

Fears private flight plan may still go ahead

FEARS that an application to allow up to 500 private flights over Hungerford could still get the green light are looming, despite West Berkshire Council's recent decision to refuse the plans.

Last week, planning officers refused a plan to vary and remove planning conditions related to the Anvilles Farm airstrip under delegated powers, saying that there was insufficient information to fully assess the proposal.

The application, submitted by landowner Carl Persson, was to change conditions of a permission granted in November 1972 for the late Lord Howard de Walden, who died in 1999.

That permission allowed the

use of the airstrip and hangar for a light aircraft for Lord Howard de Walden and people in his employment, but Mr Persson had applied to allow private use of the airstrip near Hungerford for up to 500 flights.

Several nearby residents, plus Inkpen Parish Council, objected to the plans, claiming it would constitute a nuisance and a safety issue in the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Although the district council decision to reject the application has been welcomed by many, at least one Kintbury resident, Stephen Colloff, doubts that it is the end of the matter.

He said: "I am glad they refused it, but I am worried about the reasons given - it looks

like they are getting ready for another application.

"They don't mention safety in the area and I think eventually they will find a way to approve it."

Mr Colloff also believed the application should be discussed by councillors at committee level, rather than officers only.

He said: "The fact that you cannot exercise your democratic rights to comment on the plans, other than to a council officer, is in my opinion not good enough."

Meanwhile, Kevin Ayrton, the agent for Mr Persson, said that the applicant would need to establish what information is required before deciding whether to submit another proposal.

29.10.09

Dog attack left policeman needing stitches

A DOG owner has been ordered to pay £900 compensation after her pet tore at a policeman's groin.

Newbury magistrates heard on October 22, how Pc Benjamin Train yelled in terror as 40-year-old Angela Mann's German Shepherd attacked, leading to the officer being taken to hospital for stitches.

The animal then ran around to his police car to cut off his escape, the court was told.

Becky Owens, prosecuting, said that Pc Train had to run back into Mrs Mann's home in

Post Office Road, Inkpen.

She added: "At 7.50pm the officer attended the address to serve some documents and the dog - a German Shepherd called Lady - appeared at the door, barking."

"The door was opened by the defendant's lodger and it lunged at Pc Train, biting him in the groin area. It then bit him above the knee and was growling, shaking its head and snarling."

Yelling, the officer managed to wrench his leg free, the court heard, before dashing to his car.

Ms Owens said that the dog was subsequently destroyed.

Mrs Mann admitted owning a dangerous dog that was not kept under proper control.

She told the court that she knew Lady had a "bad temperament" and had put extra locks on doors and taken her to behaviour classes.

Mrs Mann added: "We told the lodger not to let her out but he let us down. I'm very sorry it happened."

Mrs Mann was made subject to a 12-month conditional discharge, ordered to compensate the officer and to pay £85 costs and £15 surcharge.

5.11.09

Night life in a dark land beyond street lights

OUT here, way beyond the street lights, night feels like the luxurious wrap of a velvet coat.

There are no pavements, few road signs and the line between the verge and the pot-holed road is at best indistinct. It is not for everyone, this trek up to the car in its windy corner of a field by torchlight through the mud, but I love the hidden away-ness of it all.

When there is no moon and no moonlight reflecting off low white cloud, and no chalky glitter of the Milky Way, it is so dark that you can pass a neighbour in the road with a slightly nervous, polite "hello", before realising who it is.

However, as *The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark* discovered, dark is also kind, comforting, and exciting. Friends walk to the pub for Christmas drinks through dark woods and the thick orange mud that used to supply the potteries here. We lay our torches on the table with our keys.

At the farmers' market there are Christmas cards with a view of our part of the village in 1945, painted by former villager, the Royal Society of British Artists member Christopher Hall. It is a delightful snowy scene of five spaced-out plots and tumbledown cottages, mostly thatched and four of them now gone. Our little row of farmworkers' cottages replaced one of them in 1952, and two

NATURE NOTES

by NICOLA CHESTER

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much larger houses are being built on former plots, as seems to be the overwhelming trend here. So, rather than evolving, the enduring character of this rural village and its people are being dispossessed.

Still, for the Christingle service, the village and its children gathered excitedly together in the beautiful candlelit church, a jolly affair with standing room only. The children's singing faces glowed in the light from their candles set in oranges, stuck with cocktail sticks of sweets and raisins.

After the Nativity at the school, the children had an unexpected visit from an equally surprised Father Christmas, the Hungerford Round Table's float finding the village deserted of children.

The cry went up and a stream of children spilled out into the dark playground, following their teaching assistant who was excited as they were. Mary and Joseph followed camels, shepherds, sheep, kings and angels, trailing tinsel and football tops behind them. When the float eventually disappeared slowly up the lane like a ferry boat down the dark Thames, it took with it all the lit-up thrill, colour and noise of a fairground.

My five-year old shepherdess was utterly convinced; my two-year-old, spellbound, clutching the orange that Father Christmas had given her to her pink duffle coat. And then the still, deep quiet resettled and we felt again the velvety touch of the night air fresh on our cheeks.

A very happy Christmas to all *Nature Notes* readers, and thank you for your suggestions.

Wild Diary

Sunday, December 20, 11.30am to 4pm.

Drop in and make some Christmas tree decorations in the Recycled Arts Workshop at The Nature Discovery Centre, Thatcham.

While you are there, check out the wild winter duck on the lake as well.

17.12.09

24.12.09

Comments are unwarranted

I WAS surprised to see that Nicola Chester has used her *Nature Notes* column as a platform to voice her personal views concerning housing development in the countryside. Although Inkpen is not named in the piece it is clear that she is referring to Upper Green.

As the developer responsible for obtaining planning permission for the two large houses she mentions and a resident in the village I feel I must respond. The inference made by Mrs Chester is that as a developer I am accused of three "crimes against the village", namely the sweeping away of quaint thatched cottages, displacing local residents by denying them smaller less expensive homes and defying the dubious concept that old is good and new is bad.

The first charge is easily refuted. Christopher Hall's painting is a somewhat Lowryesque and idealised snow scene depicting the village pond and neighbouring cottages some 65 years ago. The reality, when we acquired the land last year, was that one cottage was in an advanced state of collapse and had been lying empty for years and the other had been demolished and replaced by an ugly house in the early 1960s. This was also dilapidated and vacant. The new houses permitted are of an exceptionally high standard of design and will be a major improvement to this previously unsightly corner of the village.

The second charge is unfairly levelled at us because it is West Berkshire Council's planning policy which dictates what may be built in the village. In this case a strict a one-for-one replacement applies and in these circumstances, with both gardens and paddocks available, larger family houses are appropriate. Indeed we have sold one of the plots to a local family and the second we are building for marketing next year. In both cases I am sure the future occupants will bring added vitality to the village. We all enjoy the freedoms of a market economy and villages grow and adapt organically with the changing circumstances and needs of their residents. The new house we are building will definitely be better than the 1960's building it replaces. Unlike other developers we have not sought to avoid WBC's requirement to construct the dwelling to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 3* and I am confident that this new and larger home will use less energy and water than its smaller predecessor.

As we started with *Natures Notes*, allow me one final observation. In order to implement the construction of this new home we have been required to survey and protect all manner of flora and fauna. Bats have been studied and accommodated, trees recorded and protected and Great Crested Newts have been searched out in the fields and pond. All of this has taken effort, diligence and considerable expense but as responsible developers we carry out our obligations to protect the natural environment willingly. In the autumn we were happy to provide men and machinery at our cost to carry out the much-needed clearing of the village pond, working with neighbouring householders and land owners. Perhaps Mrs Chester's column could focus on these very positive aspects of progress rather

than harking whimsically back to a time when people were forced by necessity to live in unheated, damp, sub-standard accommodation with no running water or lavatories.

CHARLES ISAAC
Pottery Lane
Inkpen

The wood turns into Narnia as the snow falls

THAT it should snow three days before Christmas was a wondrous thing.

At the weekend, we'd felt cheated, as the forecast snow did not fall here, unlike in the east of the county. Even Newbury had more snow than we did.

However, out with the dog, stealing a moment from the build-up to Christmas, memories still lingered of last February's snow that cut us off, closed the schools and allowed days of sledging. Perhaps we just weren't due any this time.

The wood was beautiful with its subtle dusting of icing sugar snow, the floor was covered with oak-leaf plates filled with snow crystals and where we had walked, there was a little caramel path where the leaves had turned over and spilt their small allocation of snow.

The hard ground was a welcome respite from the relentless mud and the sunny, frosty day a delight. The pine trees and the highest oak branches rising above the canopy bathed in the full syrupy light of the winter sun. Bracken ferns, with their roots in the half-submerged

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banks of the stream were green, and as big and exotic as palms, while their close neighbours had turned a petrified crumbled copper. The ice was crazed and opaque and the glossy holly leaves and bright berries couldn't have looked more festive.

A little more snow fell overnight, enough to creak underfoot. A raven sounded a repeated, carrying call from the wood that rebounded off the down like a deep bell, a sound old as the hills. What was it communicating? As it stopped, the snow started falling and we built a hasty snowman in the dusk.

The following day, drawing back the bedroom curtains, was a

"wow" moment. The snow was pristine, thick on the power lines and trees and making magical blue shadows over the undulating ground, while icicles hung from the shed guttering and the barn.

All thoughts and practicalities of last minute Christmas shopping trips were abandoned and we gratefully accepted that we'd be here all day. We eked out the milk, just in case, and carefully distributed toast. Then as soon as we could, we cobbled together a winter picnic and walked out into Narnia.

Every bough, branch and twig balanced an inch of snow; on the ground the snow was powdery, marked only with the tracks of blackbird, pheasant, hare and fox. The lane was a tunnel of crystallised white branches, the hills and their woods achingly beautiful under the blue sky.

We walked in a white Christmas winter wonderland - and, three days short of Christmas, it felt like all our dreams had already come true.

A happy new year to all *Nature Notes* readers.

31.12.09

Satisfactory schooling at Inkpen

INKPEN Primary School has been judged satisfactory overall by Ofsted inspectors.

The Weavers Lane school was graded as good for its capacity for sustained improvement and rated outstanding for its effective engagement with parents and carers.

Lead inspector Rodney Braithwaite said: "There is much evidence of widespread improvements in a number of areas and the school has a number of strengths."

He added that the school needed to continue to raise pupils' attainment and achievement in writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

28.1.10

Commander John Marriot RN 1922 - 2010



COMMANDER John Marriot RN, of Inkpen, died peacefully on Friday, March 5.

John's father, Captain Jack Marriot, CMG, RN, had an illustrious naval career which included being present at the signing of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, and a career in the Navy was a natural destiny for John.

His happy childhood days in Inkpen were rudely interrupted by the outbreak of war in 1939 when, aged 17, he joined his first destroyer.

His war service included participating in the sinking of the *Bismarck* while serving on *HMS King George V* and the Allied landings in Sicily and Italy.

John served on *HMS Grove* when it was hit by two torpedos and sunk off Tobruk with the loss of 145 out of a complement of 180.

He was mentioned in despatches twice for distinguished service. Highlights of John's post-war service included serving on the Royal Yacht *Britannia* from 1954-1957 as First Lieutenant and captaining *HMS Puma* from 1959 to 1962.

John was forced to retire from the Navy in 1964 for

medical reasons which resulted from injuries sustained at the time of the sinking of *HMS Grove*.

Following retirement, John channelled his energy into his estate at Inkpen which was greatly enjoyed by him and his family.

He served the local community in various ways including as High Sheriff of Berkshire in 1976, parish councillor for Inkpen and district councillor for Hungerford for many years, governor of John O'Gaunt School, Hungerford, president of the St John Ambulance, Hungerford, and chairman of the Berkshire branch of the Country Land and Business Association.

John had an ingrained sense of public duty which manifested itself throughout his life. He had a deep love of rural affairs and made many friends during his long and distinguished life.

He is survived by his wife Moira, his children Alice, Jack and Tom, and his grandchildren Ned, Scarlett, Toby and Matilda.

JM

Newbury Weekly News

25.3.10



Eric Rein, PDS Newbury chairman, accepts the cheque from Mary Harris, owner of The Swan Inn, and Sylvia Grimwood, PDS Newbury Vice-President. The collecting bottle is pictured on the counter behind

Fund-raising pub shows a 'lotta bottle'

THE Newbury branch of the Parkinson's Disease Society held its annual meeting recently and a new chairman, Eric Rein, was appointed. His first pleasant duty was to collect a cheque from The Swan Inn, Inkpen, for £170 towards the local branch funds.

Each year, the Swan Inn regulars fill a large bottle with coins and when it is full, they hold a sweepstake to predict the amount collected, making even more money. We as a branch are so grateful to be helped in this way

and would like to thank Mary and Bernard Harris and their regulars for continuing their support.

Our branch exists to help people with Parkinson's and their carers, arranging meetings, outings and various therapy sessions. If you need our help, please contact our welfare officer on Newbury (01635) 869532. The next fund-raising event is the annual quiz on April 17 at Fairclose.

SYLVIA GRIMWOOD
Vice-President
PDS Newbury & District

Frogs head for their ponds in mass spring ritual

AT the spring equinox, this extraordinary season finally began. The no-show of Mother's Day daffodils, blackthorn or frogspawn created feelings of mild bewilderment, growing anxiety and disorientation in us all.

The Woodland Trust expects about 1,000 sightings of blackthorn blossom by now, but at the time of writing, has received just four. Perhaps this severe, prolonged winter has not yet done with us. Yet after 30 years of increasingly mild winters and disjuncting early springs, the winter into spring season of 2009-10 represents a slight return. An old-fashioned spring is following an old-fashioned winter.

A few days before, winter starling flocks built up in large numbers, giving bare trees the appearance of black leaves with a cacophony of trilling, clicking and chattering that couldn't be ignored - something was going to happen.

The day after the flock dispersed, spring was suddenly in evidence. A brimstone butterfly and two commas were a joyous sight. The new steely-burgundy leather leaves of bramble were so welcome. I reached out and snagged my fingers. Fat pussy willow was exploding and almost immediately went to pollen. The catkins that had not given up and shrivelled

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puffed pollen on the breeze like someone with a pipe.

A friend reported a wet-night drive to town that was hampered by a mass frog migration. An endless stream of frogs were crossing the road to their birth-pond all at once, rather than over several days, with the reflecting eyes of ranks several deep waiting at the verge.

The mysterious 'wild' crocuses of Inkpen's Crocus Field were the best they have been for years, six to eight purple flowers in a square foot in some places, a glorious contrast with the still winter-grey grass. Big buff-tailed bumble bees were travelling in between, falling in them head first as if they were goblets of wine, and pushing the petals apart with

black hairy legs, and then reversing out clumsily, woolly with pollen.

Then I saw the spotted skin of a sad squashed frog on the road. However, after long weeks of watching, the frogs had returned to our local pond. There must have been a hundred or more and the water seemed to boil with them as their white-throated croaking reverberated.

Splayed feet and glistening golden, olive-green and orange-spotted bodies gleamed beneath the water, piggyback embracing, among globs of quivering, gelatinous spawn. The back rider of four frogs in a line kicked to the surface, but they sank again, like a listing liner.

Along the pondsides are tiny, sweet dog-violets. This is the anticipation of what must surely follow - spring colliding into summer.

Wild Diary

Take part in recording the progress of spring across the UK. Become a part of history, chronicling our climate, its fluctuations and change, in the largest record of phenology in the world with The Woodland Trust's Nature's Calendar (formerly Springwatch).

More information at www.naturescalendar.org.uk

1.4.10

50 YEARS AGO

8.4.10

April 7, 1960

FIFTY-seven years a bandsman, Charles Wright, of Council Houses, Inkpen Common, was the oldest member of Newbury Borough Band competing at the recent southern counties area brass band championships, which was held at the

Friends' Meeting House, London.

Mr Wright, a 68 year-old gardener, was playing the bass trombone in the fourth division contest, in which the leading three bands qualified for the *Daily Herald* national finals in London.

At the other end of the age scale in the borough band was 10-year-old cornettist John Hillier, of Camp Close, Newbury, whose father, Reginald Hillier, plays the soprano cornet in the band.

Other family groups in the borough band are the conductor, George Dyson, his brother Ray and son Bill, both tenor horn players; euphonium player Bert Gore and his cousin Montie, who plays baritone; and the Stacey brothers, Tom, who plays cornet, and bass player Ray.

75 YEARS AGO

April 11, 1935

FOUR teams from the district entered the Newbury section of Berkshire Federation of Women's Institutes' Drama Competition, held in The Plaza, Newbury, on Thursday. They were Yattendon and Frilsham, who presented a trial scene; Hampstead Norris, who chose a scene from *Cranford*; Shaw-cum-Donnington, who acted the same play as in the Community Theatre Drama League Festival at Newbury recently, *The Mother*; and Inkpen, whose choice was *The Lustre Jug*.

The judge, Janet Weatherby, awarded Shaw-cum-Donnington top place, with Inkpen runners-up. The leading teams in the preliminary competitions were announced by the adjudicator after the performances at Reading on Saturday. The adjudicator congratulated the teams as a whole, and remarked that the performance improved as it went on.

PICTURE FROM THE PAST



THIS picture from the *Newbury Weekly News* of June 4, 1970, shows Combe Gibbet, the landmark on Inkpen Beacon, being replaced after having been vandalised. The work is being overseen by Inkpen landowner John Astor, at that time Conservative parliamentary candidate for Newbury, whose farm manager, Mr K. Bastable, made the arrangements. The heavy work was done by Inkpen agricultural contractor Norman Painting.

Thursday, June 3, 2010



Kimberley Mangan

Undergraduate acclaimed top guide by new students

AN Inkpen student has been crowned Peer Guide of the Year at Bangor University.

Kimberley Mangan, aged 21, has been given the award for her voluntary role as a peer guide, in which she helps new undergraduates adjust to university life by organising events during Welcome Week and assisting new students in finding their way around the university and the local area.

She was nominated by first year students, who described her as a friend who was always there for them, making the move to Bangor University easy for them.

The former St Bartholomew's School pupil, who is studying marine biology and zoology at the university,

was presented with a trophy and a high street voucher to mark her nomination, while the students union emphasised the importance of the award by donating a pair of summer ball tickets as an extra prize.

Miss Mangan said: "I loved the experience, it was awesome.

"I like helping other people and when my name was called out I was shocked and stunned.

"I only did what I thought I was supposed to do as a peer guide."

The university's pro vice-chancellor, Professor Colin Baker, said that peer guides were a vital asset to the university and expressed his gratitude for their positive input into the student community at Bangor.

Canopy classroom

INKPEN Primary School is to create a covered classroom by building a wooden canopy.

West Berkshire Council has permitted the Weavers Lane school to install a freestanding canopy outside the building, which will be used by Pre-School and Infant pupils.

3.6.10

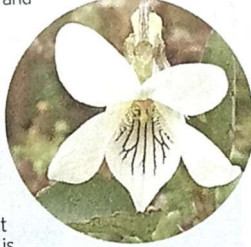
Trust buys heathland to help save plants

Conservationists have bought land to help rare plant species including the pale dog-violet. The Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust has made the purchase to extend heathland in its Inkpen Common Nature Reserve, near Newbury.

Heathland was once a widespread habitat across Berkshire, but much of it has been lost to development and agricultural change.

The pale dog violet, pictured, has tripled in number at Inkpen due to careful management of the site. It is hoped that it will be just one of many species that will benefit from the extension as it becomes incorporated into the rest of the reserve.

The new extension is more than two acres in size and is destined to become heathland through a programme of scrub, bracken and bramble control. An area of rough grassland will also provide grazing for the trust's ponies. Dr Kate Dent, head of conservation and education, said: "The violets on the original part of the reserve have responded brilliantly to heathland management and pony grazing."



DAILY TELEGRAPH.
21.6.10

More heathland for Inkpen nature reserve

BERKSHIRE. Buckinghamshire and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) has purchased an extension to its Inkpen Common Nature Reserve.

The trust has bought more than one hectare of land to the south of Kintbury and east of Inkpen from the Inkpen Poor's Allotment Trust.

BBOWT has owned and managed Inkpen Common since 1991 and the trust's head of conservation and education in Berkshire, Dr Kate Dent, said that the trust was very excited about the opportunity to expand the existing heathland habitat into the new acquisition, including the rare pale dog-violet flower, which has tripled in number on the reserve in recent years.

She said: "I am very grateful to the Inkpen Poor's Allotment Trust as, without their commitment in offering us first refusal when the land came up for sale, we may well have missed out on a fantastic

opportunity to increase the amount of heathland at Inkpen Common.

"The reserve's staff and our group of committed local volunteers are all relishing the prospect of starting work on the extension this autumn."

BBOWT plans to restore most of the new extension to heathland through a programme of scrub, bracken and bramble control, which it said should benefit a range of species, including heather, lousewort and the pale dog-violet.

"The additional rough grassland would be a valuable grazing resource for its ponies.

Dr Dent added: "The violets on the original part of the reserve have responded brilliantly to active heathland management and pony grazing - a success we hope to repeat on the new extension over the coming years."

Summer's mystery artwork draws enthusiasts from across Europe

HUNDREDS of crop circle enthusiasts have been flocking from across Europe to a field near Inkpen to spot this intricate design that has appeared in barley.

Jamie Saddler, whose bungalow backs onto the field near Walbury Hill, near Combe, said: "Hundreds of people turned up on Sunday, on their way to summer

solstice celebrations.

"There were people from Holland, Belgium and France. One group said they found a crystal in the middle of the crop circle and one person, from France, said that the circle gave them healing powers."

Scientific research has shown that, in some formations, the crop has been super-heated causing steam to blow vent holes in the stem nodes and indicating microwave radiation as a possible source.

Theories range from the testing and calibrating of a secret military weapon to more esoteric causes.

Mr Saddler, however, does not think that there is anything supernatural about this circle.

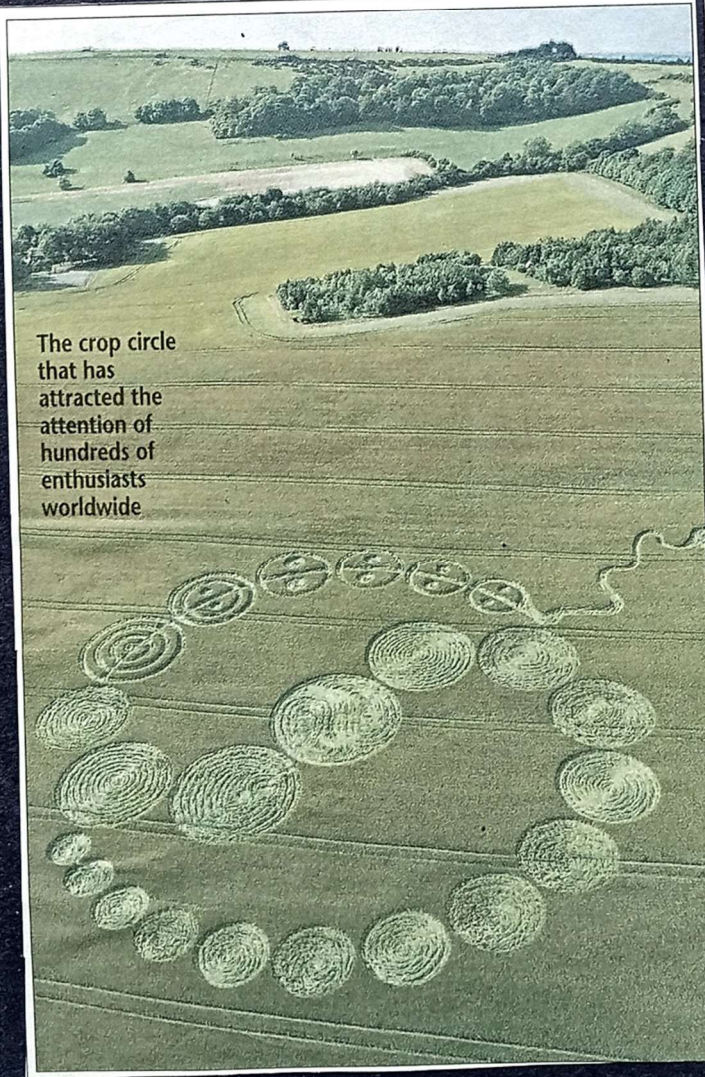
"You can see where someone has put a peg in the middle and walked around with a board," he said.

"It's clever, though, because the design is spot-on."

Crop circle photographer Steve Alexander, who runs a website dedicated to the phenomenon - www.temporarytemples.co.uk - took the above photograph from a helicopter, but those hoping to see the whole design on foot have been largely disappointed.

Newbury resident Alison Mawdesley, who has visited several crop circles, including this one, said that she feels there is something mystical about them.

"It's just like stepping into another world," she added. "Why it is there, is a mystery, but I think it is beautiful."



The crop circle that has attracted the attention of hundreds of enthusiasts worldwide

A.W.N. 24.6.10

Children's adaption has furry tale ending ^{5/3/10}

FORTY children from Inkpen Primary School have been learning about the joys of the riverbank by performing an adaptation of Kenneth Grahame's children's book *The Wind in the Willows*.

The pupils, aged six to 11 years, took on roles from the perennial classic including Ratty, Mole, Badger, Otter, the incorrigible Mr

Toad plus the villainous stoats and weasels. In addition, they made a host of puppets with the help of the school's teaching assistants to add butterflies, dragonflies, birds and fish to the production and create very colourful effects of spring along the famous riverbank and of the river itself.

The end result delighted parents, governors and friends.

The headteacher Gerry Heaton said: "The production was charming and carried off with great aplomb by the youngsters who had worked extremely hard over the preceding half-term to ensure a great success and a treat for parents, younger children, governors and friends and neighbours of the school."

Walk to help children

TWO friends have helped to raise more than £600 for young children in Newbury with a canal walk from Hungerford to Newbury on Saturday.

Cristina Lu and Pavlina Kozolkova, from Inkpen, who work for West Berkshire Give a Child a Chance, will be presenting a cheque to Dingley Family and Play Therapy Group on Monday.

Complaints rise as helicopters descend

VILLAGERS of Inkpen Common and Brightwalton Holt, along with people in Thatcham, have added their voices to complaints by Ashmansworth villagers about low-flying helicopters.

As reported in last week's *Newbury Weekly News*, Ashmansworth villager John Anscob said that his sleep and that of other villagers was regularly being disturbed by the night time Ministry of Defence sorties flying low overhead.

Subsequently, the MoD commandant at Middle Wallop complained that villagers were shining torches at helicopters. A police investigation into this is still ongoing.

This week, John Corne, of Inkpen Common, said that the torches were probably being shone at the MoD helicopters for good reason, as Apache helicopters had also been disturbing the peace in Inkpen.

He said: "If the commandant at Middle Wallop believes people with torches are too close to his aircraft, maybe he needs to consider that his aircraft are too close to people on the ground. I am more than happy to have him sit on my patio and enjoy the sounds of the aircraft hovering



Apache helicopter flying low over Inkpen Common, photographed by local man John Corne. The MoD stressed that although the aircraft was equipped with missile carriers, it was unarmed

directly over my house."

A Thatcham resident, Linda Rolfe, also said recently that she was kept awake for more than an hour by low-flying helicopters.

Tom Weller, of Whitelands Farm, Brightwalton Holt – a former commercial pilot of more than 30 years' experience – said that several years ago his racehorse severed a tendon after charging through a fence, frightened by a low-flying helicopter.

Mr Weller has challenged the MoD stance that shining a flashlight at an aircraft is illegal.

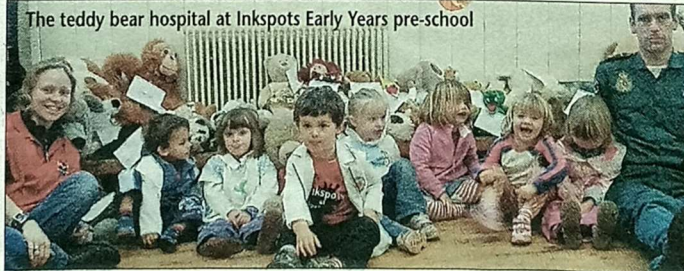
The MoD – which last week pointed out there was a high demand to train helicopter pilots in manoeuvres, owing to operational demand in theatres including Afghanistan – said that its lawyers were currently looking into the matter. It also said that it was reviewing locations for training in the local area.

Inkspots Early Years

THE pre-school at Inkpen Primary School held a teddy bear hospital on Tuesday and raised £50.

All of the children brought along a teddy or favourite stuffed toy which was skillfully bandaged Pudsey-style.

The teddy bear hospital at Inkspots Early Years pre-school



25.11.10

9.12.10

Newbury Weekly News



George and Margaret Taylor

Diamond wedding couple

A COUPLE from Inkpen will today (Thursday) celebrate their diamond wedding.

Eighty-four-year-old George Taylor and his wife, Margaret, aged 82, married 60 years ago. Mr Taylor had returned from serving with the Devonshire Regiment (Airborne) in the Second World War and Mrs Taylor worked at Woolworths.

Mr Taylor bought a plot of land for £50 and in his spare time built their bungalow in Inkpen, where they still live today.

The couple's granddaughter, Melanie Chandler, said: "Over the years since his retirement, my grandad has stepped in as Father Christmas at Notrees Old People's home in Kintbury, kept Inkpen church yard maintained and done weekly doctor's runs for elderly people in Inkpen."

She said of her parents, while wishing them a happy anniversary: "They still banter with each other.

"They are both very extraordinary, lovely people."

27 1.11

Newbury Weekly News



Landlord Bernard Harris, housekeeper Jan Aldridge, bar manager Tomas Stupka, waitress Nadine Casey, head chef Tim Clarke, painter Jeff Keen and landlady Mary Harris at the bar of the newly-refurbished Swan Inn

Ref: 04-3011A

New year, new look, new chef

THE Swan Inn at Inkpen re-opened its doors last Thursday for the first time since Christmas Eve, after refurbishments was carried out.

This was the first major internal redecoration to take place at the Craven Road pub since it was rebuilt about 14 or 15 years ago.

The painter in charge of the project, Jeff Keen, was the son of the pub's landlord in the 1960s.

The current landlord, Bernard Harris, has also welcomed a new and award-winning head chef to

go with the re-vamp.

Tim Clarke, who has won awards at two of his previous restaurants, including fish restaurant of the year at the Passage House, Devon, has just joined the team.

Mr Harris said that he was very pleased to have the new head chef on board and that he was very pleased with the way the pub looked.

He said: "We are looking forward to great things this year."

Illustrious film career began at the Gibbet

24.2.11

JOHN Schlesinger, who went on to become an Oscar-winning director, was to say in later life that it was his silent black-and-white film *Black Legend*, made while he was still at university, that confirmed his passion for making films and which he regarded as his first success

A HORNETS' nest, poisoned ham, chains in a pond – all have featured in legends surrounding Combe Gibbet – and the stark silhouette of the 'hanging tree' on Inkpen Beacon is a familiar sight for those living in the surrounding counties.

It was in the Easter of 1948 that John Schlesinger, whose family lived at the Inkpen house then named Mount Pleasant, took a stroll up to the gibbet with friends down from Oxford and made a decision that was to have a dramatic impact.

Schlesinger and Alan Cooke, who was also to become well-known in the entertainment industry, were trying to think up a film project for that summer. They rejected various legends turning instead to the real case which led to the erection of the gibbet (the first of four) in 1676.

George Broomham and Dorothy Newman, his mistress, convicted at Winchester Assizes of the murder "with a staff" of Broomham's wife and son, were sentenced to be hanged near the site of the crime.

With few details to go on, Schlesinger and Cooke decided to write their own version, based on the Broomham case, using amateur actors and, having managed to "beg, borrow or steal" £200, the project became viable.

Schlesinger found local people enthusiastic and the cast included villagers from the surrounding area, members of the WI drama group, a large group of schoolchildren (which included Robin Tubb, now Hungerford's town crier), and the local thatcher, milkman and schoolteacher, Schlesinger's family plus friends from the OUDS (Oxford University Dramatic Society) including a young Robert Hardy playing the village idiot Mad Thomas, who wore a long blonde wig, no shoes, "was mad and bad, and ran a lot".

The grisly role of hangman was assigned to pig farmer Percy Billington. The late Jean Tubb was given the part of one of three gossips with

Kate Lovelock and Ethel Druce. Her costume included a mobcap which she is recorded as saying, "did nothing to enhance my peculiar style of beauty".

A programme note refers to the patience of the actors who, dressed in XVIIth-century costume were "stamped and shouted at" and compelled to desert their families to spend whole days in windy fields. The pressure was on, for more than 400 separate shots had to be taken in a fortnight and the weather was unkind. At the same time, the harvest had to be brought in and children would cadge lifts on the carts as workers picked up the sheaves.

For ease of filming, a fake gibbet was erected on a brow nearer Inkpen, though many scenes, including the final hanging, were shot on the Beacon itself.

Watching the villagers silhouetted against the sky, trudging up the hill as they followed Roger Schlesinger as Sheriff of Newbury for the execution of the condemned pair on the lonely gibbet still sends a shiver down the spine and underlines the praise Schlesinger was later to receive for his ability to create dramatic effects.

He recalled getting rather too ambitious when it came to shooting the actual hanging.

"I decided to put the camera on a rope and drop it ... giving the impression of plunging to one's doom. What it did was to shake the camera up so seriously that it ruined the motor and shooting was held up!"

As a silent film, *Black Legend* was accompanied by music when first shown, presumably on records, and a commentary by Alan Cooke. The fragile film was shown from time to time, but the original commentary disappeared along with details of the music played. One of only two copies is held by Inkpen's parochial church council on behalf of the village.

In 2000, Robert Hardy was delighted to be asked to record a new commentary based on one put together earlier by Geoff Luton; Gerald Atkinson, part of a small committee working on the film, developed music from various sources. Now, the film has been transposed on to a DVD and Hardy's commentary and the music will be added. I can say that it is an extraordinarily atmospheric film, even bearing in mind the limitations of the time when it was created.

Money made from showing the film has always been given back to the village and this will continue to be so whenever it is shown again, hopefully if his trustees agree, with the addition of an introduction about John Schlesinger.

That summer when film-making came to Inkpen has resulted in a film of which the village is extremely proud. The programme note ends with the words: '*Black Legend* is dedicated to the villages of Inkpen and Combe, and to all those for miles around whose unbounded goodwill was sufficient to bring the story of the gibbet to the screen'.

CAROLINE FRANKLIN



Combe Gibbet Film.
 THE FILM of the story of the last hanging on Combe gibbet, which was in 1676, by the Oxford Film Society, has now been completed as far as the photography is concerned. It will take about three months to edit and cut, and the Society hopes to have it ready for showing in the locality in early January. The Society is arranging a tour of the film in villages around Inkpen, Kintbury and Combe, and if there is any demand for it in Newbury. In answer to the request in these notes, Mr. John Schlesinger assured about 20 people to help in the several scenes, who promised great assistance.

N.W.N. 30/9/48

The atmospheric gibbet at Combe (above) and a contemporary report in the *Newbury Weekly News*



The three gossips from the film *Black Legend* filmed in Inkpen September 1948 – Jean Tubb as Elizabeth Waite, Kate Lovelock and Ethel Druce



24.2.11

Actor Hardy at Watermill screening

JOHN Schlesinger's film *Black Legend* will be shown at The Watermill on Sunday, March 6, (7pm) when Robert Hardy will be in conversation with Jon Snow.

In 1948, as a student at Oxford University, Hardy acted in the short film noir movie directed by fellow student Schlesinger.

The film tells a tale of forbidden love, exposed passion and a multiple murder, inspired by the story behind Combe Gibbet in Inkpen.

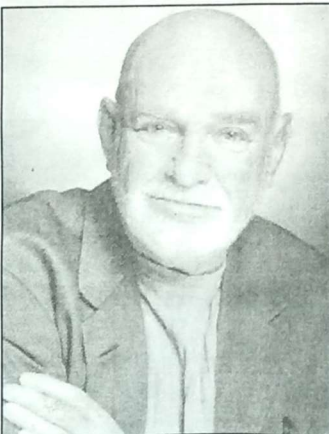
Hardy is one of Britain's leading actors, with a career that has spanned everything from the classics with Laurence Olivier and the Royal Shakespeare Company, to his hugely popular television roles in *The Troubleshooters* and *All Creatures Great and Small*.

More recently he appeared as the Minister for Magic, Cornelius Fudge, in the *Harry Potter* films. He also has the distinction of having played both Churchill and Roosevelt.

This is a rare opportunity to listen to Hardy and see the early work of the Hollywood legend Schlesinger who went on to direct such classic films as *Billy Liar*, *Darling*, *Far From The Madding Crowd*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Sunday Bloody Sunday* and *Marathon Man*.

Jon Snow is an experienced journalist and presenter and currently presents the award-winning, flagship news programme, *Channel 4 News*. Return tickets only (£20 and £17.50).

For more information, telephone the Corn Exchange box office on (01635) 46044.



John Schlesinger



Linda Hunt, happy to reach the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro

Mount Kilimanjaro climb was a tough but rewarding challenge

AN INKPEN recently scaled Africa's highest peak to raise money for charity.

The ladies' captain at Newbury and Crookham Golf Club, Linda Hunt, recently climbed to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro to raise money for Dogs for the Disabled, a Banbury-based charity that creates partnerships between people living with disabilities and specially-trained assistance dogs.

Mrs Hunt, aged 50, said that reaching the summit was a personal challenge for her, but was also the final part of her charity efforts as the ladies' captain this year.

On her return to the UK last week, she said:

"It was extremely difficult and even more challenging than I thought it would be.

"It was very demanding, physically and mentally, and it was such a relief when we got to the top."

Mrs Hunt added that the weather was quite harsh during her climb, which she completed as part of a group of seven people who had never met before.

She added that she was very proud of her achievement in reaching the summit and was pleased that she had raised at least £1,200 for the charity.

3.3.11

10.3.11



Jon Snow and Robert Hardy on The Watermill stage, photographed by Geoff Fletcher

Ref: 10-2811D

An evening of legends

Robert Hardy on fine form at reunion of Schlesinger film actors

A HIGH proportion of the packed audience must surely have been Inkpen residents keen to be present at one of the infrequent showings of John Schlesinger's extraordinarily dramatic film *The Black Legend*, made in the village well before the director's Oscar-winners which were to follow.

Three groups were involved with the film, the Schlesingers, Inkpen and Combe villagers and five friends from Oxford University. This last group included one Robert Hardy who played Mad Tom, the village simpleton, complete with flowing blonde wig. Sixty-three years later the great man had come to The Watermill to be interviewed by Jon Snow, appropriately since the TV presenter owns a cottage in Combe.

The interview was punctuated by gales of laughter, for Hardy describes himself as "an actor when he was born" and 86 years have only honed his talents.

Famous names studded the conversation, from Richard Burton "full of danger to himself", via Olivier to Dame Judy Dench. His reminiscences would make an evening of their own, but he was also there to recall memories of those 15 days in 1948 when what Snow described as "the biggest thing that ever happened in Inkpen and Combe" took place. With him on stage, some 40 years after their last meeting, was Charles Lepper, another Oxford actor, who shared with the audience his diary of

In conversation and film viewing

Robert Hardy and Jon Snow, plus Schlesinger's film *The Black Legend*, at The Watermill, Bagnor, on Sunday, March 6

the filming (A later photocall of *Legend* actors present at The Watermill revealed no fewer than five still standing.)

And finally we saw the subject of those memories, unaltered from the original silent, black and white film except for the addition of Robert Hardy's narration and music chosen by Gerald Atkinson, who, as treasurer of Inkpen PCC, holds one of only two

copies and whose dedication to preserving the film made the evening possible. The impact was dramatic, not only because of the gruesome tale of the first and last hangings on Combe Gibbet, but because of brilliant camera work foretelling the success of the man Snow described as "a bundle of nerves, energy and genius".

Robert Hardy and Jon Snow, combined with this remarkable early example of Schlesinger's genius and a lot of laughter, made this an evening to remember.

CAROLINE FRANKLIN

To read Jon Snow's blog on what he describes as a 'marvellously mad' night at The Watermill, visit <http://blogs.channel4.com/snowblog/madnewbury/14791>



Actors in John Schlesinger's film *Black Legend* reunite on The Watermill stage. Left to right: David Raeburn, the rector of Combe; David Broom, one of the village boys; Charles Lepper, Ezra Daniel, an old rogue, of Inkpen; Christopher Hall, a cyclist with map in the prologue; Robert Hardy, Mad Thomas, the village idiot; and Christopher Finzi, representing his late brother Nigel Finzi who played Robert Broomham, the Thatcher's son

19.5.11

Newbury Weekly News

Inkpen man is exposed as spy for Soviet Union

"Potentially" he was "the most damaging spy in history"

VETERAN espionage writer and journalist Harry Chapman Pincher has revealed details of a spy from Newbury who held such an influential position that he personally delivered decoded German messages to Winston Churchill while working as a Russian agent during the Second World War.

In his book *Treachery*, which has just been released in the UK following its publication in the US two years ago, Chapman Pincher chronicles six decades of espionage against America and Great Britain.

In the 600-page book, Chapman Pincher, aged 97, of Church Street, Kintbury, exposes fresh evidence of treachery, including details of a spy from Newbury called James MacGibbon.

Mr MacGibbon, a well-known figure in London publishing who died in 2000, aged 88, only told his family and a small group of friends that he was a spy for the Russians while working in the War Office.

Mr MacGibbon, who, along with his wife, Jean, was a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain. Because of his fluency in German, he was given a role in British military intelligence when the Second World War broke out in 1939. At the time, he was living in Inkpen, but a year later moved to Stuart Road, Wash Common.

At that time, he was investigated by the Berkshire Police, who posed as removal men to gain access to MacGibbon's home. They advised the UK Security Service MI5 that he should not be given a role in the British Army owing to his communist beliefs but, according to Chapman Pincher, the service ignored this advice.

The author said: "There's an MI5 file on MacGibbon but they did nothing about it. There's some evidence that MacGibbon saw the German codes from Bletchley Park and, on occasion, took the messages and delivered them personally to Churchill in War Office."

"Former GRU [military intelligence directorate of the Russian army] official, Vladimir Lota, who has been allowed to see certain GRU records, said there was a spy known as Milord who knew what Churchill had for breakfast. That spy we now know was MacGibbon."

In 1944, Mr MacGibbon was sent to Washington DC with the rank of major and, according to Chapman Pincher, went on to reveal details of the D-Day landings to the Russians.

"He was potentially the most damaging

Report by James Williams

uniform spy in history," said Chapman Pincher. "The code-breakers won the war. If the Germans had found out we had broken their codes, we could have lost."

"If MacGibbon had been found he would have been court marshalled and Churchill would have insisted on the death penalty."

"If he had been caught in Washington, and America had discovered that we had sent over a Russian spy into their secret establishments, Britain's relationship with America would have been more than strained."

After the war, MacGibbon, who was secretly awarded the Order of Lenin (the highest decoration bestowed by the Soviet Union), set up a publishing firm with Robert Kee, called MacGibbon and Kee.

In 1969, the firm published the memoirs of Kim Philby, the notorious, high-ranking member of British intelligence who, in 1963, was uncovered as one of the Cambridge Spies along with Maclean, Burgess and Blunt.

Chapman Pincher said: "I'm delighted that *Treachery* has now been published in Britain because it's about British traitors, but also it's about the complete incompetence of our security and intelligence."

"We beat the Germans upside-down during the Second World War, but our intelligence record against the Russians was abysmal."

MacGibbon's son, Hamish, aged 74, who lives in London, defended his father's decision to pass information to the Russians.

He said: "Russia was an ally. They were losing thousands of people a day and, at the end of the war, they lost about 25 million people, including civilians. They fought incredibly to save the West. It was completely right to let them in on what we knew."

"Churchill is on record as wanting to pass on this information to the Russians, but the head of M16, Major General Sir Stewart Menzies, dissuaded him."

"I don't think my father would have been shot. I don't think we would want to say we shot someone who provided an ally with vital information. I think he would have probably been dismissed. But it didn't ever get out to the Germans."

Hamish MacGibbon added: "It wasn't so much a shock when my father told me, I suppose there was some possibility, but it never really crossed my mind."



Mary and Bernard Harris of The Swan Inn, Inkpen, receive their award from members of CAMRA Ref: 21-0111A

Ale's well at award-winning village pub

PUBLICANS in Inkpen toasted their success at recently being announced as the Campaign for Real Ale's West Berkshire branch pub of the year.

The 17th-century Swan Inn pub owned by organic beef farmers Mary and Bernard Harris, who have run the pub for 15 years, raised a glass to yet another award for their business.

They have already won many accolades for their organic produce and restaurant, and have been regular entries in CAMRA's

annual *Good Beer Guide* for many years.

Mr Harris said: "We are all delighted. We rely on customers travelling some distance to visit us, so this award is especially welcome."

The chairman of West Berkshire CAMRA branch, Adrian Bean, said: "Our hearty congratulations go to Mary and Bernard and all staff at The Swan Inn."

"They have been great servants to the real ale cause over the years and have been keen

supporters of our local breweries, regularly stocking ales from Butts Brewery, just down the road in Great Shefford.

"For this reason they were also awarded CAMRA's LocAle accreditation, signifying their commitment to locally produced beers."

The pub will now go through to the next round of judging against other Berkshire pubs including the Jack O'Newbury, Binfield, the Nag's Head, Reading, and the White Horse, Hedgerley.



The Rev Julie Ramsbottom earlier this year

Ref: 15-2011A

Vicar prepared for her new challenge

A POPULAR vicar is preparing to give her final service in the district early next month.

The rector of the benefice of West Woodhay with Enborne, Hamstead Marshall, Inkpen and Combe, and priest-in-charge of Kintbury with Avington, the Rev Julie Ramsbottom, will move to Finchampstead later this summer to become the priest-in-charge and rector designate for two parish churches.

Her final service in West Berkshire will be at the Church of St Michael and All Angels in Inkpen on Sunday, July 3, and Mrs Ramsbottom said that she would be sad to say goodbye to her parishioners.

She said: "I adore this place and love the people here, but

the time is right to move on."

Mrs Ramsbottom added that she had thoroughly enjoyed her 14 years in West Berkshire, but said she was looking forward to the new challenge of uniting St Mary and St John's Church, California, and St James' Church, Finchampstead, as one parish.

The appointment was announced earlier this year by the Archdeacon of Berkshire, Norman Russell, who described Mrs Ramsbottom as a much-loved and well respected rector across the communities she serves, adding that she had been "quite exceptional" in her leadership of a raft of small village parishes in West Berkshire.

Mrs Ramsbottom is due to take up her new post at a service of licensing in August.

23.6.11

18.8.11

OLD
MEMORIES
REVIVED



PICTURE FROM
THE PAST

Home from a hockey tour in Jersey, NWN reporter Peter Dallimore pays tribute to the fitness of fellow Old Newburyian Sidney Inns in 1973

"A man who'll soon be thinking about drawing his old age pension played a remarkable five games of hockey in as many days over Easter. Sid Inns took part in the Jersey International Hockey Festival...."

"And at the age of 60 he was still able to show players young enough to be his grandchildren a thing or two."

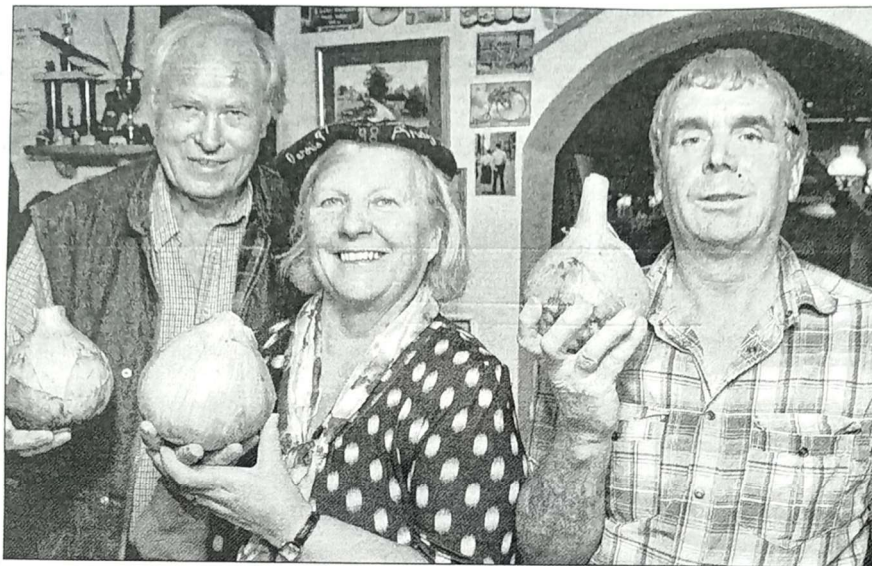
"Sid, master at St Barts Grammar school, has of course had plenty of practice. He has been a sportsman all his life, and now at a time when most men would settle for a quiet game of bowls, he still plays the more energetic sports 52 weeks a year. And as long as the muscles hold out, he says, he'll be playing for many years yet. Sid of Oakdene, Inkpen was one of the men who reformed the Newbury Hockey Club - now Newbury and Thattham- in 1952 - and he has been playing regularly since then. He played

for the first team for many years, and since about 5 yrs ago has run the seconds. During a long career at the Grammar School, Sid has become involved in both Hockey and cricket. On the academic side, he is St Barts senior classics master.

"The trip to Jersey was organised by Basil Burge, who, like Sid, is a founder member of the reformed hockey club and is still playing now at the age of 52. Basil, I who lives in Thattham, came to England from India in 1947. He works at AWRE Aldermaston. Basil played for the firsts from 1952 to last season, and was also the club secretary from its inception until two years ago. Like Sid, Basil also hopes to be playing hockey for some time yet."

□ The NWN is always pleased to receive pictures from the past from readers. Anyone with an image for this section is asked to email editor@newburynews.co.uk attaching a copy of the picture with some information about it. Alternatively call into Newspaper House, in Faraday Road.

22/9/11



Bob May (second), Mary Harris (winner) and Peter Pike (third) display their entries at the Black Beret Onion competition at the Swan Inn Inkpen Ref: 37-49118

Big in the onion business

FOR growers of oversized vegetables, the bar was set pretty high at an onion-growing contest at the Swan Inn, Inkpen, this week. Some cried foul when the pub's landlady Mary Harris took first prize, but there was no denying that her 2lb 11 5/8oz monster was bigger than any other entrant.

In second place was Bob May and Peter Pike came third, both long-term Inkpen villagers. The winner of the under-12s was three-year-old

Madison Greenhorn, who came 10th overall. Landlord Bernhard Harris said: "It has been a difficult growing year - too much rain, not enough sun and heat and a few people including a previous multiple winner have suffered from wilt. (Their onion that is). It was all good fun and Inkpen School have promised to redouble their efforts next year to rise up the table." The final weigh-in for the Black Beret Onion competition was held at the pub last Wednesday.

Thursday, November 17, 2011

HEAT to hold foraging event

29.9.11

HUNGERFORD Environmental Action Team (HEAT) has organised a fun family foraging event.

Local ecologist Meg Chambers and local author and naturalist Peter Marren will lead a foraging walk around Inkpen Common's nature reserve, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Anyone who wants to join should be at the entrance to Inkpen Common Nature Reserve on the corner of Great Common Road and Heads Lane at 10am on Sunday.

Participants will be able to gather hedgerow fruit and nuts but it will not be possible to collect fungi since the area is an SSSI, a protected site for nature conservation.

Those taking part are advised to bring a basket or bag made from paper or cotton, not plastic.

It is envisaged that the walk will finish around mid day or before.

For more information or further directions, contact Meg Chambers on (01488) 683150.

Thanks to Gill

I WAS very excited to see my photograph in the paper last week when I won the The Inkpen Flag Competition, with my school-friends Harry and Dylan joint-second, but you did not mention the lady whose idea it was and who got it made. Please can you put it in the paper? Her name is Gill Hern from The Crown and Garter Pub in Inkpen. She was very kind.

24/11/11
EVIE CHESTER
Inkpen Primary
School, aged seven



Evie Chester with her flag

Evie flies the flag for Inkpen

THE village of Inkpen has its own flag, thanks to the efforts of seven-year-old girl.

Villagers decided they needed a flag to serve as a rallying point in the village, and they launched a competition asking children from Inkpen Primary School to submit their designs.

The winning entry, submitted by Evie Chester, depicts the St George Cross behind an image of Combe Gibbet, a sheep and a red kite.

Evie's mother, *Newbury Weekly*

New's Nature Notes columnist Nicola Chester, said: "Evie can see the Gibbet from her bedroom window, it must have served as inspiration."

As of yet the village does not have a flagpole, but villager Chris Keene said that they were hoping to acquire a mobile one, which can be used at all the village events.

The runners-up in the competition were Harry Hutchins, aged nine, and Dylan Gerhardt, aged six.



The children at Inkspots Early Years nursery, Inkpen, (pictured middle right) showed off their cooking skills and their caring side for Children in Need. They made and sold chocolate crispy cakes at break time to pupils Inkpen Primary School and opened a cuddly animal hospital, spending all day diagnosing and treating ailments, raising £64.94.

8/12/11



The Rev Rachel Lewis

New rector for Walbury Beacon

A NEW rector has been appointed to the Walbury Beacon benefice.

The Rev Rachel Lewis has been appointed as rector of the benefice, which includes the combined parishes of Kintbury, West Woodhay, Enborne, Hamstead Marshall, Inkpen and Combe.

It was previously led by the Rev Julie Ramsbottom, who left her post earlier this year to move to Finchampstead to become the priest-in-charge and rector designate for two parish churches.

The benefice has since been renamed and its new name was chosen by parishioners.

Miss Lewis, who was born into a vicarage family, followed in her father's footsteps and started out as a university chaplain. She was then among the first women priests ordained in the Church of England in 1994. She is currently a vicar in the Vale of Glamorgan.

Speaking of her new appointment, she said: "I am looking forward to an exciting new chapter of ministry with the people in the lovely villages of the Walbury Beacon benefice."

"I have been a team rector in groups of country parishes since 1994 and relish the richness of life in the countryside. Two of my favourite places to think are resting by a farm gate looking out over a view, or by an open fire with a warming drink."

Thursday, December 15, 2011



Kevin Forder with the pig that turned up at his house Ref: 50-3311C

A piggin' surprise

SOME little piggies go to the market, but it seems this little piggy prefers a home.

Kevin and Shelagh Forder were stunned to find the little porker appear at their cottage in Inkpen on Saturday morning, looking forlornly through one of their fences. No one seems to know where the pot-bellied pig has come from, but Mr and Mrs Forder have taken it under their wing and housed it in one of their stables.

Mr Forder said: "I couldn't believe it. My daughter saw it first and did a double take."

Mr Forder believes the jet-black pig may be a cross between a Vietnamese Pot-belly and a Berkshire Black.

He said: "She is really friendly and good-natured and she is in good health."

Mr Forder said that the pig must be between two and three years old and must have been well looked after.

Do you know where the pig has come from? If so, contact reporter Robert Warlow on (01635) 564540 or by email at robert.warlow@newburynews.co.uk

Merry Christmas Everyone

The light fantastic

Ref: 48-2111J

Young volunteer helps mayor at the great Newbury switch-on

Report by James Williams

e-mail: james.williams@newburynews.co.uk

THOUSANDS of people packed into Newbury town centre on Friday night for the official Christmas lights switch-on.

The procession through Northbrook Street to the Market Place, where crowds gathered for the lights to be illuminated was led by stiltwalking Christmas fairies, followed by town crier Brian Sylvester, and Santa's sleigh pulled by Rollie the reindeer, carrying mayor Jeff Beck, accompanied by 10-year-old Denise Harris from West Woodhay, who won a competition to switch on the lights with him.

Before the dignitaries reached the Market Place, the crowds were entertained by singer Kate Izzard and the band South Finesse. Traditional hymns, carols and songs including *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer*, *Jingle Bells* and *The Holly and the Ivy* were performed by Newbury town band Watership Brass and St Nicolas' Church Choir. Visitors also enjoyed petting Santa's other reindeer Mistletoe, Ball-balls, Holly and Rudolph. Mulled wine was on offer and Christmas toys sold from stalls. Volunteers from the *Newbury Weekly News* handed out the Christmas supplement, sweets and toys.

Then the big moment arrived - the switch-on of the lights and the impressive 40ft tree bedecked with fairy lights, which lit up the Market Place.

Competition winner Denise Harris, who was nominated to switch-on the lights for her volunteer work for West Berkshire Mencap by parents Paul and Ellie, said: "I help my mum with the Christmas shoeboxes for Mencap. I donate a lot of my toys. I do it because know it goes to a good cause and it gives a child something to open on Christmas morning."

She also helps adults with learning difficulties and was top fundraiser at school last year in a skipping fundraiser for the British Heart Foundation.

The Inkpen Primary School pupil was delighted to switch on the lights but added that her arm hurt from waving to the crowds from Santa's sleigh.

The mayor, who thanked everyone involved in organising the event, added: "Denise deserves the honour of turning on the Christmas lights. It's great to find a child who helps in the community and it's nice to see that she is supported and encouraged by her family. The town needs more people like Denise."

"It's been an excellent evening of entertainment. It is fantastic to see so many people turn up for the switch-on."

The event, which was marshalled by volunteers from Newbury Rotary Club, Newbury Lions, Newbury Town Council and Newbury Sound, raised more than £100 for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund.



Denise Harris turns on the lights with the mayor of Newbury, Jeff Beck

Ref: 48-2011Q



Children's songs raise £5,000 for charity

HUNDREDS of West Berkshire primary school pupils sang a range of songs to raise money for charity.

Twenty five schools took part in the annual Save the Children concerts at St Nicolas Church in Newbury, which saw about 750 children participate over two nights.

The headteacher of Inkpen Primary School, Gerry Heaton, organised the concerts and he said that they were very successful, raising in excess of £5,000 for Save the Children.

He said: "It was lovely and all the children were brilliant. The children had beaming faces and they really sang with gusto."

Each school performed one song individually, while there were three songs that involved all the schools on each night.

S.112

Villagers dismayed over council's silos decision

Residents say that they face a summer of noise pollution hell

INKPEN residents say that they are set to face another summer of "hell" after a farmer was permitted to carry on using two noisy grain silos that run 24-hours-a-day, seven days a week.

Last Wednesday fed-up residents appealed to councillors on West Berkshire Council's western area planning committee to refuse retrospective planning permission to allow the silos to run.

However the council said that farmer Paul Clarke would be allowed to use them again this summer, within limited hours.

The two grain silos were installed last year at Lower Spray Farm, in Ham Spray. The farm is isolated farm, but those living many miles away have complained that they were unable to sleep because of the noise.

Inkpen villager Steven Oliver spoke at the meeting on behalf of several of those affected, many of whom were in attendance.

"You can't open your window, it's impossible to sleep. Gardens have become no-go zones. We've had unbearable sleepless nights," he said, adding that the silos run 24-hours a day and were "extremely intrusive".

Report by Mark Taylor
email: mark.taylor@newburynews.co.uk

Another villager, Judith Stock, said that the noise started last July. At first they thought it was caused by helicopters and tried to ignore it, but it continued for at least four more months.

According to parish council document, more than 12 per cent of the population of Inkpen objected to the silos, and Mr Oliver read extracts from several of the 27 letters of complaint, including one letter from Richard Weeks, who lives in Puddlewharf Weavers Lane, which said: "Although it is about a mile away it sounds like a combine harvester in the next field, or a low-flying helicopter a bit further away.

"We have those, but combines run close by for a few days at most and the helicopters come and go. This machine has caused a great nuisance during the summer and autumn of last year, when it was running day and night for many weeks."

Inkpen parish council chairman David Thomas, said: "The applicant does not mean to cause harm, but that is exactly

what this is doing. There is likely to be a human rights infringement and Inkpen Parish Council is vehemently opposed to it. It's totally unacceptable, and is affecting business in the area."

The application for retrospective planning permission was granted, however, with the stipulation that the machines were operated between the hours of 7am and 11pm on weekdays, and between 8.30am and 11pm on weekends, which angered some of those in the public gallery.

West Berkshire Council's Environmental Health department, which had been consulted throughout the application process, said that it was satisfied that there would be no noise pollution or harm to residents if the machines were operated within the time limits.

Mr Paul Clarke apologised profusely for the disruption and said that he had been badly advised. He said that he would pay £25,000 to soundproof the silos and a sum towards painting the gas canisters that were also part of the application.

"I am also sorry that it was put up without planning permission, that was wrong and I apologise for that. I can live within the operating times," he said.

Corn Exchange accident – driver named

THE MOTORIST who died after crashing into Hungerford town hall has been officially named.

She was 89-year-old Rosemary Gray from Inkpen. Police have renewed an appeal for witnesses to the incident, which happened around 2.50pm on Tuesday, March 6.

Anyone who saw the incident or has any helpful information should contact PC Simon White via the 24-hour Police Enquiry Centre on 101.

Alternatively the Crimestoppers charity can be contacted anonymously on 0800 555 111.

22.3.12

Return of the 10k Gibbet Challenge

22/3/12

THE GIBBET Challenge run has been resurrected for the Queen's jubilee year.

The event is being held in association with the Inkpen Fete during the diamond jubilee celebrations weekend.

The Gibbet Challenge is a scenic, 10k race in the beautiful countryside around Inkpen, and organiser Simon Hanna said that he hoped that up to 200 people would take part.

Mr Hanna, aged 40, a Microsoft employee who lives in Inkpen, added: "I think the last time the event was staged was in 2008 and we decided to do it again as part of the village's jubilee celebrations, with the ethos of having a bit of fun combined with a bit of a challenge."

The run takes place from 11am on Saturday, June 2 – the day before the village fete – and starts and ends at Inkpen Memorial Playing Fields with a multi-terrain route which includes a climb up to Combe Gibbet to enjoy the spectacular views.

Any proceeds from the event will go to the Inkpen Sports Clubs Association with the aim of encouraging sporting activities within the village.

The race is licensed with the Association of Running Clubs.

Trophies will be awarded for the first three male and female finishers and fastest male and female veterans aged over 40. All finishers will receive a commemorative medal. For more information or to register, visit www.gibbetchallenge.net

Policeman and community stalwart among those honoured by the Queen

A NUMBER of the district's professionals and volunteers have been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Clerk of Kintbury Parish Council for 33 years, **Chris Trigwell**, was awarded the BEM for services to the community in Kintbury.

The 67-year-old, who lives in the village with his wife Rosemary, has also volunteered for the Bruce Trust for 19 years, directed and performed in a number of amateur plays with the Kintbury Players, and is former chairman of the parent-teacher association at St Mary's School, Kintbury.

The father-of-four, who has eight grandchildren, said that he could not wait to celebrate with his family.

He said: "It was a surprise, then shock, but it's had time to sink in now.

"I'm very pleased to receive the award," he added.

Mr Trigwell has also been invited to the Queen's garden party at Buckingham Palace next year.

The chief executive of Sovereign Housing Association, **Ann Santry** was thrilled to have been appointed a CBE.

"Whilst it is a tremendous honour to receive this award, it is really recognition of the hard work, determination and effort displayed by everyone at Sovereign," she said. "We have a great bunch of talented people who are dedicated to providing housing solutions; this is as much their award as it is mine."

Also on the honours list is **Professor Peter Roberts**, lately the head of plasma physics at AWE Aldermaston, who has been appointed an OBE for his services to the defence industry.

Mr Roberts said: "This is a great honour, and I'm also really pleased that our contribution at AWE is recognised and appreciated in this way.

"I'm also grateful to those who nominated me and those who supported it through the approvals process in MOD and the government."

Retired Detective Chief Superintendent of Thames Valley Police **Andrew Taylor** has been awarded The Queen's Police Medal for his 30 years of dedicated public service.

In 2008, Det Chief Supt Taylor was in the spotlight locally when he voiced his agreement with the findings of a long-awaited Domestic Homicide Review, which criticised the standards of basic policing, record keeping and follow-up in the case of local businessman Alan Pemberton, who killed his estranged wife Julia and son Will at the family home in Slanting Hill, Hermitage. He subsequently highlighted the improvements made within the force since.

He said: "I am thrilled with the award of the QPM it means a great deal to me. It really is an honour given to one which owes much to the work and dedication of others.

"So many people work tirelessly to keep the Thames Valley a safe place to live and work, and often much of that work goes unnoticed. I am therefore very proud to have been selected to accept the award on behalf of all of the dedicated, hardworking and often unsung members of Thames Valley Police."

Gloria Keene has been appointed an MBE for her



Det Chief Andy Supt Taylor

services to the community in Inkpen.

Mrs Keene has been clerk to Inkpen Parish Council for ten years and is also chairwoman of the Inkpen Rights of Way Committee, and secretary of the Campaign to Protect Rural England in Newbury and Hungerford.

She said: "I am absolutely delighted to have been awarded the MBE for a community role that I have enjoyed being part of. I feel very honoured and humble to be listed amongst those receiving the award."

Also on the honours list is consultant ophthalmic surgeon at the Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust, Reading, **Brenda Billington**, for services to ophthalmology.

Bradfield farmer **John Dexter Bishop** was appointed an MBE for services to agriculture and to the community in Berkshire, and Elisabeth Perry was similarly recognised for her work with the Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel Trust and the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths.

Actress and novelist **Jean Marsh**, from Boxford, was appointed an OBE.

The *Upstairs Downstairs* creator, aged 77, was given the honour for services to drama.

Miss Marsh, whose novels included *Iris*, and *The House of Elliot*, co-created *Upstairs Downstairs* with her friend Dame Eileen Atkins as well as starring in it.



Gloria Keene

Law change may allow Inkpen plan

New policy framework means stable bid could be passed

CONTROVERSIAL changes to Government planning laws may allow an unpopular application in Inkpen to be passed, despite being previously refused by Whitehall and West Berkshire Council.

Applicant Stuart Canning wants to change a plot in Weavers Lane from agricultural to equestrian, in order to construct a stables, barn and tack room, but faces a fight from angry residents and the local parish council who are again attempting to stave it off.

Last year, an appeal was dismissed by the Department of the Secretary of State for Local Government, Eric Pickles, who backed West Berkshire Council's refusal on grounds that it contravened planning laws and would harm the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

However this time the application, scrutinised under the revised National Planning Policy Framework, has been given the all clear for approval by council officers.

It was due to go in front of the council's western area planning committee last night

Report by Mark Taylor
email mark.taylor@newburynews.co.uk

(Wednesday), having been called in owing to the number of objections from local people.

The applicant has moved the barn to another end of the field, in response to previous complaints of the overbearing nature of the development, which has satisfied West Berkshire Council.

Government inspector Peter Bird pointed to drainage and traffic conditions along Weavers Lane as further reasons for the appeal's dismissal, but under the new NPPF laws, the applicant can supply details of drainage methods to avoid outright refusal.

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has again opposed the decision on grounds that it would have the same harmful visual effect and a negative impact on the landscape and character of the area.

Inkpen Parish Council lodged strong objections, including no mention of overhead electric cabling or buried cables, envi-

ronmental pollution, serious traffic concerns, and the impact on the residential tourist trade centring around nearby pub, The Swan, the owner of which has also objected.

It said the proposed development would be in direct line with the bedrooms and the garden of the pub where residents eat food and drink, and that vermin attracted to the stables would be in direct view.

In a letter to West Berkshire Council, the parish council said that of primary concern was the abnormal bulk and height of the proposed large barn on previously undeveloped open countryside.

In recommending approval, the senior planning officer at West Berkshire Council, Jake Brown, said that the proposed scheme complied with NPPF rules on sustainability.

"The proposal is not considered to have an adverse affect on the character and appearance of the AONB, the amenities of neighbours or on highway safety," the planning report stated.

See NewburyToday.co.uk or next week's *Newbury Weekly News* for the decision.

People power wins the day at Inkpen

INKPEN residents have overturned local and national Government policy and successfully fought off plans to build a barn and stables in a field in the village.

The contentious plan to put the equestrian menage in the plot at Weavers Lane has gone back and forth between council planners, the Government and the applicant several times in recent years.

Newly scrutinised under of the Government's controversial National Planning Policy Framework guide - a document which critics argue puts greenfield land at the mercy of developers, council officers recommended approval of the plans and the notice resulted in outcry from the village.

Residents packed into the West Berkshire Council chambers on Wednesday to witness the members of the Western Area Planning Committee decide the fate of the re-jigged plans.

Objectors lined up to denounce the unpopular application which attracted many letters of objection.

Speaking on behalf of the parish, village councillor Vanessa Tomlinson said the plans would "blemish protected countryside and cause unnecessary development in an already overdeveloped area".

Of primary concern, and singled out in the rejected appeal by a Government inspector last year, was the visual impact of the proposed plans.

The dimensions of the stables complied with the minimum recommendations set by the British Horse Society, however the applicant, Stuart Canning, said the barn would also house farm equipment and would be almost six metres high.

This was unacceptable to the inspector last year and despite pleas to ignore the appeal and focus on the new plans where the barn had been moved to

another location in the field near hedgerow, it was again used as a reason for objection by those speaking against.

The agent speaking on behalf of the applicant argued that hay would only be transported to the field twice a year and would not cause any traffic issues, that light pollution would be irrelevant given the barn would be sunk and away from view.

West Berkshire Council planning officer Derek Carnegie said the application was finely balanced but said officers had to come down on the side of approval given it was no longer deemed harmful to the character of the area under new planning laws.

Despite this councillors voted to refuse the application, to the visible delight of those present, and now Mr Canning must decide whether to again appeal to the Government.

Happy birthday Peggy



The chairman of the *Newbury Weekly News*, Jeremy Willis, presenting a digital reproduction of the newspaper, dated September 22, 1922, the week that Peggy Cruse was born

Ref: 39-0212A

PEGGY Cruse made an expedition this week to visit her old work place – the *Newbury Weekly News*.

Peggy Cruse, well known as the first lady reporter of '*The Newbury*', was employed by the then editor Hugh Turner and regularly cycled to report on parish meetings and local weddings and to write the first columns in the newspaper on fashion.

She also featured in the well-known documentary film *Pig and Paper Day* that used early black-and-white film, made in 1952 by the Crown Commission.

She retired in 1971, having been a reporter on the paper for almost 25 years, including the time spent as the Inkpen correspondent, but later worked in the *NWN* library and continued to contribute.

Mrs Cruse celebrates her 90th birthday today (Thursday) and all those at '*The Newbury*' would like to wish her a happy birthday.

The surprise visit to the *NWN* was organised by her friend Jill Wilson.



Eleanor with novelist Matt Whyman

HERE'S budding author Eleanor White receiving a prize from best selling novelist Matt Whyman.

At the tender age of eight, Inkpen Primary School pupil Eleanor is already a published poet.

A prolific writer, she has had one of her poems selected by children's book company, The Red House, for publication in its 2012 Young Writers Year Book.

This was a national competition open to children of all ages throughout the country.

As part of her prize, Eleanor was invited to a young writers' work shop with one of the competition judges, best selling author and columnist Mr Whyman.

Mr Whyman is the creator of the Carnegie-nominated mystery writer, Lazlo Strangolov.

The work shop took place at Catteshall Manor in Surrey.

Eleanor's mother, Jane White, said: "Eleanor enjoyed a truly inspiring day with Matt and 12 other children

from all around the country whose work was also accepted for publication.

Following a walk through the manor grounds, where the children's imagination was stimulated by Matt and an actress playing a distressed woman who had lost her sister, the children enjoyed a work shop which culminated in their writing their own stories which they then read to Matt and the rest of the group.

At the end of the workshop Matt presented the children with a copy of his Lazlo Strangolov book *Feather and Bone*, which he signed for them.

She added: "Eleanor was on a real high afterwards - she found it so inspiring. She has been buzzing with excitement and new ideas for stories ever since."

"She has loved writing since an early age and the teachers at her school have always encouraged and nurtured her creative writing skills."

11.10.12

Medal awarded for service to the Kintbury community



Christopher Trigwell receiving his British Empire Medal from the Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, the Hon Mary Bayliss

KINTBURY Parish Council clerk Christopher Trigwell has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM).

He was presented with the medal on behalf of the Queen by the Lord Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire, the Hon Mary Bayliss, at a special awards ceremony held at the Royal Berkshire Conference Centre in Reading.

For the first time since 1993 some 293 people from across the UK have received the British Empire Medal in the 2012 Queen's Diamond Jubilee Birthday Honours.

This honour has been reintroduced this year to recognise and reward the

dedication and hard work that many people provide to their communities.

The honour recognizes achievements or contributions of a very 'hands-on' service to a local community in a local geographical area.

Mr Trigwell has been awarded the British Empire Medal for his services to the community of Kintbury.

He has been involved in many community projects in the village since he moved to there 38 years ago. He has been clerk to the Parish Council for the past 33 years - a post he holds to this day - during which time he has ensured that Kintbury has a strong voice in West Berkshire

affairs.

His work has been wide ranging and he has been much involved in many other aspects of community life including both of the Village's amateur dramatic groups and as a volunteer with the Bruce Trust.

He has helped to establish many longstanding Kintbury traditions.

In presenting the medal, the Lord Lieutenant congratulated Mr Trigwell for his dedicated work on behalf of others.

He said afterwards: "I'm very honoured to receive the BEM and to have been involved in the life of Kintbury which means so much to me and my family."

Family celebration follows investiture

GLORIA Keene, who was appointed an MBE in June, travelled with her family to Windsor Castle for the investiture by the Princess Royal last Thursday.

Mrs Keene was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) in the Birthday 2012 Honours List for her work with CPRE (Campaign to Protect Rural England) and as the clerk to the parish council in Inkpen.

During the ceremony, Princess Anne asked about her work with CPRE, the problems of rural transport and the introduction of Superfast Broadband for rural areas.

Mrs Keene's guests at the Investiture included her husband, Chris Keene, her son Nigel, and her daughter Debra Neale, both of whom live close by in North Hampshire.

After the Investiture the extended family gathered at Coworth Park, Ascot, for a glass of champagne and a family celebration lunch.

Mrs Keene said: "The day was very special. A magical day. The sun was shining and Princess Anne was absolutely charming."

Mrs Keene's outfit for the investiture was supplied by The Clothes Shop, Enborne Road, Newbury, and dress designed and made by Tina Taylor.



Gloria Keene pictured at Windsor Castle with her award



Black Beret winner John Hull knows his onions Ref: 40-3412D

Farmer John's onions makes the competition weep

THE region's biggest, most bulbous onions came under scrutiny at Inkpen's Black Beret Competition.

The annual event run by licensees Bernard and Mary Harris at The Swan, Craven Road, can be fiercely competitive.

The most recent controversy in the competition's 15-year history was in 2008.

Farmer John Hull's organically-grown vegetable pipped its nearest rival by more than an ounce. But rivals muttered darkly that its two-headed bulb should have been disqualified.

In the end 'Farmer John' prevailed, and to prove it was no fluke, he donned the winner's black beret again this year as his winning entry tipped the scales at 2lb 10 and 1/8 oz. It is the third time that he has won the competition.

'Good' report for village school

Inspectors praise behaviour of pupils as being 'excellent'

INKPEN Primary School has reason to celebrate this week after receiving a largely glowing report from Ofsted.

The watchdog rated the school as 'good' overall - with pupils' safety and behaviour of pupils rated 'excellent'.

The inspection was carried out under the new, tougher guidelines which came into effect from September and which make it more difficult for schools to achieve good or outstanding grades.

The previous inspection in September 2009 graded the school as 'satisfactory' with 'a good capacity for sustained improvement'.

The report also stated: "The headteacher and governing body provide very effective leadership."

The inspector particularly praised the good

start children make in the foundation stage and the progress children make across the school, reaching high standards by the time they leave in Year 6.

The report commented that "teaching is good because small-group teaching is matched well to the needs of each child."

The inspector also remarked that teachers plan interesting lessons with music and drama being particular strengths.

Praising the excellent behaviour of the pupils and their good attendance, the report continues: "This is because pupils feel safe, valued and thoroughly enjoy their learning."

This view is also reinforced by parents who hold the school in high regard and feel that their children are getting the

best possible start to their education as well as being well prepared for secondary school.

Headteacher Gerry Heaton said: "I'm very excited by our positive result and immensely proud that all of the hard work by staff and pupils has paid off. Inkpen is a wonderful school which is a joy to lead."

Chairman of the governors, Phil Day, said: "We were especially pleased that all of the teaching observed was judged to be good or outstanding and that the children's behaviour was recognised as being exemplary, as we believe this reflects the core ethos of our school."

"The governors thank all of the staff for their hard work in continually focussing on school improvement and the children and parents for their pride in the school and high levels of support."

Indicating the way forward for the school, the report noted:

- * sometimes the teachers in Key Stage 1 give the brighter pupils work which is too easy
- * standards of handwriting are not high enough

- * goals within school improvement plans are not clear enough

- * the way in which leaders check on the quality of teaching is not systematic enough

Mr Heaton said such feedback was welcome to help the school move to 'outstanding' in future.

The school is currently providing appointments for parents and pupils who are looking for Reception Class places for September 2013.

If you would like an appointment, telephone the school office on (01488) 668219.

Party on ice

In 1963 the Goodharts hold a barbecue on the lake at Inkpen's New Mill

OLD MEMORIES REVIVED

Extracts taken from past columns of the *Newbury Weekly News*

Fifty years ago.
31 January 1963

Barbecue on ice

MR and Mrs Gavin Goodhart of New

Mill, Inkpen, held a barbecue party on ice for their grandchildren Andrew and Juliet, and a party of over thirty friends on their frozen lake on Saturday.

There has been skating on the lake since Boxing Day, and by Saturday the ice was a foot deep. A huge log fire burned merrily on the lake for three hours and only penetrated an inch-and-a-half into the ice.

Mrs Goodhart provided a meal of sausages, cooked on a tripod over the lake bonfire, bread and cheese, apple turnovers, and a warming drink followed by hot coffee. Music was relayed from a radio in the house to a loudspeaker on the lake and with the skating and tobogganing in brilliant sunshine the scene might well have been at some Alpine winter sports resort. The highlight came when a garden tractor pulled a crocodile of skaters and a toboggan round and round the lake.

Mr Goodhart has lived at New Mill for 58 years and never before have they had a fire on the lake, although there was skating for six weeks in 1947. Andrew and Juliet are the children of Mr and Mrs Goodhart's eldest son, Commander AJG (Tony) Goodhart, who works for NATO in Paris.



28/3/13

Award nomination for The Great Gift Company

THE Great Gift Company, a local company based in Inkpen which specialises in unusual gifts for men and boys, has reached the finals of The Greats Gift Retailer Awards 2013.

Now in its 11th year, The Greats Retail Awards celebrate excellence within gift retailing. The Great Gift Company are finalists in the Best Online Retailer and Mail Order Gift Retailer category.

Mette Downer (pictured), who started the company only two years ago is delighted.

"It is really wonderful for us to have our hard work acknowledged. The online gift market is full of excellent retailers and many people thought it was very risky to be starting up in such a competitive market in the depth of a recession. Just being a finalist is very rewarding and whether we win or not, it will definitely encourage us onwards and upwards".

The winners of The Greats Retail Awards will be announced at a glamorous awards ceremony at The Savoy in London in May.

Read all about it – pupils take first steps on to professional stage



Deputy stage manager Eloise Short, assistant stage manager Amy Wildgoose and director Heidi Bird

A HUNDRED of the district's primary pupils took to the stage at the Watermill, Bagnor, ~~Yesterday~~ (Wednesday) for their first performance of *Rubies and Rock Pools*, written specifically for them.

Children in Years 5 and 6 from schools in Enborne, Chaddleworth, St Andrews and Shefford, Inkpen, Shaw-cum-Donnington, Stockeross and Welford and Wickham are involved in the performance, written by West Berkshire-based playwright Laura Ellen Major, which runs until Saturday.

It tells the tale of children sent to live at Camp Revamp, a fictional initiative launched by the government, seemingly to teach the importance of being eco-friendly but in fact brainwashing them to dig deep into their pockets and buy consumer goods.

The *Newbury Weekly News* was glad to help out with the eco-friendly production, donating 150 newspapers to be used as props.

The marketing director at the Watermill, Jan Ferrar, said: "[The newspapers] were a great

help. They have been really useful as we needed a massive amount."

The performance was organised as part of the Schools Federation Project, which aims to get more children involved in theatre and improve children's self-confidence before moving up to secondary school.

"It's always fun," added Ms Ferrar. "We apply the same standards to these shows as we do with our professional shows, so it's good experience for them."

The headteacher of Inkpen Primary School, Gerry Heaton, added: "The children gain so much from this collaboration through working with professional writers, directors, designers, stage managers and with each other [It] gives them an unparalleled opportunity to perform on the world-renowned Watermill stage as well as to get to know other friendly faces amongst their peers, some of whom they will recognise and gravitate towards in their first few weeks in secondary school."

6.6.13

Ref: 22-2213A

1/8/13

Pedal power to Paris

Pictured are Team Inkpen with air ambulance crew members



A BAND of cyclists from Inkpen will embark on a four day, 320-mile ride to Paris.

Team Inkpen - Karl Prismall, Cary Fielder, Henry Morris, Ed Hing, Martin Cuss, Richard Franics, Tony Ross, Lawrence Martin, Phil White and Jill Cuss - was formed in September last year to raise money for the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust.

Mr Prismall said: "We wanted one main fundraising event for 2013. We are all aware there are so many worthy causes, so as a group we had a meeting to decide a main beneficiary for this event. The Air Ambulance was suggested, as it's a vital service, which anyone could need."

The team, which will set off from Inkpen on Wednesday, has so far raised half of the £5,000 target.

You can make a donation via www.justgiving.com/teams/teaminkpen

Author donates books for hospital

A BERKSHIRE author who avoided contracting cancer after two cysts were removed is donating copies of her first book to raise money for the ward that treated her.

Katy Buckland, aged 34, of Inkpen, became a patient at the Great Western Hospital, Swindon, four years ago when she was diagnosed with pre-cancer of the cervix.

However, 18 months after undergoing treatment she was rushed into hospital with severe abdominal pains and had emergency surgery to remove two cysts on her ovaries.

Tests later showed that the cysts were borderline cancerous and that another cyst had already begun to grow. The treatment that followed three months later meant she was unable to have any more children. Mrs Buckland has one daughter, Kaye, aged seven.

During her stints in hospital, Mrs Buckland began writing to relax, and she has since completed her first novel *Finding Hope - Berkshire, England*, which tells the tale of an ancient creature who is reincarnated as a human being with magical powers.

In order to raise funds for the women's health unit at the hospital, Mrs Buckland has opened a JustGiving page, and anyone who donates will be entered into a prize draw to win one of 10 signed copies of her book.

Mrs Buckland said that during her time at the hospital that she had read hundreds of



Katy Buckland - "I would like to give back to Great Western Hospital"

books, but now, in addition to her "obsessive" distraction, [she] found a new love: writing. Now, with the second book being edited, I would like to give back to Great Western Hospital, especially to the women's health unit, as a thank you."

Her second book, *Finding Hope - London, England*, is due to be published in

January. She intends to write 10 books in the *Finding Hope* series.

To make a donation, visit www.justgiving.com/Finding-Hope

Mrs Buckland will be signing copies of her first book at the Hungerford Bookshop on Saturday, October 26, from 10.30am till 11.30am.



Camra members pictured with local landlords and breweries launching the 2014 edition of the *Good Beer Guide* Ref 39-4513A

A toast to all 11 *Good Beer Guide* entries

ELEVEN pubs and a club in West Berkshire feature in the 2014 edition of the Campaign for Real Ale's independent *Good Beer Guide*.

The Rowbarge at Woolhampton and The Five Bells, Wickham are new entries for this year. The other local entries are The Bell, Aldworth; Rising Sun, Stockcross; Lord Lyon, Stockcross; The Castle, Cold Ash; Six Bells, Beenham; The Pot Kiln, Frilsham; Lock Stock and Barrel, Newbury; The Crown and Garter, Ink pen; and The Hungerford Club, Hungerford.

The chairman of the West Berkshire branch of Camra, Richard Scullion, said: "The *Good Beer Guide*, is exactly that - if someone visits a pub listed in the guide then they are visiting somewhere that not only has demonstrated ongoing consistency in the provision of quality real ale in convivial surroundings, but has also been voted one of the top pubs in the area."

"In West Berkshire we encourage all beer drinkers to report on the quality of the beer they

drink on an on-going basis through our beer survey web pages. That data is a key part of the selection process open to all Camra members."

Stephen Butt, of The Rowbarge, said: "We always serve at least six real ales, a mixture of local and national brews. Quality is crucial to me, and it's nice to see people drop in just to see what we have available in a particular week."

"To achieve recognition in the guide within two years of my start here is fantastic and it's also a career first."

Mark Genders, of the Lord Lyon and Five Bells, said: "It's marvellous to gain a listing in the guide just 18 months after taking over and transforming the run down, neglected Five Bells. We are now able to support nine or more real ales, one or two of which will be exclusively from the on-site brewery commencing production by November."

The Rowbarge last appeared in the Guide in 1994, and Five Bells in 1982, both under different ownerships.

Home-grown victory

IT'S enough to make you weep. Defying cries of "fix," licensee Bernard Harris has finally won Kintbury's annual Black Beret onion competition with a monster tipping the scales at more than 4lb.

A jubilant Mr Harris said after his historic victory at The Swan Inn in Craven Road: "It's the heaviest in the competition's history. The record was previously held by my wife Mary in 1999 with an onion of 3lb 7oz."

The winner of the annual contest gets to don the coveted black beret, the loser gets a packet of cheese and onion crisps.

The winner of the Under 12s receives a children's book.

The contest is fiercely fought and secret formulas, sometimes involving seaweed and other exotic substances, are deployed.

Mr Harris - who declined to reveal his own secret - said: "People are a bit tight-lipped about their techniques. There are various theories banded about - direct sun, indirect sun, tender loving care. Some warm the soil



during the winter before planting the onion seeds and people use various magic liquids run off from organic muck heaps."

There was controversy in 2008 when a double-headed mutant onion was declared a valid entry.

Farmer John Hull's organically grown root vegetable went on to win, beating its nearest rival by more than an ounce, but critics claimed its two-headed bulb should have been disqualified.

In keeping with tradition, a victorious Mr Harris had to eat

some of his own champion onion to prove it was genuine and that no

chemical skulduggery had been used to artificially boost its size.

Thursday, September 26, 2013



Left and above, the onion contest produces a whopping winner, and the coveted black beret for victorious licensee Bernard Harris

Fun and games as Sharky comes home

Children's party pals roadtest book at Hungerford Literary Festival

CHARLIE 'Sharky' Astor, aged 30, is co-chief of Sharky & George, the legendary children's events company which he runs with school and university pal George Whitefield, and which savvy parents around the country have on speed dial.

Inkpen-born Sharky, named on account of a fin-like hair style he used to sport, fell into entertaining children while at school. As a punishment for a prank played on their housemaster, Charlie and George were 'forced' to entertain his daughter and guests at her sixth birthday party.

They played the games they loved as children, and behaved more like older cousins than grown-ups - no silly voices or talking down - and needless to say, were an instant hit.

They took this winning formula to Bristol University, entertaining children in the south-west while studying. On moving to London, they continued to organise parties in their spare time but juggling this with busy day jobs became exhausting and so it was that he and George chose to devote their talents to professional larking about.

Sharky & George now throw around 60 parties a week and employ seven full-time and 80 part-time staff. In addition to the parties, they also run The Exploration Society, a schools initiative that provides outdoor education to children of all ages and backgrounds. They have a clothing line too, and have been approached by several TV production companies since the publication of their first 'literary masterpiece' - *Don't You Dare* (Egmont, £12.99).

The book came out this summer and is what brings Charlie and George to Hungerford Literary Festival. At the festival they will road test some of the classic Sharky & George pranks, activities, games from the book, which repeat client Jools Oliver calls a "must have Bible for parents with children who think outside the box". She also said: "This book has



Sharky Astor, left, and George Whitefield



made our long car journeys, dreary wet weekends and quiet afternoons at home a delight!"

For Charlie, who spent his youth cycling up and tobogganing down local hills, taking part in the festival is a good excuse to come back home.

Sharky & George will be at Hungerford Literary Festival (October 17 to 21) on Sunday, October 20 (11am) at John O'Gaunt Community Centre to roadtest the games in their book, *Don't You Dare*. Tickets are available from Hungerford Bookshop, telephone (01488) 683480.

21.11.13



Ref: 47-1113D

Spot-tastic day for Pudsey

District throws itself heart-and-soul into fundraising for BBC Children in Need

SUPERHEROES, sportsmen and pyjama-clad children were in abundance across West Berkshire last week as businesses and organisations did their bit for fundraising for BBC Children in Need.

Hundreds of children and adults ditched their uniforms for a donation to the charity, among them the Rockinghorse Nursery, Newbury, and Playmates Pre-school, Thatcham, where the day was spent dressed as superheroes, raising £250 and £42 respectively.

Teddy Bears pre-school, Boxford, and Little Sunflowers Nursery, Hamstead Marshall, also baked Pudsey-themed treats, raising £47 and £45 through selling their sweet treats to parents and family.

Sport was the theme at The



It was a stonking day. People seemed a lot more generous than normal

Castle School, Shaw, where pupils dressed as their favourite sports personalities and spent the day participating in different sports.

Castle School teacher Lisa Boorman said: "It has been brilliant, all the kids have really got into it."

Spots and stripes were worn by all at Victoria Park Nursery, Newbury, where children brought in their teddies, made Pudsey eye patches and took part in a range of Pudsey activities. Parents, carers and staff also made cakes to sell on a stall in the park and in total the nursery raised £141.

Children at Jubilee Day Nursery, Padworth, were also seeing spots - they were wearing polka dots for the day while baking biscuits and making Pudsey Bear masks. The nursery also ran a used toy sale and in total raised £155.

Pyjamas and a cake sale saw Brightwalton Primary School raise £188 for Children in Need and a further £70 for the Philippines appeal.

Also sporting their favourite

pyjamas were the group at Busy Bees Nursery, Newbury, who raised a further £70.

Pudsey Bear himself was out on Northbrook Street with members of the Newbury Round Table, who together collected £2,726, £400 of which was donated by Robert Sandilands Primary School through their own fundraising efforts.

Round Table president Garry Poulson said: "It was a stonking day. People seemed a lot more generous than normal. I think because of the situation in the Philippines there was a greater sensitivity to it."

Chairman Phil Gray added: "Thanks to everybody in Newbury for their generosity."

A further £210 was raised by pupils at Theale Green School, who participated in a number of Pudsey-themed games, including pin the blindfold on Pudsey Bear, as well as hosting a cake sale and mini beauty treatments such as nail painting.

Inkpen Village Hall once again hosted the annual village Pudsey-

themed beetle drive, drawing in £380.

Christine Titford was crowned winner on the night and was presented with the Pudsey prize by event host Nigel Pateman.

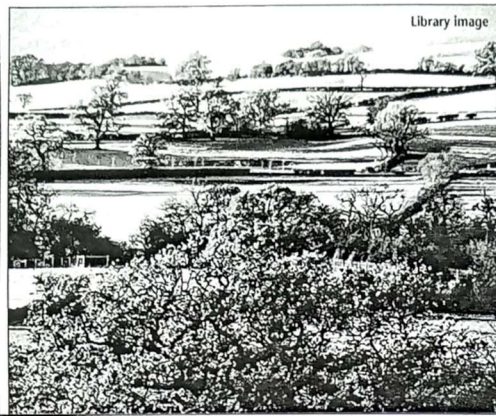
Fourteen employees and members at Nuffield Health, Newbury, raised more than £520 by rowing a combined distance of 120km on static rowing machines at the gym.

The team, some of which donned bumblebee and Where's Wally outfits, hit their target of rowing the distance of the English Channel in just under three hours, and the group carried on rowing as more members pledged their money.

Non-uniform days at both St Bartholomew's School, Newbury, and Trinity School, Thatcham, also raised £300 and £703.

Fundraising events continued across the weekend, and at 1pm a group of adult tap dancers at Ashford Hill - the Mad Tappers - joined thousands of others up and down the country in an attempt to break the world record for the number of people doing the same dance to the same music at the same time. The group raised £200 for BBC Children in Need.





Estates recognised for improving habitats

Awards presented for conservation work on land and in the rivers

TWO local shooting estates have received national recognition in the prestigious 2013 Purdey Awards for Game and Conservation.

Adrian Scrope, of the Chilton Estate near Hungerford, was presented with the Certificate of Merit at the annual ceremony held in Purdey's historic Long Room in London's Mayfair, for his work improving habitats and biodiversity over the 2,050-acre estate.

Mr Scrope was honoured by judges for what is "not just a shooting project, but a farming, conservation and

shooting project". They acknowledged that, alongside his farm manager, Mr Scrope has tried to improve the quality of the land, introducing an annual rotation of wheat and fallow and going to great lengths to nurture wildlife on the stretch of the River Kennet which makes up part of the estate.

Following extensive work with Natural England and the Environment Agency, wild trout numbers have increased substantially, and so have otters.

In addition, noted the judges, Mr Scrope has established good relationships

with the public, offering farm walks and welcoming students.

Richard Purdey, who has organised the awards since 1999 said: "Judges were impressed by Mr and Mrs Scrope's extensive work in nurturing both the wildlife and the landscape at their Chilton Estate, and the big improvements to its biodiversity."

Meanwhile, the head keeper of the Kirby Estate Shoot in Inkpen, James Sadler, had his skills in game management and conservation recognised by the judges. He was presented

with a Highly Commended Certificate.

Although the Kirby Shoot, owned since the 1960s by Richard and Katherine Astor, is run as a commercial enterprise, James Sadler and his assistant Nicola Chester have successfully developed innovative keeping methods to reduce stress and disease among Kirby's game birds and, through well thought-out conservation work, have improved habitats to keep them as wild as possible.

The judges noted they have also, with the full support of owners Lord and

Lady Astor, gone out of their way to communicate how shooting and conservation benefits many other species of animal, bird and plant life, taking regular Walks on the Wild Side parties for local charities, as well as arranging estate visits for local organisations and schools.

Richard Purdey said: "James Sadler impressed the judges by his passionate

commitment to the Kirby Estate Shoot, by using its steep downland topography to maximum advantage, and by his efforts to promote a wider understanding of how shooting and conservation work together to improve biodiversity."

The awards were presented by the executive chairman of the Countryside Alliance, Sir Barney White-Spunner

DAILY TELEGRAPH
14.12.13

NATURE NOTES



Plants blossoming in Edinburgh

Nature springs to life in the warm winter air

A "SNOWDROP" Christmas could be on its way as the recent mild weather has caused butterflies to emerge and plants to blossom several months early.

Every few years, depending on the movement of the jet stream, the country has a warm winter that causes snowdrops to bloom at Christmas and daffodils to flower by the new year.

Yesterday, bird watchers visiting lakes in Thatcham, Berks, reported seeing butterflies, which could signal the milder season following two bitter winters in a row.

Nigel Cleere wrote on the Berkshire Birds website that he had seen a small tortoiseshell butterfly and a yellow brimstone at the Lower Way lakes in Thatcham. The two native species of butterfly normally emerge from their winter hibernation on the first warm days of spring in March.

Wood pigeons were also spotted mating at Marlborough, Wilts, which means that they could be making nests and laying eggs before the new year.

At Inkpen, Berks, people saw clumps of spring daisies and white dead nettles in full bloom as well as grass growing lushly in the absence of ice, frost, snow and freezing temperatures.

The Met Office said the temperature in many parts of the country yesterday should exceed 50F (10C).

Some experts have predicted "storms from hell" sweeping in from the Atlantic soon.

They said that temperatures will fall sharply in January, with Arctic gales and blizzards lasting until the spring.

So far there has been no sign of any imminent wintry weather.

The mild weather suggests that household gas, electricity and oil bills will be lower than the previous two winters.

A lack of ice on the roads also means that gritting teams have not had to work overtime to maintain the safety of the highways, as up to 20 million people prepare to drive to visit friends and family over the Christmas holidays.

OLD MEMORIES REVIVED

Extracts taken from past columns of the *Newbury Weekly News*

75 years ago
22 December 1938

Blizzard halts mail van

SHOPPING in Newbury yesterday was brought almost to a standstill by a heavy snow storm, which started in the night and continued with few breaks throughout the day.

Tradesmen kept open all day in anticipation of busy Christmas shopping, but they might as well have been closed for their usual half-day. The streets were practically deserted. Treacherous roads made driving a nightmare. Mr Frank Parker of 2 Branksome Cottages, the Folly, Newbury, had the most exciting adventure of any. He left Newbury driving a Post Office mail van at 1.45 yesterday afternoon, bound for Enborne, Hamstead Marshall, Kintbury, Inkpen and Combe. He made several deliveries on the way out, and found the roads pretty bad in places. The van skidded quite a few times.

Going up the crossroads near the Gibbet from Kirby house, he had two bad skids. This steep ascent would have been even more difficult had not the roadman been waiting with gravel to help the van get a grip. The blizzard seemed worse on top of the hills. Mr Parker told a *Newbury Weekly News* reporter "It was like a deluge of fine flour, and I could scarcely see anything."

Starting to run down the hill for Combe village, he immediately found himself in a six foot drift. The snow completely covered the bonnet and windscreen, and although he tried the full power of the engine, the van would not move. So Mr Parker and the roadman set to at digging the van out.

Then he proceeded at a snail's pace with the roadman in front, but the snow whirled about to such an extent that he could not keep the roadman in view. At times he had to speed up the engine to force the snow out of the way.

When the car was running downhill it skidded violently, the door flew open and caught on the side of a tree. Mr Parker jumped out and found he was lucky. The van had been saved from a drop of 200 feet. Slowly and warily he made his way to Mr Richards' farm, where he put the van into a barn, took out the bag of mails remaining and locked and left the vehicle there.

It had taken him forty minutes to go a quarter of a mile. With the bag over his shoulder, he trudged through the deep snow, completed his delivery and arrived at Combe Post Office about a quarter to six, two hours later than usual. He sank into a chair, thoroughly exhausted.

Mr Parker is a big man weighing over 17 stone, and undoubtedly his build carried him through. "I am just about done," he told the *NWN* reporter as he rested at Combe awaiting a rescue party. "In places the snow was up to my chest as I walked along carrying the mail".

A relief van was sent out from Newbury to make the collection at Inkpen, Kintbury and the letterboxes en route which Mr Parker would have undertaken on his homeward journey, while two mechanics, Mr D Robinson and Mr R Weston, with an engineer's van went out by way of Three Legged Cross on the Andover Road, Hurstbourne and Netheton Bottom to Combe to fetch Mr Parker in. They got to Combe at 8.30pm and the stranded van was brought back. All three of the men had to dig a track for 500 yards to get it out. They eventually reached Newbury after 11pm.

19.12.13

Car fire in Inkpen

FIREFIGHTERS were called to tackle a car fire in Inkpen on Monday afternoon. One engine from Hungerford attended the scene in Trapps Hill.

A spokeswoman for the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Ellie Gray, said that the car was empty at the time and no one was injured.

16/1/14

NATURE NOTES

Rats infest homes as countryside floods

Rats are infesting homes to escape the flooding in the countryside.

Faced with being drowned in their burrows, millions are searching for a safer place to shelter.

Many are climbing drainpipes, squeezing through cracks in masonry or crawling through holes in roof eaves to set up nests above ceilings and under floorboards, where they can breed. They nibble at roof linings and try to eat electrical cables, putting houses at risk of fire. Rats are also capable of spreading up to 35 diseases.

Pest control firms are reporting a surge in calls. Sue Hardy, a resident of Inkpen, Berkshire, told how the roof of her cottage was infested. She said: "It's really scary and goodness knows what mess and damage they are causing."

Campaigners have been demanding that the laws are relaxed so stronger poisons can be used to wipe out "super rats", which have become resistant to standard poisons, but wildlife experts fear that these could harm predators that feed on rats, such as barn owls and red kites.

It was estimated three years ago that there were more than 50 million rats in England, matching the human population.

DAILY TELEGRAPH 3/1/14

Inkpen bakery and coffee shop plan

PLANS to renovate an Inkpen pub and convert the adjoining barn into a bakery and coffee shop have been submitted to West Berkshire Council.

If approved, the pub will have a new kitchen installed and windows and outside paving replaced.

The Gibbet Barn, currently a residential dwelling and place of historical interest, would sell breads and pastries to the general public during normal shop opening times and supply produce in the pub restaurant.

To make the bakery a more viable proposition, they also plan to use the premises as a coffee shop and the alterations made to the barn will enable them to install a disabled toilet for customers.

It will trade as 'Honesty at the Crown and Garter'.

Honesty is a trading arm that the owner, Romilla Arber, has set up to carry out consultancy work in school kitchens,

to help them to improve the quality of the food they offer to their pupils.

She also owns the Honesty Cookery School where, alongside other tutors, she educates customers about all aspects of food and drink.

In the application she said that the changes were vital for the pub to be a focus of the community and prevent the loss of a "village facility and centre of employment".

She added: "I want the quality of food being offered to improve and to rely much more on local, seasonal, primary produce."

"I also intend that the pub will, once more, become a focus for the community."

"We will continue to sell locally produced beers and ales and encourage the local people to congregate in the pub."

The accommodation, which is described as an integral part of the business, would also be updated and refurbished.

3.4.14

15.5.14

Newbury Weekly News



Rotary Club of Newbury's annual charity walk which started at Inkpen Village Hall

Ref: 20-1314A

These boots were made for walking

MORE than 60 people put on their hiking boots to raise funds for several local charities as they took part in the Rotary Club of Newbury's annual charity walk on Sunday.

This year's walk offered a choice of either five or eight miles, starting from Inkpen Village Hall and taking in Coombe village and Buttermere on the long walk or Coombe Gibbet by the short route.

The event has become a significant part of the club's ongoing community programme, supporting many local charities,

and this year's event was no different - with some walkers turning out to raise money for their own charity, club or project.

Some of the local charities and community groups benefiting from this year's walk included local churches, Cubs, the Red Cross, schools and a gym.

The highest expected income was from a group of 10 walkers who were anticipating £650 for John O'Gaunt School. The Red Cross walkers expected to raise £400, St Mary's Church at Shaw £520, Greenham Cubs £400 and Newbury and Thatcham Green

Gym £150.

Living Stones Appeal, represented by four families and walking for the benefit of Woolton Hill Church Hall and St Thomas' Church, had the biggest walking group of 16.

By holding this event each year as part of its Service above Self focus, Newbury Rotary Club has given an opportunity to more than 1,300 walkers to generate some £60,000 in recent years.

For details of future events, including Boules in the Square in the Market Place on June 29, visit www.newburyrotary.org

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26.6.14

Daughter throws Rock Off Cancer concert in tribute to parents

THE death of both parents within two months of each other has prompted Inkpen resident Sarah Harry to organise a fundraising concert in their memory.

Jan and Mike Harry died in July and September respectively, both just months after being diagnosed with cancer.

Miss Harry, aged 25, has organised a night to celebrate their lives at the Blue Ball pub, Kintbury on Saturday, July 5,

with support from her brother Gavin Harry, aged 29.

Called Rock Off Cancer, the event in aid of Cancer Research UK will run from 2pm to 10pm, with West Berkshire's own group The Mini Band included in the entertainment line-up.

An auction - including beauty vouchers, a family photo shoot and paintballing sessions - will also be held on the day. A number of items are also up for grabs via email bids ahead of the event.

Miss Harry said: "Both of my parents died very quickly. Rather than let this break me, I decided to give back and try to make my horrific year somewhat positive."

Adult tickets cost £10 in advance or £12.50 on the door, and are available from the Blue Ball pub. A donation is requested for entry for those aged under 16.

For more information or to leave an auction bid visit www.rockoffcancer.com



Pictured right, Jan and Mike Harry

26.6.14



The team in action

Endurance challenge for Inkpen cycling team

TEAM Inkpen, the endurance cycling team, has a new project - pedalling 400km from Inkpen to Blackpool in just 24 hours.

The 'InkPool 400' event will raise money for the Community First Responders for Inkpen, Coombe, Ham, Kintbury and Hungerford.

Community First Responders are dispatched whenever an emergency 999 call is made and often arrive while an ambulance is still en route.

These vital few minutes save lives, often making the difference between life and death

and the service is wholly funded by donations.

The money raised by Team Inkpen will buy much needed kit bags which include a defibrillator and airwave radio.

InkPool 400 will leave from Inkpen at 3am on Friday, June 27.

Team Inkpen has a fine record in fund raising from endurance cycling - their last sponsored ride to Paris made nearly £7,000 for the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust.

If you would like to support them in this epic cycle ride visit: www.virginmoneygiving.com/teaminkpen

Meanwhile more

details about Team Inkpen plus updates are available on their website at www.teaminkpen.co.uk



Garden furniture stolen from garden in Bell Lane

THIEVES stole a large garden table, six chairs and an umbrella from the rear garden of a property in Bell Lane near Upper Green, Inkpen.

The incident happened around 11pm overnight on Wednesday, July 9.

Anyone with information should contact the 24-hour non-emergency Police Enquiry Centre on 101.

Alternatively the independent Crimestoppers charity can be contacted anonymously on 0800 555 111.

24.7.14

NWN columnist enthralled capacity crowd

BRINGING otters back from the brink of extinction was the topic in sharp focus at Newbury library last Thursday evening.

A capacity audience gathered at the wharf-based library on a sultry summer evening, keen to hear a talk, *In the Wake of Otters*, hosted by *Newbury Weekly News* correspondent, Nicola Chester, who also writes articles for the RSPB.

Library systems administrator, Andrea Ferguson, said the author read snippets from her new book, *RSPB spotlight Otters*, while revealing her personal quest to find and observe otters in their natural habitat.

She said, "Nicola talked about other authors who have written books on otters and how the perception of otters has changed over the years, including how the hunting of otters was made illegal in 1978. She also read snippets from other books including *Ring of Bright Water* and *Tarka the Otter*."

"A very interesting informative talk which was enjoyed by all."

Photographs of otters in the wild accompanied the talk, followed by questions.

Newbury Weekly News correspondent, Nicola Chester, pictured at home with her book, which maps the welcome return of otters to every English county



Ref: 31-0214B

OLD MEMORIES REVIVED

14.8.14 Extracts taken from past columns of the *Newbury Weekly News*

125 years ago
15 August 1889

All's well that ends well

LAST week a female resident of Inkpen was greatly alarmed when drawing water from her well, in discovering therein the body of a live creature.

She sent for the local police officer. With all the activity imaginable he set to work to recover what turned out to be a pig, and strange to say, his own animal. The worthy P.C. was only too glad to recover his missing animal, which fortunately proved not much the worse for its immersion.

50 years ago
17 September 1964

Inkpen's industrial heritage

MR REUBEN Annetts of Gallants View, Inkpen, was 89 last week and enjoyed seeing a number of old friends who called to wish him many happy returns.

Mr Annetts was a village blacksmith for many years after being apprenticed to Mr C Palmer at the forge in Pottery Road.

He left school at the age of eleven and his first job was minding sheep on Kirby Hill for a shilling a week. Other jobs he has tackled have included rod stripping for the basket maker Mr Henry Rolfe and he's killed hundreds of pigs.

"There aren't many of the old houses but where I've killed a pig in Inkpen, Kintbury, Woodhay Inglewood, Combe and Ham," he recalled, although Mr Annetts thinks they can't make bacon today like the old cottagers did.

Mr Annetts remembers the time when Inkpen was quite a thriving industrial village with a variety of craftsmen.

"There were three blacksmith's shops, one in the Lower Green employing three or four carpenters and they had their own blacksmith's shop.

"Then there were four shoemakers; a pond maker, who used to make dewponds, and a well digger called Richard Preston. Arthur Faulkner was a rope spinner and there was a weaver at Weaver's Cottage.

"There were two basket makers - William and Henry Rolfe - and of course Oswald Rolfe was at it later. Oliver Green used to make hoops to go round barrels," he remembered.

Mr Annetts also saw service in the First World War when he was a corporal in the Royal Engineers and was badly injured in an accident when a sledgehammer severed an artery.

40 Thursday, September 18, 2014

PICTURE FROM THE PAST



MR Reuben Annetts celebrated his 89th birthday in September 1964 with a look back at Inkpen's industrial past. Mr Annetts, a former sheep minder, rod-stripper, pig slaughterer and blacksmith, recalled the times when the village was virtually self-sufficient - and the traditional crafts were still very

much a part of everyday life.

25.9.14

Rave draws 800 to beauty spot

THE Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner has defended the police's handling of a rave on his doorstep which saw 800 revellers descend on Combe for 18 hours at the weekend.

The peaceful corner of West Berkshire was shattered when ravers started arriving at Combe Gibbet late on Saturday night. Thames Valley Police, who were alerted by alarmed residents at 12.30am issued a section 63 order stating that all participants must leave the site by 10am on Sunday. But the last of the party-goers did not leave until 6.45pm on Sunday - more than 18 hours after the rave began.

The aftermath of the event, which saw the number of ravers swell to 800 at 3am and music continue to blare until 10am despite the police presence, left the well-known West Berkshire landmark scattered with litter; broken glass and drugs paraphernalia.

The partygoers, who arrived in an estimated

Renowned landmark focus for illegal event

150 vehicles which were then left abandoned on village lanes, also rolled a Land Rover, belonging to Kirby Estate's head game keeper, used to block an entrance to the estate.

But Police and Crime Commissioner Anthony Stansfeld, who is also the district council ward member for Combe, defended the police's handling on the night.

"If we go in mob-handed with people we will probably make the problem worse. It's about doing it carefully and gradually and getting it to disperse rather than rushing in with squads."

Owner of Combe Manor, David Russell, said residents as far away as Inkpen and Buttermere were kept awake by noise.

"It was very obvious and not very pleasant," he said. "A lot of people heard it because it was quite a quiet night. They weren't a very nice lot from all accounts."

Mr Russell added: "We are going to do everything that we can to stop

it from happening again."

The aftermath could still be felt in the days that followed, with Hungerford taxi driver Mark Townsend stating it had impacted upon his business as well as damaging the beauty of the area.

"On Monday there was a mountain of rubbish to be cleared, empty beer cans, broken beer bottles and cardboard boxes," he said. "The verges were damaged with cars park-

ing on them and when you think how beautiful the area is, and how many walkers come to the area it's a real shame."

Mr Stansfeld continued: "These things are always alarming when they happen. It's difficult when you have very large numbers of people which this rave did."

"A lot of these young people who go to these occasions claim to be concerned about the environ-

ment and then they go and trash the area, leaving litter and drug paraphernalia around.

"I think on the whole we cope with raves pretty well and we do our best to ensure that land owners and the public are not inconvenienced, but very often we're not aware and it's up to the public to inform us so we can do something about it."

Four men were arrested on suspicion of failure to leave the site and three of them for possession of drugs.

25.9.14

ROYAL COUNTY OF BERKSHIRE SHOW

Newbury Weekly News



Left, screen printers, Emily Parker, aged 22, and Chessie Rosier, 26, of Squeegee and Ink, Hambridge Road, were at their first Newbury Show, and, right, Caroline Dyke, a former Inkpen and Kintbury villager, with some of her award-winning glass jewellery.



Crafter's touch of glass

A FORMER Kintbury woman was among award-winners in this year's craft marquee.

Caroline Dyke, aged 46, of Blissmore Designs, won The Rowbury Cup for best product for her designs, including glass jewellery and wrought-iron clocks, bowls, key rings and lampshades.

Originally from Inkpen before moving to Kintbury, Mrs Dyke, a former John O'Gaunt School pupil, now lives in Andover.

She also worked for Vodafone in Newbury for 14 years as an operations manager.

"I started making jewellery about 12 years ago and turned it into a business about four years ago," said Mrs Dyke.

She added that a 'few people at Vodafone' were wearing her jewellery, which had sold world-wide, including in New Zealand. The jewellery ranges in price from £15 to £35

for a silver-plated glass necklace.

Her inspiration for the necklaces had been an Inkpen bonfire.

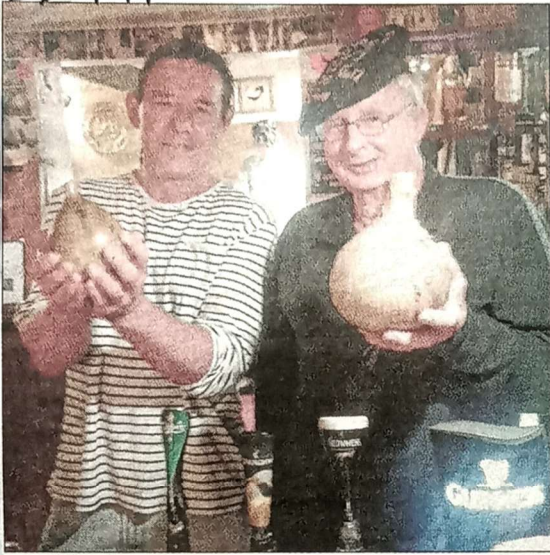
In January, she will start work on a commission for a glass water feature for a Hampton Court garden.

Emily Parker, aged 22, and Chessie Rosier, aged 26, of Squeegee and Ink screen printers, who host weekly workshops at their Hambridge Road premises in Newbury were at their first Newbury show.

Stonemason Joss Nankoo, of Stone Art Memorials, Thatcham, was among regulars who returned to the craft tent this year.

The other three award winners were: Judith Swannell, of Essex - Penningtons Salver, best first-time exhibitor; Hannah Dowding, of Kent - Petit-Mills Salver best exhibitor; and Legends Rocking Horses of Loudwater - Michael J Bissell Award of Excellence, best display and demonstration.

25.9.14



Whopping onion is a real winner

Giant weighed in at 3lbs 14ozs

WHAT a whopper! Kintbury farmer John Hull proudly sports the winner's traditional black beret at Inkpen's 18th annual onion growing contest.

The fiercely fought competition is held each year in the Swan Inn and the winner has

Kevin Jordan holding his father's carved wooden onion with competition winner John Hull
(Submitted picture)

their name embroidered on the beret.

This year's triumph was the fourth win for Mr Hull in the competition's history.

His giant onion tipped the scales at an eye watering 3lbs 14ozs.

Licensee Bernard Harris said: "For the first time ever we received an onion that was perfect in shape and colour weighing in at 1lb 12ozs. However, it was disqualified as it had been carved from English oak by Brian Jordan.

"There were originally 40 entrants back in April but the weather and local disasters meant that some were lost.

"Seventeen competitors presented on the night and two phoned in their weights.

"A good time was had by all with bread, cheese and the winning onion providing the refreshments."

The winner traditionally has to eat a portion of the winning onion to prove no exotic chemicals were used to boost growth.

Mr Jordan's wooden onion which will be kept in the pub for posterity.

Champion cyclists turn in peak performances

2.10.14

National title holder is crowned king of the hill in gruelling event

CHAMPION cyclists flocked to Berkshire's highest point as part of a hill climb on Sunday.

The event saw nearly 70 riders head to Walbury Hill, near Inkpen, for Newbury Road Club's first open hill climb event.

The hill is the highest in the traditional county of Berkshire at 974ft above sea level and is also the highest natural point in the south east of England.

Local and national riders set off at 10am, but they had no time to take in the picturesque views of the surrounding countryside as they tackled the gruelling 1.2-mile course.

Newbury rider James Wilson returned to defend his course record of four minutes and 18 seconds, but he was knocked into second as national hill climb champion, Tejvan Pettinger, completed the course in 3mins 55secs, collecting the first prize of £100 donated by the *Newbury Weekly News* in the process.

Report by JOHN HERRING
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Current women's national hill climb champion, Maryka Sennema, clocked the fastest time in the women's event - 4mins 56secs.

Claire Kitching, and Polly Perkins, who are both Newbury Road Club members, finished second and third.

The local successes continued as Mark Shepherd of Banjo Cycles, a sponsor of the event, finished second in the veterans' race.

The race also attracted many junior and juvenile riders, with the youngest aged just 12.

Newbury Road club member Adam Teece clinched the junior title, while Jacob Kilby from Reading's Palmer Park Velo was fastest in the juvenile event.

The event also incorporated Newbury Road Club's annual Hill Climb Championship for club mem-



National hill climb champion Tejvan Pettinger crests the hardest part of the course, urged on by fellow competitors and the crowd

bers only

Ladies winner Claire Kitching won in time of 5mins 40secs, with Tim Cartwright taking the men's event in 4mins 52secs.

Organiser Chris Boulton said "The event was an amazing success with great summer-like weather and some excellent times, especially by some Newbury riders."

9.10.14
Carpenter reaches final and says, 'I've only just begun'



Chris Ridler is one of five traders to make it to the regional finals

A WEST BERKSHIRE carpenter has made it to the finals of a national competition to find Britain's Top Trader.

Forty-three-year old Chris Ridler, from Inkpen, beat competition from all over London and the South East region to become one of only five to make it to the regional finals.

The national award led by Screwfix and now in its fifth year recognises the best tradesmen and women from across the country, and the competition culminates in a final to be held at a ceremony at Wembley stadium on October 21.

Mr Ridler, who trades as Universal Renovations and Carpentry Ltd based in Inkpen, said: "I feel privileged to be named as a regional finalist in Britain's Top Tradesmen as I know there were a lot of entries to this year's competition. I absolutely love my

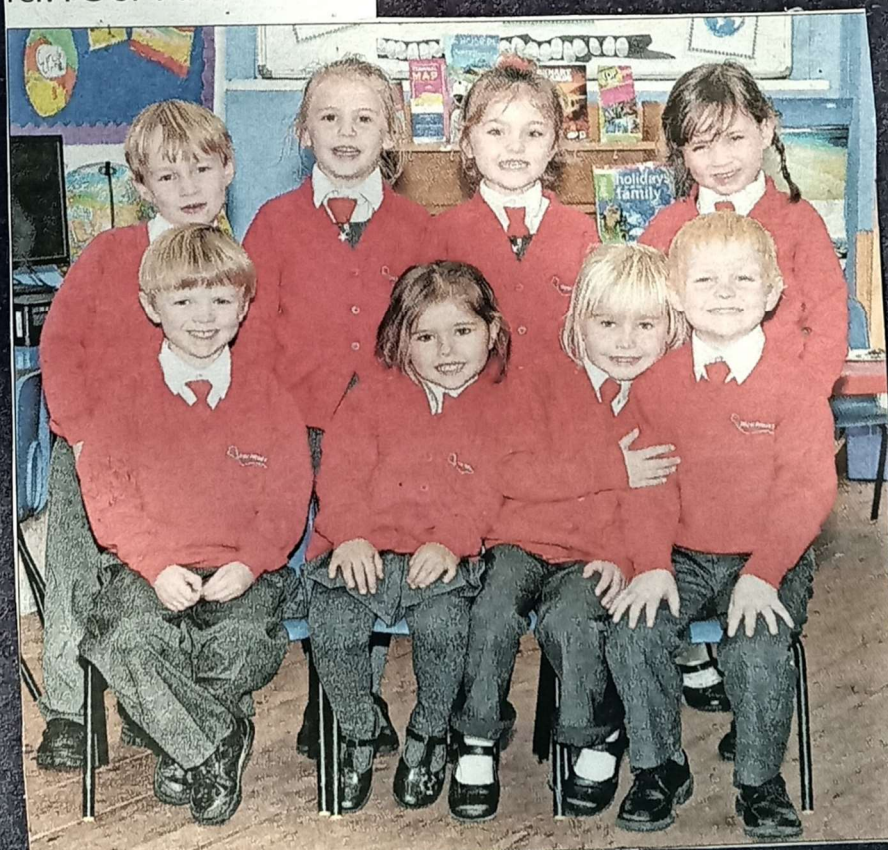
job and everything that goes with it, so to be considered for this award is a real honour."

Screwfix marketing director John Mewett said: "Chris has a loyal customer base and has really broadened his horizons moving from carpentry into renovations and the acclaim he has received for his work speaks for itself.

"This year's grand final will be held at Wembley Stadium and, with only one person from each regional heat able to secure a place, it is bound to be an exciting and close competition. I would like to wish Chris the best of luck in this heat."

The regional finalist will be announced on October 9 at the Epsom Screwfix store in Surrey, with the ultimate prize a brand new Toyota truck to the value of £28,000 to be awarded at the national final later this month.

16.10.14
Inkpen Primary School
ref: FC 6714A



Family grateful for quick response from fire crews

16.10.14

Fire and rescue personnel salvaged belongings when thatched cottage caught alight

A FAMILY whose Inkpen home was severely damaged by fire last week has praised the quick action and support of the firefighters for saving their home.

A total of eight crews attended the blaze on Thursday night, which was thought to have started soon after 9pm in the chimney breast in the cottage, in Trapps Hill, before spreading to its thatched roof.

Teresa Cordery, who lives at the cottage with her husband, Steve, told the *Newbury Weekly News* this week: "They were absolutely brilliant. I have lost absolutely nothing except from a carpet that has been down a long time.

Report by ELLIS BARKER
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"They were a good lot of men and women. They saved my house. I can't thank them enough.

"There was no panic, nothing. They were absolutely brilliant. Thank God we have got such a brilliant service."

Mrs Cordery added that they had not lost their electricity or hot water supply in the blaze, but had lost their heating and - more importantly in the eyes of their nine-year-old granddaughter Eva - their television aerial.

"I had to run out and buy an indoor one," said Mrs Cordery.

Thankfully, Eva who regularly visits her grandparents, was not in the house at the time of the fire.

The building suffered 10 per cent damage in the fire, which was tackled by crews from Newbury, Hungerford, Reading and those from across the border in Wiltshire, while around 20 per cent of the thatched roof had to be removed.

Working in teams, the crews minimised the damage to the property. Some tackled the blaze itself while others worked to remove the thatch and others rescued items from inside the building to prevent them being damaged by water or smoke and from catching fire.

Thames Valley Police also attended to direct traffic due to the large number of fire pumps and vehicles at the scene.

Crews began leaving the scene at 11.30pm, and the final pump left at 00.46am.

A crew from Newbury fire station returned at 7.30am on Friday morning to ensure the area was safe.

No-one was hurt in the incident. The incident has prompted a reminder from the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) for home owners to get their chimneys swept, particularly at this time of year as the cooler autumn days and chilly nights set in.

Redevelopment gets go-ahead in Inkpen

27.11.14

A CONTROVERSIAL redevelopment has been given the go-ahead, despite fears it would spoil the rural character of Inkpen.

The application was for demolition of an existing bungalow and erection of a replacement, four-bedroom house with detached garage, parking, and turning at Three Ways in Folly Road.

Inkpen Parish Council objected on the grounds the application was "disproportionate" and would "destroy the characteristic landscape in the village."

Parish council chairman Dr David Thomas told a meeting of West Berkshire Council's area planning committee: "As you are aware, Inkpen is one of the most dispersed areas in England.

The character of the village is one of trees and natural, country lanes. This

character still remains... just.

"The proposed development portrays urbanisation by replacing a small bungalow with a prominent four-bed house and will give an immediate expression of entering a built-up area and it will damage the feeling of remoteness and tranquillity."

He concluded: "This is an unsympathetic development that harms the character of the village. All of the neighbours would much prefer that the property remains a bungalow."

The application was called in to the committee by Andrew Rowles (Con, Kintbury): "I called this in at the request of the parish. We feel the development is not sympathetic to the area. The parish council are not in favour."

Agent for the applicants, Mark Pettitt, said "The proposed dwelling will raise the standards of architecture

in the area. There are no technical reasons why this should be refused."

Virginia von Celsing (Con, Compton) said: "I feel it's no different from any other housing all around it. As far as I am concerned it would be a benefit, so I propose we accept the officer's recommendation to approve."

Paul Hewer (Con, Hungerford) said: "The proposal is for a good, high quality home for a family so I fully support this application."

Further support for the application came from Julian Swift Hook (Lib Dem, Greenham), who said: "The building will be adequately provided in term of landscaping and it doesn't seem to be significantly out of keeping. I think this application is acceptable."

The meeting voted in favour of the redevelopment by a majority of nine to two.



Steve and Howard Jones after their win at the World Gliding Championships

TV reception for Inkpen's world-beating brothers

INKPEN'S world gliding champion brothers Steve and Howard Jones will be among the best British acknowledged at the BBC's *Sports Personality of the Year* show to be staged in Glasgow on Sunday.

The pair won the two-seat 20-metre title in their Schempp-Hirth Arcus by a massive gap from their rivals.

"It was the biggest winning margin in more than 50 years," said 46-year-old Steve, who also

won a solo world crown in 2001.

"I was selected for the world championships this year, and am allowed to pick my partner. "My younger brother has won championships, so I naturally chose him."

Steve will be joined by 42-year-old Howard in being recognised for their achievement in the parade of Britain's world champions during the programme.

11.12.14

10 years ago
25 November 2004

Baring all for 2005

INKPEN is receiving less coverage than usual as a group of 10 pub regulars at the Swan and the Crown and Garter launched a nude *Calendar-Girls* inspired 2005 calendar last week.

The pictures, tastefully posed, were taken by Pippa Tout, and feature the women aged from 18 to 37 showing off the glorious countryside.

NWN. 20.11.14

Thursday, December 18, 2014



Thursday, January 22, 2015



Mary Harris presents the cheque to Lady Howard de Walden at the Swan Inn

Ref: 04-0515A

Swan regulars raise the bar for charity

LOCALS at The Swan Inn, Inkpen, have raised hundreds of pounds for the Parkinson's Disease Society.

Licensee Bernard Harris, who runs the village pub in Craven Road with wife, Mary, said: "The money was raised by regulars filling the charity pot on the bar. We also had a sweepstake to guess

the value in the pot."

The total, including the sweepstake, was rounded up to £300 by Mr and Mrs Harris. Marcus had the closest guess and the total was increased up to £300 by Mary and Bernard.

After the presentation eight teams took

part in the New Year Quiz.

The next quiz is on Thursday, January 29, and every other Thursday thereafter.

The cheque was presented by Mrs Harris to Lady Howard de Walden, who accepted on behalf of the charity

19/3/15

MP joins pupils to release trout into Kennet

CHILDREN from Inkpen Primary School are almost ready to release their brown trout fry into the wild.

The youngsters have carefully hatched another batch of fry this year and today (Thursday) Newbury MP Richard Benyon will wade in to help them release their charges into the River Kennet at Kintbury.

Inkpen School has been taking part in Action for the River Kennet (ARK)'s Trout in Schools project again and the children have been rearing a tank of trout since they arrived as eggs in the classroom in early January.

The project gives the children the chance to care for the trout and educates them about the delicate chalk stream environ-



The trout fry

ment and the importance of plentiful clean water in rivers.

Mr Benyon MP will join the children on Thursday from 2pm to help them release their trout at The Wilderness in Kintbury.

ARK works in partnership with Thames Water, which has funded the project and helped develop classroom materials to explain to children that the

water that comes out of the tap comes from the same place as the water in the river.

Schools liaison for ARK, Helen Kelly, said: "This year's schools have all loved having a tank of trout in the classroom. They have counted egg survival rates and written stories about their trout. It has been so encouraging to watch them reach their own understanding about how they can support the river by using less water at home.

"The children have even calculated how much water they can all save by making small changes including turning the tap off when brushing their teeth and swapping baths for a short shower."

Thames Water's Care for the

Kennet project manager, Karen Simpson, said: "As water used in the area comes from the River Kennet, every drop saved is another drop in the river, which supports populations of trout and other fantastic wildlife.

"By educating children about the importance of saving water and the variety of wildlife supported by the river, we can help safeguard this vital and diverse chalk stream for many years to come."

Teacher of Pheasant class at Inkpen Primary School, Jane Obin, said: "The children are very excited that their MP is coming along to support their project and are looking forward to sharing some of their work with him."

Elections for Inkpen, Kintbury and Devizes

IN ADDITION to the General Election battle in Newbury (see pages 12-16), five candidates are also contesting the seat for Devizes next Thursday.

They are, in alphabetical order: Emma Dawnay (Green Party), Claire Perry (Conservative Party), David Pollitt (UKIP), Manda Rigby (Liberal Democrats) and Chris Watts (Labour Party).

Dr Dawnay is aged 50, lives in Wexcombe, Marlborough, Wiltshire, and is married with one daughter.

Ms Perry moved with her family to Wiltshire in 2000 and in May 2010 she was elected Devizes MP. In July 2014 she was appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport.

Mr Pollitt, aged 57, is the

first and only UKIP councillor on Wiltshire Council after being elected into the Melksham Central seat in 2013.

The father-of-two has lived in Wiltshire for the past 25 years and this is the first time he has run in a General Election. Ms Rigby is a life-long Liberal, studying politics at Bristol University, and in 1983 chaired the Students Union there.

Mr Watts is 48 years old, married with three children. He has lived in Wiltshire for most of his life and is a lay member of the GMB trade union and is president of its Wiltshire and Swindon branch with representing responsibility for 2,200 employees throughout the county.

The Devizes constituency covers the parishes of Chilton

Foliat, Shalbourne, Wilton, Great and Little Bedwyn, Froxfield, Aldbourne, Ramsbury, Baydon and Welford and Wickham.

Meanwhile, in town council and parish elections in West Berkshire, only Inkpen and Kintbury are contested. The respective candidates are:

Inkpen: Keith Evans, Claire Jones, Moira Marriott, Robert May, David Thomas, Vanessa Tomlinson, Linda Wild and David Wilson.

Kintbury: Lanie Allen, Maureen Bailey, Paul Bateman, Stephen Cook, Tim Davis, Christine Holmes, Michael Kaye, Ruth Kaye, Neil Patterson, Darren Peace, David Smith and Andrew Stott. Uncontested town and parish elections include: East Garston, Deana Carpenter,

Jane Haddock, Jonathan Rabbitts, Christopher Tenge and Susan Tulloch, Boxford, Alistair Britton, Mark Hayes-Newington, Paul Kilding and Charles Oliver Bellassis; Great Shefford (and Shefford Woodlands): Steven Acrill, Jim Carter, Glenn Parsons and Jantice Winfield; Hungerford: Dennis Benneyworth, Robert Brookman, Colin Bumberis, Doris Colloff, Martin Crane, Carolann Farrell, Richard Hudson, David Small, Paul Whiting, Margaret Wilson, Claire Winsor and Shaun Wood, and Lambourn (and Upper Lambourn): Mike Billinge-Jones, James Bracey, Bridget Dowdeswell, Bruce Laurie, Simon Mooney, Tina Nims, Elizabeth Spence, Jill Fitzpatrick and Nicholas Spence.

MAY 2015

Inspiring children about wonder of nature

NATURE NOTES
by NICOLA CHESTER

IT IS a truth that ought to be universally acknowledged, that kids need nature and nature needs kids - otherwise, it'll be the end of us all.

And although I've heard things from children that alarm me (how do badgers swim underwater?) there is plenty to gladden the heart; certainly, locally, there are schools, supported by wildlife organisations, that are getting nature into the curriculum, whether it is supposed to be there or not.

At the wonderful Nature Discovery Centre, BBOWT's education officer, Sophie Axford, took Inkpen's infants on safari, pond dipping and sweeping for bugs, enriching their learning on habitats.

Back at school, the youngest enjoy regular 'Forest School' and have raised butterflies and the junior children currently have eels in the classroom.

Last term, another class raised trout. Thanks to Action for the River Kennet and The Renewal Project, other schools have benefited from this experience, too, as will the conservation of the river, its wildlife and the water we drink.

Last week, I took my Wild Writing Workshops to John O'Gaunt School's



Nicola Chester, back centre, at an event at the Thattham Nature Discovery Centre exciting two-day Primary Project.

The pupils were genuinely shocked when I told them that, if they were our native wild species, over half were at risk of dying out before they were my age.

A few shocked me with their lack of knowledge of their wildlife - but all 120 children, without fail, were fascinated by the things I gave them to explore 'as inspiration'.

We warmed up to writing, listening to the trees. Around the playing field in the slight breeze, the only trees moving were the tall Lombardy poplars. The oaks, ash and beeches were still, but the trembly poplars roared to our cupped ears and flashed in the sunlight - and we were away.

Antlers, raven and kite feathers, a jay's wing and fox teeth inspired micropoems, describing 'spirit animals' that would accompany them to secondary school on their first day, as a kind of 'alter-ego', Harry Potter style, whose characteristics they might share, emulate, or hide behind.

We had otters wearing headphones that slipslapped down corridors, their curiosity and playfulness helping make new friends and find classrooms, we had red kites blazing trails of confidence and certainty at break times, wolves that shouldered heavy rucksacks and heavier expectation and fallow deer whose antlers clattered books off shelves, knocked into 'bigger children'.

All rather telling and poignant.

To save it, our own native wildlife, its ecology, science and interconnectedness must be included on the curriculum.

But we are missing a trick if we cannot see, show and teach how it also inspires us, creatively; offers us a salve to the world's harder edges, is good for our health and well-being and is a joy in its own right.

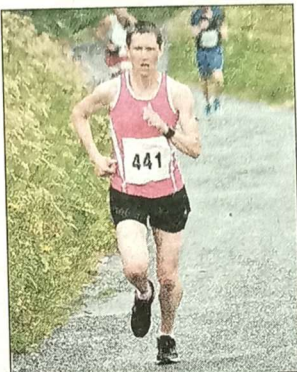
Wild Diary

Eels and Trout in the classroom:
<http://www.riverkennet.org/education>
or <http://www.renewalproject.org.uk/our-schools.html>
Wild Writing Workshops:
<http://www.nicolacheseter.wordpress.com>

9.7.15



Men's winner James Craggs



Women's winner Laura Woodley

Conquering Combe Gibbet

NEARLY 130 athletes took part in the 2015 Inkpen Gibbet Challenge, to face the tough, 10.5km course over Walbury Hill and Combe Gibbet.

James Craggs of Newbury AC claimed his third victory in the event in a time of 39 minutes, 40 seconds. The first lady home, and also a third-time winner, was Laura Woodley in 42 minutes, 37 seconds.

Winners in the veterans categories were Peter Keen (Swindon Harriers) and Leanne Taylor.

The full race results are on the Gibbet Challenge website at www.gibbetchallenge.net

Meanwhile 25 young runners joined in the 1km children's race and were rewarded with sweets and medals for their efforts.

The Gibbet Challenge was the final event in the 2015 Run West Berks series, following the Chieveley Chase, Kintbury Ollie Johnson 5, and the Hungerford Harey 8.

Twenty-four hardy runners competed in all four events, and the overall series winners were Martin Walker (Newbury AC) and Laura Woodley.

The full results are on the Run West Berks website at www.runwestberks.net

Planning decision a shock for Inkpen

Council ignores objections and allows Craven Road development

A SHOCK decision by councillors to allow a controversial development in Inkpen prompted murmurs of "absolute disgrace" from the public gallery.

A similar application had previously been turned down and an appeal against its refusal was roundly rejected by Her Majesty's Planning Inspectorate.

Following the shock upset on last Wednesday night, the chairman of West Berkshire Council's district planning committee, Alan Law (Con, Basildon), said: "An interesting debate... we've gone against policy and against local feeling."

The new application was to demolish an existing bungalow and detached garage at Hunters Way in Craven Road and replace it with a new house, on a slightly smaller footprint than previously.

The decision, by six votes to four, clearly surprised some - the previous application for a replacement dwelling on the site was refused and an appeal was dismissed in October 2014.

A planning officer's report again recommended refusal and Inkpen parish councillors voted unanimously against the proposals, which generated around 20 objections from local residents.

Hungerford goldsmiths and jewellers Greg and Rachel Furr, live nearby and lodged a formal objection in which they stated: "The style, size and position of the

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building remains out of character with the rest of Craven Road.

"It is a dominant development made more so by both its height and prominent areas of glass."

Former Hungerford GP, Dr Robin Dunn, agreed: "The size of the proposed dwelling is at least 125 per cent larger than the present bungalow... the house, as proposed, is out of proportion to the properties which surround it."

Secretary of the Inkpen Rights of Way Committee, Janet Dunbar, wrote: "This development is too large, too prominent and too intrusive on the (adjacent) footpath."

The North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) group also objected.

Not all comments were negative.

...the house, as proposed is out of proportion to the properties which surround it

tive.

Claire Scott of Charnham Way, Hungerford, said she regularly runs in the area and described the present bungalow as an "eye sore".

Formally supporting the proposals, she added: "The design appears of high quality."

A design and access statement submitted by the applicants states: "The design of the new house seeks to blend contemporary design and modern living with traditional vernacular materials."

The matter was called in to committee by former district councillor Andrew Rowles because of the site's "controversial history".

He spoke in favour of the new proposals at the meeting.

Paul Bryant (Con, Speen) said: "It's modern and very attractive... I like it."

Paul Hewer (Con, Hungerford) agreed: "I've seen some real carbuncles in Inkpen - but this isn't one of them."

Graham Pask (Con, Bucklebury) said: "I don't want to drive a coach and horses through policy - I propose following the officer's recommendation [for refusal]."

The motion was defeated, however, and a rival motion to grant planning permission, proposed by Hilary Cole (Con, Chieveley), was carried.

CPRE response to the decision

THE COMMITTEE'S decision has been branded an "amazing act of defiance" by the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE).

The CPRE, a national charity devoted to protecting and enhancing rural England, issued a statement citing the "overwhelming opposition" to the development and condemning the committee for supposedly throwing reason to the winds and "ignoring" a whole tranche of local and national planning policy guidelines.

The statement is titled: "An Act of Defiance - and the countryside loses again. Developer was given the go-ahead for a replacement dwelling which will threaten the beauty and tranquillity of the AONB [Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty]."

The statement asked: "What is the point of planning policy when West Berkshire Council simply choose to ignore it? And what is the point of localism when the voice of the many is overruled by [the council's] planning committee?"

"Who will defend our countryside, if elected councillors cannot work within the National Planning Policy Framework and the Local Plan (adopted in 2012)?"

Chairman of the West Berkshire Council district planning committee, Alan Law (Con, Basildon) responded: "It was a full and frank discussion and the vote at the end was finely balanced."

"Decisions against policy can be made if members feel there are special circumstances or reasons, and six to four considered that there were."