

The DOWNSMAN

April 2011



Picture courtesy of Trish Chorley

The Parish of Sixpenny Handley with Pentridge

**Including: Woodyates, Deanland and Minchington
Published by Sixpenny Handley Parish Council
Delivered by Sixpenny Handley Homewatch**

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	CLlr Mrs P Bailey-Wright..	552771
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<u>County Councillor</u>	CLlr T. Palmer	552321
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Rights of Way Liaison Officers

Sixpenny Handley	Mrs M New	552539
Pentridge	Mrs M. Jones	552358

The Downsman Team

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Production	Brian Hansford.....	552468
Advertising	John Cornish	553199

Churches

Church of England	St. Mary's, Sixpenny Handley	
	St. Rumbold's, Pentridge	
	St. Andrews, Gussage St. Andrew	
Vicar	Rev Mel Durrant, The Vicarage	
	60 High Street, Sixpenny Handley	
	552608
Roman Catholic	Church of Our Lady of Lourdes &	
	St. Cecilia, Blandford Forum	
Priest	Rev. Father Dylan James	
	The Prestbury, 55 Salisbury Street,	
	Shaftesbury.....	01747 852125

Doctors

	Drs. Nodder, Morgan & Taubman	
	Dean Lane Surgery ..	552500

Sixpenny Handley Village Hall

Chairman	Carole Wyatt	552572
Vice Chairman	Tony Gibb	552704
Treasurer	Paul Skinner	552785
Bookings	Jaqui Blake	552306

Sixpenny Handley Homewatch

Overall Co-ordinator & Police Focal Point	John Curtis	552397
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Co-ordinators

Area 1 - Dean Lane	Don Penrose	552022
2 - Lower Handley	Chris Stokes	552672
3 - Upper Handley	John Clarke	552674
4 - Deanland & N.E.	Charles Nodder	552292
5 - West & South	Simon Meaden	552715

Other Areas (These are separate Homewatch Schemes)

Pentridge	Roy Elford	552911
Woodyates	Mrs A Adams	552675

Police

	Wimborne Station..	01202 222222/ 07825 521735
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Sixpenny Handley Allotment Holders Association

Chairman	John Curtis	552397
Secretary	Jane Laing	553146

Sixpenny Handley Horticultural Show

Chairman	Brian Hansford	552468
Secretary	Carole Wyatt	552572
Entries	Tony Gibb	552704

Schools

First School	Handley First School	552356
Middle School	Cranborne Middle School	517348
Upper School	Queen Elizabeth's School	
	Wimborne	01202 885233

Little Pennies Pre-School

Chairperson	Sarah Stonton	516939
Secretary	Andrea Meyer	552392

Little Pennies Pre-School Link Group

Contact	Tilly Stevens	552046
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Happy Nappy Club

	Samantha O'Neill	552088
	Katie Keeble	552177
	Sarah Styles	552544

1st Woodcutts Scout Group

Group Scout Leader	John Curtis	552397
Explorer Leader	Andy Turner	552735
Scout Leader	Rob Easton	552038
Cub Leader	Andy Young	553166
Beaver Leader	Denise Turner	552735

1st Sixpenny Handley Rainbows

Unit Guider	Jacqui Tarran	552008
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Sixpenny Handley W.I. (Formed in 1922)

President	Mrs Maggie Staplehurst	552795
Secretary	Mrs Bobbie Carter ...	552042

Sixpenny Handley Mother's Union

Leader	Sheila Bradley	553133
Secretary	Mary Macleod	552041

Chase Community Friends

Chairman	Vic Hatton	01258 840671
Secretary	Maureen Penrose	01725 552022

Sixpenny Handley Sports Association

Chairman	David Cross	552640
Vice Chairman	Patrick Taylor	552187
Secretary/Treasurer	Tracey Lownds	552414
Bookings	Bea Boyland	552805

Sixpenny Handley Bowls Club

President	Colin Mardlin	552810
Secretary	Bea Boyland	552805
Treasurer	Patrick Taylor	552187

Handley Sports Club

Chairman	Mark Young	552741
Secretary	Brian Hansford	552468
Team Manager	Mark Young	552741
Asst. Team Manager	Stuart Haskell	

Handley Sports Youth

Manager	Adam Day.....	01258 452481
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Sixpenny Handley Tennis Club.....

Chairman	Tracey Lownds	552414
Membership/Treasurer	Sue Smith	552225

Sixpenny Handley Cricket Club

Evening Captain	David Cross	552640
Secretary	Frances Churchill	552868

Citizens Advice Bureau

Wimborne Branch	01202 884738
Ferndown Branch	01202 893838
Out of Hours Service	08444 772022

Welcome to the latest edition of The Downsman.

Editor: Margaret Cornish, Parish Office, Unit 5B, Town Farm Workshops, Sixpenny Handley
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Sixpenny Handley with Pentridge Parish Council

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Thursday 6pm – 7-30pm

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**Please email editor@thedownsman.org.uk
to ensure your articles and news reach us
(preferably in Word, please — not pdf)**

Advertising Costs

The rates to advertise in The Downsman are:

Full page - £16

Half page - £10

Quarter page - £5

Our offer of book 6 but only pay for 5 insertions continues with the annual rates (6 issues) being £80, £50 and £25 respectively.

The magazine offers excellent value in reaching your local customers.

We currently deliver The Downsman to approximately 700 households within the parish.

We regret that flyers cannot be distributed within the Downsman.

The next edition of this magazine will be published on the
1st June 2011
Copy Deadline is Sunday 15th May
**We would also ask that contributors make every effort to meet the
deadline which is required to allow for printing, production
and distribution**

Views expressed in this magazine are those of our correspondents and contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions held by the Editor or Members of Sixpenny Handley with Pentridge Parish Council.

This publication does not endorse the products or services advertised within.

CLERK'S CORNER

Sixpenny Handley Information Network

This facility has now commenced and although only eight people have signed up for it so far, you are not too late if you wish to be added.

2011 Local Government Elections

There is still time to complete a nomination form to become a Parish Councillor – forms are in the Parish Office and have to be received, duly completed, by East Dorset Parish Council, Furzehill, Wimborne, by noon on Monday 4th April 2011. Come on! It can be fun to be a Parish Councillor and you can make a difference – ask the current ones!

Over-60 Bus Passes

You will see later in the Downsman that a decision has been made to allow these to be used prior to 9.30 am.

Anonymous Letters

I am afraid that the Parish Council are unable to take action on requests that are not signed.

Dog Fouling **oops*****

Once again the issue of dog fouling on public paths and green areas has become an unnecessary nuisance. It is simple, it is your duty and it doesn't take long: 1 Nappy Bag + 1 Dog Mess = Clean Walking & Happy Residents!!

Please make sure you always clear up after your dog and dispose of the rubbish in the Red Bins which are provided in many suitable places around the village.... not in the hedges, PLEASE!! This also applies to the paths by the campsite and adjoining farmland. Happy Walking!!

Recent Planning Applications

3/10/1235 - Hunt Corner Farm, Common Road - Construction of a below-ground concrete panelled slurry store.

3/11/0090 - 83 Minchington, - Solar panels to Agricultural Farm Building.

3/11/0097 - 8 Mulberry Court - 2 storey side extension & attached garage.

Results of previous planning applications

3/10/1119 - 6 Chase Crescent, Woodcutts - Erect rear conservatory – Permitted.

Gill Martin

THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
WILL BE HELD IN THE VILLAGE HALL
ON THURSDAY, 14TH APRIL 2011, AT 7.00 PM

As last year, it is hoped that representatives from the Church, Doctors' Surgery, School, Police, Sports Association, Scouts and Youth Group will attend and report on their activities – both past and future.

We hope to see you there.

THANK YOU

I have been reading your newsletter since first discovering it over eighteen months ago and I must say that it is magnificent especially as my mother was born at Dean End in 1910, together with her two brothers and three sisters, although she moved to the Blandford area in 1924-ish. She would often take me when she visited her sister at Handley (New Barn) and I even went to school there for a short while. Many thanks.

Mike Dennis

MARY PEACH

The cremation took place on 12th January at Poole Crematorium of Mary Peach who passed away suddenly on 31st December 2010 at the age of 83. This was followed on 29th January by a private family burial at St.Rumbold's, Pentridge.

Mary had lived in East Woodyates for 58 years and will be much missed by her friends and family.

A collection of £216 was made for St.Rumbold's Church, Pentridge in memory of Mary Peach.

Her children Ian, Jackie and Janice would like to thank everyone for their support.

Mobile Library Schedule - Visits on Thursday Fortnightly

Woodyates – Cobley Close	2.25 – 2.40	
Back Lane/St Mary's Close	3.00 – 3.20	
Roebuck Inn	3.25 – 3.45	
Dean Lane	3.50 – 4.05	April 14th, 28th
Sheasby Close	4.10 – 4.30	May 12th, 26th June 9th

VILLAGE HALL NEWS

The Artsreach winter season closed with a fascinating evening of musical history in the form of 'Benjamin's Book'. A chance encounter in Brighton with a small book of handwritten music and poems about Belchalwell, Okeford Fitzpaine and the area around them led to an evening of music, song and puppetry provided by Tim Laycock and Colin Thompson.

Puppetry was also the theme when Devon-based Puppetcraft brought the 'Mousehole Cat' to entertain the children and their parents on the Monday of half term. This was based on the popular children's book and had the opportunity for active participation in the play by some of the children.

The New Kitchen



After three weeks hard work by Graham Cradock, the hall now has a smart new kitchen with lots of clean cupboards, double sink and an updated fridge. There is also an industrial dishwasher to support large events. The cooker and water heater have also been deep cleaned and serviced.

A chance remark by Gordon Oxford that there were

"some spare wall tiles somewhere in the loft" has made all the difference to the finished product, which should take the hall on for the next 25 years or so. Our thanks go to Graham for his excellent skilled workmanship.



Wanted.

The **hall committee** is urgently looking for a new **Secretary** due to the departure of Vicki Wyrer. If you can spare a few hours to help support the village hall meetings it would be much appreciated. Please contact Carole Wyatt on 552572 or Tony Gibb on 552704.

There will be a **Race Night** in the hall on Saturday 16th April - (see separate advert)

Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Village Hall
Management Committee will be held on

Wednesday **20th April** at 7.30 pm in the hall.

All users of the hall should ensure that they are represented.
Everyone is very welcome.

Village Hall 100 Club Winners

January

1st	£25	132	Mrs Poolman
2nd	£15	103	Mrs Broadway
3rd	£10	3	Mrs Lane

February

1st	£25	93	Mr Durrant
2nd	£15	16	Mr Jesse
3rd	£10	38	Mr Budden

The 100 Club is run in aid of the Village Hall.

If you would like to join and have a chance to win, please contact Bea Boyland on 552805

Mothers' Union

At our meeting in February, we were entertained by a talk given by Ann Hinchcliffe entitled 'Music in Prisons'. She brought several musical instruments with her, and to illustrate her work members were asked to volunteer to join in by playing an instrument (with no previous experience!) to make an accompaniment to Ann's rendering of 'Yesterday'. It went very well. Prisoners in the establishments which Ann visits have a 3 hour session with her and she reported that she gets favourable feed-back from them.

Our second meeting was a 'Lenten Meditation', led by Gwen Watkins. Her 'programme' was much appreciated by everyone and was a valuable, thoughtful and quiet time.

In St Mary's in February we set up a display for 'Marriage Week'. Many people came to see it and found it interesting. If you missed it, some of the items will be shown again on an MU stand at the Street Fayre in May.

Thank you to those who contributed to the 'Overseas Fund'. So far, we will be able to send £100 to help the work of amazing Mothers' Union members in poor countries who know what help is needed in their communities. The money we have collected is to mark 'Mothering Sunday' in memory of, and appreciation of, our own mothers.

If you have any enquiries about MU please phone Sheila (553133) or Mary (552401)

Sixpenny Handley Bowls Club

We have had two league teams in the Blackmore Vale League. I'm afraid our team, the Tanners, didn't do very well, but Sixpenny Handley did very well and at the moment are second from top in Division 3 and play their last game on April 1st - good luck!

Congratulations

We had our Singles Day in February which was won by Brian Hansford. Runner-up was Cliff Miles. Best Lady of the day was Stella Olsen.

In March we had our Pairs Day, which was won by Peter Martin and Gordy Martin. Runners-up were Patrick Taylor and Cliff Miles.

Recently, we were lucky enough to be visited by about 20 young players from Sixpenny Handley First School. They were all aged about 5 or 6 years old and came with their teacher and her helpers. They were learning about different sports and asked a lot of interesting questions. Gordon and Brian helped me set up the rinks and they all had a couple of goes. Some of the children were very

good - I just wish they had been older as we could have signed them up! It was quite a cold day, so we are hoping they might come back again in the summer.

Future

We are looking forward to a friendly match at Coombe Bisset at the end of March. Of course, we hope to beat them, but as it's a friendly, it is about meeting friends.

If anyone else would like to try the game, please get in touch with any of our members (the names and phone numbers are on the inside of the front cover of the Downsman). We start outdoors on April 17th and would love some new players; it's a great way to meet people and have fun.

May I remind you that it is Quiz Night on May 14th. Please get in touch with Val if you are interested: 01725 552607

Best wishes to the entire Club.

Pat (Captain)

Chalke Valley Churches

Save the date for the
Chalke Valley Family weekend - 9th and 10th April,
to be held in Coombe Bisset Village Hall.

More information can be found in Church porches and Chalke Talk.
Tickets £5 for adults, £3 for children (with Roly the clown show and circus skills) and £10 for a family ticket.
Available from the clergy, Broad Chalke or Coombe Bisset post offices,
or phoning Katie-Jayne Jennings on 01722 781200.

COUNTRY RAMBLES

The wildlife of today is not ours to dispose of as we please. We have it in trust. We must account for it for those who come after. KING GEORGE VI

I said in my last article that there was little evidence of rat runs were around the barns, which meant that they were either elsewhere or that my efforts to reduce the population in the autumn had been successful. I now know that they were elsewhere because they are now in the roof of the house. We always have mice in the house in the winter and some piles of poison in the loft soon sort the problem out, but this year is different and they are not eating the bait and when they run across the ceiling during the night it sounds as though they are wearing hob nailed boots! The war is on, and my next tactic is to try a different type of rat bait. I have to do something because I am losing too much beauty sleep.

I was down in the woods cutting some bean sticks when my young dog ran off. He didn't hesitate and went like a rocket. I found out later he had seen some deer and decided to investigate. I followed on foot along in the direction he had gone, but there was no sign. We searched for four hours without success and finally came home. About 30 minutes after we had given up the phone went; it was the dog warden to say that he had been picked up by a lady and taken to Salisbury, and that if we didn't want him she would very much like to keep him as he was such a lovely dog. We worked out that she had actually picked him up 12 minutes after he went missing; the important point of the story is that he was returned because he is micro chipped. You would have thought that after that traumatic afternoon he would have been sheepish when he came home, but not a bit of it! He went to the kitchen and sat down for his food: he was obviously hungry.

The weather is mild at the moment but I am wary of planting out stuff that I have got in the poly tunnel because I am sure that we will have a few more frosts yet, and if the ground gets cold it will kill any seeds that are germinating. Nature, however, seems to think spring is well and truly sprung as on the 14th March I saw three butterflies, and the bumble bees are moving around. One of the indicators of climate change in the UK is that frogs have been spawning earlier. Spawning begins in earnest in early March, with dozens of frogs heading to their traditional spawning ponds. Once the frogs have had their turn, the same ponds host mating toads. A friend of ours dug a fish pond in her back garden which, as far as I can see, is nowhere near another pond, and yet every year the pond is full of frogs spawn. How and why they get to and choose the pond is a mystery. Some field ponds which were full of tadpoles when I was a boy are now empty, so perhaps these urban sites could be the salvation of the amphibian breeding population.

Field voles breed from spring through to late autumn and the over-wintering population consist almost entirely of animals born during the previous summer. They can survive at high densities in suitable habitat and provide a meal for a number of predators. The average lifespan of a vole is seven to eight months, with few surviving to a second autumn.

Richard Harwood

Memories of boyhood days before World War II

Tramps could always be found passing through the parish. They used to follow a sort of plan whereby they walked from one workhouse to another, usually arriving at the workhouse at weekends. This, I imagined, made sense with probably a bath and a square meal before the off on Monday morning. Most of them were ex-soldiers from World War I, some still wearing their old army overcoats.

Many were, sadly, mentally affected and never really adjusted to a form of civilian life. Some were pretty crafty, as on approaching the village around dawn they would wait until they spotted smoke from a chimney and then there would come a tap on your door. One in particular at our door would say, "Could you give me a can of hot water to make a cup of tea, governor?" This was no easy task as there was no electricity or gas to boil a kettle or make toast. One, who got to know my father pretty well, would sit outside on the garden steps until father made him a mug of hot tea and usually a thick slice of bread and butter and home made jam. At the end of the piece he would stand up and say, "God blessie, sir." My father and him often spoke about places they had been during the war.

A more sobering thought is the fact that here we are, 70 to 80 years further down the road, and the same thing is still occurring, albeit on a much lesser scale. Ex-service people cannot get their lives together. The workhouses have gone, but now the Royal British Legion, and other various charities, are still having to pick up the pieces and clear up the fallout of several unnecessary wars in latter years.

About the summer of 1936 -1937 my father had the use of a car for a few days and during this period we went on holiday, staying with my father's sister at Hamworthy, near Poole. One day it was decided that we would go to Swanage for a day on the beach. All was going well until we were few miles from Corfe Castle, where the army were on manoeuvres. We suddenly found that we were on the tail end of a convoy of horse-drawn field guns, the last vehicle being a horse-

drawn field kitchen. This was in the shape of a large, square metal box, complete with a chimney which was smoking, with also a couple of fires in metal baskets underneath. A sight to behold! Finally arriving at Corfe Castle we saw their camp laid out with neat rows of white bell-type tents.

Yet another sobering thought: three to four years after this, a poorly equipped British army was sent to France and Belgium to combat a mechanised German army on the rampage in Europe, which had been re-arming over the previous decade. They were no match for armoured columns and dive bombers. The outcome was obvious. They were ill-equipped for this and ended up in humiliation on the beaches at Dunkirk. The Royal Navy, plus a fleet of small pleasure boats saved over 300,000 men from defeat. Now, here we are again in 2011, cutting the armed forces. Let's hope that history will not repeat itself.

Another sight I remember is emerging from the Methodist Chapel at about 7.00 pm one Sunday on a summer's evening and a German Zeppelin was seen flying over the village, heading in the direction of Handley Hill. The Zeppelin was very quiet and not very high and people could be seen in the gondola-type cabin beneath the airship. This was back sometime in the 1930s: a one-off, not to be seen again.

The Declaration of the Second World War was made at 11.15 am on Sunday September 9th, 1939. On this particular morning the village was very quiet, as was the whole country, waiting to hear from the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, the outcome of negotiations with the German Authorities. In his rather melancholy voice he said, "I have to tell you now we are at war with Germany." This was followed by a stunned silence, but people accepted it, and got on with life as usual.

The following World War II lasted 6 years, and cost the lives of over 20 million people throughout the world. Mankind has learnt very little about the futility of war.

Peter Bailey

Bible Reading Marathon

Three years ago we ran a very successful bible reading marathon, where a hundred people in the valley participated. From the enquiries we have received, people would very much like to do it again. Therefore, from Monday 28th March until the following Saturday we plan to read the entire bible, starting at 8.00 am on Monday morning until we finish, probably on Saturday afternoon. As before, the reading will be in Broad Chalke Chapel and we do hope as many people as possible will come and read and listen while they enjoy our hospitality.

Please contact Katie-Jayne to choose your slot. You can either phone 01722 781200 or check the online timetable at www.biblereading.webs.com to see what best suits you.

COMING HOME - The Malvern Hills Remembered

By Margaret Quinn

The train is now moving as I close my eyes
 Recalling sweet memories under Worcestershire skies –
 Resting I listen to those clattering wheels,
 They are taking me back to my beloved Malvern Hills.
 I'm remembering now the years that were ours
 To wander those hills for innumerable hours.
 I'm old now and weary - those days all have gone,
 But the train wheels are turning, and taking me home!
 I smile at my thoughts - for like the rush of the train
 Those years may have flown - but sweet memories remain!

For I have watched the sun rise o'er the Eastern ridges
 Spread the lower slopes in warm eye-shading light,
 And held my breath as dewy fronds of bracken -
 Awoke in sun-kissed patches - golden bright.

And I have heard the cuckoo in new April
 Send clear, magic notes to thrill a fine Spring day.
 Have watched its flight through buttercup bright valleys
 –
 Calling first near, and then so far away.

And I have watched in early Summer dawning
 The heron cutting upwards through a misty sky,
 And later, seen the lark rise, singing to the morning
 A tiny speck against the blue on high.

I have seen Spring flowers greet the season.
 Primroses, violets and bright star celandine.
 Have sought their hiding places in the hedgerows,
 And wondered at an earth as sweet as mine!

Oh I have seen the red fox lope across the hillside
 To vanish midst the bluebells in the woodland far below,
 And started at the strident calling of the peacock
 As he struts proudly in the parkland - full of show!

And I have had the joy of April showers
 Cleansing our hills and brightening the view.
 Thrilling at the sight of clear twin rainbows
 Tinting low patchwork fields in purple hue.

And I have stood content in warm Spring sunshine
 To watch lambs frisk in meadows far below,
 And heard across the morn their joyful bleating
 As they gambolled, youthful happy, to and fro.

Oh I have walked those hills on foggy mornings.
 Treading firmly, the paths of shale and scree -
 To find the peaks - a range of tiny islands
 Sun-tipped in a misty foam of 'sea'!
 And I have rested on a craggy summit
 When golden sunsets blazed across the sky,
 And heard the buzzards' wild and lonely calling
 As they winged their leisured progress up on high.

And I have heard, through a dusky twilight,
 The screech owl's eerie, haunting call -
 And felt the calming stillness of the evening
 As night's shadows reached and covered all.

Oh, I have gazed at velvet moonlit heavens –
 Seen stars like sparkling jewels suspended there.
 Have traced with joy the many constellations.
 Awake and vital in the pure, cool air.

I've felt the hills reverberate with thunder
 When Summer storms have raged across the sky.
 Have caught the awesome camera-flash of lightening,
 And seen dark and tumbling storm clouds racing by.

Oh, I have walked the hills in mellow Autumn
 When misty sunshine colours every glade.
 Trod woodland paths, golden with enchantment –
 Weeks of delight, before the colours fade.

Oh, I have seen dark snow clouds gather forces
 And watched in awe a strong, white blizzard rage.
 Have felt its power, and heard its mighty roaring.
 A daunting force that no-one could assuage.

And then have wakened to a clear still morning
 To find the hills transformed in pearly light.
 Have trodden then on snow-packed hidden pathways
 And marvelled at an earth so pure and bright.

And I have gloried in the wonder of the dawning
 As in warm sunshine, and a still calm air,
 I have sat and watched a Summer day unfolding –
 And felt contentment at such beauty there!

But the train is now slowing. Through the window I see
 A Worcestershire sun shine a welcome to me!
 I whisper a message - 'No more will I roam -
 My beloved Malvern Hills - I'm coming home!'

Sixpenny Handley First School News

The Robins go on a trip to China!



In Robins class our new theme is . . . 'a trip to China', so our classroom has turned into lots of different places in China! We have been busy trying to answer our questions such as, 'How long is the Great Wall of China?' and 'What were the Great Army for?' We have been building the Great Wall of China, Tiananmen Square, a panda reserve with bamboo in it and we have also built our own river Yangtze! We are having lots of fun dressing up and serving people in our Chinese restaurant and takeaway. We can't wait to see what next week brings!

The Wrens get out and about!

This spring the Wrens have been out and about around Sixpenny Handley, with a trip to the Post office to send off our letters to the Queen, to which Her Majesty has sent a lovely reply. The children have also been lucky enough to try their hand at bowls at Sixpenny Handley Bowls club, with a small victory and a lovely experience the children and I will remember forever. Now the children are taking their learning journey underground and trying to find out more about what lies beneath. An exciting term for the Wrens, with exploring different underground mini-beasts and fossil hunting soon to come!



Kestrels class get a "shock"!



Kestrels class have been very busy finding out the answer to our question . . . I've got the power! We learnt all about Renewable and Non-Renewable energy from our special visitor, Steve, and have made our own energy-saving devices for our home learning. Did you



know that the sun and wind are great sources of renewable energy? We also had an exciting visit to The Electricity Museum in Christchurch and we even got to sit on the top deck of an electric tram! In our assembly, we shared our learning with our mums and dads and sang "This little light of mine" at the end. We are now enjoying our new theme . . . Who's the King of the Castle

Awesome America!



Last half term our theme in the Woodpeckers class was Awesome America! First we planned altogether what we wanted to learn about! We all had a go at sketching the Statue of Liberty and researching key facts - we even made our very own version in 3D! At the end of the half term we all went on a trip to experience a real life American diner called TGI Friday's; it was amazing! We got to eat all sorts of American food from chicken tenders to BBQ Ribs and Hot Dogs – YUM YUM! After our learning, we had a class assembly to invite

all our parents in to share our learning and they even got to see us dancing the American Jive!



The Americans

For the United States soldiers coming to Britain it must have been quite a cultural shock; and vice-versa for the village folk, who had seen nothing like this before. The Americans were extravert and outgoing, with a zest for life. They came in many shapes, sizes and colours, with smart uniforms, plenty of money and were well fed. Villagers, on the other hand, were rather staid and sombre, and had to live frugally.

At first, fraternising between the two sides stayed at arms length, with much misunderstanding. The Yanks, or GIs as they were known, were hospitable and wanted to be good friends, but the locals were wary of strangers bearing gifts, and didn't want to know, and were often offensive towards them. However, after a while the villagers mellowed and the "us and them" mentality began to fade. Some of the local girls were attracted by the lure of nylon stockings, cigarettes and candy bars and made friends with the younger GIs, many of whom had never had so much money in their pockets before. The saying at that time "Overpaid, Oversexed, and Over Here" was very appropriate.

One thing I found difficult to understand was their military segregation regarding visits to the local villages: whites one week, coloureds the next, and so on. Both were in the same army, fighting the same cause. More often than not the coloured GIs were more smartly dressed and better behaved.

Many of the American troops were garrisoned at a temporary constructed camp in a plantation at Nine Yews, near to the road from the Handley to Cranborne. However, I do not recall the Americans ever carrying out manoeuvres in our area. They seemed to go to

coastal regions in Dorset and Devon for training, probably beach landings. In hindsight we have to try and understand the situation. Many of the GIs were no more than conscripted teenagers, and a long way from home. Their future prospects were far from good - for many it was nil.

As far as I know, none of the GIs returned to the village after the war had ended. It was said many that we had known had perished. Whether this is true or not, I cannot say. They did, however, bring a bit of colour and excitement to the village at a very drab time. Who could really blame them for their indiscretions; it was not all bad. They were generous to a fault and the availability of tinned Spam was a welcome change to a diet of rabbit. Also for cigarette smokers there was Lucky Strike, Phillip Morris and Camel (the word 'Camel' raising some strange ideas as to their manufacture). Then, of course, there was Glenn Miller. Here was dance music ahead of its time, the like of which we had never heard before. Who could forget 'Moonlight Serenade', 'In the Mood', 'A String of Pearls', etc. It raised the spirits of the people of Britain through a very dark and dismal period.

As a point of interest, there is a book by the author Leslie Thomas called the "The Magic Army". The book is based on his boyhood observations of the influx of the Americans into South Devon: Kingsbridge, Totnes, and Slapton Sands bordering on Start Bay which was used for beach landings. It gives an interesting account of what went on, and a great tragedy only days before D Day. A lone 32-ton Sherman tank, salvaged from the sea, now stands as a memorial on Slapton Sands.

Peter Bailey

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We currently deliver **The Downsman** to approximately 700 households within the parish.

Ahead of the World at Woodcutts

In this time of government and local authority cut backs, it has been decided to buck the trends and go ahead with the annual Woodcutts Census anyway. This is the seventh annual census in twelve years, so it can be seen that not a lot of money is spent on them. In fact, as all basic figures are conservative estimates, particularly in the cases of the ages of our adult female population whom I am sure would be highly gratified with the figures used, the costs of the collection of details are minimal..

Since the last annual census in 2007, there have been several changes in occupancy of the ten properties of this suburb of Woodcutts, with two changes in the last three months. We would like to welcome Emily and Lee and their new baby Joanna, and Trisha and Jamie and their two children Arabella and Cameron to this corner of Woodcutts. It now means that we have a total of thirty residents compared with the seventeen there were in February 1999, when Meg (Madge) and I first came here.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total residents	17	23	28	-	-	27	30	-	30	-	-	-	30
Adults	15	16	16	-	-	17	20	-	21	-	-	-	21
School children	-	2	8	-	-	9	10	-	8	-	-	-	8
Pre-school children	2	5	4	-	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	1
Total average age	41.5	30.6	26.4	-	-	31.3	30	-	29.4	-	-	-	32.8

As can be seen from the above figures, the total population has increased by 76% in the twelve years of the census. This beats the world-wide trend, where the forecasted figure is a fifty percent increase globally in fifty years. Woodcutts has done it, and more, in twelve years. With the total, average age now almost ten years less than what it was in 1999, which again bucks world-wide trends, it has been creeping up slightly over the past few years. Back in 1999 there were two elderly residents in their eighties who pushed this figure up, namely Mrs Win Kirby, who had been born here, as had her father before her, in the house that her grandfather had moved into when it was built. The other senior member of the community at that time was that great character Jock (Robert) Meehan, one-time shepherd on the estate who, as a direct neighbour, was a great bane to Win, as he was always asking her, "What's it going to do today then?" whenever he saw her and no matter how many times he saw her. His other oft repeated query was, "Will you have a wee dram?" He always had a bottle of Scotch to hand but as a diabetic the doctors had warned him off it - however this did not stop him offering it to everybody else!

These two old stalwarts have now passed on and Meg and I have become the senior citizens of this part of Woodcutts, albeit some decade or more younger than Win and Jock were at that time. We are also the longest serving residents now and have seen all the properties change in residency, some several times over. Time does not stand still and we must make the most of our time as we come this way but once. However, we will never forget the past. For instance, we will always remember seeing this elderly lady (Win) walk past our cottage every Thursday morning dressed in her Sunday best but pushing a wheel barrow. It took us ages to find out that every Thursday, being market day in Blandford, there was a bus

which passed the end of the lane taking all the locals to do their shopping at the market, returning the same afternoon. However, Win still had several hundred yards to go after getting off the bus; a long way for an elderly lady to carry her weekly shopping, hence the wheelbarrow, in which she trundled her purchases home down to her cottage.

It is wonderful to have memories of characters of the past: for instance, when woodmen recently spent time boughing up trees on the edges of the fields adjacent to Win's cottage using chainsaws I thought of the times before chainsaws when cross cuts prevailed. Previous to moving into farming, I spent a year working in the woods on the estate where I was brought up. This was the pre-chainsaw era and I learnt to use an axe and a cross cut. I had a great teacher in George, who I have previously written about, together with an older brother of his named Bob. When I knew Bob he was in his late fifties; tall, angular and as hard as iron, but a nicotine addict. He rolled his own cigarettes using St. Julian tobacco. Bob was a grafter of the old school and when he was paid to work, he worked. That is, except when he didn't have any tobacco. Then he was next to useless, completely uncoordinated and agitated. Whenever he ran out of tobacco there was only one solution - send him off to the nearest village shop to get some. George, our foreman, would send him off as soon as he could and Bob would stride off very purposefully with long, hurried strides to satisfy his need.

On his return he would be smoking a cigarette, but when he finished it, he would not throw the stub away but squeezed it between finger and thumb to ensure it was out completely and then this dog-end would be placed in his left-hand 'wescot' (waistcoat) pocket. Why, you may ask? Well he did this for at least three cigarettes, after

which there would be a short interlude in the smoking. Then he would take from his right-hand 'wescot' pocket a somewhat battered pipe, held together with Elastoplast, and taking the dog-ends from his other pocket he would remove any paper left and load the nicotine soaked tobacco into said pipe. Three butt ends were sufficient to fill his pipe because the bowl was so choked up with accumulated debris. He took considerably more time to smoke his pipe than he did to smoke a cigarette, as he chewed it quite violently for some time after the tobacco had burnt out. This I got to really appreciate, especially when on the other end of a cross cut saw with him.

On one occasion we had to fell a particularly large beech tree. We started sawing at just before four o'clock one afternoon and at five o'clock we went home. We weren't even half way through, so we simply left it. Being on your knees sawing only a few inches above ground level was hard toil. This was continuous sawing except when Bob called a halt to roll up and light another cigarette. After every third halt, it meant the next would be a longer break because Bob had to fill his pipe with the three accumulated dog-ends and stoke up. I would see clouds of smoke puffing out from the other side of the tree and while this continued there would be no respite from sawing. The tree was too large for me to see Bob and so I had to judge the state of play by these clouds of smoke. We started sawing the following morning at eight o'clock and we arose from our knees at twenty to nine when the tree fell. Bob eventually became a victim to lung cancer in his late sixties.

In Bob's case a chainsaw would have made no difference to his life as he would never have used one. Bob and machines were sworn enemies. He had grown up on the farm and in the woods, relying on horse power of the original sort and he referred to tractors as, "They thousand pound armchairs." At that time, the early nineteen sixties, a fifty-horse-power tractor was the biggest to be found on most farms and would have cost around £950.

Sorry for the preambles into the past; we must now return to the twenty first century, and Woodcutts in particular. The most obvious flowers showing here at present (16th. February) are the snowdrops and despite the lateness of their flowering, which has been between five and eight weeks later than in recent years because of the snow that we experienced at Christmas, which lasted for up to two weeks, we have had a show better than ever. At first all the flower stems seemed to be very short but they seem to have lengthened since the inflorescences have fully opened. (Liz: I hope you have seen them.)

As I now write, 26th February, the next wild flowers expected to show, the celandines, are nowhere to be seen. However, yesterday as I drove up through Surrey along the Farnham by-pass, I saw on a south facing bank a host of these beautiful, shiny, yellow flowers - a definite harbinger of spring. We are staying with our daughter just outside Fetcham in Surrey where weeping willows are

in leaf, pussy willow catkins are showing, lilac and honeysuckle are in leaf and grass is a little ahead of ours at home, despite being fifty odd miles to the north. At Woodcutts I haven't seen a wild primrose in flower, although I did see one on the 17th February at Canford Heath. As children, we always looked forward to going out to pick the first bunch of primroses for our mothers or, in my case, my grandmother. Now, of course, this would be frowned upon, even if the children of today were interested.

On the bird front, I saw a red kite opposite the Manor on the 12th February, and Heather saw one in her garden at Handley Park a week later, so they are still in the area. We look forward to seeing them again on a regular basis. While on the subject of birds, I must mention the RSPB bird count. On that particular day I counted seventeen species on or around our bird table outside our kitchen window in the allotted hour. The most numerous at any one time were the yellow hammers; seven in number, which is rather odd as they are not normally considered to be garden visitors. Other species included great, blue, coal, long tailed and marsh tits, chaffinch, green finch, gold finch, dunnock, pheasant, red legged partridge, wood pigeon, robin, blackbird, jackdaw and magpie. Other frequent visitors are mistle thrush, greater spotted woodpecker, collared dove and occasionally hedge sparrow. All these were seen without moving from my seat on the settle, just inside the kitchen window.

Back at Woodcutts on the 2nd March, to find blue and white violets in flower as well as a few celandines and wild primroses, so spring is on the way. One flowering species I haven't mentioned before is the lesser periwinkle. At this time of year, when the sun is shining brightly, these beautiful, purple-blue flowers show brilliantly and the fact that they have been flowering continually when nothing else has, would need an apology if they were human.

Sunday 6th March. On returning from church at around 11 o'clock we saw a pair of red kites soaring above the turning in the lane. On Monday we saw a single red kite circling above the same site at approximately 11 o'clock, so they are definitely still here, coming up to nesting time. Paul, my next door neighbour, has just been in to say he has had several recent red kite sightings. He also says that in his garden pond he has copious amounts of frog spawn, as he found out when his dog emerged from a swim with a mouth full. He also mentioned that he had seen large numbers of ladybirds as he moved the umbrella he uses over his barbeque table. There are copious numbers of this wonderful, little insect to be found around the house and in sheds everywhere, so I hope it means a poor summer for aphids.

My apologies for rambling on but I am now ending my waffling and emailing the finished product in.

Thank you for reading to the end, and God Bless.

Ted Cox (March 2011)

Rob's Column

Season's Song

In meadowlands and lanes between
 A thousand signs of spring are seen,
 And sweetly, now, upon the ear
 The thrush's mating song we hear
 As from his turret in the wood
 He pours his heart in happy flood.
 The ditches, too, new vigour take,
 And what a chattering they make
 As, swollen with the melting snow
 They hurry to the stream below
 Where, surging on and singing still
 They shake the timbers of the mill.
 With joyful wassailings they come
 For winter's spell had made him dumb.
 But now, with happy heart, he feels
 The steady turning of his wheels
 And sings himself a song of spring
 With all the country echoing.

(D.I. Hill)

Roads

I like a road that doesn't know
 Just where it wants to go.
 A road that's always wandering
 And turning to and fro –
 Following a winding stream
 Or curving round a shore
 Making loops across the hill
 To reach the valley floor.
 But of all the roads that I have known,
 There's one I like the best –
 It's the one that later makes me turn
 My steps towards home and rest.

(Rachel Hartnett)

Tricky Tongue Twister

When courting couples connive at convivial
 connubialities, they don't consider the costly conse-
 quences concerned in the contemplated contract.

Smiles

On a sign at an optometrist's office, "If you don't
 see what you're looking for, you've come to the right
 place."
 On a plumber's truck, "We repair what your
 husband fixed."
 On another plumber's truck, "Don't sleep with a
 drip – call your plumber."
 On a fence, "Salesmen welcome! Dog food is
 expensive."
 On a maternity room door, "Push, push, push."

(Thanks to Alan Oxa for sharing these smiles with us)

Definitions

Worry: interest paid on trouble before it is due
A bargain: something you can't use at a price you
 can't resist
Hobby: hard work you wouldn't do for a living
Dilemma: a politician trying to save both faces at
 once

Market Day

If you're free on Saturday
 Let's go to the market place
 For I'm making a gown for a christening
 And I'm looking for some lace.
 And we'll buy some yards of ribbon
 As we saunter between the stalls,
 Some nuts, some apples,
 Some homemade jam,
 And a quarter of aniseed balls.
 We'll poke in a basket of bric-a-brac -
 We might find a bargain or two,
 And I've heard from a friend
 That the stall at the end
 Gets some wonderful 'nearly new'.
 There's a man who sells very fine china,
 As pretty as it can be,
 And next I expect you'll be ready
 To go for a cup of tea.
 So if you are free on Saturday
 I'll see you at half past two,
 And we'll wander around the market
 Just as we always do.

So remember to save your pounds and pennies
 For Saturday in May at the
 6D Handley Street market (all the fun of a fair).

Points to ponder

- If I agreed with you we would both be wrong.
- We never grow up – we only learn how to behave in public.
- War does not determine who is right – only who is left.
- Never, under any circumstances, take a sleeping pill and a laxative on the same night.
- I did not say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
- A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
- Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.

Continued on page 27

The Downsman

DON'T FORGET WHAT'S ON!!!

DATE	FUNCTION	PAGE	DATE	FUNCTION	PAGE
9 April	Chalke Valley Churches Family Weekend	11	9 May	W.I, Resolutions Meeting	13
10 April	Chalke Valley Churches Family Weekend	11	12 May	Mobile Library	5
11 April	W.I. Annual Meeting	13	14 May	Bowls Club Quiz Night	13
13 April	W.I. Birthday Meal	13	15 May	Deadline	3
14 April	Annual Parish Meeting	4	15 May	Start of Christian Aid Week	7
14 April	Mobile Library	5	19 May	W.I. Meeting	13
16 April	Race Night, Village Hall	6	26 May	Mobile Library	5
20 April	Village Hall AGM	7	26 May	Chase Garden Club	8
28 April	Mobile Library	5	28 May	Street Fayre	15
28 April	Chase Garden Club	8	1 June	Next Edition	3
28 April	Bingo	8			
30 April	Sixpenny Brewery Annual Open Day	14			