

Village News

in Swindon Village

*Your local Newsletter sponsored by the
Parish Council and delivered by volunteers*

No. 412 March 2015

March

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|---|
| Monday | 2 | Marle Hill W.I. - St. Nicolas' Hall 7.30pm
Richard Burton - Life at Barrington Court |
| Wednesday | 4 | Wednesday Club - Village Hall 8.00pm
Marion Beagley - My Mother was a Cockney |
| Saturday | 7 | Scouts collecting jumble around inner village area from 10am |
| Tuesday | 10 | Parish Council Meeting - Village Hall
Starting with Public Session at 7.30pm |
| Sunday | 15 | Mothering Sunday service - St. Lawrence Church 10.30am |
| Wednesday | 18 | Swindon Village Society - Village Hall 7.30pm
Geoff North - Cheltenham's Voluntary Auxiliary Hospitals |
| Saturday | 21 | Scout Group Jumble Sale - Village Hall 11.00am |
| Saturday | 28 | St. Lawrence Church Cake & Coffee Morning - Village Hall
10.30am - 12noon |
| Sunday | 29 | Palm Sunday procession 10.00am |

April

- | | | |
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| Wednesday | 1 | Village Hall AGM - Village Hall Lounge 7.15pm |
| Wednesday | 1 | Wednesday Club - Village Hall 8.00pm
Fiona Warin - Land Girls |
| Saturday | 11 | Swindon Village Society Bird & Nature Walk 9.30am |
| Monday | 13 | Marle Hill W.I. - St. Nicolas' Hall 7.30pm |
| Tuesday | 14 | Parish Council Meeting - Village Hall
Starting with Public Session at 7.30pm |

(Full minutes of all Parish Council meetings are available on the Parish website www.swindonparish.org.uk. They are also available on request from the Chairman.)

I seem to mention every month that the services we get from the Borough and County Councils are diminished by the financial constraints imposed on them. Rather than stand by and see the quality of life in the parish eroded the Parish Council is looking to engage with volunteers who want to help keep the area special. We are holding our first event on 18th March; a litter pick around the park in Swindon Village. The event is advertised elsewhere in this issue. This is a first tentative step. We want the activities to be enjoyable, sociable and safe. As we gain experience hopefully we can broaden how we work with the public, perhaps doing more than simply picking litter, and getting people involved across the breadth of the parish. Your suggestions of other areas in need of attention and other activities would be welcome.

By the way, I was reading that Derby City Council issued litter pickers to volunteers then their health and safety people told them they couldn't use them because they had not been trained. What happened to common sense?

Potholes continue to be a major problem throughout the country but particularly in Gloucestershire. Apparently the county has an £86 million backlog of road repairs, the third worst in the country. Please report the problems you encounter. You can do so by telephone on **08000 514 514**, you can go to the County Council web site's "Report an issue" page or you can email **GCCHighways@amey.co.uk**. Apparently there has just been a National Pothole Day. I am afraid it passed me by but I can now start preparing for next year's (16th January 2016 if you want to make a note).

The Parish Council and other groups were invited by the Borough Council to meet representatives of Bloor, one of housing developers looking to build over 4000 new homes in the area, predominantly on Green Belt land. There was little in the way of new information. Our concerns about the increased traffic were dismissed as they had done simulations that were "far too complex for us to understand". At the end of the evening they refused to make copies of their presentation available. If they are keen to get their message across to people why would they do that?

I have been told that a proposed major housing development in Aylesbury was rejected by the Government because of its impact on agricultural land and the Green Belt. Perhaps there is still hope for North West Cheltenham.

Many thanks to our allotment holders for paying their rents and to Ian, our allotment manager, for making it all happen. Allotment rents will rise next year but our regulars will know this is the first increase for a number of years and our allotments represent great value when compared to those of other providers in the area.

Ian also very kindly organised a social at the Civil Service Club. Sausage and chips and a very entertaining game of skittles. The men seemed to take the skittles far

more seriously than the ladies but that didn't seem to lead directly to success. On the one alley the two top scorers were ladies and a number of husbands went home with red faces!

The proposal to develop at Manor Farm continues to rumble on. Following strong opposition the scheme was modified but the Parish Council did not feel that their concerns had been addressed and continued their objections. Given that one of the major concerns is the access from the site onto Church Road it seems strange that the County Council Highways department have not made any comment. The application should go to the Borough Council planning committee but there is no information about when this will be.

Dog walkers mourned the loss of the dog bin that used to be in the middle of the Amenity Area, the path between Manor Road and Church Road. The Borough Council said that it was constantly vandalised and also difficult to service given its location. However, they have come up trumps by providing one in the entrance splay to the Amenity Area on Manor Road. Things may happen slowly but we sometimes get a result and we are grateful to the Borough Council for working with us on this.

We are proposing to do some wild flower planting in the same area now the weather is improving. Hopefully we will have a vibrant but naturalistic display in spring to augment the bulbs and snowdrops that are appearing now. Let us have your thoughts on this initiative and any other ideas you have for improving the parish. By the way, the flower planting that the Borough Council did in the park last year was hugely popular and it is hoping to do even more this year.

One of the major issues the Parish Council sees in the area is the volume of traffic and how it is (or isn't) managed. Gloucestershire County Council has drafted a new Transport Plan and they are now in a consultation phase. Details are on the County Council web site if you want to take a look or even have your say.

Don't forget to make sure you are registered to vote in the elections in May. It is no longer the case that a single submission is made on behalf of a household. Each individual is responsible for ensuring that they are correctly registered. The Parish Council election was held last year of course so we can relax until 2018!

Dates for your diary. Next month, the **Parish Council meeting on the 14th April will include representatives of the Borough and County Councils and hopefully the Police**. Much of what is reported to the Parish Council is the responsibility of these organisations. Please come along and voice your concerns directly. Finally, the **Annual Parish Meeting 2015 will be held on 21st April** at the school. We will have a speaker or two to address topics of concern to residents of the parish. Remember this is your meeting. Again, come along and have your say. Get involved! Still one vacancy on the Parish Council by the way...

Shaun Cullimore

Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

Water Quality in Wyman's Brook/River Swilgate

In one of the regular Parish Council articles a while ago I mentioned that people had reported concerns that their dogs had come to harm by entering the brook in the park. I was asked to follow this up with the Borough Council to find out if the water quality is monitored. A volley of emails was batted back and forth which ultimately resulted in me receiving a spreadsheet from the Environment Agency. I am tempted to say that this muddled the waters but, even by my standards, that is a poor play on words. Anyway, I now had lots of numbers. However, as anyone who has attempted to understand the Borough Council's budget will know, lots of numbers don't necessarily lead to understanding.

In the park we see a babbling brook but to understand what is going on we need to see the watercourse in its context. I am not sure where it starts (I am guessing up on the escarpment) but it emerges at Oakley, makes its way down through the lakes at Pittville Park, goes through the Wyman's Brook estate (where it is called Wyman's Brook amazingly), then through Swindon Village before meandering triumphantly into Tewkesbury as the River Swilgate where it joins the River Avon. The spreadsheet at least confirmed that the water quality is monitored at several points along its journey. It also told me the amount of ammonia and nitrates dissolved in the water. This was where I struggled. I didn't know whether the numbers were good or bad, or even whether higher numbers were better than lower. I contacted the Environment Agency again to seek help in interpreting the data. Enter a very helpful gentleman based at Tewkesbury who took the time to explain at least some of what is going on.

The watercourse faces a number of challenges along the route I have described. For at least some of its length it runs through an area of an urban character, often in culverts. What is now Pittville Park was once a rubbish dump and contaminants leech into the water. A heavy shower after a period of dry weather can result in higher than normal concentrations of pollutants, particularly ammonia, being washed into the stream. That allowed me to make sense of at least one number. There won't be any ammonia in clean water. Anything above 0.5 mg/l is getting poor. Generally our number is quite low but occasionally we see a spike of 0.8 mg/l.

Apparently another problem is that sinks and washing machines are sometimes plumbed into the wrong drain and discharge into the watercourse rather than the foul water sewer. When these situations are identified Severn Trent and the Borough Council have to sort them out.

In Pittville Lakes there can be high concentrations of nutrients. This arises due to phosphates from detergents (OK, so phosphates are also bad) and from people feeding the ducks (bread is thrown into the water and, if the ducks aren't feeling greedy, sinks to the bottom). The algae in the water explodes and consumes the oxygen at night when photosynthesis isn't happening (ah, oxygen is good). The wildly fluctuating oxygen levels can kill fish. Periodically the lakes are dredged to remove some of the excess nutrients and the algae are cleared.

The last piece of bad news is that money is getting increasingly tight (here we go again). The squeeze is on at the Environment Agency and they are expected to work

more closely with communities to help them to be more proactive in managing their own watercourses.

Now the good news. The quality of the water in the brook will continue to be monitored regularly. There are occasional peaks of undesirable substances in the water (it is, after all, an urban watercourse for much of its length) but there are also fish. The spreadsheet numbers tell us that the watercourse has some issues but the fish tell us it is not all bad. My contact at the Environment Agency said that he would be surprised if the contaminants in the water would ever be at a level that would injure pets.

The Environment Agency have made improvements at Oakley through a Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SUDS, a new acronym to learn). In times of heavy rainfall this holds back the flood water and releases it slowly rather than in a rush. This allows sediments to be deposited out of the water, improving downstream water quality.

I hope this allays some of the worst fears and I am grateful to the Environment Agency for providing the data but also going the extra mile and explaining what at least some of it means!

Shaun Cullimore

Clerk to Swindon Parish Council

Village Hall

The Village Hall Annual General Meeting

will take place on
Wednesday 1st April at 7.15pm
in the
Village Hall Lounge

Items to be discussed are:

1. Activities / improvements for 2015
2. Accounts
3. Future of the hall
4. Election of officials
 - a. Chairperson; b. Secretary; c. Treasurer
5. Any other business

Peter Piff

Chairman, Village Hall Committee

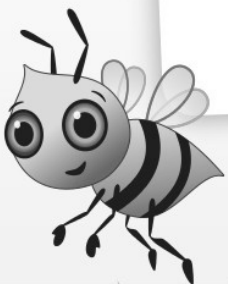


Join in at www.thebigtidyup.org

Tidy up event details:

SWINDON PARISH COUNCIL are organising a litter pick in the park at Swindon Village on 18th March starting at 10:30am.

Meet at the mosaic in the park outside the Village Hall. Please join us!



**KEEP
BRITAIN
TIDY**

**Love
where
YOU
Live**

Shoppers can enjoy free afternoon parking during race week

Parking in all council run car parks will be free of charge every afternoon, from 1pm onwards, during Cheltenham race week.

From Monday 9th to Friday 13th March 2015 inclusive, visitors can enjoy the town centre for even longer thanks to the free parking. The initiative hopes to encourage shoppers to visit the town during Cheltenham's Gold Cup festival and to show support for the festival as well as for local retailers and businesses.

Car parks allowing free parking after 1pm each day from Monday 9th to Friday 13th March 2015 are:

- Bath Parade
- Bath Terrace
- Cheltenham Walk
- Commercial Street
- Coronation Square
- High Street
- Regent Arcade
- Royal Well
- Sherborne Place
- St. George's Road
- St. James's Street
- Town centre East
(formerly Grosvenor Terrace)

It is hoped that motorists, on average, will save around £3 per day on parking during this time.

Councillor Andrew McKinlay, cabinet member for built environment, said: "Cheltenham benefits greatly during race week, it's a great atmosphere and visitors love coming here. But we do recognise that it can be a quiet time in the town centre and we hope that the free parking will encourage those who aren't watching the races to come and enjoy what the retailers and businesses have to offer."

Kevan Blackadder, the town's business partnership manager added: "There are several hours of the day during the afternoons in race week when racegoers are packing out Prestbury Park. It means it's a great time for locals to head into town and enjoy our shops. With 12 different car parks in this free parking offer, it makes great sense to take advantage. We're delighted the initiative has been launched to help both our retailers and shoppers."

Kelly Carter

Communications Officer
Cheltenham Borough Council

What happens to our recycling?

Cheltenham's residents save over £1million on landfill tax costs every year from recycling and composting. The council is celebrating this with its 'thanks a million' campaign which it's rolling out this month.

In Cheltenham residents now recycle 46% of household waste and as part of the campaign, the council wants to beat this figure by further improving awareness of what can be recycled and where, through to the final end product.

With the average recycling round serving 740 properties per day, have you ever wondered what happens after your recycling boxes are collected or you drop something off at the recycling centre? We thought we'd share with you where your recycling goes and what happens to it in the recycling process, so you can see the difference you are making to the environment.

Most materials for recycling are taken first to the council's bulking facility in Swindon Road then transported to the various specialist processors.

Paper and cardboard - Printwaste, the company which operates the bulking facility, transports paper to a newsprint mill while cardboard is used in new cardboard products, both in the UK.

Glass and cans - Most glass is re-used in new products, while a small amount is used as aggregate. Aluminium and steel cans are sorted before being transported elsewhere for a re-melt process. The recycled steel is used in a wide range of products, while the recycled aluminium is mainly used in the production of new cans.

Plastic bottles - Plastic bottles collected at the kerbside are mainly used in the production of new plastic bottles.

Mixed plastics - Mixed plastics are sent to UK re-processors where the different types are separated and granulated for re-use in a wide range of new products such as drainpipes and plastic garden furniture.

Textiles - Charitable companies collect used textiles from the 'bring banks' located across the borough. As a first priority they look to re-use the clothing within the UK. Then lower grade materials are sent to third world countries or areas where urgent relief is needed, such as in the wake of a large-scale natural disaster.

Cartons/Tetrapaks - There is a small number of Tetrapak banks in the borough; the material is reprocessed into its component parts and recycled in the UK.

Food waste - The food waste is taken to a processing plant where it is broken down by microorganisms. The gas from this process is used to generate heat and power, while the liquid residue is used as a natural fertiliser. Removing food waste from landfill helps reduce emissions of methane which is a harmful climate change gas.

Garden waste - Garden waste is taken to Wingmoor Farm where it is windrow composted to produce soil conditioner which is used in agriculture.

Councillor Chris Coleman, cabinet member for clean and green environment, says:
"We'd like to thank all the residents in Cheltenham who do their bit to help the environment by recycling which saves over £1m on landfill costs. Every year Cheltenham residents pay £1.4m to bury waste but with so many recycling options we really want to reduce this cost and the amount going to landfill. Any items that are recycled in Cheltenham become a valuable resource. With Swindon Road Recycling Centre, and twelve 'Bring Bank' sites across the borough as well as kerbside recycling, we want to encourage more and more people to recycle."

To find out more about recycling in Cheltenham, including your collection day, what you can recycle and where, visit the council's website
www.cheltenham.gov.uk/recycling.

Kelly Carter

Communications Officer
Cheltenham Borough Council
01242 264154

1st Swindon Village Scout Group

Jumble Sale

Saturday 21st March at 11.00am
in the Village Hall

Admission 20p



Scouts will be collecting jumble
around the inner village area on
Saturday 7th March from 10.00am onwards.

If you're having an early Spring-time clearout please remember
the Scouts' Jumble Sale. We will collect from your doorstep
without disturbing you if donations are clearly labelled.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Services and events in March

Sunday	1st	10.30am	Together @ Ten Thirty St David? Who's David?
		3.30pm	Wedding & Baptism
		6.30pm	Sung Holy Communion
Monday	2 nd	7.00pm	PCC meeting in church
Tuesday	3 rd	7.00pm	Holy Communion followed by Tuesday group
Friday	6 th	12.00noon	Lent Lunch
Sunday	8th	9.15am	Holy Communion (BCP)
		6.30pm	Evensong
Tuesday	10 th	7.00pm	Holy Communion followed by Tuesday group
Friday	13 th	12.00noon	Lent Lunch
Sunday	15th	9.15am	Holy Communion
		10.30am	Mothering Sunday all age service
		6.30pm	Evensong
Tuesday	17 th	7.00pm	Holy Communion followed by Tuesday group
Friday	20 th	12.00noon	Lent Lunch
Sunday	22nd	9.15am	Holy Communion
		6.30pm	Evensong
Tuesday	24 th	9.30am	School visit for Experience Easter
		7.00pm	Holy Communion followed by Tuesday group
Wednesday	25 th	9.30am	School visit for Experience Easter
Friday	27 th	12.00noon	Lent Lunch
Saturday	28 th	10.30am	Cake & Coffee Morning in the Village Hall
Sunday	29th	10.00am	Palm Sunday Procession & Communion
		6.30pm	Evensong

From the registers



Baptisms

We welcome into the Church family:

Lisa Pennicard

1st February

Enquiries about baptisms or weddings

If you would like to enquire about baptism (also called christening) or would like to book a wedding in St Lawrence church, please visit the Team Surgery at St. Nicolas' Church, Swindon Lane on any Saturday morning between 10.30am and 11.00am. (Enter through the main door and turn right.)

If this is not possible contact the Team Office, which is open Monday to Friday from 9am until 12 noon. The office is based at St Nicolas' Church in Swindon Lane. Contact the Office on **244373** or **admin@northchelt.org.uk**

You can contact me, the Revd Liz Palin (Assistant Curate) on 575547, liz.palin@northchelt.org.uk.

Lent Lunches

in St Lawrence Church

Every Friday in Lent

**Fridays 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th March
12noon to 2.00pm**

Drop in for a simple bread and soup lunch and a friendly chat. There is no set charge but donations to the St. Lawrence church building fund would be welcome.

New Team Rector and Associate Priest for the North Cheltenham Team Ministry

On 22nd January, in All Saints' Church, Pittville, Bishop Martyn Snow, Bishop of Tewkesbury, licensed the Reverend Canon David Smith as the new Team Rector for North Cheltenham, and Reverend Angela Smith as an Associate Priest in the team.

David writes:

We have been greatly encouraged by the warm welcome we have received in our new communities. I say "communities" in the plural because, although we now live in the Rectory in Prestbury, we serve the whole of the North Cheltenham Team area from Elmstone Hardwicke in the west to Prestbury in the east and down to All Saints', Pittville in the town.

Many of you, I know, are long term residents in your respective parishes and we shall greatly value your local knowledge. In contrast, Angela and I have hitherto led a rather nomadic life. Both of us were born, brought up and went to school in London. We met when we both went to Southampton University in 1972 and married when we graduated in 1975, Angela in English & History and me as an Aeronautical Engineer. I had already been accepted into the Royal Air Force, and sponsored through university, and so I embarked on what was to become over 30 years' service as an RAF Engineer, during which time Angela also qualified as a teacher, we had four children: Michael (now 38), Tom (35), Tim (30), and Hannah (21), as well as 22 different houses, a miscellany of small mammals, rodents, and fish, and 8 cats - one daughter and 3 cats still live with us!!! We have moved over the length and breadth of the UK, from Cornwall to North Scotland, and from Wales to East Anglia, as well as 18 months living at Mount Pleasant Airfield on the Falkland Islands.

Throughout my service in the RAF we almost always lived in RAF married quarters and felt that, for us, it was right to support and attend the local RAF church and/or the local parish church. Thus, as a family, we have experienced a wide range of church traditions and varied local communities, in many different parts of the UK, and our shared faith has strengthened our relationship throughout and never let us down.

I finished my RAF career with a 3-year tour at RAF Innsworth, during which time we were able to train for ordained ministry through the West of England Ministerial Training Course. I was ordained in 2005 to serve my curacy in Matson, and Angela was ordained a year later, also joining the team in Matson. It is something of a novelty for us to have stayed in one city for over 12 years after so many years travelling and moving house. We have come to know and love Gloucestershire and are looking forward to this new role, in and around Cheltenham.

We will of course get to know our local congregations better in the coming months, but the Church of England is here for everyone, throughout the community. Whether or not you are a regular churchgoer, we are here to serve the whole community and we look forward to meeting you.

With every blessing.

David and Angela Smith

Serving the community

As I am sure you will all be aware we have recently had some re-ordering done in the church. One of the main reasons for the work was so that our church building would be better suited to serving the community in which we are set.

The PCC are exploring ways in which we can do this, and have come up with two projects that they hope to launch in the near future. The first is aimed at the older people living in our community. We have several people we know who enjoy knitting, making things for grandchildren, sewing blankets and hats for premature babies overseas etc. So we are exploring the idea of Knit, natter (or neither) which would offer tea, conversation and cake, as well as an opportunity for those who want to knit as well. It would probably be held on a monthly basis, and our hope is that the community police, village agent etc. would also pop in to keep up to date with concerns of those in our community.

The second is aimed at those who care for pre-school children, who too might appreciate the opportunity for a drink, a chance to meet others who are caring for little ones, and an opportunity for the children to play. This is likely to be offered in the early afternoon so that those who want to can pop in for an hour or so before they pick up older children from school.

We would value your opinion on when would be good times for these two initiatives to happen, how frequently, and whether you would be able to volunteer to help either in getting them off the ground, or helping out once they are established.

Please do contact me or Mary Halliwell if you have any thoughts or suggestions. Tel. 575547 or email liz.palin@northchelt.org.uk.

Rev. Liz

A view from the pew

Thoughts on Prayer

I saw this little comment once: “Who says worrying doesn't work? Everything I worry about doesn't happen.” These words are, of course, ironical – it doesn't mean what it appears to mean. Reading this made me think how it applied to prayer and praying. I could change it to: “Who says praying doesn't work? Many things I pray about seem to happen sooner or later - in some mysterious way”. Although I have been praying all my life, I still wonder does praying work?

I'm one of those people who can't help questioning everything. So if something I pray for does happen I always wonder if it is a result of my prayers or not? My conclusion is that prayer does work – whatever we mean by 'work'.

Dr Leslie Weatherhead, a well known Christian preacher in my youth, said that once, when he was a student he came across the verse: “And whatsoever you ask in my name, that will I do..” He believed that the verse meant that all he had to do was ask and he would pass the exam. He told God he believed Jesus' promise, and he wanted good marks. Next day the young Weatherhead took the examination, but – would you believe it - he found he'd failed. He was disillusioned. He rebelled and almost lost his faith. He came to the conclusion that the promises in the Bible were no good. Why? Because God hadn't granted his wish that he should pass the examination it followed that prayer was useless. The next year he repeated the course. He worked hard and he passed. This time he decided that he didn't need God and that he could get along by himself.

Isn't this the conclusion that many people reach? We need something, we want something, we pray for it, and when we don't get the results we want we come close to losing our faith. At the very least we conclude – as did Dr Weatherhead - that we can, or we must, get along by ourselves. In the end Dr Weatherhead came to understand that his own powers and abilities were in reality the power that God had given him.

I see from the paper that the Church of England is very concerned with the steady decline in numbers. Indeed a great deal of money has been released to help the Church communicate with people better. So we have got some money but we've also got the promise of God's help.

All prayer is answered but sometimes the answer is 'no' – “I have plans – trust me in this”. Sometimes it is 'no', “not yet, the time is not right”. At other times God's answer is 'yes' and “just wait, and just wait to see what else I have in store for you”.

Do you know this prayer? It's been a great help to me at times:
O God, grant us the serenity to accept what cannot be changed,
the courage to change what can be changed
and the wisdom to know the difference. *Reinhold Neibuhr (1892- 1971)*

Ralph Griffin

Lent, Holy Week and Easter at St Lawrence Church

Join us at these special services as we journey together towards Easter.

15th March	10.30am	Mothering Sunday All Age Service
29th March	10.00am	Palm Sunday Procession & Service <i>Meet outside Cheltenham Town FC Training Ground, Quat Goose Lane.</i>
3rd April	12noon	Good Friday reflection with music and readings
4th April	12 noon	Easter Garden <i>Children accompanied by an adult are welcome to come and help make the Easter Garden.</i>
5th April	10.00am	Easter Day Family Communion Service. <i>Suitable for all the family.</i>

St Lawrence Swindon Village

invite you to

‘Make a mother’s day’

by joining with us to celebrate Mothering Sunday

on 15th March at 10.30am

An informal service for the whole family where we can say thank you to all those who “mother” us.

There’ll even be a gift for all who mother us, so don’t miss out, make sure to come along (and bring someone special!).

Swindon St Lawrence & Cheltenham St Peter



29th March

Palm Sunday Procession

10am

Join us as we process from outside Cheltenham Town FC training ground (formerly Seasons, Quat Goose Lane) to St Lawrence Church for our Palm Sunday service.

Bring branches, drums, tambourines etc.

Suitable for all ages.

We aim to arrive in church at approx 10.15am so if you can’t manage the procession join us at the church gates!

St.Lawrence Church

Annual Cake & Coffee Morning

Saturday 28th March 10.30am to 12noon
in the Village Hall

Come and enjoy a chat over a cup of coffee and a biscuit or two
then buy some goodies to take home.

Cakes, other bakes and preserves on sale.

Donations of goods to sell and raffle prizes will be most welcome.

Please contact Mary Halliwell, tel. 692423.

Caryn Soundy - Thank You

Our heartfelt thanks to all those who sent messages of sympathy to us after our daughter, Caryn, sadly passed away in January. We were overwhelmed and comforted by their warmth and the happy memories they recounted, helping us through a very difficult time.

Thanks also to those who were able to come to the Service of Thanksgiving – some 200 or so. It was also quite touching to see so many of the village primary school children of the late 60s and early 70s together again. Caryn would have loved it!

To you all, our friends and Caryn's, thank you so very much.

David and Marlene Iliffe

There is no direct news from the society because as I write this there have been no more meetings since the January AGM.

Of course there is always the Joint Core Strategy to keep us entertained. We are now in a bit of a quiet period awaiting the Examination in Public by the Planning Inspectorate. However, that does not mean we are not doing anything. Stroud also has a core strategy and that is at the examination stage. There, too, it is felt that the Council are attempting to provide more space for housing than is called for by the statistics. Their various protest groups together with the parish councils that are affected have clubbed together and hired some legal advice. That advice has created several problems for the originators of the strategy.

As a result, the various groups opposed to our own JCS as it stands are trying to get the parish councils in this area to join in common cause and also raise enough money to employ the same legal representation.

It has become obvious to me that the whole plan to build on the north-west extension has been many years in the conception. It seems that the original idea of this urban extension, rather than being inflicted on us by regional government as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy, must have been called for by our own local mandarins. Since then both parties in local government, while saying that they wish to protect the green belt have, in fact, seen it as the only way forward for the economic expansion of the town. It is interesting that whereas in Cheltenham the Lib Dems are seen as supporting the JCS and the Conservatives are against it, it is exactly the other way round in Tewkesbury. Over the years whichever party is in power has supported the initiative and the opposition has tried to pretend that they are against it. Politicians – wonderful things – eh.

Pity they did not come clean on this earlier. We would not then have wasted time handing anti JCS ammunition to those councillors who had said in their manifesto that they would protect the green belt in the hope that they would do as their manifesto said.

Anyway, back to the Society. In March we will keep our First World War theme going with a talk about the Voluntary Hospitals which operated in Cheltenham at that time. Visitors are always welcome and new members even more welcome. Best of all is when current members rejoin by paying their subs – ‘that one sinner repent, etc’.

Barry Simon

Swindon Village Winemakers

The 2014 year ended with a Christmas meal at the House in the Tree, and early in January eighteen of us went to the Everyman Theatre to see the pantomime - oh yes we did! We intend to go again next year.

The January meeting was the A.G.M. Mandy Jilbert, our chairman, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the members for their continued support at this, her first AGM as chairman. Apologies were received from Claire Smith, Sylvia Hales and Barbara Brooks. Minutes of the last A.G.M. were read and approved, there were no matters arising and so they were signed by the chairman.

Mandy then gave her report of what happened during the last twelve months.

Tony Jilbert, our treasurer, gave a vote of thanks to Stuart Alcock for auditing the accounts; he also said that we now have a membership of 35, one more than in 2013. The treasurer's report was read out, approval was proposed by John Beardsley and seconded by Jim Taylor.

All existing committee members agreed to carry on for another year so the chairman proposed that the committee be elected en bloc and was proposed by Pete Jones and seconded by Cyril Smallwood.

Ray Hales agreed once again to stand as our representative on the Village Hall committee; proposed by Jim Ruxton, seconded by John Beardsley.

In Any Other Business Mandy explained that Barbara Brooks had moved up north to be near her son and Roy has her son's email address to keep them informed of what is going on in the club. Last year we lost our President Vera Wilkins; Harold Kent proposed Betty Taylor to take over as President which she accepted and all were in agreement.

At the time of writing we are looking forward to our Doug Wilkins Kit Wine competition, this year for a sweet white wine.

On Saturday 7th March it is our Spring Dance dancing to the Dad and Daughter group Tandem. Tickets are £6.00 each; all are welcome, please see a member for tickets. Because of the dance there will be no meeting in March.

Roy Harper
Secretary

Mr Punch arrived at our February meeting accompanied by Emeritus Professor Diana Humphrey and her partner Fred Ward. They had started their business whilst living in the far north of Scotland, touring around in a van and calling themselves 'Whisper and Shout Puppets'. The puppet Punchinello came from Italy but is likely to have originated in Egypt. From there the character spread throughout Europe and beyond with variations and different names in every country. Records show that Mr Punch first appeared in Covent Garden in 1660, was mentioned in Pepys' diaries and became popular when Cromwell banned live actors from performing, but not puppets. Originally the puppets would have been marionettes but, as the travelling shows developed, glove puppets became more practical. Toby the dog was originally a cat. Every year enthusiasts and professionals meet up in London for a great party and rally to celebrate Mr Punch's Birthday. The Codman family from North Wales have been performing at the seaside venues there since 1860 and are still going strong. I have photographs of them on the esplanade in Llandudno taken a couple of years ago.

A party of members met at The Ballroom Restaurant and had a very enjoyable evening; we are planning to meet up at Flynn's for lunch for our next meal out. Several members took the bus to Painswick and spent a gloriously sunny, but cold, day at the Rococo Gardens wandering amongst the drifts of beautiful snowdrops there. The Craft and Book Clubs are proving popular and continue to have regular monthly meetings. A social skittles evening gave us a chance to brush up on our bowling skills, after quite a long break, ready for this year's Tournament. On the subject of skittles, we are arranging another Skittles and Supper Evening at the Suffolk Arms. These events have proved very popular in the past and include many friends and relations joining in the fun. The first round of the County Quiz has been arranged, so we shall have to brush the cobwebs away and get our brains fit as well! There is also Prestbury WI's Birthday Party to look forward to.

A number of members are off to the Races in their posh hats for Ladies' Day. We have a marquee with all facilities so if the weather is bad we can watch the races on the screen, eat, drink and bet in the warm and dry! The difficult bit is picking the winners! The County Annual Meeting in the Town Hall is where we will be passing the Centenary Baton around amongst the delegates before it is taken around the town, via various modes of transport, and then passed on to the next sector of the county. The Baton started its journey at LlanfairPG on Anglesey, the venue of the first WI meeting, and is being passed all around Wales and England before arriving at the Royal Albert Hall for the National Annual Meeting. There are many events organized to celebrate 100 years of the WI. Historian Lucy Worsley is making a television programme.

At our next meeting on **2nd March Richard Burton** is coming to enlighten us on '**Life at Barrington Court**'. We shall all be baking again as there is a Cake Sale to boost our funds. We meet at 7.30pm at St Nicolas Church Hall, Swindon Lane and warmly welcome anyone who would like to join us there.

Sara Jefferies

The Women's Institute is 100

The Women's Institute is celebrating 100 years of the organisation and to this end there is a Baton going around the Country. This is County by County and on Monday 16 March it will arrive in Gloucestershire.

I am the co-ordinator for the Cheltenham sector and I will have the Baton for the day on **Wednesday 18 March 2015**. The Baton will be travelling around various points of interest in Cheltenham which will include Neptune's Fountain, Pittville Pump Room, Pittville Gates and the Holst Museum. If anyone wants any more information about this fantastic event please do not hesitate to get in touch with me so that I can give you exact timings of where the Baton will be. I hope to hear from you.

Sue Davies

Secretary, Marle Hill WI
Cheltenham Sector Co-ordinator
Tel. 01242 511778

Wednesday Club

Our AGM went well and we were pleased to inform our members that we are still well in credit and can afford to pay for good speakers again this year. We have a great and varied programme again thanks to Shirley and June and hopefully Rose has filled in her Refreshment rota. Thanks to everyone that brings along raffle prizes, this all helps our funds.

Afterwards, we played bingo until supper and a quiz was put on the table for everyone to complete. It was an interesting one actually, all questions on Gloucestershire.

Our next meeting is on **Wednesday 4th March** and **Marion Beagley** is to talk on "**My Mother was a Cockney**". We also have a Plant Stall that evening so please bring along some plants to sell.

Please remember visitors are always welcome, so do come along and join us.

Pauline Wright

It's been a busy few weeks for all sections of the group. The Cubs recently enjoyed meeting for the evening in St Lawrence's Church instead of the village hall. They had a tour of the building and a look at the new facilities before finishing with a Scouts Own (prayers and reflections) that they had prepared themselves. Our thanks to Tony Jilbert for giving his time and sharing his knowledge of the church and its history on the night.

Meanwhile, the Scouts have had a busy few weeks in the "camp kitchen"...

Troop Cooking Competition – Swindon Village

In preparation for the District Scout Cooking Competition, we held our own troop competition the week beforehand. With the Cubs meeting at St Lawrence's Church, the Scouts had the village hall to themselves for 2½ hours to prepare, cook, eat and clear away a two-course meal for four people. We had 26 Scouts that formed seven very enthusiastic teams. Having planned their menus the week before, each team was presented with the food items from the shopping lists that they had written out themselves. In order to replicate camp conditions, each team had just a twin burner camp stove to cook on. The hall was a vibrant mix of noise and smells and it was great to see all the Scouts working really well together as teams and then enjoying the meals that they had cooked together. Foxy (Liz) and Mr Foxy (John Attwell) were our guest judges for the evening and they were very impressed with the high standard of the meals produced. All in all, a really great evening of Scouting with some lovely food to enjoy as well!

...and so on to the...

District Cooking Competition - Shurdington

Following on from our own competition, four of our Scouts formed a team to take part in the District Scout Cooking Competition, held at Shurdington Scout HQ. The challenge this year was to cook and serve a three course meal for four people with a budget of just £17. The theme for this year was "Jamboree" which gave them licence to incorporate any/all elements of World Scouting/International Friendship, not just Japanese food! All four teams from around the district cooked meals that the judges would have been happy to sit down and eat and the standard was incredibly high. There was a total of 470 points on offer and yet all four teams were split by just 17 points. Our team managed to finish in second place – pipped to the trophy by just 3 points. However, as the top two teams go forward onto the County Cooking Competition, they will get to try again in a few weeks and see if they can improve on this excellent performance! Congratulations to all of you, and a big thank-you to the parents for all their support.

The Cotswold Marathon

The Cotswold Marathon is a 36 mile trek across the Cotswolds through the night, aimed at the Explorer Scouts, leaders and the older members of the Scout and Guide movement, held during February each year. However, at the age of 12, Scouts are

able to tackle the Bronze route, which is the first 14 miles, finishing at Birdlip, and at the age of 13 and 14 they are able to take on the Silver route, which is the first 19 miles, finishing at Elkstone.

We had 5 lads up for the challenge this year together with Rob Ellis and myself and we set off to tackle the Bronze route. Before the hike started we pitched our tents at Murray Hall in Gloucester. We set off at 5:05pm and, as dusk fell we climbed to the top of a very muddy Robinswood Hill where there are great views of the lights of southern Gloucester. The lads set a steady pace and maintained this well through the first few checkpoints at Upton St Leonards, Hucclecote and Brockworth, after which came the long and slow climb up Cooper's Hill. Despite tiredness and fatigue starting to take their toll, they continued without slowing down all the way to Birdlip and our finish checkpoint. We finished just before 11pm having covered 14 miles in 5 hours & 46 minutes and it's fair to say we were all shattered. We were transported back to Murray Hall by minibus and arrived back at around midnight, where a mug of hot chocolate was enjoyed before a well earned night's sleep in some rather cold tents!

While we were all enjoying a rest in our tents, participants on the Silver and Gold routes continued trekking through the night. A team of Explorers from Cheltenham managed to complete the Silver route at 4am, showing a huge amount of determination to get to the finish at that time of the night. And one of our former Scouts, Matthew Evans (now an Explorer Scout leader), tackled the Gold route with other Gloucestershire Network members. Matthew had completed the Silver route in the past but had never taken on the challenge of the full 36 miles before. He too set off at 5:05pm on the Saturday and, with his team mates, walked right through the night, completing the full distance just before 7am on the Sunday morning in a time of 13 hours & 47 minutes. That's 8 hours longer than us to cover almost 3 times the distance – makes me feel tired just thinking about it! Well done Matthew.

I must also mention our fellow leader Shane Gough who has become an important part of the team that helps to make the Cotswold Marathon tick. Shane drives our minibus through the night, assisted with a radio operator beside him, ferrying back teams from Birdlip and Elkstone as they finish and other teams and individuals as they drop out along the route. (More than 50% of participants failed to complete their target route this year). Poor Shane was driving right through the night and finally crawled into his tent at 6:45am on the Sunday morning, where he managed just 1½ hours sleep!

So congratulations are due to the five lads - **Sam Burge, Sam Gibson, Sebastian Grey, Dan Mitchell** and **George Wood** - who took part this year. There was an excellent team spirit and the lads all helped each other through the tougher moments. They equalled our group's fastest time on the Bronze route – an excellent achievement at such a young age. All in all it's a terrific event providing real challenge and adventure in really testing conditions. I'm looking forward to next year already!

Sos



Winston's Wish is the leading childhood bereavement charity in the UK, helping children and young people rebuild their lives after the death of their mum, dad, brother or sister, and enabling them to face the future with confidence and hope.

Throughout Gloucestershire, Winston's Wish runs a unique bereavement support programme called SWITCH. The program is aimed at children aged 8-14 who have suffered a close family bereavement which is having a negative effect on their behaviour. The bereavement may not be recent but may still be having an impact on the child. The SWITCH programme offers family work, individual work for children and their carers and group work. We end the programme with a celebration day. The aim of SWITCH is to provide children and families with the opportunity to work through their experience with qualified professionals and to help them make sense of their emotions and feelings, meet other people in similar situations and provide them with a coping strategy to help them reach their full potential.

We would like to reach as many of these children and families as possible in Gloucestershire. If you know a child or family who would benefit from the SWITCH programme or would like any further information, please contact me, Sheila Elliott, Family Programme Lead for SWITCH: **selliott@winstonswish.org.uk** or **switch@winstonswish.org.uk** or phone the office on **01242 515157** and ask to speak to myself or a member of the SWITCH team.

For further information about other services Winston's Wish can provide for children who have suffered a bereavement, please go to our website **www.winstonswish.org.uk** .

Sheila Elliott

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Cub Scout Leader	Rachel Smith (Chil)	693107
Beaver Leader	Charlotte Mitchell (Mole)	701854
Rainbow Guider	Jackie Bailey	07871 169308
Village Hall Booking Secretary	Sandy Thornton	232045
Village Hall Secretary	Rose D’Gama	574964
Wednesday Club	Pauline Wright	693112
Play Group	(Playgroup hours)	690479
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Deadline for the next issue of the Village News is the 16th of this month.
Please send contributions to the editors:
David Iliffe at 16 Stantons Drive or Karen Evans at 5 Manor Road
or e-mail village-news@swindonparish.org.uk

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