



Newsletter No 82
Winter 2023
www.osa.org.uk



OGBOURNE ST ANDREW, MAIZEY AND ROCKLEY NEWSLETTER

*SPECIAL 20TH
ANNIVERSARY EDITION!*



Welcome to the Winter edition of the Parish Newsletter!
Inside this bumper issue you'll find:

- ♦ **20 years of the village newsletter!**
- ♦ **Village news**
- ♦ **Silks on the Downs update**
- ♦ **Project Andrew – reorganising the church**
- ♦ **Carol-singing and Christmas church services**
- ♦ **Who lives in Ogbourne St Andrew**
- ♦ **100 Club winners**
- ♦ **Christmas waste and recycling**
- ♦ **Life in the pub in the 1950s and 60s**
- ♦ **Getting around with Wiltshire Connect**
- ♦ **History Group news and recollections**

Twenty years of the Parish Newsletter!

Newsletter #1 was sent out in January 2003 and was an invitation to help in putting together the proposed Village Design Statement. This was a document to provide local people with the opportunity to help design any future developments in the parish. The project resulted in an award-winning report which is still referenced in planning applications.

Once the project was finished, it was decided to continue the newsletter as a parish resource and 81 editions on we are still here! There has been a change of editors and format in the intervening years – Bruce Fox, Angela Hughes, Charlie Usher and now Alex Hegarty. A willing band of volunteers has delivered copies over the years and deserve a mention – for their fortitude. You wouldn't believe how many letterboxes have strong springs, sharp corners or are just difficult to reach! I pity the postmen and postwomen.

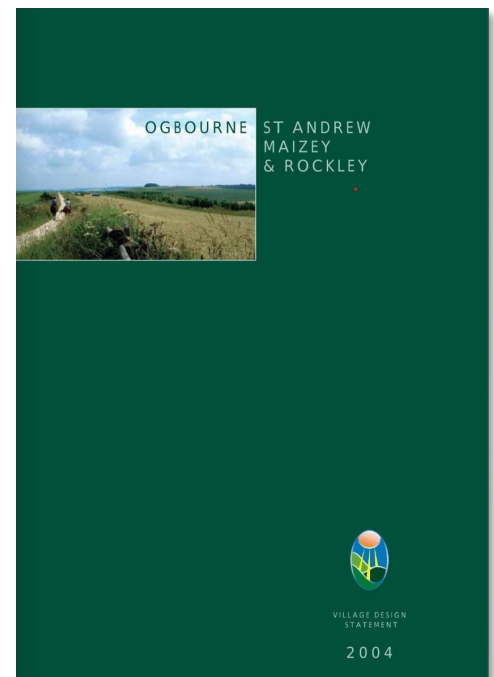
The Village Design Statement project threw up a variety of aspirations, many of which were achieved for a time – a walking group; painting and drawing group; theatre group; concerts in the church; history group. The latter is still functioning and has created a series of reports and booklets which will shortly be available at the proposed 'History Hub' in the Silks. The 300-odd photographs of the village provided a selection for the new pub decor, which has been well received.

Alerting the parish to events has aided their success: the open-air plays at Maisey, the half-price deals for parishioners at the Barbury Horse trials, fetes and church events have all been featured. The support of the Parish Council has been crucial – it means the newsletters have been free to all.

This series hasn't been the only Parish newsletter. In 1993 'The Ogbourne Times & Rockley Gazette' ran for three years covering St Andrew, St George and Rockley until replaced by 'The Ridgeway Bell'. Liz Turner and Charlotte Frost were the editorial team and copies cost 50p.

Recent copies of the current parish newsletter, as well as an electronic version of the Village Design Statement, can be found on the parish website, osa.org.uk.

Bruce Fox



The published Village Design Statement

newsletter # 6

Ogbourne St Andrew & Rockley
Maizey

April 2004

The Village Design Statement (VDS)

Presentation of the draft VDS
WEDNESDAY APRIL 28th at 8.00pm
in Ogbourne St Andrew Church
includes
Slide Show - views of the Parish - new and old
Refreshments (donations to the PCC)

Village Concert - another HIT!

Tinkers Reg were afforded a warm welcome when they returned to St Andrew's church for another of their presentations. This time it was "A Wiltshire Wedding", the story in song, verse and even dance of a young couple progressing from courtship to marriage. Over 70 people packed the church for a superb evening's entertainment. Refreshments again were provided by the PCC, who did a sterling job in crowd control.

A further concert is planned for October 27th this year. Bob Fox and Betty Graham, two excellent performers, will present an audio visual show of songs and tales of the canals from yesteryear to the present day. This is a truly entertaining and interesting show and shouldn't be missed!

THEY'RE COMING BACK TO THE WATER
Make a note in your diary

April 2004

newsletter # 6

VDS Project - Progress:
A draft statement has been produced and informally submitted to Kennet District Council. Their comments, which were only on minor points, will be incorporated into the draft, which will soon be sent to all households for their input and comments. The draft itself will then be formally presented to Kennet for adoption later in the year.
A Public Meeting will be held in the Church on Wednesday April 28th at 8.00pm.
The aim will be to present the draft VDS, its findings, and what input we are looking from the Parish before final submission.
Anyone unable to attend will have a copy of the draft delivered to their door.
Your comments and input are valuable, and will be welcomed.

Walking Group:
If you would be interested in heading together to take advantage of the beautiful countryside around us, and the interest in meeting people, then walks during the week and at weekends in small groups are being arranged.
Please contact:
Sue Wood: 01672 514324

Neighbourhood Watch & Vandalism
Following an increase in the amount of dumping and vandalism, the Parish Council are looking at re-investigating the Neighbourhood Watch scheme. Further details will be sent out in due course.
• Large quantities of rubbish were dumped on the Maizey - Rockley road recently, as well as by the bridge over the old railway at Maizey and on the track leading up to Porton Down (near Wood).
• The gates and fence at The Firs and Poulton Down Farm in St Andrew have been vandalised several times. It should be noted that there is no Public Right of Way along this access.
• The iron stables, although already in need of repair, have been needlessly damaged.
If you see any acts of vandalism or dumping, please contact any of the following:
The Police: 01672 542311
Kennet contact centre: 01380 734665
(please removed within one working day)
Any Parish Councillor
In the case of The Firs gate, etc:
Jonathan Parkinson-Lill: 01672 841334.

History Group:
A latent interest in the history of our Parish appears to have been awakened by the historical vignettes in the recent newsletters. Two subsequent meetings have resulted in the formation of a small committee to assist in the formation and co-ordination of a Parish History group.
All members will be encouraged to form small groups, specific to their own interests and to carry out research at their own pace and above all ENJOY themselves in the process.
The overall aim will be to research, collate, display and archive all aspects of the history of the Parish, possibly with a view in the future to publishing a history of the Parish.
For further help and information please contact Brian Wood.
Phone: 01672 514324
e-mail: brian.wood23@virgin.net

Painting / Drawing Group:
If you are keen on painting or drawing and would like to take part in a creative session,
Phone: Jane Fox 01672 512867

Theatre Group
A theatre group has been formed, with an aim of 2 or 3 visits a year. By visiting to various theatres within an hours drive from the village. The first two will be in Scotland, followed by a visit to a pantomime, early in the New Year. The approximate cost will be £20-£25 per head to include the theatre ticket and the transport. Details will be sent out in the next Newsletter. If you are interested in taking part, please contact either:
Margaret Matthews 01672 841382,
Cheryl Swan 841521 or
Sally Page-Ratcliff 841500

Steering Group:
Chairman: Roger Swan Ogbourne 841521
Vice-Chairman: Bruce Fox Ogbourne 512857
Secretary: Liz Wright Ogbourne 841039
Treasurer: Carol Davis Ogbourne 841294
Committee:
Sue Page Ratcliff Ogbourne 841500
Sally Page-Ratcliff Ogbourne 84174
Liz Turner Ogbourne 841501
Margaret Matthews Ogbourne 841382
Sheila Heaven Ogbourne 841525
John Hutchinson Ogbourne 512712
Amy Roberts Rockley 511257
If you feel you would like to help in any capacity, then, please contact Roger Swan. This is a community project for the widest scope.

Newsletter Issue Number 6, April 2004: beginning to mix parish news with the VDS plans

Twenty Years On



I suppose I was caught slightly off-guard when our esteemed editor contacted me, "John, did you know the village newsletter is twenty years old this year? Would you like to write a piece about all the changes that have taken place during that time?"

"Yes, of course," I replied airily, confident that I had a pretty sound grasp on the modern history of the Parish. But the realisation soon dawned that I actually have a rather impoverished memory when it comes to village timelines. So I am afraid

this article will be more a series of dubious assertions and questions and you, dear villager, will have to write in to me with the true facts...and I will publish the list of corrections in the next newsletter. So the exam question I was set was "What has changed in the Parish over the last 20 years?"

There are some things I can be pretty sure about. For example, during the last 20 years a major project has researched, documented and restored the ancient

Twenty Years On (continued from previous page)

burial mound within the churchyard. A major landmark has been afforded the recognition it deserves. I know also, for example, that our local pub has transitioned from The Wheatsheaf to The Silks on The Downs and is now the beating heart of the village in the guise of a Community Pub. What an achievement!

Over recent years, the villages have seen a lot of housing development. But, for the life of me, I can't remember when the development took place. Can you? The Olympia appears very well established.... But is it less or more than twenty years old? What about Sheepridge...? It looks as if it has been there forever...but I can remember the farm buildings that were there before. When we moved into Ogbourne Maizey, some 40-odd years ago, Stable Cottages were either part of the old racing stable block or were just not there.



Stable Cottages, built on the site of the stableyard

Manor Courtyard was part of the gardens of The Manor. A range of handsome Victorian greenhouses stood where our friends' houses stand now. And the lunge ring for the stables lay derelict with the Old



The entrance to Manor Courtyard, built on the gardens of the Manor

Engine House, which used to generate electricity for the Manor, standing by the roadside.



The area where the stables lunge ring was. The old Engine House stood here too.

But that was all 40 years ago....how much of all of this development occurred within the last 20 years. Do you know?

I do know that Bonita racing stables has changed hands in the last twenty years. After many years at Bonita, Peter and Natalie handed over to Emma and Barry. We were all delighted that it remained a

racing stables, a key component of village life. New ownership has brought new development and a new all-weather training run up the valley. No longer do race-horses clip clop their way through Maizey at dawn...they cross straight from the Upper Yard to the all-weather track.

And I do know that the mighty river Og has been returned to its original route across the water meadow, north of St Andrew. Heron, snipe and other birdlife have returned.

Attempts have been made to manage the speed of vehicles through the Parish. New 20mph zones have been imposed in Andrew & Maizey and the 40mph limit on the main road (A346) has been lowered to 30mph, with the addition of Speed Indicator Devices.

Change continues apace as you would expect in a thriving community. The next big village project is the refurbishment of the church....which has been a long time coming. Hopefully on the 40th anniversary of the village newsletter we will be able to report on the successful transformation of the church into a vibrant hub of community activity to complement the village pub.

As a Parish, we are poorly off for community space and hopefully this will help fill that void.

After this rather rambling (and somewhat ill-informed) piece, I ought to make a philosophical observation. At the end of the day, bricks and mortar do not a village make. It is, of course, the people. Over the last twenty years there has been a veritable upsurge in village life and activities, much of it due to the influx of new young talent into the new builds and into the community as a whole. The pub project was a great catalyst in this and has led to a much greater sense of community and many new friendships. Communication in the village is now better than it has ever been with various WhatsApp and Facebook groups springing up making requests for help, organising meetings and managing volunteers much easier. This also gives me the opportunity to thank Alex for the great work she does in producing the newsletter.

If you have answers to any of the questions I have left hanging, please email me on john@teamhetherington.co.uk.

John Hetherington



Keeping the Railway Path safe for users

The railway path that runs through the east of the village is reserved for the use of cyclists, runners, walkers and horse riders. Motorcycles and off-road vehicles are not permitted on the path, but do sometimes seem to be using it. These vehicles not only pose a risk to other users, but can cause considerable damage to the surface and disturb wildlife. Any such activity can be reported to Sustrans (the organisation maintaining the path) via email: south@sustrans.org.uk.



VILLAGE NEWS

Ramsbury Gin and Vodka tasting

On 9th November, twenty of us gathered together at the Silks, to enjoy a gin and vodka tasting hosted by April Thrush from Ramsbury Brewery. We tasted both the Single Estate Vodka and a Special Limited Edition followed by Ramsbury London Dry Gin and then my personal favourite, the new Raspberry and Honey. Nibbles were also provided to soak up the liquid! Everyone went home with a gift pack of miniature gin and vodka and a Ramsbury logo gin glass. Cheryl Swan was also a lucky winner of a Ramsbury Produce Hamper. After a jolly start to the evening, we stayed on afterwards to enjoy a meal.

Carolyn Davis

The River Og

In a recent newsletter (#80) there was an article describing the 'restoration' of the course of the Og to its pre-19th century course (an update is included in this issue). With the heavy rains over the last few weeks the change in the Og has been dramatic: with the old canalised route dry, a sinuous river has reappeared in the field to the north of Wetpit. Wildlife has already moved back in and the other day I counted four herons grouped close to Wetpit. I have seen the occasional heron in the past along the Og, but never four!

Unfortunately, they were just too widely dispersed to capture a shot of all four but perhaps this suffices (see right).

Bruce Fox



Application to record a bridleway

The Planning Inspectorate held an Inquiry at Silks on the Downs on Tuesday 31st October to determine whether or not a Definitive Map Modification Order should be made. The route, of approximately 430 metres long, would link Byway OSTA6 (known locally as Green Lane) from Drove Barn to Bridleway OSTA29 (which comes up from St Andrew).

The Inspector heard from both proposers and objectors, and the outcome will be made known within 6 weeks of the Inquiry date.

Carolyn Davis



The Parish Council

The Parish Council meets regularly through the year to discuss matters relating to our Parish, which covers the villages of Ogbourne St Andrew, Ogbourne Maizey and Rockley, and a large area of the local countryside. We are here to help with any local issues, so do feel free to contact us. If you would like to get in touch please email our parish clerk, Jan Whitehead, on ogbourneparishclerk@yahoo.co.uk. Or you can call the Chairman of the Parish Council, John Hetherington, on 01672514712.

You can find out more about what the Parish Council does and the budget we manage on the village website at osa.org.uk. The website also has Minutes of recent Parish Council meetings under the section The Parish Council > Documents.

The next meeting will be held on 8th January 2024.

Parking on pavements

As a reminder, according to the Highway Code, which provides guidelines for road users, vehicles should not be parked on the pavement unless there are specific signs or markings that permit it.



The Highway Code states: 145. You MUST NOT drive on or over a pavement, footpath or bridleway except to gain lawful access to property or in the case of an emergency.

The Parish Council



New Thames Water reporting tool

Thames Water has launched a new reporting tool and easy-to-use interactive map to allow members of the public to report sewer flooding, blockages or leaks. You can report a problem, upload photos and videos and provide a location using the map, which contains boundary lines and property numbers so that the exact position of the problem can be pinpointed. You can also use the map to check planned maintenance work going on in the area, including details of traffic and roadwork updates so motorists can plan their journeys.

Find the tool online at: www.thameswater.co.uk/help/report-a-problem



MULTI-MEDIA PROJECTOR FOR HIRE

The Parish and the History Group have a multi-media projector available for hire within the Parish. The modest hire charge of £5 funds the purchase of a replacement lamp.

Contact: Bruce Fox 01672 512867



OGBOURNE ST ANDREW CHURCH NEWS

‘Project Andrew’

A very successful meeting of villagers was held in the church on Thursday 30th November. This was the launch of the plans for the reorganisation of the west end of the building. Just over 50 people attended the presentation from members of the PCC, the architect, contractor and fundraising consultant involved with the project.



The plans show the installation of running water for an accessible toilet and a kitchenette, as well as a rearrangement of the vestry area to create a space for community use for talks, concerts, meetings and anything else you suggest. It was stressed that in no way is it intended to compete with the Silks On The Downs; the strong wish is to complement the pub for the benefit of everyone.

In order to unlock grants from various charities we need to demonstrate that we have the support of the community. This was evident at the meeting but we encourage you to please complete our questionnaire with your comments and suggestions. The church after all is owned by all of us. We hope too that you might make a financial contribution, either by a donation now or by pledging one for when the works begin in the summer of next year.

Full details of the ground covered in the meeting, the questionnaire and how to contribute will hopefully have been distributed by the time you read this. We will of course keep you informed of progress being made. We thank you for your support.

Roger Swan and Marion Gordon-Finlayson – Churchwardens

100 CLUB WINNERS Why not join the 100 club?

October 2023

- 1st prize Yvonne Parsons**
- 2nd prize Marian Blakeney**

November 2023

- 1st prize Nicky Place**
- 2nd prize John Hooper**

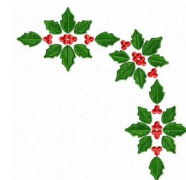
December 2023

- 1st prize John Edmunds**
- 2nd prize Roger Swan**

A 100 Club is a form of lottery. Subscribers pay £2 per month and are entered into a monthly draw. All profits go to Ogbourne St Andrew Church.

First prize is 75% of the available pot, while second prize is 25%. There is no limit to the number of shares held by any one person, but no individual can win more than one prize per month. The more shares you own, the greater your chances of winning!

Apply to Ian Gordon-Finlayson, Treasurer, at iangf@f2s.com, to join the 100 Club or to increase your holding.



OGBOURNE ST ANDREW CHURCH SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER

6.30 pm

“A celebration of Christmas” for the whole family

Well loved carols, music for Christmas, poems and favourite Christmas readings

Wine & mince pies (suggested donation £5.00)

CHRISTMAS HAMPERS - RAFFLE DRAW AT THE END OF THE EVENING

Any queries contact Marion on 01672-512125



CAROL SINGING FOR ALL IN THE OGBOURNES

Manor Courtyard, Ogbourne Maizey

Wednesday 13 December

From 6.00pm

The residents of Manor Courtyard are kindly offering mulled wine & mince pies

All families most welcome. Carol Sheets provided

Come warmly dressed with a torch

Any queries: contact Marion on 01672-512125

History Group also 20 years old! www.osahg.org.uk

In 2003 two unsuspecting new-comers to the village were in for a surprise:

"Sue and I had just moved into Ogbourne Maizey. There was a local planning meeting being held in Marion and Ian's house. I didn't know them but I wandered across out of curiosity. By the end of that meeting, I had volunteered to help with a fledgling village history group. In no time at all, somehow, I found myself Chairman; how did that happen? But what a blessing. I had the privilege of delving into the history of the Parish with its fascinating mixture from Romans to Horse Racing. Able to look at the Church, the cottages and houses and surrounding fields with a fresh understanding. Learning of the lives of previous villagers who left their mark on the story of the Parish. It also allowed me to meet many of the villagers, both past and present. Many with their own tales to tell. A happy ten years passed before I passed the baton to Bruce and took a back seat.

I must give thanks to the committee members throughout that time who helped so much with our investigations and I feel became good friends. Circumstances have changed and we have had to reluctantly move away from Maisey but I hope Sue and I are now part of the story. Many thanks to you all."

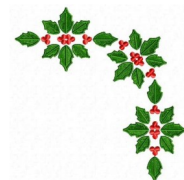
Brian Wood

Another player key in successfully launching the Group was Bill Turner who, until he passed away in 2006, offered much help and advice. Since then the Group has offered monthly talks, exhibitions at fetes and Christmas fairs. We have organised archaeological digs, a graffiti survey of the church and an innovative geophysical investigation of the barrow next to the church. We are still in business and are regrouping for next year. We have a large amount of archive material we wish to share with the parish, and that starts with attending at the Silks coffee mornings each month to advertise and discuss items of interest.

Progress has been made in creating booklets of old photographs of personalities. In addition, Brian's excellent history of the racing stables is being updated with new pictures and text. Using the newspaper archives, a series of clippings relating to Ogbourne St Andrew from 1738 to 1941 have been bound into a booklet. We hope these booklets will form the nucleus of a 'History Hub', available in the Silks. The articles vary from the mundane to the tragic, but show the life and death of our forebears. A short selection follows below:

Transported for stealing, WILTSHIRE LENT ASSIZES 1848

George Sawyer, 45, of Ogbourne St. Andrew, was convicted of stealing a palin (?) tree lug, and quantity of bran and peas, the property of John Gale and T. A. Gale, and sentenced to seven years transportation. (!)



Underweight bread 1873

William Harper, of Ogbourne St. Andrew, baker, was summonsed for underweight bread. P. C. Clarke proved the case. Mr. Stratton stated that the same day he weighed the loaf handed to him by the witness; the loaf on being weighed was found to be one ounce and six drachms short of two pounds. To pay 9s. costs.

Case of animal neglect 1880

William Turner, of Ogbourne St. Andrew, shepherd, in the employ of Mr. Robert P. Tanner, was summoned under the Employers and Workmen Act for negligence under a contract of service whereby his master sustained a loss of an ewe sheep of the value of £3. It also appeared that defendant was addicted to poaching in his master's time. Contract annulled, Michaelmas money £3 forfeited, and to pay costs 9s. 6d., and allowed a month to seek and obtain another cottage.

Left engine going 1935

Horace Taylor, of Ogbourne St. Andrew, was fined 7s. 6d. for quitting a motor-car without having stopped the engine.

Bruce Fox

AONBs become National Landscapes

The very special area we live in has been renamed from an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to a National Landscape. The North Wessex Downs National Landscape covers areas of Wiltshire, Berkshire, Hampshire, Oxfordshire. It encompasses 173 parishes and is the third largest National Landscape in the country covering an area of 668 square miles (1,730 square kilometres). It received its designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1972, and AONBs were renamed National Landscapes in November 2023.

Conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the North Wessex Downs is the responsibility of nine local authorities within the four counties. They come together with community, farming, conservation, tourism and heritage representatives to make up a governing Council of Partners, which is supported by a small professional team.

The new logo reflects this name change and depicts a well-known landscape icon in the North Wessex Downs – the Uffington White Horse – and the big skies we enjoy on top of the chalk downs. Read more about the North Wessex Downs and this significant change for protected landscapes on the website:

www.northwessexdowns.org.uk



**North Wessex
Downs
National
Landscape**



Silks on the Downs News

Firstly, a huge thank you to everyone for your ongoing support at the pub. We are navigating through this difficult period, not only with support from an army of volunteers giving up their spare time to keep the pub operational, but also by many of you visiting as guests and spending money in the pub. On behalf of the committee, thank you so much.

Trading

During late October and November, the pub has, so far, enjoyed good trading, and the impact of cost reductions starts in early December, providing the pub with relief on cash reserves. However, we must maximise the Christmas period to boost our trade. We therefore continue to ask for your support to promote the Christmas menu to your friends and colleagues, and for you to visit the pub yourselves.

The pub has not operated trouble-free, and the committee acknowledge this and thank everyone for their goodwill in tolerating the problems as they arise. Several of you have provided critical feedback directly to the committee, and we welcome this as it helps us address the operational challenges. Soon, we will be planning for January to ensure we successfully trade through this quiet period.

Volunteers

Once again, thank you to all the volunteers who are helping to turn around the pub's fortunes. Almost every aspect of the pub has a merry band of volunteers adding much-needed time and services – maintenance, gardening, cleaning, table waiting, bartending, kitchen help, staff training, marketing, bookkeeping, supplies management, and so on.

The impact can be seen through the volume of great reviews and lovely comments on Google, Trip Advisor, TableAgent and Facebook. The atmosphere of the pub has changed thanks to the friendly welcome and service of our volunteers.

Christmas menu bookings

Please book your work or family Christmas party with us. The menu is on the website at www.silksonthedowns.co.uk along with the details of how to book. The menu started on 29th November and runs through to Christmas Eve.

New Year's Eve Party

The committee is throwing a New Year's Eve party for volunteers, locals and members to thank you all for your support. Please book in advance. Finger food will be provided free of charge, and the bar will charge for drinks as usual. Join us to see in 2024!

Quiz night

Please note that the November and December quiz nights have been cancelled due to clashes. We will schedule two in January to make up for the lapse!



Christmas Opening

Our opening hours for Christmas are as follows:

Christmas Eve Sunday 24th December

Open for Sunday lunch as usual from midday to 3pm. The pub remains open for drinks only until 10pm

Christmas Day Monday 25th December

Open from midday to 2pm for drinks only for the local community

Boxing Day Tuesday 26th December

Closed all day

27th – 30th December

Open as usual

New Year's Eve Sunday 31st December

Private party for local community, members and volunteers, 7pm to 1am.

New Year's Day Monday 1st January

Closed

For bookings contact hello@savethesilks.co.uk, visit our website www.silksonthedowns.co.uk or call 01672 205604.

Nick Gregory

Chair, Ogbourne Community Pub Society



New Year's Eve at The Silks

31st December 7pm – 1am

Please join us to welcome in 2024!

Open to all Members of the Ogbourne Community and Silks Members

☆ Cold finger food from approx. 8pm

☆ The bar will be open as normal



Free entry but please let us know that you'll be coming...hello@silksonthedowns.co.uk



Recollections of life at The Wheatsheaf Inn

I was born in The Wheatsheaf Inn, now called The Silks on the Downs, in 1949 and lived there until 1972 with my elder brother John and our parents Sydney and Dorothy Harris (Syd and Dolly) who ran the pub, Sydney having been the licensee since 1938. Growing up in a public house seemed perfectly normal to me and with my friends and the whole of Ogbourne parish as our playground, life as a youngster was pretty idyllic. I attended the village school under the care of Mrs Welch and Mrs Webb but was sure to nip back home each day for lunch.

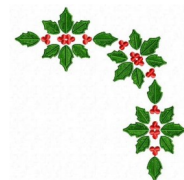
The pub then was somewhat smaller than now at The Silks with separate lounge and public bars, each with their own entrance doors. Our downstairs living room occupied the space taken by the Silks kitchen, which seems a bit tight now but was fine back then. There was a small kitchen to the rear and an internal staircase to our bedrooms and bathroom.

The customers broadly fell into two categories – locals and passing trade. Ushers Brewery, who then owned the pub, acquired the neighbouring Axe & Compass former ale house around 1950 and demolished it to make way for the car park, which greatly increased capacity for passing trade. This was significant, and sometimes hectic when a coach would pull in and discharge its passengers who all needed food and drink. It was literally all hands to the pumps. You never knew who might come in the door. I remember one evening in the early sixties a pink Rolls Royce arrived bearing a pink feather duster fixed to the bonnet and Ken Dodd stopped by for a drink. He proceeded to entertain the customers with jokes and stories – a comedian whose on and off-stage personas appeared inseparable.

I recall that traditional pub entertainment in the public bar was popular among the locals with card games, cribbage being particularly popular, shove-halfpenny and of course darts, with a Wheatsheaf team competing in the Marlborough area darts league. In the lounge bar there was a record player and a large collection of old vinyl records which regular customers seemed to like, but this was consigned to history in the mid-sixties when an amazing juke box arrived with all the latest hits, changed every fortnight. The pub now was alive with music – as a teenager I thought this was great and I had the code to get free plays!

Pub food on offer then was somewhat simpler than now. My mother would make freshly cut sandwiches but she was particularly known for her homemade meat and vegetable pies which were hugely popular and seemed to be the staple diet for a large number of the many stable lads from the Maizey yards of Sir Gordon Richards and Bob Turnell. These lads had bags of energy, sometimes too much when typically on a Saturday night they'd had one shandy too many. I remember we kept two pairs of boxing gloves in the pub which were occasionally used for 'sparring'. Sunday lunchtimes would be when the racehorse owners, trainers and jockeys would arrive.

The pub was open every day from mid-morning to early afternoon and from 6pm to



closing time, and in between there was always work to do. Our Mum and Dad worked very hard to keep the business going and successful for so long. My brother and I would help around the pub; there were always empty bottles and barrels to be taken out for collection and new stock brought in. I recall that the wooden kegs of our best-selling Ushers Best Bitter needed to be treated with some respect – rolled in and placed on wooded ‘stillages’ behind the bar and allowed to settle for a couple of days then, with a confident whack with a mallet, drive in the brass tap and the wooden ‘spile’. Get it wrong and the result would be a drenching!

By the late sixties I was helping out behind the bar at busy times. I left school in 1967 and started work as an apprentice at Plessey, a large engineering company in Swindon. After my father passed away our mother held the pub licence and my brother and I helped her in the evenings and at weekends. Life was busy. I finally moved from Ogbourne in 1972 to a new home in Swindon with my newly-wed Sue, whilst my brother John continued the family association with The Wheatsheaf as its licensee until 1977.

Roger Harris



Bay Meadows opens to the public

The new Wiltshire Wildlife Trust Bay Meadows nature reserve, which sits on the east side of the A346 between Ogbourne Maizey and Marlborough, was officially opened on 1 November at an event attended by local dignitaries, including the Mayor of Marlborough Nick Fogg, and Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Ninna Gibson.



Bay Meadows is now both a nature park for everyone to visit and a nature reserve for wildlife, comprising 30 acres of restored water meadows. Wiltshire Wildlife Trust purchased the site in 2022 to protect it from the threat of development, preserve it for the local community to enjoy and increase its biodiversity. The River Og, a typical Wiltshire chalk stream, runs through the reserve and joins the River Kennet in the town, making Bay Meadows an important wildlife corridor.

Surveys undertaken as part of the project have revealed that more than 300 species call Bay Meadows home, including otter and wild brown trout; it is also one of the last refuges of water voles, which have decreased by over 94% nationally and are now absent from most nearby counties.





Restoring the River Og: December update

Over the summer, whilst the river was dry, diggers got to work in the field upstream from Ogbourne St Andrew to rediscover the old channel of the River Og.

Using a combination of historic maps, lidar data and measurements on the ground we have guided the river from the man-made ditch along the side of the A346 back along a meandering course through the middle of the field to re-discover its 'paleo channel', the route it would have flowed before people started to move it in the 1800s.



The channel is designed to spill out across the field to create wide shallow wetland areas that have already attracted heron, snipe and ducks. Over time the vegetation in the field will naturally move from improved pasture to a more diverse mix of plants, hopefully including species suited to a wet meadow habitat such as marsh marigold, lady's smock and snakeshead fritillary.

Throughout the project we have worked with the Environment Agency and our contractors Cain Bio-Engineering.

Coping with a wet year



The springs this year broke early after a long wet summer, so the river has risen fast and the new channel has been working hard. Overall the space for water in the field is larger than the space for water in the old ditch, so the flow to the village has been slowed and the river levels through the village should be more even as a result of the work.

Now that the seasonal winterbourne flow has returned and we can see how the river is adapting to its altered route, ARK is planning to

slightly modify the channel at the north end to stop water escaping too far west and impacting adjacent land, so expect to see diggers return briefly.



Overall throughout the catchment, Winter 2023/24 is shaping up to be a wet year. If you are interested in tracking groundwater levels and river flows you can see them updated at: www.gaugemap.co.uk. Monthly updates are published by the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology at: eip.ceh.ac.uk/hydrology/water-resources. The nearest groundwater station is Rockley and the nearest Og river flow gauge is Poulton Farm.

If you have any questions about this project, or any other work ARK are involved with, please contact Charlotte or Rupert on:

Charlotte@riverkennet.org, Rupert@riverkennet.org, or call the office on 01672 512700.

New Wiltshire Connect bus service



Wiltshire Connect is a new on-demand and timetabled bus network in the Pewsey Vale and Marlborough. It only comes as far north as Marlborough, but once in Marlborough, you can book an on-demand service, or take a timetabled bus to Devizes, Great Bedwyn or Hungerford.

All adult fares are £2, and young people up to 21 pay half fare. You can pay on the app or with the driver.

On-demand service

Unlike a typical bus service, Wiltshire Connect operates on a pre-bookable, on-demand basis. Operating hours are Monday to Friday between 6am-8pm and Saturdays between 8am-8pm. When you book, smart technology matches up your journey with

any other passengers travelling in the same direction. You can book up to seven days ahead or with as little as 30 minutes' notice on the day, subject to availability. Note: rides within Marlborough are not permitted, except journeys between Marlborough and Savernake Hospital.

Timetabled service

Wiltshire Connect also operates four semi-flexible timetabled services in the Pewsey Vale and Marlborough area. These cover 100 Marlborough-Devizes (route 100), Pewsey-Devizes (101), Marlborough-Great Bedwyn-Hungerford (110) and Wilton-Marlborough (211, Weds only). Note: Rides cannot be booked between stops on the X5 route during times when the X5 is running.

You can board without pre-booking at most locations; however, if your stop is marked P on the timetable you need to pre-book (via the app or by phone) to divert the bus.

How to book

Book via the Wiltshire Connect app or by phone, tel. 01225 712900, 9am – 5pm Mon-Fri. Find out more and see timetables at: www.wiltshireconnect.co.uk



WHO LIVES IN OGBOURNE ST ANDREW, MAIZEY AND ROCKLEY?

Bruce Fox, Ogbourne Maizey

I have now been living in Maizey for 44 years, an extremely happy time in such a friendly and lively community, and have made many friends in that time. Born in Sussex more years ago than I care to remember, I spent my formative years in Southampton before obtaining a degree in Chemistry at Loughborough University in 1968. A year in the product development of Natural Rubber products was followed by three years banking in London before migrating back to a post in Analytical Chemistry, this time in synthetic rubber production in a laboratory overlooking Southampton Water on the edge of the New Forest. The sight of iconic transatlantic liners passing, interspersed with the occasional flying-boat taking off, made for pleasant diversions!

A career move in 1979 found me employed in Swindon and with a house in Ogbourne Maizey. Raychem was a progressive American company rooted in materials technology. The analytical chemistry demands were very wide reaching and demanding. It was forensic style analysis without all the drama of Silent Witness (or the dead bodies!) The increasing prevalence of computers opened up fascinating new areas of analysis and I was provided with some very expensive toys to play with. By 2002 the company had been taken over and the vibrancy lost, so when redundancy was offered I started 12 years of consultancy.

In 2003 I became involved in the Village Design project, which led to a deep interest in the local history, becoming Chairman of the History Group in 2014. Highlights of that new career have been: creating an updated history of the church together with a graffiti survey; archaeological dig in the field west of the church; creation of an information board; creation of the Group website; collecting stories, memories and photographs of the parish. All this would have been impossible without the help of the committee and parishioners. Of late the focus has been on the history of the Silks (the Wheatsheaf Inn as it then was).

I have seen many changes in the parish, the developments of: Box Drive; Maizey Manor stables; Sheepridge and Olympia, all of which have altered the 'feel' of the area in a positive way without detracting from the broader beauty of the Downs. Jane and I feel very lucky and privileged to live amongst you all in this exquisite corner of Wiltshire.

If you would like to be interviewed for a future issue, or suggest someone else, please email me on alexandra.hegarty@hotmail.co.uk. You just have to be a resident of St Andrew, Maizey or Rockley (we would love to hear more from Rockley residents!)



CHRISTMAS WASTE AND RECYCLING



Waste and recycling collection dates will be delayed by two days over the Christmas and New Year period. There will be no collections on Christmas Day (Monday 25th December), Boxing Day (Tuesday 26th December) or New Year's Day (Monday 1st January). Normal collections will not resume until Monday 15th January 2024.

Check your waste, recycling, and garden waste collection days online at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/recycling.

If you have extra recyclable materials over Christmas such as cans, cardboard and paper, place these in suitable alternative containers alongside your bin.

Did you know that you can recycle the following in your blue-lidded bin?

- Recyclable wrapping paper*
- Plastic sweet tubs (up to 5 litres)
- Christmas cards without glitter
- Biscuit tins
- Plastic bottles and food containers
- Cardboard packaging
- Mince pie foil cases
- Squirry cream aerosols
- Drinks cans

* Use the scrunch test: squeeze the paper into a ball. If it stays in a ball, it is most likely made of paper only and can be recycled. If not, it is likely to contain other materials so cannot be collected for recycling

Remember, you can't put these in your blue-lidded bin:

- Electricals incl. fairy lights*
- Polystyrene
- Foil-linked cardboard tubes eg Pringles
- Batteries**
- Cling film

** Never put **batteries or electrical items** into any of your household waste bins as they can cause fires in collection vehicles or at waste processing/sorting facilities.

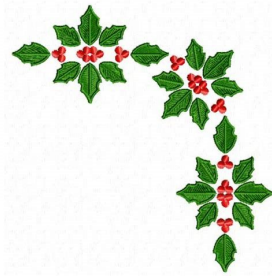
You can now put out **small household batteries and small rechargeable electricals** alongside your kerbside recycling every fortnight. Put them in a sealed clear sandwich bag, on top of your blue-lidded recycling bin or beside your blue recycling sack.

Garden Waste

Garden waste collections will cease for two weeks, from Monday 25th December to Monday 8th January. When services resume on Tuesday 9th January they will be delayed by one day, starting with collections which would normally have taken place on Monday 8th January. Normal collections will not resume until Monday 15th January 2024.



If you pay to have your garden waste collected, you can also leave your real Christmas tree next to your garden waste bin on your first collection in January, and your tree will go to be composted (don't put out fake trees as they will not be collected). If your tree is over 5ft, please cut it into manageable pieces and put them into your garden waste bin if there is room.



For your Diary

*More information on planned events
can
be found inside this issue, or see the village*

Wednesday 13th December, 6pm: Carol Singing for all in the Ogbournes. Meet at Manor Courtyard, Ogbourne Maizey

Sunday 17th December, 6:30pm: A Celebration of Christmas Service,
Ogbourne St Andrew Church

Sunday 24th December, 5:30pm: Christmas Eve Christingle Service,
Ogbourne St Andrew Church

Sunday 24th December: Silks on the Downs open for Sunday lunch 12pm-3pm, and drinks only until 10pm

Monday 25th December, 10:00am: Christmas Day Communion,
Ogbourne St Andrew Church

Monday 25th December, Christmas Day: Silks on the Downs open from 12pm-2pm, for drinks only, for the local community

Tuesday 26th December: Public Holiday (Boxing Day)

Sunday 31st December, New Year's Eve: Silks on the Downs open as usual for Sunday lunch, followed by Private Party for local community, members and volunteers, 7pm-1am.

Monday 1st January: Public Holiday (New Year's Day)

Monday 8th January: Parish Council Meeting

Monday 15th January: Normal waste and recycling dates resume



Join the Facebook Community page to stay connected, offer help, ask for help or simply to chat.

Look for 'Ogbourne St Andrew, Maizey and Rockley Community'.

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