

A Return to Grass Roots by Ferdinand Mount

The Conservative party fête was held at Chitterne Lodge by kind permission of Mrs Payne. As our MP, Mr Grimston, got up to speak, he put down his bowler hat, not on the table beside him which was draped with the union flag but on the chair behind him. He spoke about the need to support Mr Churchill in the struggle that lay ahead. Mr Grimston had been our MP since 1931. He had a thin moustache and a general air of severity. As he warmed to his theme, I noticed a small boy, smaller than I was myself, about four years old perhaps, crawling through the flowerbeds immediately behind Mr Grimston's chair, which was right at the edge of the sunlit lawn. The small boy took hold of the bowler hat with one hand, then got a firmer grip on it with both hands and rather slowly, almost ceremoniously, put it on his head so that it came down over his ears. It was impossible for any adult to reach him without crashing through Mrs Payne's flowerbeds. I do not know in what direction Mr Grimston's remarks were now turning, possibly the perils of socialism, but like the rest of his audience, I was gripped by what the small boy would do next. To our vast disappointment, at that moment a woman in a flowery dress risked her high heels on the rosebed and dragged the small boy away, snatching the hat from his head and replacing it on the chair. This is my earliest political memory: the sun-dappled lawn, the small boy and the bowler hat. It is my only memory of Mr, later Sir Robert, Grimston, who continued to represent Westbury until 1964, rising to become deputy speaker and later Lord Grimston of Westbury. Political enthusiasm was not much in evidence in Chitterne. When Churchill finally got back in, in 1951, the group captain who lived at the Grange stuck a union flag pennant on the bonnet of his car and drove through the village honking his horn. This was thought to be going too far. It was Groupie, too, who, during the fuel shortages of 1947, complained to my father about "the damned miners starving us of coal". But his was, I like to think, a minority voice. The Westbury division began then and still begins in our village. As you come over Salisbury Plain from Stonehenge and down Shrewton Hill, you cross the constituency boundary. Samuel Pepys rode down the hill with his wife and family on the evening of 11 June 1668, having lost his way on the downs, and "with great difficulty come about 10 at night to a little inn, where we were fain to go into a room where a pedlar was in bed, and made him rise; and there wife and I lay, and in a truckle-bed Betty Turner and Willet". The servant here referred to only by her surname was the delectable Deb Willet, whom Pepys was later that year to be caught fondling by Mrs Pepys in a manner so intimate that he recorded it in the diary in the cod-Italian which he used for sexual encounters. The diary does not record how the commercial traveller felt about being turfed out. But Pepys was so grateful for his rescue from this trackless wilderness that he roared with laughter at the landlord's jokes about the henpecked sailors at Bristol. The next morning the Pepyses discovered that the beds they had thought good were in fact lousy. The great diarist was still so nervous about the wild country that he was relieved when the landlord of the White Hart volunteered to lead them the whole way across the constituency into Somerset. Yet Pepys referred to this remote, almost inaccessible place as a "town". Nor was he misled in the darkness. Chitterne, like other downland villages, had once been much larger. As late as the mid-19th century the population had been 800, as opposed to no more than 250 in my childhood. Yet even in the 1950s, the village possessed a primary school, a racing stable, two firms of builders, a blacksmith, two shops, a village policeman in his tied police cottage on the Green, Mr Withers's fleet of two elderly buses, Graham Dean's garage, which he diversified into a mink farm during the Suez petrol shortage, not to mention the White Hart where the Pepyses stayed, and a post office next to the Baptist chapel. The last two were both operated by the amazing Frank Maidment, the "Bishop of Salisbury Plain", who preached the gospel and delivered the bread to even remoter villages for 75 years. All gone now of course. I remember the White Hart closing after 300 years when I was in my teens, leaving only the King's Head in business next to where the garage/mink farm had been. There used to be six dairy farms, none now, though the milkman still calls. The number of farmworkers has gone down from 29 to four. The population has recovered a little after a couple of the abandoned farmyards were turned into pleasant little housing estates for commuters to Warminster and Salisbury. The bells of All Saints church may still ring on Sundays, but, like so many other villages, Chitterne is a quieter place than it used to be, just as pretty as it always was, but a little frozen. I am sure there are plenty of homeworkers tapping away on their Macs. But the hum of the keyboard does not quite have the same resonance as the clang of Alf Burt's hammer shoeing the steeplechasers of my youth. As far back as 1893, the village schoolmaster Mr Brown recorded that "all the brightest boys look forward to getting away to the towns at the very first opportunity". How ya gonna keep 'em down on the farm after they've seen Trowbridge? The four smallish towns that dominate the constituency – Warminster, Westbury, Bradford-on-Avon (now ceded under boundary changes to the new Chippenham seat) and Trowbridge, surprisingly the county town rather than Salisbury, all have delectable old centres – tall churches built on wool money, flint-and-brick cottages and superb classical mansions in Bath stone. The sheep still share the downland with the tanks (the army has been training on the plain since before the Great War), but the fine big mills are all converted into heritage centres or Poundstretchers. Warminster, our nearest town, looks on the surface much as it did 50 years ago. The Old Bell and the Bath Arms still stare across the Market Place at each other, and the stationers Coates and Parker still publishes the Warminster Journal, which was the first place I scraped into print, with a rather over-dramatic account of the Mendip farmers point-to-point. Down the hill below the golf course still stands the imposing Portway House where I used to go to have electric shocks for my flat feet. Yet, as in all town centres nowadays, there are charity shops where there used to be grocers and greengrocers, and most places need a lick of paint. Half the premises in these towns seem to be given over to raising money for Alzheimer's sufferers and half the suburbs given over to homes for them. You begin to wonder whether short-term memory is somehow a casualty of modernity. Politically, you might think that nothing much had changed in these parts. Ever since 1945, the Tory MP's majority has usually hovered somewhere between 5,000 and 10,000. The present incumbent, Andrew Murrison, is a former surgeon-commander in the navy who served in the first Gulf war and then, remarkably, after being elected went out to serve again as a Territorial in the Iraq war – no lounging by moat or duck-house for him. Yet there is a significant underlying change here, as elsewhere in Wiltshire and much of southern England. Where once the runner-up was always Labour, today he or she is invariably Liberal (or now Lib Dem). In many ways, the revival of the Liberals is a return to an older tradition in Wessex, where nonconformist chapels abound. In the lowland parts of Wiltshire and Berkshire, where weaving has been the staple industry since the middle ages, you can trace the dissenting streak back to the Lollards. But the immediate cause is the fading of Labour in the southern county constituencies of England. It is not so hard to explain. South-West Wiltshire, as the new constituency is called, is largely post-industrial, but Labour still is not quite. For the past half century, the party has been vainly struggling to extricate itself from the dominance of the trade unions – from Hugh Gaitskell's struggle to junk clause IV, through Harold Wilson's failure with In Place of Strife, to Tony Blair's efforts to free the party of financial dependence on the unions. Now after the scandal of the millionaire donors, Labour is back where it started, reliant on the unions and knee-deep in sleaze as well. Pepys, whose later career was dogged by accusations of "cash for influence", would have sympathised.

The above story is provided by Sue Robinson and is taken from the Guardian Review: Saturday 10th April 2010

CHURCH SERVICES

May 2nd	08.45 BCP HC
May 9th	10.00 Shrewton Group Service
Thursday May 13th 7.30pm ASCENSION DAY SERVICE in Chitterne church	
May 16th	10.00 Chitterne Matins
May 23rd	Parish HC at the chancel
June 6th	08.45 BCP HC
June 13th	Group Service in Tilshead

ARMY ACTIVITIES

TRAINING: As spring arrives so do the exercises. At the beginning of May 4 Scots deploy on their major exercise, Wessex Warrior, soon to be followed by 1 Rifles on their Ex Druid's Dance which runs into the first week of June. Throughout May we see a chain of units from the Royal Marines with their Viking vehicles to 16 Air Assault Brigades' crew training in their new vehicles for their imminent deployment overseas. Meanwhile units from the Royal School of Artillery and the Land Warfare Centre are active through the month.

ARTILLERY FIRING FROM SALISBURY PLAIN (WEST) : NIL

LATE FIRING ON SALISBURY PLAIN (WEST) : NIL

ARTILLERY FIRING FROM WITHIN THE TILSHEAD, CHITTERNE AND SHREWTON TRIANGLE : NIL

ARTILLERY FIRING FROM SALISBURY PLAIN (EAST) : NIL

LATE FIRING FROM SALISBURY PLAIN (EAST) : NIL

LATE FIRING ON LARKHILL/WESTDOWN RANGES : 4th, 6th, 11th, 13th, 15th, 18th, 20th, 25th, 27th.

NON FIRING DAYS ON LARKHILL/ WESTDOWN DANGER AREA : 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 9th, 22nd, 23rd, 29th, 30th, 31st.

NON FIRING DAYS ON BULFORD RANGES : 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 8th, 9th, 15th, 16th, 29th, 30th, 31st.

NON FIRING DAYS ON WARMINSTER RANGES : 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 15th, 16th, 22nd, 23rd, 30th, 31st.

HELICOPTER NIGHT FLYING: Night flying normally takes place Mondays to Thursdays inclusive over parts of SPTA. Some aircraft will show no lights but all will operate under strict area control.

AIR ACTIVITIES: Dates and timings below are correct at the time of printing but may be altered due to aircraft serviceability or weather conditions.

AIRCRAFT TRIALS: Aircraft trials have priority

over Larkhill Range on Wed and Fri from 1200 - 1700 hrs which may involve circuits crossing the Avon Valley.

PARACHUTING: Parachuting 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 (130)

7th 1800-08/0100, 8th 1400-1600, 9th 2200-2359, 22nd 0800-1900, 23rd 0900-2359.

EVERLEIGH DZ (130)

4th 1800-05/0200, 5th 1700-06/0300, 6th 1700-2100, 10th 1800-2359, 11th 2000-2359, 12th 1700-2359, 13th 1700-2000, 14th 1700-15/0100, 17th 1700-2359, 18th 1700-2000, 19th 2100-20/0300, 20th 1900-2300, 21st 2200-2359, 24th 1700-2300, 25th 1700-2359, 26th 2100-27/0200, 27th 1700-28/0200, 28th 1700-29/0200, 29th 0900-1300, 30th 1000-1300.

IMBER DZ (130)

NIL NOTIFIED

STRIPLANDINGS:

DEPTFORD DOWN C130)

22nd 0800-1900, 23rd 0900-2359

UPAVON

NIL NOTIFIED

FAST JET ACTIVITY:

SPTA 'W' SPTA 'E' SPTA 'C'

NIL NOTIFIED



PLAINWATCH is specifically designed to rapidly identify suspicious activity on the Plain: firstly and principally to identify criminal activity but secondly to deter such activity.

We seek the support of those Parishioners who regularly use the Plain for recreational purposes, who when doing so spot what could be termed suspicious or even criminal activity taking place. No approach or contact should be made with potential offenders. If such an opportunity occurs we would be pleased to hear from you via a special telephone number which we have set up within our 24 hour Operations Cell: 01980 674700. We would welcome your assistance in making the Plain more secure and a safe place to enjoy.

Congratulations

Alan Sprack won 1st prize, Cup & Plaque at the Bath & West Tractor Show in February 2010.

He was up against 240 other Tractors. Alan commented that he 'had not even washed his Tractor' before entering

Those were the Days!!!
Back in the 70's Antipode Rugby players were employed by Manor Farm for Haymaking and Harvest. Alan Sprack remembers often being greeted at 8am by the Kiwis 'Haka' in preparation for their 'War' on the work ahead, sometimes being hit in the midriff by a stray rugby ball!!!

KINGS HEAD
QUIZ Night
Thursday 6th May 'Election Day'
Come and join us for this great evening to relax after a heavy day of Voting!!
Gather your team of 4,
Winner takes all & sets the next months Quiz!!
Bangers & Mash £5 from 6pm

Vacancies at The Kings Head

**** Cleaner ****
General Cleaning, hoovering, dusting & moping.
Twice a week, good rates of Pay

**** Cook/Chef ****
We are looking for an enthusiastic and creative person to work in our kitchen.
Someone who is dedicated and able to work Weekday evenings and Sunday Lunch times.
If interested please call Paul or Jo 01985850004

For your diaries

ANNUAL CUT CLEARUP

This Year the 'CUT' clearup will take place on the 29th May, so dust of the wellingtons and come out to this well attended and social event.

PLAYGROUND OPENING

As most are aware there have been changes in the Playground and the Grand Opening will be on the 30th May. It is intended to make a day of this so bring a picnic and weather permitting enjoy the village facilities whilst the youngsters put the new equipment to good use.

VILLAGE HALL AGM

AGM will be held on Tuesday 4th May 2010 7pm in the Village Hall. All are very Welcome.

PLANT SALE

Annual Plant Sale at Pitts House on Saturday 22nd May, 10.30am - 12.30pm.

Chitterne Festival Weekend June 26th and 27th

Chitterne Flower Festival
Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th June
Dog Show and Fete
Sunday 27th June
Cricket Match
Saturday 26th

The theme for the Flower Festival is "Quote Unquote" we hope this will give all the flower arrangers plenty of scope to create something different and amusing.

There will be a quiz sheet in the Church and a small prize for the person with the most correct answers

Keep your quotation under your hat in the meanwhile!!

It will be a busy weekend, so all offers of help will be gratefully received.

As well as flower arrangers, we need people to cook, serve, wash up, fetch and carry, bake cakes, sit in the Church and still have time to enjoy the fun.

Please contact the following people if you are able to help on either or both days.

Flowers	Virginia Pryor 850255
Church Sitting	Davina Toole 850502
Food	Sarah Gooch 850893
Hall Helpers	Marcelle Stobie 851048
Fete	Paul Pike 851053
Dog Show	Sally Oliver 851240
Fete	Gillian Nolan 850391
Cricket	Anthony Knyvett 851108

Village Hall Hiring Rates 2011

Village Residents	£20/Session
	£40/Day
Village Community Groups	£5/Session
No Resident/Commercial	£75/Day
(10% Discount for multiple booking, 5 or more, paid in advance)	



Weather for April 2010

Weather for April 2010

Max Temp – 26.1°C on 9 Apr 2010 WooHoo!

Min Temp – minus 5.7°C on 21 Apr 2010 Brrrrrr!

Looks like April has been a month of temps on either end of the spectrum. The March winds have died down, but we've yet to see the April showers.

Rain – 27.9mm of rain this month so far

FAR below the average- dare I say we need rain!?

The average daily temperature (max) in

April was 14.4°C and the average night

time temperature (min) was 5.1°C. The

area average for April is 12.4°C (Max)

and 3.8°C (Min). So we're above the average temps for this month!

Could we dare hope for this trend of warmer temps to continue?????

CRICKET

The new cricket season is about to begin and Chitterne Cricket Club has another packed fixture list. We would be very grateful if you could come along and play or support the team on the dates outlined below. Subscriptions for the Club remain unchanged again at £15 for a family membership and £10 for an individual. If you feel that the time has come to resurrect those long dormant cricket skills and join the team, please contact Charles Horsfall on 850468. We look forward to seeing you all on the boundary or in the Village Hall for tea.

Sunday 16th May Horningsham

Sunday 30th May Stranded Whales

Sunday 13th June Athlone

Saturday 26th June Wet Bobs

Saturday 10th July Oundle Ramblers

Sunday 25th July Oxymorons

Sunday 15th August Bill Twiston-Davies XI

Sunday 29th August W&I Beagles

Sunday 19th September President's XI

Readers' letters

Views expressed in Readers' letters do not necessarily reflect those of the Editor or Parish Council

Howards Way Walk

I would like to say a big 'Thank You' to everyone who helped make the Howards Way Walk Charity coffee morning an incredible success. We raised £585; a sum which far exceeded what I had hoped for.

Howards Way Walk was inspired by Howard Kerr (who was the brother-in-law of friends of mine who live in Wylle). Howard and his family set it up after he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2007. It raises awareness of and money to fight the disease. Last year the first Howard Kerr PhD Studentship Award was given to an individual at Barts Institute of Cancer. This year is the 3rd Annual Howards Way Walk. The first year, The Ridgeway was tackled and Howard Kerr himself was among the walkers. Last year, Hadrian's Wall (which was on Howard's 'Bucket List') was successfully tackled. On Friday 30th April I will be among thirty two walkers starting off in Winchester and ending up, via The South Downs Way, in Eastbourne three days later - a distance of just over 100 miles. If anyone would like to donate to this charity or to sponsor me for my efforts, it's quick, easy and secure to do so on www.howardswaywalk.co.uk There's also more information about the walk, the charity and the individuals involved on the website - including photos and short videos of the walks.

Thank you once again to all the marvellous support I've had from the village - it is all greatly appreciated. *Kato O'Driscoll*

Dear Chitterne

Many thanks to all those who came to support the launch of our family business "Le Cafe Creme" on 17 April. We were very pleased with the way it went - we made about 90 crepes in the 2 hours (some better shaped than others!) and have been able to send a cheque for £223.50 to Combat Stress.

Anthony & Tana Knyvett

Fine Achievement

Marcus Beer, eldest Grandson of Alan and Maureen Sprack, has just taken part in a Rugby Tour with the England South West U16 Team. He travelled to Cork on Monday 9th April and was hosted by the family of the Munster Schools Team No. 8 player. They played Munster Schools the following day and the result of that game was a resounding 26:0 victory for the England Team. On Wednesday the Team returned to Wellington College near Wokingham to train and play in the Wellington International Festival 2010 against Italy on the Friday. As with the Cork fixture Marcus was selected to start the game and according to the Coaches played very well and was impressive. The game was very tight with the lead changing but eventually the England Team took charge and won the fixture 20:10. Marcus has been playing representative Rugby at County level for three years, he is a member of the Dorset and Wilts RFU School of Rugby and the Bath Rugby Elite Player Development Group.

Alan Sprack

Thanks

Please can I say a big 'thank you' to all on the Parish Council and everyone else who helped to procure the new playpark equipment. We have had LOTS of fun scrambling around on it during our Easter leave - and it's not even all finished yet. We love it!

Thank you so much for all your efforts - they are very much appreciated.

Cormac (6), Niamh (4), Tom (40'ish going on 7), Kato (21'ish)

Parish Council Vacancy

There is a vacancy for a Councillor on the Chitterne Parish Council.

Meetings are bi-monthly and usually last around an hour and a quarter.

This is a real chance to take part in local democracy, especially since the advent of a unitary council for Wiltshire has resulted in more responsibility being devolved to parish councils.

In recent years, your council has:

- Re-invigorated the allotments with new plots and allotment holders.
- Obtained a substantial grant for exciting new play equipment.
- Initiated village 'clean-ups' in conjunction with 'Best Kept Village'
- Commissioned various improvements in response to parishioners' requests.

If you are interested in helping to run Chitterne,

apply in the first instance to the new Parish Clerk,

Jo Franklin at the King's Head

01985 850004.

jo@kingshead-chitterne.co.uk



Chitterne Parent and Toddler Group meets every Thursday during term time in the village hall from 10.00 am - 11.30 am. 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:

Nicky 850028; Jo 851232; Caroline 850272.

Annual PLANT SALE

Please remember to come and support us at the Annual Plant Sale at Pitts House on

**Saturday 22nd May,
10.30am - 12.30pm.**

We are raising money this year for

Help for Heroes
and the village church.

As usual we will have plenty of wonderful plants for sale together with a cake stall and raffle.

Any cakes or raffle prizes would be welcome - please give me a call and I can arrange to collect them.

Thank you for supporting us and we look forward to seeing you all on the 22nd.

Emma Walters
850416

(registered charity no: 1120920)

POLICE NOTICE

Our found property ref - 189037.

The pictures I have forwarded relate to some property which was found at Kingston Deverill Glider Club, Warminster, Wiltshire. The property was found in a red and white checked bag which contains various wine glasses, mugs with logo's on (as pictured which make ref to coming from a military property from Watford, Suffolk etc) and jugs. Another box contains 5 Becks glasses and the other some net curtains and some green curtains.

The place where the items were found seem a strange location to "dump" things so its a bit of a mystery as to who it belongs to and why its there. A search of our systems has been completed and it doesn't show up as stolen property. Please can you put an article out to see if anyone recognises any of the items and if they wish to enquire further to make contact with Wiltshire Police on 0845 408 7000 and quote the above reference number.

Vicki

Pc 2366 Pegrum

Community Beat Manager

Warminster Rural Neighbourhood Policing Team

EXT - 726818/817

FOR SALE

If you have something to sell please send your advert to
paul@kingshead-chitterne.co.uk

Church Cleaning and Flower Rota

Unfortunately I have not been provided with this information this month

Whom ever compiles the rota, please can you email to me : paul@kingshead-chitterne.co.uk

Would you like to save money on all your household bills?

Join the Club!

Switch to the Utility Warehouse Discount Club and make great savings on all your household utilities - with the added convenience of having everything on the same monthly bill!

For full details, contacts
Paul on 01985850004
www.lowcost-utilities.co.uk

Want to pay less each month? Get in touch!

- Single bill for all your utilities
- Award-winning customer service
- Value that's unbeatable
- Easy to switch



Road Safety

While googling who our candidates for the forthcoming election are, I found the following website http://www.warminster-web.co.uk/general_election_2010.htm which had a web Q&A with the candidates and this little piece of info:

Road Safety:

What should be done about the high level of road accidents in this area?

More 20mph zones in villages and residential areas. Improving road safety doesn't just save lives, it also improves the quality of life for residents. Wiltshire Council is currently proposing to increase speed limits on some rural roads, which is madness.

Trevor Carbin, Liberal Democrats

A review of speed limits on rural roads, tackling the menace of satnav 'rat running' and more public awareness of the consequences of bad driving - I speak as a recent victim.

Andrew Murrison, Conservative

Firstly, whilst rarely popular, speed cameras are an effective way of getting drivers to slow down, but this has to be coupled with more action to raise awareness of the risks of dangerous driving and in particular how to drive safely on country roads in all conditions.

Rebecca Rennison, Labour

Just thought you might be interested...

It would be nice if one of them actually ended up doing something for our village (and others too of course!). Hope springs eternal...

Kato O'Driscoll

The Kings Head

Open every day for Lunch
Noon - 3pm

**Now Open for Evening Meals
6-9pm**

Tuesdays is Darts night
Come in for an informal night of darts.

Wednesdays we are closed all day.

1st Thursday of the month
Bangers & Mash £5
from 6pm followed by

'The Quiz'

Gather your team of 4,
Winner takes all & sets the next months
Quiz!!

Friday is Fish & Chips,
Eat in or take away.

Saturday is Party Night

Sunday is Roast Lunch

Please book to avoid disappointment.

We are always happy to cater for special occasions, just call Paul or Jo to discuss your requirements.

01985850004

www.kingshead-chitterne.co.uk

Chit-Chat next issue

All contributions for the June issue by last week of May, by hand, floppy disc, CD or email to: paul@kingshead-chitterne.co.uk, tel: 850004 or 'The Kings Head, Chitterne, BA12 0LJ'

To download **Chit-Chat** from the village website: www.chitterne.com, 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.