

Chit-Chat

Parish Newsletter
for the residents of
Chitterne, Wiltshire

Editor: Barry Ricketts, Stable Cottage, 24 Townsend, 01985 850884

No 4, Dec/Jan 2005

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Recreation Ground

The slide unit has been repaired and new swings have been installed. There remain a number of odd jobs to be done to get all the play units up to scratch. Some of the metal items require de-scaling and repainting and the wooden seat needs a coat of wood preservative. The Council is seeking a volunteer to undertake the necessary work. Materials would be supplied and an honorarium could be paid on completion of the work. Any interested person is asked to talk to the Parish Clerk.

Five-aside-Goal

Anyone using the goal posts should be aware that there is a potential danger of the posts falling over if they are not properly pegged down.

Traffic

The council continues to work on efforts to improve the traffic conditions in the village. It requested an explanation from our military liaison officer for the increase in use military vehicles on the C22. A detailed reply was received which gave a number of reasons. There was a major exercise on the plain in Sep/Oct by units preparing to go to Iraq. There had also been a major trial which involved closing the plain to units not involved. We can but accept their explanation. We will be asking the County Council to reduce the weight limit on that road as well as seeking improvements in visibility for people joining the road from Abdon Close. It has also been agreed that the Shrewton road is a suitable location from which to operate a mobile safety camera. We should be seeing the appropriate signs installed in due course.

Grant Applications

The Council received one application for a grant for the financial year beginning in April 2006. It was pleased to approve £80 for the Sticky Fingers Group.

Precept for 2006

The council was pleased to congratulate John Brown for his work on the presentation of the Budget.

The precept for the year was set at £3929, which represents a 21% reduction from last year. The village now has ten months working capital and reserves of £3000.

Grass Cutting Contract for 2006.

The Council had notified 6 firms that it would be calling for tenders. Three groups expressed an interest and were sent the
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Busy Christmas Season for Village Hall

Chitterne villagers entered into the Christmas spirit with a will.

Always a very busy time in the village hall, late November and December saw a very popular Christmas Bazaar; a Christmas Fair, with everything from Piggywigs sausages to sample, and a full range of



products to buy, hand-made jewellery and clothing, books, cards and a bewildering array of Christmas sundries. There was even a magician at the Bazaar to entertain the smaller



children. The hall was also the venue for the Christmas supper and party on Friday, December 9th.

A good time was had by all, despite disappointingly low attendance this year.



The December and January editions of Chit-Chat have had to be combined for this issue only. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.



Village Fireworks Party

With forecasts of persistent rain and heavy winds we feared the worst but, in the event, the weather could not have been kinder for the Village Bonfire and Fireworks on 11 November and a large number of the village turned up for an excellent, if somewhat belated, 400th anniversary celebration of the capturing of Guy Fawkes.

The event was sponsored and supported by the Village Hall and the Cricket Club and was helped by a very generous donation from Mr Tony Wood of Middle Barn. Our resident Maestro of Pyrotechnics, Mr Mark Carvell from Abdon Close very kindly gave his professional services for free and put on an excellent display, with the fireworks being set off, for the first time, from the field above White Hart House; this new arrangement was voted a success as it enabled us to view the spectacle to best effect without cricking our necks.

Many thanks to all the organisers!

STICKY FINGERS Parent & Toddler Group

Chitterne Parent and Toddler Group meets every Thursday during term time in the village hall from 10.30 - 12 noon. We have lots of toys, refreshments, arts and crafts activities for children to take home, all for just £1 per child. Come and meet new people, make some friends and have FUN! For more information, please call: Melissa 850243; Katy 219541; Nicky 850028.

Congratulations to Nicky, Pete and Jake on the birth of their new baby boy from everyone at Sticky Fingers

SERVICES AT ALL SAINTS IN DECEMBER

Sunday, 1st January	08.45 am	Family Communion
Sunday, 8th January	10.00 am	Group Service, Family Communion (Shrewton)
Sunday, 15th January	10.00 am	Family Service, Christingle
Sunday, 22nd January	08.45 am	Holy Communion (BCP)
Sunday, 29th January	10.00 am	Team Service, (South Newton)

UP ON THE PLAIN - ARMY ACTIVITIES, JANUARY

TRAINING

January will, for the most part, be a quiet month with a gradual increase in training towards the end as 16 Air Assault Brigade prepares itself for an operational tour. This latter trend is expected to continue for the rest of the year, with an unprecedented amount of pre-operational training in all months except August.

Live firing

Normal live firing takes place from 0830 - 1700hrs daily, but may continue throughout the night - normally on Tuesdays and Thursdays only. Noise may be greater in certain areas depending upon the atmospheric conditions at the time. Dates and locations are subject to change:

- Artillery firing from Salisbury Plain (West): *Nil*.
- Late firing days on Salisbury Plain (West): *Nil*
- Heat firing days on Salisbury Plain (West): 23, 24, 26, 27.
- Artillery live firing days from areas 7 & 8: *Nil*.
- Artillery firing from Salisbury Plain (East): *Nil*.
- Late firing from Salisbury Plain (East): *Nil*.
- Late firing days Larkhill/Westdown Ranges: 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 21, 24, 26, 31.
- Late-firing days on Larkhill/Westdown Danger Area: 1, 2, 7, 8, 14, 15, 22, 28, 29.
- Non-firing days, Bulford Ranges: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 21, 22, 28, 29.
- Non-firing days, Warminster Ranges: 1, 2, 7, 8, 14, 15, 28, 29.

Note

Due to unforeseen changes there is always a possibility that there could be firing on days other than those listed. This is particularly so now that operational training is being conducted to meet many and varied exigencies. The public should be careful to check that Red Flags are not flying before they enter the range. It is the time of year when we change late night firing times. From March through to October, the Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday night firing days will revert back to 2330hrs.

AIR ACTIVITIES

Dates and times which follow were accurate at the time of printing, but may be altered due to aircraft serviceability or weather conditions.

Helicopter night flying

Night flying will normally take place Mondays to Thursdays inclusive over parts of the training area, dependent upon weather and the availability of range space. In some cases the aircraft will show no lights but will operate under strict area control.

Aircraft trials

Aircraft may conduct trials over Larkhill Range on each Wednesday and Friday from 1200 to 1700 hrs which could involve circuits to the East crossing the Avon Valley.

Parachuting

Parachute dropping is scheduled to take place on Everleigh and Fox Covert DZs during normal working hours on most weekdays. Outside working hours and at weekends the dates and approximate times are:

- Fox Covert DZ (C130)
Jan 11, 2000 - 2200hrs
Jan 13, 2000 - 2130hrs
- Everleigh DZ (C130)
Jan 09, 2015 - 2115hrs
Jan 10, 1945 - 2045hrs
Jan 12, 2030 - 2130hrs

Striplandings

- Upavon
Jan 04, 2030 - 2115hrs
Jan 05, 1630 - 1800hrs
- Deptford Down (C130)
Jan 23, 2030 - 2115hrs
Jan 27, 0800 - 2000hrs
- Imber DZ (C130)
Jan 24, 1500 - 2000hrs
Jan 25, 0600 - 1100hrs
Jan 27, 0900 - 2200hrs
Jan 28, 0900 - 2200hrs
Jan 29, 0900 - 2200hrs

Fighter ground attack (FGA)

Jan 06, 0900 - 1000hrs SPTA (E)

WARMINSTER/IMBER ROAD OPEN

1. Notice is given that only the roads from:
 - a. Warminster to Gore Cross via Imber, &

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

The Commandant wishes all those in receipt of this news sheet, those who read it on Parish noticeboards, those who read the copied version in their Parish newsletters and their families a very happy and relaxed Christmas and a successful and satisfying 2006.

b. Bratton to Heytesbury via Imber

will be open to the public from 1800hrs Fri 16th December, through to 1800hrs Mon 2nd January, 2006.

2. Please bear in mind that **only the metalled road** will be open, all other tracks, stone tracks and Southern Range Road and Imber Village remain closed (Out of Bounds) in accordance with the Imber Ranges Bylaws. Any movement off the aforesaid roads on the Imber Ranges is forbidden, trespassers are liable to prosecution.

3. Red Flags are only flown at the vedette post when live firing is taking place on the ranges. The absence of Red Flags does not imply that the roads are automatically open to the public, times for which are notified in the Press and displayed on the entrance notice boards.

4. The roads identified above are not maintained to public road standards, if traversing the training area, drivers should do so with extreme caution.

Complaints

Specific complaints about army training may be telephoned through to 01980 620819 at any time.



UP ON THE PLAIN, NATURE NOTES, DECEMBER TO JANUARY

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW

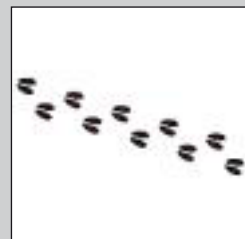
The weather this winter is set to be the coldest for years, if we are to believe the forecasters, so we should see a bit of snow. When the snow covers the plain it is an excellent opportunity to see the animals that are about by looking at the tracks they have left behind.

The brown hare is alive and well and living in the rough grassland of Salisbury plain. Living as a solitary animal for most of the year you might be lucky enough to see one in the distance or could stumble across one lying in a low hollow or 'form' in the ground, but following a cover of snow, their prints are everywhere. The prints show four toes to each foot (the front feet actually have five toes but the fifth is set too high to make a print) with the large hind feet pushing off together and the front feet hitting the ground individually. Hares run in a zig-zag and can reach speeds of 65-70km/hr, they leave my dog standing! Badgers are generally nocturnal creatures who leave their setts at dusk to root out earthworms, but they will eat just about anything they can find including roots and berries as well as frogs and slugs (yummy), there have even been reports of badgers eating hedgehogs. They have very powerful feet with long forward pointing claws that they use to excavate their burrows and also take small scoops out of the soil when collecting worms. Their prints are distinctive showing 5 forward pointing toes with claws and fleshy pads. Badgers give birth to their young in January and February and they stay in the sett for at least 8 weeks before they come out to play in the spring sunshine. Badgers are creatures of habit and follow the same tracks to and from their setts each night.

You may also see the footprints of roe deer and the deer themselves are quite visible in the winter in the stubble fields. Take a good look at the prints because the distance between the prints will show you how fast the deer were travelling and if they were running or walking. The does will already be pregnant but their embryos float freely in the womb until later this month when they will embed and start to develop normally. Fawning occurs from late April to June. Badgers also have this little trick to delay implantation and make sure that their young are born at the best time of year for them to develop and survive.

So next time it snow, head for the hill and see what's out there, and don't forget your wellies!

Aileen Fenlon



Above left, Badger print, and (right) in melting snow.

Above, Deer.

Below, Hare prints and (right) in soft snow.



JANUARY, and winter has well and truly gripped the Plain. Despite what we think of as being a harsh time of the year, flocks of sheep from the Welsh mountains are being brought here to graze in our milder climate. This not only helps the ewes to gain condition before lambing, but also relieves the uplands of grazing pressure.

During the twilight hours just before dusk, spectacular aerial displays can often be observed, not by Chinooks of Tornados, but by black, speckled Starlings. thousands of them move in 'formation flocks' as if attached to each other by a piece of string that pulls them first one way and then the other. Although these noisy, gregarious birds are present here all year round, their numbers are boosted in the winter by visiting migrants from North and East Europe. This time of year the human history of Salisbury Plain is also far more evident. The low glow of the post-solstice sun highlights in stark relief otherwise invisible details of Celtic field systems, Romano-British settlements and strip lynchets. If you are really lucky, you may even see Hen Harriers, a species for which Salisbury Plain has been notified as a European Protected Site. Hen Harriers are probably one of the most important persecuted raptors in the UK. This is due to their taste for Red Grouse, an important food source found on their summer breeding grounds

in the uplands of Britain. Fortunately, they are safer here on the Plain where they roost and hunt small birds and mammals during the winter months. The males are recognised by their pale grey plumage, whilst the females and juveniles, called 'ring-tails' sport a white band around the rump.

Rachel Crees, MoD



CHITTERNE CRICKET CLUB AGM

By kind permission of Chrissy Woods, the Annual General Meeting will be held at the King's Head at 1030am on Sunday 5 February 2006. The main items of business will be the financial report and the election of committee members (Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon Treasurer, Hon Secretary and up to five other members). All members of the committee retire annually at the AGM but they are eligible for re-election. All full members of the club are entitled to vote and nominations for election of officers must be received by the Secretary (Gareth Davies, 16 Townsend) seven clear days before the AGM. Thus the last safe moment for nominations is Saturday 28 January 2006. They need not be in any particular form but they must be signed by the proposer and seconder, who must be full members, and the nominee's consent must be obtained and recorded by the proposer on the nomination paper. We are also seeking volunteers to help run the dinner-dance and to assist with pitch preparation. More details in future issues.

Parish Council News cont.

specifications. At the meeting two bids had been received. They were duly considered and by a unanimous decision it was voted to award the contract to Chitterne Cricket Club.

Recycling

The new measures for recycling waste were put into place in late November and will be effective from December. We will therefore ask the contractors to remove the bins from the Village Hall site in the new year.

Parish Council Meetings 2006

Parish Council meeting dates have been recently agreed for 2006:

- Monday 9th January (next meeting)
- Monday 20th February
- Monday 20th March
- Wednesday 3rd May (Annual Electors Meeting)
- Monday 22nd May (Parish Council AGM)
- Monday 19th June
- Monday July 17th
- Monday September 4th
- Monday 16th October
- Monday 27th November (Budget/Precept)

CHURCH CLEANING and FLOWER ROTA

January 1st/8th	Mrs Mrs J Robertson (850382)	Clean & flowers
January 15th/22nd	Mrs H Carter (850925)	Clean & flowers
January 29th/Feb 5th	Mrs V Pryor (850255)	Clean & flowers

Coming Soon to Chitterne

Feeling like you need a change?
Time to lift your spirits? Feel better?
Get fit? Then it's time for....

YOGA ESSENCE

Coming in January to Chitterne village hall, a fitness experience that blends several ancient arts, Yoga, Tai Chi, and Chi Kung among them. The end result is a class that is designed for fitness of body, mind, and soul. You need no prior knowledge or experience, just a desire to experience something new!

If there's enough interest, a sampler class will be offered after the Christmas holidays - to see what it's all about. Details to follow in next month's newsletter. In the meantime, if you want to find out more information please feel free to ring: Lisa Murray at 1 Townsend, at 850405

Hope to see you in January!

New Refuse Collection and Recycling Arrangements

The new arrangements have now been operating for just less than a month. They seem to be working but as a personal opinion I suspect that the black box is too small. I also query the utility of the green bin as the only thing I can think of putting in it is cardboard. If you have a view please let a member of the council know or complain direct to the District Council.

Jeremy Reid, Chairman Parish Council

Chit-Chat next issue

The February issue of Chit-Chat will go to press during the week commencing Monday 23rd January. All contributions by hand, floppy disc, or email to: barry.ricketts@btinternet.com, tel: 850884 or 'over the stable door' at 24 Townsend (Stable Cottage).

To download *Chit-Chat* in colour from the village website, click on the *Village Life* link on the home page, then click on *Newsletters and the monthly issue you want*. You will need *Adobe Acrobat* to read them. Downloads may take a few minutes

TRAFFIC SURVEY RESULTS

Kevin Bolan of the Wiltshire Police has written as follows to the Parish Council, having analysed the data from the traffic survey:

My findings are that there is sufficient speeding for us, under the current Department of Transport rules, to enforce under the heading of 'Community Concern' and I have recommended this to the sergeant in charge of the enforcement unit.

Temporary

It takes many months for the council to erect signs so the next step will be for this unit to erect temporary signs on existing street lamps. If this is not possible then we can still enforce the speed limit using temporary signs which we bring with us each time, similar to road work signs which are placed on the carriageway.

In addition there is a need for us to photograph the approaches to the camera site/s which we place on our website before we carry out any enforcement. Our computer system will also have to be updated so that it recognises where the offences are coming from etc. As you will appreciate this takes a little time.

Enforcement

Once all this is in place we will commence enforcement there on an infrequent basis. We are permitted under the current Department of Transport rules to spend a maximum of 15% of our total enforcement time at such sites as we have to concentrate mainly on our core sites which are the ones with the history of fatal and serious injury collisions.

We have approximately 150 Community Concern sites in the county and try to visit them in rota. With the 15% limit on our time you will understand why I use the words "enforcement there on an infrequent basis"

However once the signage is in place and we start to visit, we find that average speeds do fall over a period of time.

BITS and PIECES

- Child's climbing frame, aluminium, with slide - free to anyone interested: call Richard Parkes 850130.
- Found - a small black kitten who had been lost for a week. The kitten was found by a generous man. He is now back with his owners and I am glad too. I am the owner's granddaughter and I am glad he is back.

Sarah Palmer (10)