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Chairman: Anne Brooker 835109

Secretary: Gill Dexter

Editor: Helen Connor 834754 (thevillagerbcs@gmail.com)

Treasurer: Betty Price

Advertising: Trevor Morgan 838920 Martin Dix 836204

Assembly: Shena Luck 834543

Distribution: Keith Brooks 839044

Production: Angela Lewis, Trevor Morgan, Gerard Varley, Susanne Tuffrey

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The Villager is published every other month and delivered free to all households in the village..

Editorial

The cold snap has brought in winter suddenly after a glorious autumn. As I write, I have just returned from the village Remembrance Day service, where a large gathering of young and old stood in silence to honour the war dead surrounded by the stunning colours of the trees around St Agatha's. If you have a moment, stop by the war memorial and take a look at the ring of poppies made by the school children each with a personal message to those who gave their lives in conflict, and also the wreaths and the crosses for our villagers who died 100 years ago this year. I'm sure, like me, you will find them poignant but also uplifting.

The main topic of conversation in the village over the last few months has been the proposed new house building, which may have a far reaching effect on our parish for years to come. Many of you will have attended the public meetings so have found out directly about the Neighbourhood Plan. Jason Debney has given a full account of the work that has gone into it on page 3. We are grateful to him and his colleagues for all the time they have put into balancing the various needs whilst trying to maintain the essential character of the village. As he says, there will be plenty of opportunities to give your comments in the months ahead before we vote on it (in our own mini referendum!) – see information in the leaflet with this *Villager* about the consultations.

Christmas will soon be upon us but, as the Rev Kevin advises on page 11, don't rush into it. There are many good things happening before the 25th, as you can read here. Most of the usual events are on in the village – from the School Christmas Fair on the 2nd and Art Club Exhibition on the 10th through to the Carols round the Save the Children Christmas Tree in the Square and Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve at St Agatha's. The community carol concert in the village hall is not happening this year but that has been replaced on the same night by a carol singing evening in St James' Sotwell (Monday 12th), 'Carols for Syria'. Fun at the end of the Christmas break can be had at the village's Wassail on bank holiday Monday 2 January, something I'd recommend not to be missed. A quick guide to all the Christmas events are in our centre pages.

Sadly, this month we lost two villagers, known to many of you - Claude Newnham who moved up to Sotwell Hill a few years ago, and Bill Prince, landlord of the Red Lion from 1997 to 2007. We send our sympathies to their families. May they rest in peace.

Helen Connor

Letter

Dave Hurley

These past few months have been difficult for both myself and Dave's close family and friends. I would like to thank all the lovely villagers who supported and helped me through this tough time. Your cards and gifts have been very much appreciated. May he rest in peace.

Cynthia Hurley

Neighbourhood Plan

By the time this issue of *The Villager* is delivered we should have our draft Neighbourhood Plan (known as the pre-submission report) ready for consultation. I appreciate your patience and understanding whilst the Parish Council has been preparing the plan, particularly in light of the difficult decisions that we have had to get our heads around.

When we started back in 2014, we thought that we would be allocating land for 10–20 houses. This increased after the Housing Needs Survey and again after the publication of South Oxfordshire District Council's draft Local Plan. For the first time, smaller villages such as Brightwell-cum-Sotwell had a duty to build a certain amount of housing, with the intention of spreading the impact of development more fairly across the region. The number of houses required increased again following SODC's failure to meet its five-year housing target. This situation has put communities across the district at risk from unwanted development – with very little that can be done even in places that were deemed 'safe' in the past. Some villages in South Oxfordshire are facing the dreadful prospect of doubling in size over the next couple of years. The bulldozers are ready and moving in. There is no reason to believe that Brightwell-cum-Sotwell would be spared particularly in light of how many fields around our community are owned by developers or by landowners who want to build.

In Brightwell-cum-Sotwell we have been developing our Neighbourhood Plan (NP) in a robust and realistic way. This is crucial if it is going to have any chance of passing examination at a later date. The plan allocates a realistic amount of housing for the village however hard this is to swallow. Unless we do, the plan could be thrown out. We are trying to steer building towards the type of houses that we know that we need – affordable, smaller and downsized

properties. Numbers at the school for example are falling and the need for good quality houses for older people to move into, which allows them to stay in the village, is a pressing concern.

To achieve a realistic and robust plan, the NP committee has had to make some unfathomably difficult choices. We have argued and debated at length all the various options and weighed up a body of evidence and advice. I think we are all agreed that it has been one of the most difficult things we have done but at all times we have considered what is the best outcome for the village as a whole. In the end we are going to allocate a requirement of at least 50 houses in the village at four different sites with a potential total of 65 new properties. Sitting alongside this housing allocation is a series of policies that will be used to guide all development during the NP's life as we know that other sites for housing will be put forward particularly in light of the growing trend to build on village gardens. This building will be on top of the housing allocations in the NP. We cannot stop it but we can help to minimise its impact on the character of the village.

Whilst the NP area covers the whole parish, most of the policies are concerned with the settlements at Brightwell, Sotwell and Mackney rather than at Sires Hill and Clapcot. This is simply the way that the plan has had to be put together. Once the NP pre-submission report is published for consultation, it will be available on the Parish Council website, at the shop and the pub for you to read. There will be several drop-in sessions for you to come and talk to us and everyone will have his or her chance to comment on it by post or email. The process will last for eight weeks. Details will be posted on the parish website, on Facebook and by posters on village telegraph poles. Every household will be leafleted at the start of the process. You will also get a final chance to vote on whether the plan is adopted or not in a village referendum sometime next year.

Jason Debney, Chair BCS NP

Christmas village lunch

The Christmas lunch will be on Tuesday 6 December at 12.15pm in the village hall. Contact Jaqui 816018 or Belinda 836223 for more details.

Community Association

AGM – 27 September 2016

Many thanks to everyone who attended our AGM on 27 September. Our treasurer Tom was pleased to be able to report that £4,497 was distributed to various clubs and charities in the village. We also provided hampers for the elderly in the village, with the generous support of the Fairthorne Trust.

We would like to record our sincere thanks to Jennie and David Dobbin, who again this year lent us their garden for the fete.

A hard working member of our team, Andy Lewis has resigned. As we all know Andy has organised and presented many of the much loved productions such as the carol concerts and the autumn events for many years. We will miss his enthusiasm and all the ideas, talent and commitment he has brought to our committee.

We are delighted that Sarah Jackson, Caroline Annets, Bill Horsfield, John Burdass, and Charlotte and Mike Woods were all happy to be re-elected. Our chairman (James Davys) and secretary Andy Stevens were also re-elected. Jim Sanger has kindly agreed to be auditor again this year. I am also pleased to tell you that we have two new members - Lynn Burridge and Annette Kilworth have joined our merry band.

Fun Run – 25 September 2016

Once again we were lucky with the weather for our second 5K Fun Run. Congratulations to everybody who took part and thank you to those who came along and supported them. I would also like to thank Charlotte and Mike Woods and Caroline Annets who worked tirelessly to make it such a success. The winners in each class were as follows:

First man: Will Cullen First woman: Lisa Herbert
First U16 boy: Mikey Hadway First U16 girl: Harriet Whetter

We were fortunate to get sponsorship from a number of local businesses and we are grateful to them and to the Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary who allowed us to hold the event at their premises. I would also like to acknowledge the support that we had from the Didcot Running Group who gave us lots of advice and helped with the marshalling on the day.

Christmas hampers

The Community Association is pleased to provide a Christmas hamper for the senior residents of the village. If you know of anyone over the age of 70 whom you believe does not currently receive a hamper but would appreciate one, please telephone me on 01491 834195.

Village quiz evening – Saturday 11 March 2017

More details to follow in next issue.

James Davys, Chairman

Brightwell Art Club and exhibition



The Art Club has had an interesting term as usual with several workshops for those who wanted to take part, including still life, portraiture and mixed media sessions, the latter enabling us to get very messy! We've also had a critique of our paintings and advice on framing and what we should put into our annual exhibition.

During the summer, members were able to exhibit at the Red Lion in the painter of the month slot so our annual exhibition is the second chance to show what we can do. This year it will be held on Saturday 10 December, between 10am and 1pm, and as usual there will be very reasonably priced art for sale, cards, local craft stalls and, of course, refreshments, so do come along, have some coffee and mince pies, and look at our work. Admission is free.

If you are interested in joining, or just learning more about us, you can always pop in and see us on a Saturday, we have coffee at about 11 am, or email me at brightwellartclub@gmail.com. We also have a link to a web page on the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell website under Local Services.

Veronica Wood, Secretary

Parish Council News

20mph speed limit

Oxfordshire County Council have now approved proposals for 20mph speed limits in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell. It is hoped that the County Council will proceed with implementation soon.

Neighbourhood Plan

The Parish Council have been very busy with the Neighbourhood Plan (see more on page 3). If you were unable to attend the recent public meetings please find details on the Parish Council website:
www.brightwellcumshotwellpc.org

Clerk's office hours

The Clerk's office hours have changed to Monday 8.45am-12.45pm, Tuesday 2.30-3.30pm and Thursday 2.30-3.30pm.

Lucy Dalby, Parish Clerk

Wassail 2017

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell's Wassail is now a well established feature in village life and is one of the biggest Wassailing events in the country. This winter's Wassail will take place at 3pm on Bank Holiday Monday 2 January. All welcome, especially families to process around the village ending up at the Red Lion around 5pm. Bring a lantern and something to make a noise with! We will be joined again this year by our friends from Armaleggan Morris who will perform their traditional 'fire dance' to finish off the event.

Further details will be posted nearer the time on posters, Facebook and the parish website.

Memories of past Wassails can be found on the Brightwell-cum-Sotwell parish YouTube page by visiting
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC05jXkxkAsVf_OGeHEPASMQ.

Jason Debney

A Lunch for Syria – Thank You

On Sunday 9 October, the Brightwell Supporting Refugees group held a lunch in the village hall to raise funds for Syrian children in Jordan.

Conversation 6 days before the lunch:

'Should we make soup for 50? 60? 70?'

'But only 7 people have booked!'

'We can always take the leftover soup home and pitta bread freezes well.'

Conversation on the day:

'How many places should we set? We have only 27 bookings.'

'Oh, let's do 50. More people are sure to come.'

In the end, over 60 people sat down to a simple lunch of lentil soup, hummus and pitta bread followed by mint tea and Syrian sesame biscuits. In between courses, they watched two short films (one a local BAFTA winner!) and heard a bit about the education project supported by the Brightwell Supporting Refugees group.

The generosity of all those who came (and we hope, enjoyed the lunch) and those who could not be there but donated to the cause, was greatly encouraging. We raised an astounding £1,257. This will help a great deal in providing some of the much needed items for the Jordanian project.

So, on behalf of the BSR group a very, very big THANK YOU for your amazing gift to the Syrian children whose well-being depends on donations like these.

The Brightwell Supporting Refugees Group

PS: By the way, we did have enough soup!

Update on Brightwell Supporting Refugees

The success of the lunch and earlier fundraising activities meant that we were able to send a further £2,200 to Jordan in October. The bulk of that, £1,800, will go to pay for a teacher for one year at the new school for refugees we are supporting in north east Jordan. This is in addition to the £500 we sent in July for books.

To date we have raised an astounding total of over £3,500 since we began fundraising earlier this year, thanks to everyone who has made donations and supported our fundraising activities so generously. We are also grateful to individuals, such as the village children who set up a pop-up shop and the McGivans who have given us the 'Rabbit and Mole' books to sell (see below).

Now that winter is here, we are currently looking at what further support the school needs, such as heating, also IT facilities or school transport possibly. We hope to dispatch another sum to Jordan before the end of the month. To read more about our project in Jordan follow the link www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk/news_item.php?wnID=11155 or contact one of us (at annlinton1@hotmail.co.uk or helenconnor21@btinternet.com).

Our next fundraising event will be a carol singing evening at St James' Church, Sotwell on Monday 12 December at 6.30pm. Numbers will be limited as space is tight there, so make sure of a seat by getting a ticket at the shop (tickets free, but donations on the night).

*Ann Linton and Helen Connor
Co-chairs of Brightwell Supporting Refugees Trustees Group*



**'A Christmas Story'
and
'The Grand Fishing Expedition'**

2 books on 'The Adventures of Rabbit & Mole in Brightwell-cum-Sowell', written by Alec McGivan and illustrated by Olive Sutcliffe.

£5 for one title or £9 for both
Sold in aid of
Brightwell Supporting Refugees

Available from the Villages Stores, on sale at local events or contact Angela Lewis lewisaanda@gmail.com or Ann Linton annlinton1@hotmail.co.uk.

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Primary School

The primary school calendar is always responsive to the seasons.

In October, the children took part in the annual Harvest Festival. The Rev Kevin Beer conducted the service in St Agatha's at which the children sang songs and recited poems. They also brought offerings of food for the Wallingford Emergency Food Bank.

As I write this, we are planning for all our 100 children to go to the village War Memorial for the minute silence at 11am on Remembrance Day. The older children have been finding out more about the Battle of the Somme which took place 100 years ago and also about the soldiers from Brightwell who died during the World Wars.

December will of course bring Christmas. Plans are already underway for a Christmas Fair on Friday 2 December and rehearsals will soon start for the nativity later in the month. Expect shepherds and angels and a crib of course!

Meanwhile, the link with Wallingford School that I wrote about in my last article is being strengthened. Fin Lewis from Wallingford, who will be the full time headteacher here from Easter, has been in Brightwell for a day or more every week; she and I will be co-heads from January. In addition, we have had visits from other Wallingford teachers including an art teacher who came to do clay work with our youngest children. We have also had a number of sixth form students who have come over to help out with a range of things such as gardening, cooking, sorting the library and helping our children in the classroom. It is great to see the 17 and 18 years olds working so sensitively alongside our children – if a few of those students are inspired to pursue a career in education in the future, that would be an added bonus!

Teachers have planned interesting work for the children for this term. Bramley Class (reception year and year 1) and Russet Class (years 1 and 2) are doing a topic on India before nativity rehearsals start to take over. Worcester Class (years 3 and 4) are doing a topic based around the Jungle Book. After their study of The Somme, Discovery Class (years 5 and 6) will explore the Seven Wonders of the World.

If you want to find out more about the school, do look at our website and our Facebook page!

*David Burrows, Headteacher
<http://www.brightwell.oxon.sch.uk>*

Don't rush into Christmas!

I trust you will read this in early December, which is the season of Advent rather than Christmas. As any child who has had an advent calendar knows, waiting patiently in anticipation for something increases the joy when it finally arrives. In church, the advent wreath has the same effect, as we light a new candle each Sunday of Advent and the story gradually unfolds.

The history of the Advent wreath is interesting: it is thought to have begun in its present form in the early 19th century, from an idea of a Lutheran pastor called Johann Wichern. He was ministering in a mission house during Advent and the children would each day ask the same question as they ask on any long journey: "Are we there yet?" (I can't help thinking of the donkey in Shrek 2!). So in 1839 he used a large cartwheel to make a 'wreath' with 19 small red candles for the weekdays and four large white candles for the Sundays, which were then lit through Advent to help the children count the days. The custom was copied by others in Germany and evolved into a wreath of four red candles and one white candle that we know today.

The lighting of candles on the Advent wreath speaks powerfully of the natural symbols of light and darkness that run through this season. As we prepare for the coming ('adventus') of Jesus, the 'Light of the World', we are reminded of those who came before us who prepared for the Messiah's coming: the Patriarchs, the Prophets, John the Baptist and Mary, Jesus' mother. Their example of faith, often in situations of extraordinary difficulty, remind us, in the business and busyness of the modern commercial season, the importance of sharing the truth about God's love shown in Jesus with others we meet and particularly the next generation. I commend this custom to you, both as Advent calendars and to see each candle lit in church and to share the biblical story of God's long-awaited plan of salvation to unfold, beginning with God made man, or God 'incarnate' - "now in flesh appearing... O come, let us adore Him!"

The next page has details of Advent and Christmas Service and carols in Brightwell and surrounds.

The Revd Kevin Beer
Email: teamvicar@wallingfordcofe.org.uk
Tel: 01491 599873 (day off Monday)



Christmas services and carols



St James' Sotwell

Monday 12 December 6.30pm 'Carols for Syria'

Sunday 25 December 8.00am Communion Service

St Agatha's, Brightwell

18 December 6pm Christmas Carol Service

24 December 4.30pm Crib Service (followed by the annual Carols around the Save the Children Christmas Tree at 5.15pm)

24 December 11.30pm Midnight Communion

25 December 9.30am Christmas Day Family Service

Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary

Thursday 15 December 7.30pm. Carol Service led by the Rev Janice Chilton - live animals, the Christmas story, music provided by Roke and Benson Silver Band and refreshments afterwards.

Didcot Community Gospel Choir

Sunday 11 December 4pm 'Light of the World: a Christmas Celebration', St Mary-le-More, Wallingford. For tickets contact didcotgospel@gmail.com or tel 01235 834295.

Cranford Choral Society with Treehouse School

Sunday 11 December 2-5pm Bring-It-and-Sing-It Messiah (Part I), St Mary's Church, Cholsey. To register and sing contact robandlizhowarth@hotmail.com or chair@cranfordchoral.org.uk





Christmas and New Year events



FOBS Christmas Fair

Friday 2 December 5.30-7.30pm at Brightwell School

Christmas Tree Festival

Friday 9 December (10-5pm) and Saturday 10 December (10- 4pm) , St Mary-le-More, Wallingford

Santa comes to the Red Lion

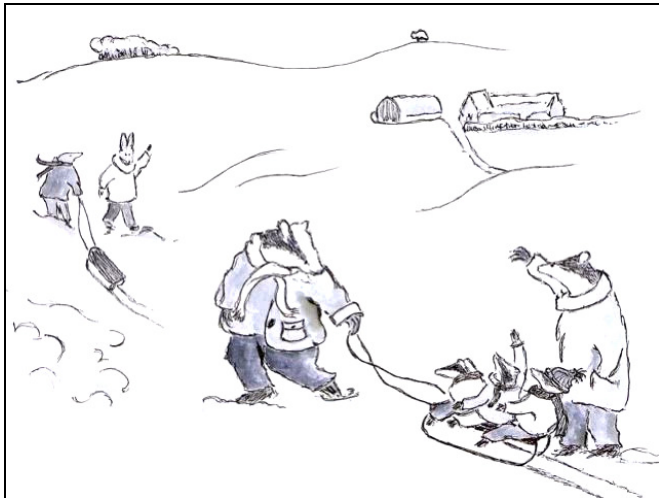
Lunchtime Sunday 11 December from 1.30pm

Red Lion New Year's Eve Eve party

As usual, the Red Lion will be holding their New Year's Eve Eve Party on Friday 30 December 8.30 – late. This year it will raise money for MIND in memory of pub landlord Bill Prince.

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell's Wassail

Monday 2 January, beginning at 3pm.



Another delightful Olive Sutcliffe illustration from 'A Christmas Story' showing Rabbit & Mole heading up to the Clumps (see page 9).

Environment Group

Autumn anniversary talk

To celebrate the 21st anniversary of the launch of the Environment Group in 1995, David Dugan, our noted BAFTA award-winning local film maker gave a talk on Saturday 22 October in the village hall. "Telling Nature's Stories on Television" was exciting and absorbing. The film clips took us deep into mostly unvisited parts of the environment. You could almost smell the decaying blubber from the whale stranded on Ireland's west coast and we watched amazed as the American professor climbed inside to dissect its voice box. The tentacles of the Pacific octopus seemed ready to reach out to entrap the unwary in the audience. It was intriguing to learn how David selects his subject matter and where his inspiration comes from, quite often Chicago Airport!

The 21st birthday cake was cut by the group's first chairman Viola Crowe and while the slices, canapés and wine were being sampled, Viola's *Villager* 1995 article on the aims of the newly established group were quoted: '*broader environmental issues such as the pollution of air and water, the increase in traffic, noise, energy conservation and the recycling of waste. Members would be involved in research and monitoring of the local environment, organising events with guest speakers, training and field visits*'. It is noteworthy that most of these aims have been achieved over the last 21 years.

Storm and flood

On the night of 15/16 September, surface water draining from the car park entered the rear of the village hall. The water ran into the Stewart Room, ruined the floor covering and soaked into the concrete floor. This was the night when the entrance to Didcot Railway was submerged, causing severe disruption to services next day, when London commuters had to travel to Swindon to reach Paddington.

Since 1998, Rosemary Greasby at Highlands Farm and Angus Dart at Sherwood Farm have been recording rainfall every day in standard Met Office rain gauges. On the night of 15/16 September their gauges caught 70.3mm and 72.4mm respectively. These are among the largest amounts ever recorded since they started observations. Less than 2 miles away at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in Crowmarsh, a recording gauge registered 43.1mm, much of it in two bursts, the first about 4am and the second around 5.30am.

From past records, falls of rain of 70mm in one day for Brightwell-cum-Sotwell have an estimated return period of about 75 years. This means that, on average, a rainfall of this magnitude can be expected to occur once over this period. But this rain fell during 6 hours so what was experienced was a much rarer rainfall.

Hedgerow survey October 2016

Members of the group carried out a survey of the hedgerows surrounding the sites proposed for housing development by the Neighbourhood Plan Committee. The methodology was a repeat of the first survey of parish hedgerows carried out in 1996 using CPRE recording forms. Our results were published in the 1998 Parish Conservation Plan. In 2001 at the request of the County Ecologist we looked again at those hedgerows identified as “key hedgerows”. The oldest is alongside the footpath on the east side of Bosley’s Orchard, one of the sites proposed for development.

Millennium Wood

In 2015 a working party from Vertex Pharmaceuticals of Milton Park Estate led by James Davys did an amazing amount of work in the wood. They came again this year, clearing brambles from the central glade, the approach to it and cutting and burning dead branches. Thank you very much James and your colleagues for your endeavours. The wood is in great shape and glowing with autumn colours.

John Rodda

A Fit and Healthy 2017

For a fitter and healthier year ahead, look no further than *PHT Personal Health Training*; a new village business.

If fitness, health, getting more mobile or getting into those ‘just too tight’ clothes are some of your goals for the New Year, then speak with H Harrison who can be contacted on 07769 645069 for a free consultation.

If getting older with vigour sounds like you and you would like to work out with a personal trainer who is older than your own children, then this should be for you.

Fun, flexible, local and fully qualified and insured.

Village Stores and Post Office

Live local, love local, shop local

You can order your local turkey, ham, goose, cheeses and wine, or come in and buy your Christmas essentials such as goose fat, cranberry sauce, mincemeat stuffing, as well as luxury chocolates, mince pies, stollen, roasted chestnuts, treats and gifts etc...etc.

Why not send a ‘One4all’ gift card? Available at the Post Office counter; it is an ideal gift from £10 to £400. The multi-store gift card can be used in one of 22,000 outlets with many online retailers.

As a reminder the latest recommended posting dates for the UK are:-

Tues 20 Dec – 2nd Class and 2nd Class Signed for

Wed 21 Dec – 1st Class and 1st Class Signed for

Thur 22 Dec – Special Delivery Guaranteed.

For full details including International and parcels posting dates please pick up a leaflet from the PO counter.

Our Christmas advert, in this edition of *The Villager* includes our Christmas and New Year opening hours.

Nic and Celia

Save the Children

I would like to thank two Scouts from the village, Jamie Zaliniski and James Moore, for helping us with our quiz at the Red Lion in October. They carried out the role of joint quizmaster with confidence and good humour. Jamie and James did this as part of their Gold Scout Award and helped us raise £180 for the Syrian children. They are a credit to Brightwell Scouts, their parents and to themselves.

The 5th November ‘Coffee, Cakes and Christmas Cards’ in the Stewart Room of the village hall raised £371.15p. Many thanks to everyone who supported us.

We will be holding our event ‘**Carols around the Save the Children Christmas Tree**’ as usual on Christmas Eve at 5.15pm. If you can’t make the event, but enjoy the tree in the Square, please give a small donation to Save the Children via the donation box near the tree or drop it through my letter box

at Thistledown, The Square. All money raised goes straight to Save the Children to improve the lives of children in Britain and all over the world. To find out more visit our website: savethechildren.org.uk.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

Celia Collett

News from the Bach Centre

We mentioned in the last issue that Dr Edward Bach, who spent the last two years of his life in the village, is buried just around the corner from us in Baker's Lane in the churchyard of St James's. It was the 80th anniversary of his death last month.

Bach loved living in Sotwell. He enjoyed the Berkshire countryside as well; many of the remedies he discovered were first prepared from local plants. Some things of course have changed since his day. Names for a start; Sotwell and Brightwell joined together in 1948 and boundary changes moved the whole area to Oxfordshire in 1974. The pubs he used to frequent, such as The Bell at the end of Bell Lane, have turned into homes. Only the Red Lion is left. There are houses and gardens where there used to be orchards and open country, and so many cars.

As for his house, Mount Vernon, if he had visited in the 1980s he would have found it had become the distribution centre for a thriving business, sending out 80,000 bottle of Bach remedies a week to 66 countries. With the business side having moved on, the quiet has returned. He would feel more at home now - although he might wonder why his old bed is hanging on a wall in a training room!

Last winter would have felt especially familiar to him. The central heating developed a hard-to-find fault during the coldest weeks of the year. They really were made of sterner stuff in the 1930s - although of course in Bach's day the chimneys would have been uncapped and the fires lit from September on.

If you'd like a look around - not least to see the bed! the Centre is open to visitors every weekday from 9.30am to about 4pm. There's no charge and you might learn a bit more about a hidden side of village history. Avoid the period between Christmas & New Year however as we are closed to the public then.

Stefan Ball

At our October meeting we celebrated the glory of autumn with WI member Ann Linton showing us how to make the best of the late flowers, foliage and seed heads in our gardens and around our lovely village. The results of our efforts can be seen on our website www.brightwellcumshotwellwi.com. Our homes are still enjoying the results of our labours, well mine is anyway.

Moving from flowers to feathered friends, we welcomed Chrissie Harper with her collection of rescued owls at our November meeting. It is good to know that there is always someone looking out for our indigenous flora and fauna for future generations. It is also lovely to get a close up of these beautiful creatures who usually are out and about when we are tucked up in bed.

During November, our WI hosted the meeting of the Didcot Group. This is a gathering of the local WIs which takes place around South Oxfordshire twice a year. On this occasion we chose to have Judy Dewey from the Wallingford Museum to talk about the arrival of William the Conqueror in Wallingford some 950 years ago. It was a very interesting and informative talk and we have good reports of the success of the evening.

Now we run down to the festive season and look forward to December when along with some delicious mince pies we will be doing a bit of line dancing.

Margaret Smith.

Coffee and cake
every Wednesday morning
from 10am -12 noon
at St Agatha's Church Room.

Why not pop in for a cuppa and a chat?
All welcome.

The Red Lion

As we enter the festive season, we hope to see many of you popping in with friends, family and work colleagues to enjoy a drink, some food, maybe even a Christmas lunch. Whatever your reason, you are always guaranteed a warm welcome from Mark and his team.

At the Red Lion, we strive to be at the heart of the community, offering a place to meet friends, somewhere to showcase local and national talent whether it be musical, dance and drama, or artistic. We are somewhere to raise funds for good causes, whilst having a good time. We are somewhere for you to celebrate a special occasion, right on your doorstep.

We have live music most Sundays, charity quizzes every month, along with our artist of the month gallery. We hold regular gourmet evenings with guest chefs offering you the chance to experience different styles of food.

We aim to offer something for everyone in our community. Please check our Facebook page www.facebook.com/Red-Lion-Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and our website www.redlion.biz for what's on, or why not drop your email address in at the bar and we'll send you our regular newsletter.

30 pubs are closing every week, many of them in rural communities just like ours. Imagine Brightwell without a pub – whether you visit regularly, or on special occasions, it's unthinkable.

All we ask in return is that you support what you like, tell your friends about the things they might like and tell us if we're missing a trick to put on something for you.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year from all of us at the Red Lion.

Mark Brock

Red Lion opening times

There will be no food from the evening of 24th until lunchtime on 27th when times will be back to normal. On Christmas Day the bar will be open from 12-2pm, on Boxing Day from 12 – 11pm.

On New Year's Eve and New Year's Day, lunch as normal but no food in the evening, bar open as normal.

Allsorts Preschool

We have a new committee of busy parents and want to extend our thanks to both them (for volunteering) and also the outgoing committee for their fabulous work.

The children had a great time at the Halloween party hosted by the Red Lion and over £100 was raised towards the running of the preschool. Many thanks to Mark at the pub for hosting this again.

There have been lots of new starters this term and we've enjoyed welcoming them all to the preschool. There are some places available for some sessions, but many are very busy now. We have also opened up lunchtime on a Friday to extend the morning to 12.45pm.

The children have enjoyed exploring autumn this term. We have played in the leaves, been on autumn walks, made pumpkin soup, iced biscuits like pumpkins, made a den for hibernation in our playroom and sung our autumn song many times. We also harvested the preschool sweetcorn and cucumber from the garden, which the children liked eating for snacks. This is so beneficial for the children to see the life-cycle of plants, especially if they get to eat it!

We are looking for a new volunteer to run our gardening club (in our wonderful new garden!), preferably someone from the village who could give us one hour a week to help the children grow vegetables, fruit or any other ideas more than welcome. Please contact our manager Natasha Hillier for more details.

Looking ahead to Christmas we will be decorating a tree for St Mary's Church Christmas Tree Festival this December, so please go along to support a good cause and test your Christmas carol knowledge.

Many thanks,

The Allsorts team

Earth Trust

Natural Christmas

Sunday 4 December, 11am-3pm. Get into the festive spirit by making decorations and gifts from natural and recycled materials. Plus, meet Father Christmas. Price by activity, no need to book.

Winter Wetland Birds

Sunday 11 December, 9.30-11am. Come and explore Thrupp Lake in Radley (OX14 3NG) and find out about some of the wetland birds that call it home over the winter. With Ben Carpenter. £5 adult, £2 child; booking essential: 01865 407792 or online at www.earthtrust.org.uk/whatson (incurs a booking fee).

As always, more information can be found on our website www.earthtrust.org.uk. All events take place at the Earth Trust, Little Wittenham, OX14 4QZ unless otherwise stated.

Isabel Hauer

Clifton Hampden Surgery Patient Participation Group

For the information of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell residents who are registered at the Clifton Hampden Surgery, the 24 hour ECG monitor, which avoids patients having to wait for a hospital referral, is now in full use. New furniture and equipment has been installed in the nurse's room in accordance with clinical assessment compliance requirements. A defibrillator has been installed at Burcot at the Close Home.

Any Brightwell patient who would like to receive the Patients Group Newsletter and notice of forthcoming meetings should please register with the secretary at rogermmit@aol.com. We would like to have a Brightwell-cum-Sotwell resident on our committee.

Roger Mitchell

In Brief – round and about

Wallingford Country Market

Seasonal baking, crafts, cards and plants, (including wreaths), will be on sale from the beginning of November, as well as all our usual products. Do pop in sometime – you may be surprised at what you find.

Orders can be placed for most items we sell, but particularly mince pies and other Christmas baking. Special jars of preserves make an ideal gift.

Our last market for 2016 will be held on Friday 23 December. We re-open after Christmas on Friday 13 January, 2017.

For further enquiries, please contact the Market Manager on 01865 890649 or visit us one Friday morning.

Wine, mince pies and quiz

At the December meeting of the Wallingford Gardening Club, our members will test their gardening know-how with a short quiz. Following a very brief Annual General Meeting, they will all enjoy wine and mince pies!

This event will be held in the Ridgeway Community Centre, Wallingford at 7.30pm on Thursday 8 December. Visitors very welcome £2.

Treasures Beneath our Feet

James Mather will talk to The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society (TWHAS) on Wednesday 11 January, 7.45pm at St Mary's Church, Wallingford, about local metal detecting finds from Oxfordshire and Berkshire dating from modern times to the Bronze Age. His most significant find, 'The Watlington Viking Hoard', with its amazing selection of King Alfred the Great coins, is currently on display at the Ashmolean.

Visitors (£4) are most welcome. www.twahas.org.uk

Wallingford U3A

The Annual Christmas Party will be on 7 December. Next public lecture is on 4 January, a talk by David Day on 'Pendon Museum modelling the past for the future' at Crowmarsh village hall at 2.00 pm. To see more of what we do please visit our website [Google u3awallingford](http://Google.u3awallingford). Or phone Hermione on 01865 858 024, or Jill on 01491 835994.

Style Acre

Join Style Acre at the Howbery Park Manor for an afternoon of Christmas merriment at the 'Christmas at the Manor Craft fair and Carol Concert' event. Friday 9 December 11am-2pm. For further details contact Chris at cburrows@styleacre.org.uk or call 01491 827593.

The Book of Snow



The Book of Snow is a unique combination of poems, artworks and graphic design. At its heart is a love story – its narrative then interpreted in dramatic paper cuts and collages, which are in turn wrapped in an arresting black and white design that changes with every page.

Many of the poems were written in Church Cottage, Sotwell where Robert Seatter lives –so this is poetry direct from its source!

Robert gave a live reading by atmospheric candlelight in St James Church Sotwell in November, but if you missed this enjoyable evening the book is available direct from Robert (Robert.seatter@bbc.co.uk) or via www.tworiverspress.com.

Front cover images

The wintery photo on the front cover is of the Croft Path looking west, taken by Susanne Tuffrey a few years ago when we had a heavy snowfall at Christmas. We welcome local photos or drawings to feature on our front cover so if you have any you think might be suitable, please send them to the Editor (thevillagerbcs@gmail.com).

VILLAGE DIARY

December

2	FOBS Christmas Fair Brightwell School	School	5.30pm
6	Christmas village lunch	VH	12.15pm
10	Art club exhibition	VH	10am
12	Carols for Syria in aid of Brightwell Supporting Refugees	St James'	6.30pm
13	WI Line Dancing	VH	7.30
15	Island Farm Donkey Sanctuary Carol Service		7.30pm
18	Christmas Carol Service	St Agatha's	6pm
24	Crib Service	St Agatha's	4.30pm
24	Carols around the Save The Children Tree	Square	5.15pm
25	Christmas Day Family Service	St Agatha's	9.30pm
30	New Year's Eve Eve Party	Red Lion	8.30pm

January

2	Wassail		3pm
10	WI Meeting – Resolutions and Chutney Tasting	VH	7.30pm
25	Burns Night Supper	Red Lion	7pm

Advance Notice

Saturday 11 March Village Quiz

Refuse Collection (Food waste each week)

Grey bins	Thursdays 1, 15 & Saturday 31 December Friday 13 & Thursday 26 January
Green (& brown) bins	Thursdays 8 & 22 December Saturday 7 (no brown) & Thursday 19 January

Village website

For more information about Brightwell-cum-Sotwell visit the village website: www.brightwellcumsotwell.co.uk, and on Facebook at [Brightwell-cum-Sotwell community page](#).

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