somerton Village History Project*

### THE 400<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF KING JAMES' BIBLE



Every third Sunday in the month the church of St James The Apostle, Somerton has a traditional Matins and a shortened Holy Communion service. The readings are from our old King James' Bible, newly restored, and the service is from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, based on Thomas Cranmer's translation of 1549. The congregation sing the Canticles and the Responses and both Paul and Eddie sing the Versicles beautifully. The hymns are from Ancient and Modern and sung to well known tunes. It is the service that my husband, myself and many others were brought up to and one that we love.

What is so special about this, as some would say, old fashioned service?

Like Shakespeare it is to do with language and the cadences of the words which have given guidance and illumination to generations of Christians. They inspire the heart of the faithful like poetry and awaken the admiration of purely aesthetic critics. The experience lifts us above the mundane and where the true contemplation of the creative stillness of God is possible.

The words are also one of the guiding influences on our language today despite liturgical reform whilst The Book of Common Prayer is still used in a number of churches – notably Rousham – and most cathedrals.

It is that the older words speak of another wordliness that many people are looking for today, they resonate into one's memory through years of familiarity and sustain devotion to the end. Worship is a pastoral activity and has the potential for spiritual renewal for the whole community going back to our grandparents' day and beyond.

Today we have militant atheists, anti-Christian prejudice and a weakened Church.

But there is still hope. Peter Hitchens' book "*The Rage Against God*" describes his own journey from radical unbelief to Christianity.

My own husband, Timothy Leon, died three months ago and is buried in the Somerton churchyard. He was a writer and the words of the Bible and Prayer Book were of great importance and comfort to him.

**On 20<sup>th</sup> February, the next date for the traditional service, the Somerton Church is being given new cushions for all the pews as a legacy in memory of Timothy who loved this Grade 1 Listed Church so much.**

Do come and join us. It will remind the older ones amongst us that every Sunday we used to go to each others' Church and became friends with many more people in the benefice. Perhaps this service will have the desired effect to increase the integration of the community.

Suzanne Leon

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

### Councillor Calling

**Ice and snow** certainly gave us a challenge last month. As the County Council focuses on priority routes for gritting and clearance, a lot of village roads became unsafe for rubbish trucks – a 28 ton toboggan is a safety hazard in anybody's language! This meant that only 30,000 of the 80,000 bins due for collection in the first week of the snow were picked up and the backlog took some time to clear, despite extra staff, who could not work due to the snow, being roped in and some working 10 hour days including Bank Holidays. Hopefully, most people understood the difficulties, especially when they saw that the bin men were not idle, working first to clear streets and footpaths and then council car parks until they could get back on the trucks. As there are several more winter months to come, the key message remains to put your bins out on the due date and, if they cannot be emptied, leave them until the trucks make it, which will be as soon as possible but may not be on the day you expect.

**Incinerators:** while talking rubbish, I regret to report that the Ardley incinerator will be approved as the Secretary of State will not "call in" the second, approved, application and is now consulting on conditions for the first, appealed, one. Meanwhile, Bucks County Council is still scrutinising their proposal for Calvert, on the other side of Bicester, and WRG have applied for a Mechanical Biological Treatment plant in place of the incinerator they were refused at Sutton Courtenay. While this is a far better method, as the County Council have contracted for Oxfordshire's waste to go to Ardley, WRG will presumably have to import rubbish into the county, which is far from green.

**Budgets**, though, bring better news as I am now almost in balance for Cherwell, with no increase in Council Tax (which will therefore stay at £123.50 for the average "Band D" home). The only area of controversy is around increased parking charges, which I am putting up by 10p an hour by day, while introducing an 80p charge for the evening. Opponents tell me this will cause the economic collapse of our town centres, but are less forthcoming on which groups they propose to take the strain off drivers. I don't see why the general, non-driving taxpayer should subsidise drivers or, for that matter, that residents should support visitors from outside the District. It is only the second rise, totalling 20p, in seven years, so I suspect we are behind inflation. When it costs over £50 to fill up with fuel, 10p is not going to persuade any rational person to drive to Witney. And, as for the cry that an 80p charge will materially affect choices to go out for a drink or dinner in the evening, I say that it's "peanuts" – as the first snack of the evening costs more than the parking!

**Joint working** with South Northants Council, which was formally approved in December, contributes the sort of cuts which taxpayers won't notice. We are now in the implementation phase, integrating computer systems and suchlike, which is causing me late nights in Towcester but, if it works as intended, will deliver substantial savings with no loss of service.

**Housing policy** and other such business carries on as normal, meanwhile. Or, rather, as abnormal, as we have to adapt to get sufficient social housing built for those who can't afford market rents or to buy, despite the dead market for new building and against a background of rapidly changing government policy. Touch wood, we've done pretty well, with 199 affordable homes built last year and homeless families down from 400 four years ago to just 26 – but that was last year and now we have to repeat the trick...

**Planning obligations**, the contributions that house-builders make, in cash or kind, to local facilities are also being given a shake-up, with the first comprehensive summary of everything from schools to cemeteries and ponds to play areas going out to consultation. While a lot of this is not new, I can see developers fighting their corner robustly while the waters are also muddied by the proposed new Community Infrastructure Levy, so you might see some controversy before this is finalised.

**Localism** is, of course, a key theme of the new regime and the newly published Localism Bill looks set to shake things up, with new planning powers devolved to parishes and neighbourhoods, who will be able to shape their development through neighbourhood plans and local referendums. As always, one should listen to the furore around the Bill with interest, but it will be the small print in the Act which will dictate the future. The proof of the pudding... 2011 should be an interesting year.

James Macnamara

### Poppy Collection 2010

I am delighted to report that I have so far banked £1,062 for the Poppy Appeal and would like to thank all those who contributed to making up this significant sum. As always, I am most grateful to all those who collected door-to-door: not least Emily Daly and Denise Ball, Janet Lawrence, Victoria Prentis and Charles Cottrell Dormer – I am sure there are more and I apologise to anyone I have left out. If anyone else is tempted to join in, the response on the doorstep is really heartwarming, so do get in touch with me or any of the above as collecting in company is even better.



Collecting tins were also kindly hosted by the Bell, the Barley Mow and the Horse & Groom as well as the Heyford Park Stores and the Canal Shop in Lower Heyford. Knowing how precious is the limited amount of bar or counter space, it was very kind of all these to make room for the Appeal. I am particularly grateful to the patience of the Horse & Groom this year, as I kept putting off picking up the tin until I had a chance to combine it with a meal: what with holidays, flu and other distractions, it was not picked up until January – but I will definitely get there for supper soon!

In addition, the total includes church collections from Remembrance services at Rousham and Upper Heyford, contributions for wreaths laid by organizations including Parish Councils, the WI and, of course, the Royal British Legion branch itself – in fact, I am still expecting a couple more wreath contributions, so the final total will be even bigger. To all who gave, on behalf of those in need, many thanks.

James Macnamara – Poppy Appeal Organiser

# NEWS & VIEWS FROM THE CHERWELL VALLEY

## WANTED PIANO ACCOMPANIST



An accompanist is needed for Steeple Aston Choral Society rehearsals every **Monday night at 8pm** in the Village Hall at Steeple Aston.

We are a group of about 20 adult men and women who enjoy singing and preparing for our concerts but really need someone who can help us practise. The Choir generally perform traditional choral works such as Vivaldi's Gloria, Faure's Requiem, other similar pieces and choral anthems. For the next concert our new director, Denis Long, has chosen a programme inspired by the upcoming Royal Wedding. Currently we have a choir member doubling as the accompanist, which is quite difficult, so any additional help would be terrific. We are not a terribly wealthy society but we are offering to pay the right person for their time.

If you think that you might be able to help us, please ring choir chairman Jenny Evans on **01869 349099**. Also, if there are any singers who would enjoy a friendly sing once a week please feel free to come by on Monday at 8pm at Steeple Aston Village Hall everyone is always welcome. An ability to read music would be helpful but is by no means essential, all ages and abilities are welcome.

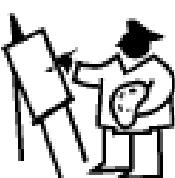
## Healthy Heyford Winter Walks

Meet every Monday morning for a 2 hour walk at a leisurely pace. We usually meet at the Upper Heyford Village Hall at 10am for a circular walk around the Cherwell Valley, come rain or shine. We welcome new walkers. For more details



## Landscape Watercolour Painting Classes

Classes beginning on Tuesday evening 15th February 7.30-9.30pm and Thursday morning 17th February 10-12noon at Upper Heyford Village Hall. Places still available on Tuesday evening session. For more details contact Jo 07734562028



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Eric Glennie and Rosemary Williams

Eric's funeral is at Rousham Church on 3 February at 11am followed by interment at Lower Heyford  
Rosemary's funeral is on 1st February at Lower Heyford at 12.30pm

Tributes will be included in the April edition

## ANNE ELIZABETH (PEGGY) CUSS

Anne was born on June 14<sup>th</sup> 1916 at Worksop, Derbyshire, and became known throughout her life, even in some official circles, as "Peggy".

Peggy's early life was not easy, and at an early age, probably about 6, she was removed, with her brothers, from the care of her parents into the care of Doctor Barnardo's and they were placed in an establishment in the Epping Forest in Essex; Peggy remained in communication with Doctor Barnardo's for most of her life.

Peggy lost one brother in 1942 when HMS Lively was torpedoed in the Mediterranean and a second brother in a post war sea disaster.

Upon leaving Doctor Barnardo's Home Peggy went into service as a kitchen maid at Middle Barton, and it was there that she learned her cooking and housekeeping skills, skills which were to remain with her throughout her life.

Peggy married Ronald Cuss of Freehold Street, Lower Heyford, on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1942 when Ron had just a few days leave. Ron and Peggy were blessed with two children Eileen and Trevor, Eileen was in fact born just 9 days before Ron was obliged to join the Normandy Landings, landing on Juno Beach on June 17<sup>th</sup> 1944 just 11 days after the D-Day Landings.

Peggy & Ron lived at first in a small cottage in Caulcott, but sadly Ron fell very seriously ill, and in 1958 they purchased a more suitable home in Upper Heyford, No 2 Orchard Lane, where sadly Ron died just a few months later. Peggy remained in her bungalow until she was 91; her great passion was her large garden which was much admired by all in its heyday. For the last 3 years Peggy lived happily at Heathfield House, Bletchington where she was well looked after by the staff.

Peggy loved helping in the community, firstly as Leader of the Girl Guides in Lower Heyford just after the war, and in particular in Upper Heyford, taking on the job of Clerk to the Parish Council, secretary of the Flower Show Committee, and later Leader of Warreners.

It was during her time as Clerk that the Village Hall was built, and she put a great deal of time and energy in ensuring that the funds were available, charitable status arranged plus the appointment of the architect and a myriad of other tasks, before the hall was finally opened in 1964.

The Warreners were formed in 1974 and later Peggy took on the job of Leader and is remembered with affection as one of its stalwarts.

## Official opening of the hall 1964

Col Baxter USAF, George Gray, Peggy Cuss, Arthur Burton



## The Poetry Corner



Seamus Heaney

Early in my life I realised a love for poetry for several reasons, including the notion that a most wonderful story can be portrayed in a few short lines. I enjoy the work of many poets but often I return to Seamus Heaney's poetry. His writing embraces countless genres but I often choose to read poems about his native place, rural agricultural County Derry in Northern Ireland. He and I grew up in rural Northern Ireland and as we are a similar age we were the last generation to experience a time in Ireland when life moved with the farming seasons, when visiting was a time to look forward to, when friends and family shared whatever food available and local and other news, when children roamed freely about the countryside and when family ties and religious affiliations were strong. Although some of these values can still be found in modern Ireland the farming aspect of rural agricultural Ireland, as we knew it, is gone forever. All of the mentioned rural aspects and much, much more can be found in his poetry. I enjoy our poetry evenings very much indeed.

I've chosen *The Forge* to briefly think about here. Heaney's beautiful sentences capture an atmosphere of quite a dangerous place for the onlooker to imagine with phrases such as '...a door into the dark...' or '...hoops rusting...' or '...unpredictable fantail of sparks...' 'Or hiss when a new shoe toughens in water...' and '...The anvil must be somewhere in the centre', one gets the idea that it is a dark, dangerous and noisy place, so dark that the location of the anvil is guessed at. But the forge can also produce music, '...the hammered anvil's short pitched ring...' invites one to imagine different rings making different notes and a possible tune of sorts. The last five lines tell us that the Smith is sad to find that motor vehicles have replaced horse power, sad too perhaps to realise that his skills will soon go the way of horsepower as he '...grunts...'.

### *The Forge*

All I know is a door into the dark.  
Outside, old axes and iron hoops rusting;  
Inside, the hammered anvil's short pitched ring,  
The unpredictable fantail of sparks  
Or hiss when a new shoe toughens in water.  
The anvil must be somewhere in the centre,  
Horned as a unicorn, at one end square,  
Sat there immovable: an altar  
Where he expends himself in shape and music.  
Sometimes, leather aproned, hairs in his nose,  
He leans, out on the jamb, recalls a clatter  
Of hoofs where traffic is flashing in rows;  
Then grunts and goes in, with a slam and flick  
To beat real iron, to work the bellows.



As a note of interest, at the bottom of the garden of Hillside Cottage opening on to Orchard Lane, there once stood a forge worked by the Nelder family. Almost certainly the Smithy Nelders shared experiences as described by Seamus Heaney. '*The Forge*' is from *Opened Ground Poems 1966 – 1996*, by Seamus Heaney. Mary Goodman

## LOCAL ELECTIONS

Thursday 5th May

Hours of poll 7am to 10pm

District Council (one seat)

Possibly parish council

Possibly referendum on  
Alternative Voting System

## AN APPEAL TO ALL DOG OWNERS

### Please keep your dog under control

There are so many wonderful walks in the Cherwell Valley many of them across farmers' fields; if you are walking your dog it MUST be under control at all times, and to be sure it is sensible to have it on a leash. Unfortunately there have recently been cases of farm animals being worried by dogs, this is both unacceptable and an offence under The Dogs (Protection of Livestock) Act 1953. Please heed this advice as the worrying of livestock is a very serious matter and could result in your dog being put down. No one would want that to happen.

### Village Green, Upper Heyford

The Reading Room will soon be in use on a regular basis and the children's play area is now complete so it is essential that dog fouling is eradicated. Sadly, despite the provision of a dog litter bin on site, there is dog fouling everywhere. This is totally unacceptable and the Parish Council has been asked to TAKE LEGAL ACTION against any dog owner found failing to clean up



**Minutes of the meeting of the Lower Heyford Parish Council held on  
20<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at 7 pm in the Church**

**Present:**Mrs Hepworth (Chair) Mr Dare (Vice Chair), Mr Osborne-MacKay, Mr. Mortimore, Mrs. Ball, Mr. Macnamara  
**In attendance:** Cathy Fleet (Clerk)

**Apologies** No apologies were received

**Declarations of Interest :** Mrs Ball declared an interest in the Timber Yard, Mr. Osborne-MacKay declared an interest in King George Field

**Minutes of the last meeting** held on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2010 were read and it was **RESOLVED** to accept these as a true record of the meeting and they were signed by the Chair.

**Public Participation :** There were no members of the public present

**01.11.01 Clerk's Report**

Clerk has ordered a new nameplate for Bromeswell Close

Clerk is in discussion with Bowerman's solicitors re. playing field

**01.11.02 Highways** - There has been no response to the email sent by the Clerk to Paul Wilson, Area Steward regarding outstanding items from the last meeting. DD proposed that a further email be sent to Mr Wilson copied to Tim Hallchurch, Keith Mitchell and Tony Baldry requesting a response and action within 21 days. **ACTION : CLERK**

**01.11.03 Grit Bins** - There is still a grit bin short at the Lane. Clerk to chase Highways. During recent severe weather builders working on a local property were seen taking grit from the bin for personal use. Mrs. Hepworth had drafted a letter to the builders, a vote was taken and it was agreed that the Clerk should send the letter.

**01.11.04 Fox Crossroads** - An email had been received regarding the dangerous crossroads on the B3040 crossroads to Duns Tew/North Aston. The North Aston meeting were asking for support in making the crossroads safer and it was agreed that LHPC would support them. **ACTION : CLERK**

**01.11.05 Station Road** - It was reported to the meeting that the condition of Station road is deteriorating badly due to the number of heavy lorries travelling to the recycling plant at Enstone. Manholes are subsiding and the side of the road is collapsing. Clerk to report to Highways and email Paul Wilson. **ACTION : CLERK**

**01.11.06 Overhanging foliage** - Overhanging foliage is causing a problem at Forge Cottage, Merry's Farm House and 103 Freehold Street. Clerk to compose letter to owners requesting that the foliage be trimmed back.

**ACTION : CLERK**

**01.11.07 Potholes** - Potholes were reported at South Street, Caulcott, Freehold Street and Station Road. Clerk to report to Highways **ACTION : CLERK**

**01.11.08 Timber Yard** - The noise from the timber yard continues to be a disturbance. Sawdust is being washed into the drain in South Street causing a blockage. Clerk to report to Highways **ACTION:CLERK**

**01.11.09 Playing Fields** - Discussions with Bowermans solicitors are ongoing **ACTION CLERK/DD/DO-M**

**01.11.10 War Bonds** - The sale of the War Bonds is on-going, Clerk had had documents returned as a Letter of Indemnity is required as the original Certificate has been mislaid. Documents have now been returned to Computershare, the brokers. **ACTION: CLERK**

**01.11.11 Amalgamation of Charities** - On-going

**01.11.12 Parish Plan** - Nothing to report

**01.11.13 Website** - It was **RESOLVED** that the domain names of heyford.info; oxfordshirevillages.info; and secretoxfordshire.info would be renewed at a cost of £37.95 each . It was reported that some undesirable topics had been posted on the Forum. Clerk had liaised with Graham Wilson to have them removed. **ACTION : CLERK**

**01.11.14 Valley News** - An email had been received outlining the financial situation of Valley News and it was **RESOLVED** that LHPC would continue to support Valley News financially.

**01.11.15 Planning** - There was concern that the views of LHPC were not being taken into account when Planning Permission was granted. Mr Macnamara explained the process and suggested that a Planner be invited to attend a PC meeting and that Clerk/Councillors should attend training courses where available. **ACTION/CLERK**

Approvals had been received for 13 Church Lane and 110 Freehold Street

An application had been received for the felling of a tree at 47 Freehold Street to which there was no objection.

**01.11.16 Finance** - The accounts payable were approved and paid.

Discussion took place about the 2011/12 precept and figures presented amounted to a total of £7190. A winter contingency has been added which will cover the cost of purchasing extra grit and clearing snow in Caulcott and Lower Heyford.

**01.11.17 AOB** - Mrs Hepworth had received a copy of the Events Committee accounts and it was **RESOLVED** that a letter of congratulation should be sent to the Events Committee for their efforts. **ACTION : CLERK/DO-M**

It was reported to the meeting that a man had recently been arrested charged with theft from 107 canal boats in the area.

**Date of next meeting : 17<sup>th</sup> March 2011**

The meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed ..... Mrs R Hepworth Date .....

## Christmas Carols in the Square

The Lower Heyford Village Events Committee held their annual Christmas carols in the village square on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2010. Over 80 people braved the snow and cold to sing carols accompanied by the Bletchington Silver band.

The Events committee hold this event every year and donate the refreshments and pay for the band from fund raising activities throughout the year.

The committee would like to thank all the people for turning up and making it such a lovely occasion, special thanks to the people from the 'Old School House' for the use of the electricity.

## The three ringers

Three bell ringers from Lower Heyford and Caulcott showed off their talents by ringing the church bells at Lower Heyford church, Somerton church and Middleton Stoney church, on Christmas eve

The ringing started at 3.30pm at Heyford, 5.30pm at Somerton and then finished off at Middleton Stoney at 9.30.

Eric Ball, Gay Hawkins and Leigh Thompson all agreed it was fantastic fun but tiring, Eric said he hoped the villagers of the three venues enjoyed listening to the bells being rung as much as we enjoyed ringing them. The question is. Will it be four churches next year ????

## THE HEYFORDS WI

The Heyfords WI met on January 19th in the Upper Heyford Village Hall for a most interesting talk, given by Carol Richardson, on the Russian crafts of Icon painting and the making and decorating of papier mache boxes. Ms Richardson told us how the Russian Revolution of 1917 forced the artists to stop painting Icons and to begin making and painting small boxes, and how finally, with glasnost, the wheel has turned full circle and they are now painting Icons again. She was able to show us the techniques used to paint the boxes and had brought with her a collection of exquisite examples for us to enjoy.

Our speaker on February 16th will be Dr Tony Maisey, another excellent speaker, who will talk to us at the Village Hall on the causes and cures of pain.

March 16th brings us back to our AGM and a pleasant evening chatting about things in general; we are very good at that!

As I write this on a gloomy January afternoon, April 20<sup>th</sup> seems a long time away, but the speaker for that evening will be Richard Middleton and his subject is Women in the Colonial Period of American History. For this meeting we will be in the newly refurbished Upper Heyford Reading Room on the Village Green.

Our meetings are open to all (male or female) and, if you think you are interested in any of our talks, please come and join us. We charge £1.00 and you can have refreshments for 50p and raffle ticket also for 50p - what a bargain and a most warm welcome too. We will be posting next year's programme on the village notice boards - our year goes from May to April, so don't be shy, come and join us; we look forward to seeing you from 7.30pm on the 3rd Wednesday of every month.

Janet Lawrance

## Mary Greaves



Mrs Greaves passed away peacefully in The Horton Banbury after a fall in her home in Lower Heyford at the age of 93, having lived independently at No 2 Valley View until the last few days of her life. Mary was born in Upper Heyford in 1917, like so many of her generation she had a hard childhood, losing her father in the Great War she was brought up by other family members, then at an early age she went into domestic service in Upper Heyford. She met George her late husband and they were married and moved to Souldern just before the Second World War, where Helen, her late daughter was born.

George captured at Dunkirk and remained a POW for the rest of the war, in fact he was reported missing and Mary did not find out that he was alive for many months.

George was taken ill in the mid sixties and became more and more reliant on the devoted care of Mary who showed immense love and both mental and physical strength caring for George until he passed away in 1975. Sadly in 1989 she lost her much loved daughter Helen who lived in Australia and later also her dear close sister Doris.

Mary was a very bright and talented lady, often top of her class at school, she also had certificates for knitting and embroidery. She was indeed a legend for her knitting and embroidery, including making bridal dresses and the like. For many years she was a 'home help' receiving a long service award from the council for 20 years service.

At an age of 58 she decided to fly to Australia to visit her daughter and grandchildren

Mary was a founding member of The Forget Me Not Club in 1958 and still a member when it closed in 1998, being a committee member most of the time.

She was a Methodist at heart but when the Methodist Church could not survive in the village, she joined the American Gospel Groups and also came to St Mary's Church to attend C of E services. She regularly read from her bible and this gave her the strength to enjoy a simple non materialistic life and to deal with the sadness that the turmoil of life brought and then to face the increasing fragility of old age.

Mary was a legend to her family, maintaining traditional country village values and living a modest and simple life whilst being able to accept the changing attitudes and activities of those younger than herself, often surprising younger family members with her awareness of world events, linked with the occasional quick wit that was typically "Gran". Her simple country cooking was renowned with her speciality being pastry and Christmas fare which was liked by all those who tasted it.

## SOMERTON NEWS

### THE SOMERTON HOUR

We are now halfway through the Somerton Hour, a series of talks designed to entertain, inform and stimulate discussion held in the Village Hall.

First was John Mitchinson former publisher and now director of research of QI, the popular television show hosted by Stephen Fry, and co-author of a series of QI books. We were vastly entertained to hear how the original idea came about (in the Falkland Arms in Great Tew apparently) and where they get the fascinating facts. For example did you know that the rickshaw was invented by an American?

Next was Oliver James the controversial psychologist who despite having had a road accident on his way to Somerton, gave a stimulating talk on where he thought we had gone wrong in the world today. Some agreed with him, some obviously didn't but agree or not there was certainly food for thought and much discussion afterwards.

Our third speaker was Colin Dexter who needed no introduction. His anecdotal talk was full of gentle humour about his life and work. We could have listened all night and like a teddy bear I think we all wanted to take him home with us.

A selection of books for sale by each speaker, signed & with a personal dedication meant that we had no problem with Christmas presents this year.

We look forward to our next speakers. If they are anything like the previous ones we are in for a good 2011.

Thanks go to Sue Muir for finding and persuading such interesting people to come and talk, to the Social Club for manning the bar and the ladies who provided the delicious refreshments

### CAROL SINGING IN SOMERTON

On a cold and frosty evening just a few days before Christmas we ventured out on our annual pilgrimage around the village carol singing. The snow lay deep and crisp and even and brightly shone the stars that night. No wonder we sang Good King Wenceslas with such enthusiasm. We had rather more men than usual and the singing was really rather good. Because of the conditions it took a bit longer than usual so we apologise to those of you who might have expected us. Frozen toes eventually proved too much.

We were very grateful to those who provided much needed refreshment, particularly the 50 year old Madeira. Our only complaint was that if we had known what it was before we quaffed it down in one gulp we might have savoured it more! It was delicious.

The total raised was £255 another record. Each year the singers choose where to send the money raised and this time it was decided to share it between the Salvation Army Homeless Service and Cerebral Palsy Africa.

Thank you to all the generous people of Somerton.

### SOMERTON CHURCH

If you passed through Somerton in the evening any time since the beginning of December you would have noticed the beautifully illuminated church of St James. Last year Alison Eastwood came up with the idea of sponsorship for the lighting which proved to a popular idea. Details of the sponsors and dedications can be found on Facebook and the blackboard at the top of Church Street. Dedications can be for a loved one, a celebration or even, possibly the nicest, 'To the friendliest village in England'.

The Church has been lit up at Christmas for many years since the days of Rev. Rhodes but has never looked more impressive. This is due to the hard work of Malcolm, Roger and Basil and we are very grateful to them. Due to the overwhelming response from sponsors it was decided to begin earlier than usual this year, on the 1<sup>st</sup> December so in great haste Basil persuaded the PCC to buy two timers thinking it would make life easier. Roger provided the lamps and Malcolm was persuaded to come out of 'retirement' and lay out the lamps and for only the third time in many years the south of the Church was also lit much to the appreciation of those who live in that part of the village.

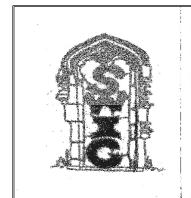
But it was not going to be as easy as anticipated. One of the timers was faulty and had to be returned and unfortunately it was a couple of weeks before it was replaced. Then we had a power cut which threw the timers out followed by a fault with some lights inside the church which not only fused the lamps but burnt one out completely. Roger to the rescue again with another lamp that he 'just happened to have'. All this time Malcolm was back and forth changing timers, fuses and lamps and switching the lights on and off manually. Doesn't sound much trouble but believe me it was! However it all came right at last and since Christmas Day the lights have gone on and off obediently and don't they look good. When we went Carol singing it was magical with snow all around, the houses with decorations in the windows and our centuries old Church shining in the winter's night.

Sadly there were a couple of complaints that the lighting was not satisfactory. Perhaps given time and money another lamp and fittings could be purchased to light the west side of the tower but for this year I think most villagers were appreciative of the effort.

On their behalf may I say a big Thank You to Malcolm, Roger, Basil and Alison.

### CHRISTMAS SUPPER

The SWIG Christmas Supper is always a popular occasion and this one proved to be no exception. After a welcoming glass of wine about 35 members and guests sat down to beautifully decorated tables. The food if anything was even more delicious than usual. Maureen led us in the now traditional rendition of the Twelve Days of Christmas and a good time was had by all.



We should like to thank all those who worked so hard to make this a really festive evening.

## SOMERTON CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

It seems a long time ago but mention must be made of the Christmas Bazaar held in early December in the new Village Hall.

All the usual well loved stalls were there plus some new ones. Schnapps and hot chestnuts joined the mulled wine in getting us into the festive spirit. A Deli complimented the Cakes by providing pates, cheese straws and other delicacies, and the Nearly New did a brisk trade.

We made an profit of £1.700, a record & amazing amount in these straitened times. This was divided between the Church of St. James and the Barnes Memorial Hall.

Thanks to all who came and spent so generously and to those who gave their time and abilities in making this such a happy and successful event.

## THE COLD WAR

Back in late November I received a newspaper cutting from my niece who lives in deepest Wales. It mentioned Somerton and she thought I would be interested. I managed to get in touch with the author Don McBeth (oh the wonders of the internet) and he was quite happy for it to be reprinted in VN. Does anyone remember these events? It has been suggested that the planes were in fact B47(E)s but whatever - it makes for a good story!

*An item in this weeks Daily Mail about President Clinton loosing the atomic weapons codes made me think how an unguarded moment, could have unexpected consequences.*

*In 1964 at the height of the cold war, I was a member of a group of young Post Office telephone wiremen, who were sent from the Brighton telephone area to work in the Oxford telephone area, installing and upgrading small telephone exchanges. Our routine was that we would work from eight in the morning to eleven at night, four days a week, and for that we would be paid the princely sum of £30.00, which in those days was a small fortune.*

*On one occasion, two of us found ourselves working in the small Oxfordshire village of Somerton, under the guidance of an Irishman called Mick. He would appear at eight in the morning, slightly the worse for wear, read the paper till eleven, go to the pub till three, and then go home, leaving us to work through the evening. We worked hard, and unlike Mick, our work was strictly monitored.*

*One morning we arrived to find Mick waiting for us, but this time he seemed different, he was stone cold sober. He explained to us that he had been visited at two o'clock in the morning by fully armed American military policemen, who had dragged him down to the Somerton telephone exchange, and insisted that he explain why he had sabotaged their air force base. What I haven't mentioned is that Somerton was situated very close to the American Strategic Air Command base of RAF Upper Heyford. This was one of the air bases where day and night 365 days a year, the giant nuclear armed B52 bombers would take off and fly to the Russian border and back. The theory was that if there was ever an international incident, the Americans would be up there ready and waiting.*

*On the previous night, my colleague and I had as usual, been unwiring old equipment to install new. Unbeknown to us, and before closing up and going back to our digs, someone accidentally disabled the remote unit that controlled all the airport runway lights. As a result, for a period of about four hours, no aircraft could take off or land. If only the Russians had known.*

*By now we were starting to imagine what the 1964 equivalent of Guantánamo bay might look like, and expected the world to come crashing down around us. But nothing happened. We later reckoned that the Americans were so embarrassed to find that that so vital a piece of equipment had been being routed through a humble Post Office telephone exchange that they just kept quiet.*

*We heard no more about it, and we never did discover who cut through the wrong cable, but one thing I can tell you for certain, it wasn't me! Don McBeth*

Rosemary Arnold

The B47 was a very familiar sight in north Oxfordshire throughout the 50s & 60s as part of USAF Strategic Air Command's (SAC) contribution to the NATO alliance. The larger B52 mentioned was only an occasional visitor. As was the spectacular B36  
UH Historical Society



B47E coming into land at Upper Heyford in 1961

## UPPER HEYFORD NEWS

### WATCH OUT, THERE'S A THIEF ABOUT!

At a time when there is so much goodwill in the village, we are saddened to report further acts of vandalism and theft in our parish. Before Christmas Heyford Park Residents' & Community Association had its TV & Wii equipment taken, and more recently the village hall has been broken into THREE times! New locks have been fitted and we are having to become more security conscious. There is nothing of any great value in monetary terms in the hall, however, the thief walked off with a piece of Post Office equipment and a large box belonging to the AA. AA members are most upset at the loss of their records which go back over a period of 30 years' and other items of intrinsic value, contained in the box.

Needless to say, there is damage to the building as well, one broken window to gain access, one wash basin smashed by the thief on entry and water damage from the resulting flood.

**What is really galling is the fact that the perpetrator is a local person as clearly an outsider would hardly risk returning twice for such meagre pickings.**

If you see anything untoward please notify the police, you can do it anonymously through Crimestoppers 0800 555 111 or on line.

### WE MUST PULL TOGETHER TO STOP THIS HAPPENING IN OUR VILLAGE

### YOUR PARISH NEEDS YOU!



There will be a NEW Parish Council after 5th May when the existing PC completes its current term of office, so now is your chance to join!

Upper Heyford Parish Council has six members, the current incumbents are Ian Lough-Scott, Peter James, Sally Anne Mildenhall, Patricia Kirby, Alison Graham & Anji Hall

Ian Lough-Scott, Sally Anne Mildenhall & Anji Hall have indicated that they will not stand again so at least THREE new members are required.

An election will only be necessary if more than 6 parishioners apply, however, regardless of the number of applicants there is a legally binding procedure that must be followed, so if you would like to be a member of the parish council please contact Jack Goodman, parish clerk, or Cherwell District Council direct. **The necessary paperwork MUST be with Cherwell District Council by 4 April 2011**

There are normally 6 meetings + the annual parish meeting each year and usually each member has a specific responsibility. It is worthwhile and rewarding work.

### The Warreners

December was a month of partying for us all. On 1<sup>st</sup> Dec., despite the snow and ice, we went to Fringford for our Christmas Lunch. This was freshly cooked for us by 'The Scullery Maids' and it was superb. They really did us proud and I can highly recommend it for parties or special occasions. They are a lovely friendly group of ladies who tailor it to your needs.

The following week on our usual meeting date we had our Christmas Tea along with the special Raffle and double-up Bingo. The tea was great and afterwards we were entertained by David on his electric organ. All in all a very entertaining month.

The New Year was to see us watching a film, but somewhere along the line it didn't get logged in and we had to play bingo instead. Never mind as we have re-booked for February.

Sadly we have learned of the death of Peggy Cuss who was a leader of our club for many years. I know she was in charge in 1977 when my mother had her stroke because she always kindly called in after club and brought mum a plate of tea as she could no longer attend meetings. The Warreners would like to extend their sincere condolences to Eileen and Trevor and say how much we appreciate what Peggy did for the club.

The February meeting will be the last one in charge for me. Amid a lot of heart-searching I feel I have to step down and let someone else take over. Unfortunately Ron has a medical condition which means we don't know how much longer he will be able to drive, and I haven't been able to for the last 6 years, so I have no option. I am going to miss my work with it so much as I have really enjoyed the last 9+ years, but we will still attend meetings as long as we can this year. Before I log off I would like to give my sincere thanks to all the committee who have supported me through this time, for all the work they put in month after month and all the fundraising they do to make the club the success it is. Having been going non-stop since forming in October 1974 may it continue for another 36 years. As for me I am very proud to have been part of it, considering my parents and Aunts and Uncles were founder members all those years ago!

### Thank you, Barbara

We are blessed with so many good people who voluntarily contribute to the wellbeing of our small community. Warreners has lasted 36 years because so many parishioners (and friends from outside the village) enjoy the camaraderie it offers. None of this would be possible without a Leader to gently organise the proceedings. It started with Mrs Burn & Maxine, followed by Peggy Cuss, Hazel Plowman, Muriel Haynes then Barbara. All of them generous with their time and caring to a fault.

Barbara is a lovely lady and we greatly appreciate all that she has done for the club, not just on meeting days, behind the scenes too, arranging trips, meals, fund raising and ensuring we don't miss out on any grants that are on offer.

Thank you, Barbara, you have been a marvellous leader and a real friend to all of the members. Please, please come back as often as you can.

# UPPER HEYFORD NEWS

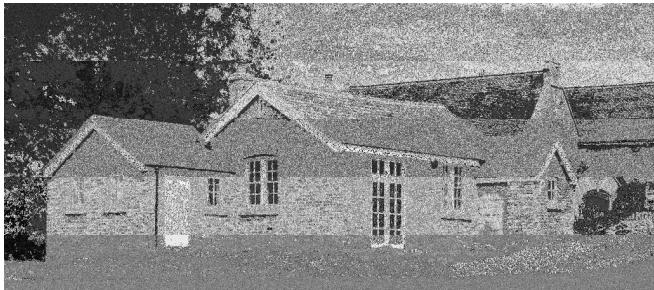


## Sticky Fingers

Baby & Toddler Playgroup

Sadly we have to report that Sticky Fingers, the parent and toddler group, has now folded due to lack of interest. We still have all the toys in storage, so if anyone is interested in starting the group up again please contact the parish clerk, Jack Goodman on 01869 232722

## Almost there!



### Reading Room Report

A good deal of work has been completed, the ceilings and walls have been painted and heating installed. Three major jobs remain: fitting the kitchen, sanding and varnishing the floor, and laying the patio. It was estimated that an additional £5,000 is required for this work and we are pleased to report that a grant of £5,000 from the Rural Access Support Programme has been approved so all work can now proceed.

**Grateful thanks to everyone who has helped the project**



### Flower Show 2011

3<sup>rd</sup> September.

By the time you read this the organisers of the Flower Show will have met to discuss what shape this year's Show might follow. Please make a note of the date and get in touch if you feel you can help out, or indeed if you have suggestions you would like us to discuss in the coming months. It would be good to have some people that we know we can call on as we progress through the months of planning. We will keep you informed through these pages about this event. Meantime think about growing or making something that you and your family can show on the day. Simon: 233664; Jo: 232291; Ann: 232976; Peter: 232878; Maureen: 232878; Mary: 232722. Also we would like to express our sympathy to Roy Hudson and his family on the loss of Dinah. As many know both Dinah and Roy were very involved with the Upper Heyford Flower Show over many years.

## December dates to floodlight St. Mary's Church

2<sup>nd</sup> December In loving memory of Eric Rhodes, who died 21 years ago. By his widow, Joan, 'with love.'

18<sup>th</sup> December In celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the late Mrs. Doris Shayler. 'Love from Mary and Frank', her daughter and son-in-law.

24<sup>th</sup> December In memory of the late Archibald Slatter. With love from Jean, John and Hannah.

In memory of Jan Woski and the deceased family members and friends of Ann Woski.

27<sup>th</sup> December In celebration of the 65<sup>th</sup> birthday of the late Eric Rhodes. 'With love from Joan.'

29<sup>th</sup> December In memory of the late Mrs Doris James who died in 2000. 'With love from Maureen, Peter, Paul, Debbie and baby Grace.'

**The friends of St Mary's** would like to take this opportunity to thank all who have supported their efforts in raising the wonderful sum of £730.00, in total, for the year 2010. This will go towards the repair of the chancel roof in the parish church.

Please get in touch with Ann Woski on (01869) 23 2976 or Mary Goodman on (01869) 23 2722 if you would like the church tower floodlit for a special occasion. We will provide you with an attractive card detailing who or what is being remembered. Some have found this an unique way to remember a loved one, or loved ones who lives far away, for example. We will also give you a receipt for a minimum donation of £10.00.



## PLEASE HELP

A yearly income of £18,000 is needed to run the Church and despite the generosity of a number of parishioners who contribute through Gift Aid the average income is less than £7,000. Please consider making a regular donation through Gift Aid, which has the added advantage that the PCC can claim 20p in the £ back from the Inland Revenue. Please contact Nick Alcraft, treasurer



## Upper Heyford Parish Website:

Upper Heyford Parish has a new website based on the Cherwell District Council server. Although this site is still being refined and updated, it now contains the most recent Parish Council minutes, a summary of Parish Council finances and a list of upcoming events in the Parish. As well as that, some information on Parish organisations is also on the site.

To access go to <[www.cherwell.gov.uk/upperheyfordpc](http://www.cherwell.gov.uk/upperheyfordpc)> For information about or for the site please contact: Jack Goodman, Parish Clerk, 01869 232722 Email: [jgoodmanjr61@gmail.com](mailto:jgoodmanjr61@gmail.com)

## Coarse Gardening.

Well, we've had some snow and we didn't like it all that much, but soon we shall have snowdrops, which are much more to my taste. I have said before that there have not been enough of them in my life, but this state of affairs is now being redressed, a bit late, maybe, but better than never. There are now a satisfactory number of clumps of them about the garden, though we have by no means reached saturation point. They are such good things. Not only do they bring cheer just when you need it in the darker days of the new year, but they totally ignore the harshest weather, they love this heavy local soil and, although bullfinches may occasionally nip them, the wretched squirrels and voles leave them alone, possibly because their bulbs are actually fairly poisonous; so don't be tempted to include them in your Five a Day.

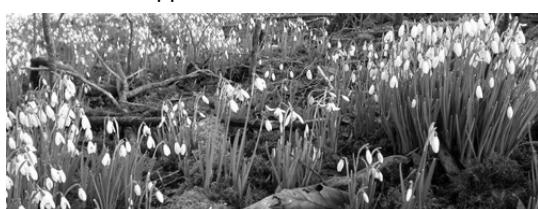
In recent years, there has been a surge of interest among enthusiasts called Galanthophiles - the botanical name for the snowdrop genus being *Galanthus* - who discern minute differences between individuals, cultivate them and bulk up their stock, give them names and swap them around. They recognise over two hundred varieties, now - or is it even more? It's not that far off train-spotting or stamp collecting indulged in by middle class hoodies in anoraks and green wellies. Individual bulbs can change hands for twenty pounds (or more - up to £100 a bulb, according to a recent article I read in *The Garden*). None of this is for the coarse gardener, naturally. Such unbecoming nit-pickery. In my garden I have just four distinct sorts, three of them varieties of the common *Galanthus nivalis*, the snowdrop that grows wild around Britain. There is a late-flowering, rather small single; an early, large-flowering single, which is scented; and the usual double form. There is also an increasing group, derived from a small clump found growing here under an apple tree when we first moved in, of what I am pretty certain is another species, *G. elwesii*, a handsome, much larger single snowdrop with broad, silver-grey leaves. The big, early, common one - my favourite - is fertile, producing seed pods like green grapes, each of which contains a dozen or so big seeds which sprout roots before they are shed, all ready to go, and so my stock of these is increasing rapidly. They reach flowering size in their third, or sometimes second, year. The other way to bulk them up (and the only way for sterile types, like the doubles) is to divide them by digging them up and pulling the clumps apart into small groups of three or four bulbs, to replant. This has been traditionally done 'in the green', that is, after the flowers are over but while the leaves are still there. This is the usual way that you can buy them from suppliers in the fens, who grow them in open fields in vast rows. Unlike daffodils and tulips, snowdrop bulbs do not like to be dried out, but are happy to be moved around whilst actively growing. In fact, I have found you can dig them up and shift them at almost any time, in flower or not, and they don't seem to mind. However, John Grimshaw, co-author of a monograph on snowdrops and a renowned expert, does not agree. He says it is far better to lift them in the summer, when they are dormant. For the coarse gardener, there is a problem with this. Where are they? You didn't mark the spot when they were in flower, did you? And anyway, if you do find some to dig up, when you come to replant them you can bet your boots that you will slash into and chop up some other precious bulbs also asleep down there, also unmarked. A fair compromise would be to wait until after flowering when the leaves are turning yellow. At that time it should be clear where they are and where other nice spring things are, too.

I can see what Grimshaw is driving at, though. If you have bought some rather expensive, named variety that you want to increase without any chance of weakening it, you would want to give it the very best of conditions, including never messing with it when there would be a chance of damaging its roots. If I had paid two quid a bulb, even I would put in a large, clear marker. The variety I covet (which actually is two quid a bulb - best price I can find on the net) is 'S. Arnott', a beautiful, large - eight inches tall - upright single, which is quite strongly scented. It is named for Samuel Arnott and is sometimes sold as such - though don't you dare call it 'Sam Arnott'. Its progenitor was an eminent, very dignified and fierce looking Scot, a prolific writer and Provost of his town, who no-one in his right mind would ever even *think* of as 'Sam'. Goggle him on the Interweb and you will see what I mean. While you are at it, put in 'snowdrop s. arnott' too. There are some good photographs of it on various sites, most of which want to sell it to you. If you look at the 'Eurobulbs' site, there are pictures of several other named varieties, also.

Speaking of the very best of conditions, where would you plant your snowdrops? Naturalised, or in the wild, they grow mainly in woodland under the trees, where they are well capable of thriving in places which, in the summer, become so dry and full of roots that practically nothing else will grow there. Some of mine put up with this sort of thing under the big old ash tree in the middle of the lawn, their companions being autumn flowering cyclamen and some incredibly tough violets. However, I have a theory that they grow in such places simply because they can and others can't. That is, as the year advances, they are not shaded out by coarse grasses or other large foliage before their leaves have fed next year's bulbs. Bluebells grow in similar conditions, but it can easily be shown that they prefer spring shading. They seldom grow outside the tree-shadow except up in the mountains. Snowdrops, though, equally like an open site - such as out there in the fens - if they are given one and if some kind gardener keeps it clear until their leaves have died down. They are not fussy, but they also like compost, leafmould, manure or any other organic feed, if given it. If you pamper them, they purr.

New Year's Resolution: like that nice woman Ruth, who will have a go at pretty well anything in the *Edwardian Farm* series on telly, I am paranoid about dry kindling. We have wood-burning stoves here, and there is no chance of getting them fired up without really dry material and plenty of it, so I am, once again, going to follow the example of the Green Lady I was so rude about a year ago, and collect my prunings; at least, the easy ones, like the nice straight sticks of red dogwood and the coloured-bark willows and the 'water shoots' on the apple trees. These will be tied in bundles and put to dry in the cellar. Yes, they will. Honest. I mean it. You'll see.

All the best for 2011. Roger Burt.



References: *Snowdrops: A Monograph of Cultivated Galanthus* by Matt Bishop, Aaron Davis and John Grimshaw, Griffin Press, 2006, £60 (£40 on Amazon. I haven't bought one...).  
[www.eurobulbs.co.uk](http://www.eurobulbs.co.uk) for pictures of various snowdrops.  
For *Galanthus 'S. Arnott'*, [www.shootgardening.co.uk](http://www.shootgardening.co.uk) and other nearby sites.

