



£1, free to Members

Barkham Newsletter

Issue 113 Autumn 2015

from the Barkham Village Residents Association

<http://www.barkham.org.uk>

The following BVRA social events will all be held at
Barkham Village Hall.

Please see page 12 for more details

Barkham Bop

Saturday 3 October 7.00 for 7.30pm

Children's Halloween Party

Saturday 31 October 3pm

Quiz Night

Saturday 21 November 7.00 for 7.30pm

28th BVRA AGM – 12th November 2015

In accordance with the constitution, the BVRA Annual General Meeting will take place at 8pm on Thursday 12th November 2015. The meeting will take place at Barkham Village Hall and all residents of Barkham are welcome to attend. Nominations for any post should reach the Secretary by 22nd October.

In this issue...

Quiz	2	Borough Councillor	8	Concerts	18
Editorial	3	Church	10	Gardening	20-21
Parish Council	4	Ramblers	11	Diary	23
Barkham Ladies	5	Social	12		
Planning update	6	Local history	13-14		

BVRA Social Secretary Vacancy

As Judith Collins says in her Social Matters piece on page 12, she is planning to downsize and move out of Barkham. Judith has been our Social Secretary for several years and, together with the rest of the Social Committee has organised the various regular social events we hold each year, such as the quiz and the Easter Egg Hunt. On behalf of all Barkham residents we are very grateful to Judith for her work in leading the committee.

However it is now time to pass on the baton! Please consider volunteering to take on this important and interesting role on behalf of the Barkham community. Judith will be happy to provide more details as to what the role entails and to support the new Social Secretary as they "learn the ropes".

Alternatively, if you would like to help but do not feel able to take on the leading role, the Social Committee is always looking for new members and ideas for events so please consider helping by joining the committee.

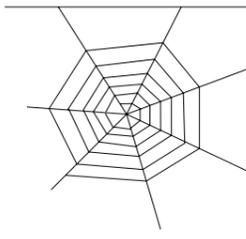
Judith's contact details can be found on the facing page.

The Quiz

Given England's success at winning back the Ashes this summer, the theme for the quiz this time is "Australia". Only one question on cricket though!

1. What is the Australian National Anthem?
2. Who sang "We come from a land down under"?
3. Where is the WACA (this is the cricket question)?
4. Which Australian actress was married to Tom Cruise and is currently starring (again) in the West End?
5. In which city is the Australian Tennis Open played?
6. Ayers Rock is usually known nowadays by its Aboriginal name – what is it?
7. What is The Ghan?
8. Who is the current Australian Prime Minister (September 2015)?
9. On which side of the road do they drive (in Australia)?
10. And finally ...who, as created by Barry Humphries, was knighted for services to Australian culture?

Answers on page 23



Barkham web site

We are constantly looking for ways to improve our website www.barkham.org.uk and would welcome your suggestions.

More photos please!

We are always in need of attractive images of the Barkham area for both the web site and newsletter, so if you have some interesting photos and would like to share them please get in touch.

Dave Clements

Barkham Village Hall

Next to St James' Church, beautiful rural setting for weddings, christenings and parties.

From as little as £22/hr for both halls. £25/hr after 6.00 p.m. on Saturday.

Can accommodate 175 guests and now has a new fully equipped kitchen. Plus with the benefit of Lottery Funding a new ceiling and lighting have been installed which can be fully dimmable for evening celebrations.

If you are a group who needs somewhere to meet on a regular basis why not use your local village hall, we have plenty of tables and chairs and spacious car park and grounds for use during the summer. We offer very competitive rates for regular users.

Further information can be obtained from the parish council web site with photographs of the hall plus a calendar with availability. Please contact Judith Neuhofer on 979 0296 or email clerk@barkham-parishcouncil.org.uk

BVRA 2014/15 GENERAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairman: Stewart Richardson (acting)
chairman@barkham.org.uk

Secretary: Christine Leigh
977 4333
secretary@barkham.org.uk

Treasurer: Ian Overton
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treasurer@barkham.org.uk

Social: Judith Collins
977 1579
social@barkham.org.uk

Membership: Jim Butler
978 3572
membership@barkham.org.uk

Newsletter: Stewart Richardson
979 1914
newsletter@barkham.org.uk

Web Site: Dave Clements
989 2198
webmaster@barkham.org.uk

Development Watch: Lindsay Brown
07968 958151
development@barkham.org.uk

Advertising and Newsletter Contributions

Newsletter articles / contributions for the Winter edition should be in by 6 November 2015. It helps if these can be submitted in electronic form by email to newsletter@barkham.org.uk. They may also be hand written, and should be sent to the Editor, Stewart Richardson, at 342 Barkham Road, Wokingham, RG41 4DE.

For trade adverts, contact Ian Overton by email to treasurer@barkham.org.uk, or call 973 4806. We offer three sizes, 64mm x 54mm at £22, 124mm x 105mm at £52 and 190x130mm at £100, for 4 quarterly insertions.

Distribution of the next issue will take place in early December.



Editorial

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Barkham Newsletter. This is a bumper 24 page issue!

This edition is "members only". You may be aware that the Spring and Summer newsletters are distributed to every household in Barkham but the Autumn and Winter ones are just for paid up members. The large majority of residents are members – 685 households this year – another record. Thank you for your support!

You may be aware that the MOD finally moves (moved, depending on when you are reading this) out of Arborfield Garrison (a large part of which is of course in Barkham) in September. This started life as the Remount Depot in 1904 and Janet Firth has written a fascinating article on the impact of the Remount Depot on Barkham before and during WWI. Ray Hill also makes reference in his piece.

Laurence Heath provides one of regular updates on planning matters, specifically for the Garrison.

We have the regular contributions from Barkham Parish Council, John Kaiser, our WBC councillor and other local societies such as music, gardening and rambling. Thanks go to Alan Edwards who

has agreed to restart his gardening column "Alan's Patch" (after a 15 year break!). Julian Bidgood reports on the Holiday Bible Club which has been running successfully for many years and must be one of the biggest logistical challenges in the area (almost all achieved by volunteers)!

The Quiz topic this time is "Australia" and the questions as usual are an eclectic mix! If anyone fancies being a guest quiz setter for one (or more) editions please let me know. One job less for the editor!

Stewart Richardson
Editor

Arborfield & Newland W.I.

Calling all families in Barkham!

It's never too early to prepare for Christmas, so check your diaries and make note of our Winter Fayre to be held in Arborfield Village Hall on Saturday 5th December.

From 2.00pm until 4.00pm we will be providing refreshments to keep you going as you choose from a variety of 'goodies', including Christmas decorations, gifts, our traditional preserves, produce and seasonal cakes, together with toys, books, a 'lucky dip' for the youngsters and our fabulous raffle. Do come and join us with your friends and family and make a start on Christmas.

This is the WI's Centenary Year and we are looking for new members. So why not come along to one of our meetings, held on the second Tuesday of each month at 2.00pm in Arborfield Village Hall, listen to our Speaker and join us for tea and cake and a chance to make new friends.

Enquiries to Mary Lane 976 0577 or Pam Stubbs 989 3050



News from Your Parish Council

Keep up to date with all the local news and information at our website.

The summer is usually a quiet time of year for the Parish Council but not this year! The Reserved Matters for Phase 1 of the Crest Nicholson application and the Hogwood Farm application are both out for consultation.

See below for more information.

Arborfield Garrison SDL Update

The MOD (Crest Nicholson) Planning Application for 2000 houses and the application for the new secondary school were both granted planning permission at the Planning Committee on the 25th March. The planning application for the Hogwood Farm development for the remaining 1500 houses has now been submitted (application number 140764) and will be brought to the Planning Committee in September. The first phase of the development will be the construction of 113 dwellings with access from Biggs Lane and Princess Marina Drive. The Reserved Matters application has now been submitted, this is the actual design and layout. The architectural style proposed is very disappointing (application number 150162). Please do take some time to view the proposals for yourself and submit your comments to Wokingham Bor-

ough Council. The name of the development has still not been announced. See more detailed report from Laurence Heath, the vice Chairman of the Parish Council on page 6.

The next Arborfield Community Forum will be held at Henry Street Garden Centre from 7pm to 8.45pm on Wednesday September 23. Please do support this and take the opportunity to come and ask any questions.

Secondary School

The new secondary school will take its first intake of students in September 2016, the education provider has now been announced, this will be Bohunt Educational Trust, and they currently sponsor schools in Liphook, Worthing and Portsmouth. The first school in the trust, Bohunt School Liphook, is rated Outstanding in every category by Ofsted and was named the Times Educational Supplement's School of the Year for 2014.

Basketball Hoop

The Parish Council were delighted to be approached by a group of young people who would like to have a basketball hoop in the park at the Junipers. They have done a considerable amount of research to prove that there is a need, presenting the Council with a lengthy petition. We propose to install a basketball hoop to the right of the football post, away from the children's play area, with a small area of green tarmac in order that the ball can be bounced. A consultation will be undertaken with residents in the vicinity in order that they are aware of the proposal. If you have any concerns, please contact the Clerk.

In Memory of Frank Postlethwaite

Many of you will remember Frank as a very active member of the Parish Council. We will soon be erecting a bench in The Junipers Park, adjacent to the children's play area, in memory of Frank. The bench will be positioned so residents can sit and enjoy the view across the park. Frank was instrumental in providing the original equipment for the children's play area and walked through the park every day to ensure that it was always in excellent condition. We have a lot to thank Frank for and we trust that you will think of him for a few moments when you sit on the bench.

The Sam Hosgood Sporting Endeavour Fund

Unfortunately all our previous recipients have now reached the age of 18 and no longer qualify for the award. This is the first year since the fund was set up. We have so many talented young people, are you one of them, if so, you could be missing out on some funding which could help with your training expenses.

If you are a talented young person (under the age of 18) who represents the country in your chosen sport, the Parish Council have a small amount of money which could assist you with training and travel expenses. Please contact the Clerk for further information.

Vacancy For a new Councillor

The Parish Council currently has two vacancies, are you interested in what goes on in your area. The Council meets on the second Tuesday of the month at Barkham

Village Hall at 8.00 p.m. If you would like to find out more please contact the Clerk. We would be delighted to hear from you. You do not need any experience just an interest in what goes on in Barkham.

History Book

We are delighted to inform you that the Parish Council now have a new stock of "Barkham A History". The history book has now been reprinted with a new Foreword which details the forthcoming move of the Garrison to RAF Lyneham. If you are new to the area and do not own a copy of the history book they can now be purchased from the Clerk for £8.50 each, or they are on sale at Henry Street Garden Centre and Barkham Post Office.

Judith Neuhofer
Clerk to Barkham Parish Council



What a wonderful event this year's annual barbeque proved to be in August when 38 of us and husbands, assembled in the village hall. We began by placing umbrellas over our 3 lit burners! However, the rain soon ceased, enabling us to proceed. The weather was not ideal for eating outdoors so we set up a square formation of tables inside and enjoyed the combination of hot and cold food and deserts and coffee which followed. Everyone contributed to the evening whether providing food, cooking or their excellent company. Thanks to all who attended in making this year's event so successful.

Our next meeting is on 7th October from 7.30 when our guest speaker's subject is Hollywood to Broadway. New members are always most welcome.

Barkham Strollers

Eleven of we members of the social club, including a couple of sprightly lads, participated in our 3rd stroll this year in the heart of Surrey. We assembled ourselves into 3 cars for our journey to Elstead for the circular walk via Tilford. Being strollers who take in all there is to see and enjoy refreshments en route, this proved an all-day walk. Our breaks began with coffee stop (where picture was taken) alongside angling lake, followed by an excellent lunch at the Barley Mow situated on the cricket green alongside the River Wey at Tilford. We were in no rush to enjoy this lovely location and were shown the garden and new additional facilities by the owner/landlord. Our afternoon stroll then became more of a walk as there was increased distance in the return but this did not deter us taking in the donkeys at (you've guessed it) The Donkey pub! At the end of the afternoon, we enjoyed tea at the Elstead Mill watching the ducks in the streams and reading about the history of the mill itself.

Marilyn New





Planning Update`

August has been a busy month for planning. Crest Nicholson submitted plans for the first phase of the Garrison, along with applications for "Reserved Matters" covering public transport, greenways and phasing. Meanwhile the Marino Family Trust (MFT) submitted plans for their own development to the south.

Plans for first phase

The first phase is located next to the lake off Biggs Lane, in an area between the existing college and Commonfield Lane. It had been anticipated that Crest would be using this location as a flagship design for the whole development, capitalising on the landscape opportunities. In the event we are very disappointed by the quality of architecture proposed. I had expected some iconic buildings: instead what is proposed is ponderous and uninspiring. These buildings, with their large unadorned windows seem more appropriate to a business park than a residential development.

Some while ago, a number of our councillors visited a Crest development at Bolney Village in Sussex. We were all very impressed with what had been achieved there and Crest were clearly proud of their project. We were fully expecting a proposal of similar quality for the Garrison.

What I find extraordinary is that Crest have taken the trouble to carry out a study of local vernacular architecture – and then have ignored it! In the interests of making some constructive comments, BPC suggested some ways that the designs could reflect local architectural styles. Using the Barkham Village Design Statement would have been a good starting point.

BPC have written to Crest, and have requested a meeting to discuss their proposals. In fairness to them, they have responded and a meeting has been arranged soon.

Flooding is a separate concern. There was flooding in Biggs Lane in 2014 so, we have asked WBC to take special care in assessing flood mitigation, in line with their own policies. Resolving such issues after the event becomes very costly – far better that they are resolved at the outset.

BPC is also concerned that the arboriculture report indicates that about half the trees on the site will be felled. This is far more than we had anticipated and we are not aware that Crest have committed to replace trees on a one for one basis, which is what we would like to see.

Public transport

The Transport Statement indicates that a substantial contribution will be made towards improvements to the existing bus services and bus stop infrastructure. This is to be welcomed. However BPC would like to see specific proposals. In our view, it will be important that the Leopard bus should offer a more frequent service for the whole route. This would improve access to

the new secondary school for students, staff and other visitors. It should also help to facilitate attendance at after school activities. Consequently a frequency increase should be planned starting in September 2016, when the school opens.

Greenways

I am encouraged that Crest are taking seriously the provision of footpaths, cycleways and bridleways within the site and linking to nearby areas. BPC has raised some issues where we believe further adjustments and improvements can be made. For example it is necessary that adequate arrangements for safe crossings and segregation of greenways away from traffic are implemented in the area around the Barkham Street/Barkham Ride/Commonfield Lane junction.

Phasing

BPC is of the opinion that as far as possible, infrastructure should be delivered ahead of development. That said, it has to be recognised that there are financial and practical constraints.

Landscape and green infrastructure also should be prepared as early as possible. This is in the interests of the developer: it must be far easier to sell houses in a green and pleasant environment with landscaping maturing rather than to try selling them in a stark building site. BPC understands that open spaces will be prepared at an early date, and the same principle should be applied to the other elements of landscape and green infrastructure, which are relatively low cost compared with roads and buildings. Spe-

cifically, BPC has recommended that early attention is given to landscaping along the southern side of Langley Common Road. It is understood that this will be one of the later areas to be developed, but it should be a goal to have a well matured landscape boundary in place long before any houses are built.

Marino Family Trust

This development is to the south of the Garrison and is in Finchampstead Parish. It is part of the area designated by the Borough as a Special Development Location (SDL). BPC would like to ensure that there is adequate landscaping, particularly round the edge of the development. This is a more wooded area than the Crest site to the north: we do not want to see a sterile housing development where once there were trees.

Name of the Community

I understand Crest will shortly make public a new name for the whole site. The use of titles such as Arborfield Garden Village causes confusion, especially as the development is mainly in Barkham. BPC has communicated with Crest and various names were suggested. I had hoped that this would lead to some sort of public consultation. We shall see what transpires, but I hope that we do not end up being lumbered with a bland name with no historical association, as has occurred elsewhere in Wokingham..

Laurence Heath
Vice Chairman
Barkham Parish Council



Regimented buildings, more appropriate to a business park.



Cladding is not a local style



An attractive solution at an unspecified Crest Nicholson development. Note attention to detail.



Dear residents

An issue which is a major concern around the borough is that of enforcement and as such I think it is important to point out the council is committed to protecting the quality of the environment through ensuring that new development is of the highest quality and that the things which allow Wokingham to continue to be one of the best places to live and work in the country are retained and protected. To meet this objective, the council recognises the importance of planning enforcement and is committed to providing an effective and efficient service. The use of planning enforcement powers by Councils are believe it or not discretionary and the carrying out of development without planning permission, although unauthorised, is not illegal. Some actions may become illegal but only following non-compliance with a formal Enforcement Notice or Injunction.

While it is encouraged that issues are resolved informally where possible (government guidelines) through negotiation, this cannot always be achieved and the council will monitor development and investigate all reported breaches which amount to some 700 reported cases in Wokingham every year of which over 50% are not actual breaches. When the reported breaches give rise to planning harm, the council will look to enforce using all legal powers at its disposal including prosecutions via the courts at the same time looking to recover the

cost incurred in pursuing such cases. To ensure that resources are used in the most effective way, requests for service has to be prioritised to focus on breaches that result in the greatest harm and we have to undertake this in line with government policies and best practice. The council is committed to ensuring the quality of development in the borough is of the highest quality and is authorised and as such recognises the importance of planning enforcement to ensure that new development is carried out to a high standard.

All alleged breaches of planning control are investigated by the council except anonymous complaint unless the harm resulting is significant, all reports are treated in strictest confidence Where possible; the council will look for voluntary compliance through removal of the breach at the same time updates will be provided to interested parties although due to the time it takes to resolve some issues it may appear nothing is happening for some time as we have to follow the guidelines and the procedure as laid down by government guidance and legislation which means we must give reasonable time for offenders to comply.

This legislation does allow planning permission to be sought retrospectively and government guidance recommends that local planning authorities seek to regularise potentially acceptable unauthorised development through granting planning permission. Where there is a breach of planning an application will be requested by the Council where it believes consent maybe granted with conditions imposed to control such development.

Despite this, the council has to accept all valid applications and determine these even if they have

not been invited and formal action will not usually be taken when there is an undetermined valid planning application or appeal as the judiciary are reluctant to issue injunctions and enforcement notices pending outcomes of applications and appeals. When determining a planning application for non- authorised development, the non- authorised nature of the development cannot influence the planning assessment of the council in any way. The guidelines also say any action should be proportionate to the level of harm and should take into account relevant circumstances where it is expedient and necessary to do so, such as in the public interest. Councils need to consider whether it is expedient or in the public interest to undertake formal enforcement action to remedy breaches of planning control. Expediency will depend on the level of harm caused and the likelihood of achieving voluntary compliance. There are a range of formal enforcement powers available to councils to address breaches of planning control and the council will apply the most appropriate power dependant on the circumstances of each particular case The Council also has other powers of enforcement in relation to other legislation such as highways, environmental health, listed buildings and trees.

We recognise the importance of pro-actively monitoring development that occurs within the Borough. However, the Council issues approximately 3000 planning permissions every year and these range from small-scale residential extensions to major housing and commercial developments. As such it is impossible for the council to monitor all permissions and relies on the local knowledge of local people and the town and parish council to be its eyes and ears.

On another subject the Council has been extending its cycle network over the last couple of years and will continue to do so, the cost to the residents of the borough has been very small as the vast majority of the money has come to us via government sustainable transport grants. In addition the council has used funds from developers' contributions identified at application stage for sustainable transport to provide cycle way improvements

Cycling is regarded as one of the healthiest ways to travel and is particularly suited to shorter distances. With most of the journeys in the Borough being under 10km it seems logical to provide more facilities for people to cycle safely – particularly when one of the main obstacles to cycling is people's fear of mixing with traffic. Cycling also provides benefits for other road users as it reduces the number of cars on the road and so reduces congestion. Where we are introducing cycle facilities we make sure we don't do this at the expense of road capacity for cars, as our highway policy recognises the car is still the major mode of transport around the borough and of course all schemes must meet the latest safety standards not least because of the approval of the scheme by the Department of Transport to obtain the grants provided. A by-product of these cycle ways is the repair of the road surface where they are installed which also makes it safer for cycle road users

Overall the Council spends a small proportion of its transport budget on cycling specific schemes and these will be paid for in the main using developers' contributions. They will be designed to criss-cross the new major development and connecting to existing routes, the majority of the new cycle ways will be off road and will follow

the green routes planned, giving safe journeys to schools, local work places and stations – and some of this spend will result in improved footways as well.

Measuring cycle use is always difficult as it is still a minority form of transport. However the full cycle racks at stations, the popularity of cycling to school and booming cycle sales suggest there is demand. Without the proper infrastructure people won't be encouraged to make some of their journeys by bike and nationally the current government has demonstrated a commitment at the highest level to continue to support cycling as a form of transport.

With regards highways in general We now find ourselves in position that we can make major investments in the road network in and around the borough for the first time for many years and are planning to deliver 6 major roads over the next 7 years the first one being delivered in summer next year, the Shinfield bypass which includes a new bridge over the M4. All this with improved bus services and park and ride becoming a major feature of the councils emerging transport policy

This has only become possible due to development around the borough with the council controlling and in most cases (government appeal inspectors permitting) identifying the areas which are sustainable and stopping the practice of back garden development which delivered very little in the way of infrastructure, This has allowed us to increase the contribution from developers from £6000 per house to £28000 per house which does not include contributions for affordable housing. The money collected can only be used to provide infrastructure such as roads, schools and country parks etc. but not the services normally delivered by councils

such as rubbish collection and highways maintenance.

The other issue we are trying tackle is to buck the trend whereby, we are one of the few counties in the first world where we build 50metres of road and then build 10 houses and then another 50metres and so on. What we are trying to do is get the roads built as early in the development process as possible with the bulk of the houses following on once the road infrastructure is in place, with all the benefits that bring to both existing and new residents. All this is important to keep the borough moving and will help relieve congestion for future generations

If I can be of any help on any issues in the borough please do not hesitate to contact me

John Kaiser
Wokingham Borough Councillor
For Barkham Ward
Jk2gk@aol.com
0771 419 2352

Editorial comment

With regard to John Kaiser's description of WBC's planning enforcement activities in his article above, this has probably been influenced by residents' concerns arising from the development of 25 houses in (what was) a green field behind 336-350 Barkham Road. I must declare a personal interest here as my house backs on to this development. The whole development saga has been a sorry story over several years, with WBC refusing the planning application but losing the appeal. However, once permission was granted, we expected WBC to enforce the Planning Inspector's conditions, particularly around such issues as noise and working hours. We found that we had to repeatedly chase WBC staff for responses to our issues and this has never been satisfactorily resolved, although their response has improved and we remain optimistic!

St James's Church

Wonderful week for Epic Explorers at HBC

For over 50 years, our Holiday Bible Club has provided the high point of the summer holidays for countless local children and we are thankful that HBC 2015 proved to be another memorable week. Based as ever on the sports field at The Coombes School we enjoyed mostly dry days that were ideal for our programme packed full with activities, songs, talks, crafts, sports and heaps of fun for over 300 children.

Our theme this year was 'Epic Explorers', which saw the children delving into one of the original accounts of

Jesus' life – Mark's gospel – and uncovering the amazing evidence of who Jesus is, why he came and what it means to follow him today. For the under 5s, who came just for the morning, they did their own exploring, 'On the Farm', where they too learned some of the most famous episodes from Jesus' life (with some farmyard themed fun along the way!).

Each afternoon, the older children could choose from a vast array of sports and crafts around the field, but for many, the highlight was Wednesday, when they could have a go on the huge inflatables, as well as trying their hand at a variety of traditional fairground games. Every day, however, ended with everyone gathering in the main marquee to see which leader would fall victim to the dreaded gunge tank!



As ever, HBC was run by around 100 volunteers from the 3 churches of Arborfield, Barkham and Christ Church Wokingham, many of whom took time off work and we are so grateful, not only for everyone's hard work, but also to The Coombes School for letting us use their facilities.

Julian Bidgood



As I mentioned last time things are always changing. Government and other organisations seem to thrive on change and so everyone else has to change as well. We are changing to way people access us via the telephone. We are joining the Citizens Advice national telephone Adviceline on 5th October. From that date we hope that almost everyone that calls us will be answered. If we are too busy to answer your call it will automatically be routed to the nearest office with a free person – starting with Berkshire and then on to North Hampshire, and beyond if necessary!

So, from 5th October our helpline number will be: **03444 111 444**

We have a fundraising charity theatre event coming up soon. It is on Tuesday 20 October at 7.30pm at the Wokingham Theatre. The play is 'And then there were none' by Agatha Christie.

The tickets are now on sale via the box office. Just go to www.wokingham-theatre.org.uk, go to 'October 20' and then 'book now'.

I hope to see you there!

I don't know if anyone from Barkham Parish Council reads this – I hope they do [Ed: I hope they do too!] as I want to thank the Parish Council for the very generous grant they gave us for this year.

John Ferguson
CEO Wokingham CAB.

To contact us for help:

WOKINGHAM
2nd floor, Waterford House,
Erfstadt Court RG40 1AP
public@wokingham-cab.org.uk
www.wokingham-cab.org.uk

Hours:
Mon - Thu: 9.00am - 3.00pm
Fri: 9.00am - 1.00pm
Telephone assessments: 0844 499 4126



22 years of Community Service

Our thanks to Barkham Parish for your continuing support for this unique local service. We are most grateful to receive a contribution to our running costs which has enabled us to support some 10,500 job seekers from Wokingham Borough back into work since we started, including Barkham residents.

Our services are entirely free to anyone over the age of 19 who is looking to improve their skills. We offer job seekers a blend of assessment, one-to-one coaching, advice on the use of the Internet and workshops on CV writing, interviewing skills and the specific issues facing the 50 plus age group.

The Wokingham Job Support Centre is in the Cornerstone Building, Norrey's Avenue in Wokingham, so if you are looking for a job we would be pleased to see you. (www.wjsc.org.uk)

Steven Polak
Trustee and Treasurer
Wokingham Job Support Centre

BVRA Chairman

Can you help please?



The Barkham Village Residents Association's role is "to preserve and enhance the character of the Parish of Barkham as a community". The chairman facilitates this role and specific duties include:

- To chair the Association, Committee meetings (4 per year) and the AGM.
- Co-ordinate actions across the Association's fields of activities.
- Represent the BVRA with outside bodies (e.g. Parish Council, media, the public).
- Recruit new Committee members when necessary.
- Write the Chairman's introduction to each Newsletter.
- Time commitment could be a maximum of half a day per month.

If you feel you may be able to take on this important role in the local community or would like more information, please contact any member of the committee (details on page 3).

Loddon Valley Ramblers' Walks

For more walks, including some longer ones, visit Loddon Valley Ramblers Website: www.lvra.org.uk

Thursday 24th September: Leisurely walk along lanes, through fields and woods around The Coombes and Barkham Church 5.0 miles 10.30 from Redlands Farm Park, Evendons Lane, Wokingham (free CP next to Scout Hut) RG41 4EH Leader Sue G 0118 348 1506 or 07747 771949.

Sunday 27th September: Try this afternoon stroll through Windlesham Arboretum 4 miles 14.00 from lay-by beside St John the Baptist Church, Windlesham GU20 6BL Leader David M 07932 246232 or 0118 978 0994.

Thursday 8th October: A pleasant walk from Barkham village hall via California Country Park and Finchampstead Church 5.0 miles 10.30 from Barkham Village Hall RG40 4PL Leader John A 0118 977 4183.

Sunday 11th October: Join us for a circular walk through fields and lanes of Crazies Hill and Upper Wargrave, returning via Hennerton and Penny's Lane. Marvellous views of the local countryside 4.0 miles 10.15 Outside Horns PH, Crazies Hill, near Wargrave, after careful parking on the side of the road RG10 8LY Leader Mary B 0118 926 7208 or 07557 432878.

Sunday 18th October: Try this easy walk around Finchampstead countryside 4 miles 10.30 from CP behind shops by the double mini-roundabouts at the junction of Finchampstead Road (B3016) and Nine Mile Ride RG40 3RJ Leader David T 0118 977 4184 or 07899 938397.

Thursday 22nd October: Come and enjoy The Coombes in autumn! 3.0 miles 10.30 from CP at Arborfield Pavilion - Swallowfield Road - Arborfield - permission has been requested and granted. About 200m down the Swallowfield Road from the Bull Inn at Arborfield. Leaders Ricardo & Silvia S 0118 976 1737 or 07846 434861

Sunday 25th October: Come and enjoy views from Finchampstead Ridges then walk around Moor Green Lakes 4.0 miles 10.30 from Simons Wood free NT CP off Wellingtonia Ave RG45 6AE Leader Kath P 0118 978 0901 or 07775 694011.

Thursday 5th November: A pleasant walk around Arborfield Cross & Farley Hill 4.0 miles 10.30 from Arborfield Pavilion - Swallowfield Road - Arborfield - permission has been requested and granted. About 200m down the Swallowfield Road from the Bull Inn at Arborfield. RG2 9QD Leader Ellen H 0118 934 1084 or 07715 553979.

Thursday 3rd December: Enjoy this walk beside the Holy Brook to Brookmill then through fields to Southcote Lock and Milkmaids Bridge. Returning beside the River Kennet 5 miles 10.30 from Reading Link Retail Park. Rose Kiln Lane Reading. Turn in by BP garage from A33 Park in overflow car park behind Matalan RG2 0SN Leader Barbara D 0118 934 5506 or 07895 635001.





Social Matters

Wanted - a Social Secretary!

Life has a pattern, we are born, grow up, maybe marry and have children, retire and eventually we depart this life. During our lifetime we could possibly move to various parts of the country or even the world.

I have now realised that I wish to 'downsize' as they say. I don't know when or where to, so that is why I am looking for someone to replace me. I would be prepared, if he or she wished, to stay on the committee and help where I can - I just do not want to arrange events and then leave someone to sort everything out at the last minute because a moving date has suddenly come quickly.

It would be a great shame if there were to be no more Carols in the Park and Easter Egg Hunt in The Junipers, and skittles, dances and quiz nights in the Village Hall. Perhaps a new team leader would have different ideas as well. Please contact me if you are interested either by email or phone.

In July we had a very pleasant evening at the Distributors' BBQ where we catered for over 36 of the people who four times a year put the newsletter through your door, and collect your subscriptions. Luckily the weather was good to us and my thanks go to Stewart Richardson for taking some photographs of the event.

For the rest of 2015 we have on SATURDAY 3rd OCTOBER a dance in the Village Hall – the "Barkham Bop"! Timings are 7 for 7.30 – 10.30pm. Tickets £12.50 to include a buffet supper and there will be a licenced bar. This was the event that unfortunately was postponed in June. Music will be supplied by True Tone, a Sax and Vocal duo. Please contact me for tickets – my answer machine is on 24/7 so just give me a ring.

On 31st OCTOBER we will be having a children's Halloween event from 3-5pm (£1 per child). This is for children from toddler to end of primary school. There will be a prize for the best dressed child.- please check the website for further details. This will be held in the village hall and whilst the children enjoy themselves, those parents that wish to can stay and have tea or coffee.

The quiz night will be on 21st NOVEMBER again in the village hall and I have bookings for tables (6 people please) already. Tickets will be £9 to include a fish and chip supper and there will be a licenced bar. Start time is 7 for 7.30pm. Please check for information on the website.

The final event will be the Carols in the Park and at the moment we do not have a date for this – again this will be on the website as soon as we know it, as well as in the next newsletter.

I look forward to seeing you at one or more of the future events. However just as important is hearing from one, or more, of you offering to head up the committee. I would hate the social side of the village to cease to exist.

Regards
Judith Collins
977 1579



Arborfield Historical Society

In contrast to many local groups, our Society continues to thrive with some 60 members. Whatever your interest, we welcome new members and we try to put together a varied selection of talks and social events. We also welcome help with our ongoing local historical research—we have assembled more than 100 picture boards detailing properties, personalities and snippets of local history, which do the rounds at schools, fetes, the Royal British Legion and other interested bodies. There is usually an exhibition in Arborfield Village Hall featuring topical matters. Membership of our society is very reasonably priced - £5-00 gets you a year's membership for an "oldie" which covers most of us!

In August the weather was kind to us and the Society enjoyed a sociable, French wine tasting evening as a change from our usual garden party and I believe that a good time was had by all. Hopefully we all know a little more about certain French wines? We now look forward to October 5th when Colin Oakes will discuss the "Gunpowder Plot" and then on November 2nd we will hear from John Chapman on the subject of the "Royal Berkshire Regiment WWI". As usual these events will take place in the Village Hall at 7.45pm (there is a charge of £2.00 for non-members) and all are welcome.

Farewell to Arms (with apologies to Ernest Hemingway)

This Autumn brings to a close Arborfield and Barkham's association with the military when the Garrison finally moves to

its new location at Lyneham in Wiltshire. I for one will be sorry to see them leave.

The Garrison began life in 1904 as the [Remount Depot](#), which was actually in Barkham Parish, on land leased from the [Bearwood Estate](#); it was sold to the War Office in 1911. The Depot had strong connections with the Garth Hunt, because its [point-to-point races](#) were held there, and would have involved many Arborfield folk. The [Remount Depot closed in 1937](#) when many local employees feared that they would lose their jobs - but it was converted into a depot for mechanised Army vehicles as part of the [Royal Army Ordnance Corps](#).



By 1939 the site had been transformed into the [Army Technical School \(Boys\)](#), taking the name 'Arborfield Garrison' because the main entrance was in the Parish of Arborfield. The Guardroom and Garrison shops were on the west side of what is now Bramshill Close.

When I first came to the village in the late 60's, it seemed that as many as half the properties in the village housed either serving soldiers or civilians working at the Garrison.

There is much more detail on the Garrison and its history to be found on our website - www.arborfieldhistory.org.uk

Ray Hill



Cap badge of the Remount Service

The impact of The Remount Depot on Barkham before and during WWI

The second Boer War (1899-1902) highlighted the problems of supplying sufficient horses in time of war. As a result the Army Remount Department sought more land to maintain both horses and mules, initially to supply army units stationed at home. The depots were to hold newly acquired broken-in animals while they were assessed before being issued to a unit where further training took place. The responsibility for manning such remount depots had been transferred to the Army Service Corps (ASC) in 1891; but in the case of the new depots which were supplying horses for service at home, such as Arborfield and Melton Mowbray in Leicestershire, the depots themselves were largely staffed by civilians². Many of these men lived or were billeted in Barkham or close by. A few can be identified from the 1911 census, parish records of baptisms and marriages, the Reading Mercury and the REME Journal. Some of these sources, including the Minutes of the Wokingham Rural District Council, demonstrate the effect of services, such as water, gas, electricity, sewerage and road maintenance to the Remount Depot.

In March 1904 the War Office first leased 286 acres from the Bear Wood Estate owned by John Walter III to establish a remount depot in the west area of Barkham comprising Ellis's Farm, Old Biggs Farm (which was moated, the landscaped site is adjacent to Marina Drive) and 'New' Biggs Farm which together provided land on each side of Biggs Lane. All those farmhouses have now been demolished. The land was purchased from the Walter estate by the War Office in 1911 following the death of John Walter's son Arthur. Most of it was pasture there was land under plough for growing forage and during the War for growing food for the serving soldiers⁷. There were a few buildings for stabling, although more stabling was built in 1912 as a small block of wooden 'reception stables'². Just before the outbreak of World War I about 100 more acres were acquired in Barkham, stretching from Commonfield Lane, to Langley Common Road including Langley Common Farm (now Langley House) on the latter. The buildings here were used as the animal infirmary or 'Sick Lines' although horses with infectious diseases were stabled at Ellis's Farm².

John Walter III had gradually expanded his estate more and more land across parish boundaries. As a result half the land of the Remount Depot was in Barkham; about two-fifths in Finchampstead, the rest in Arborfield including the main HQ which was established in 'New' Biggs farmhouse from where the main gate opened onto the former road to Reading, now Sheerlands Road, Whitehall Drive and Bramshill Close, hence the references over the years to 'The Remount Depot at Arborfield' and subse-

quently Arborfield Garrison. This was before the bypass A327 was built in the 1960.

Captain Quartermaster James Laurence BARRY (1860-1920) of the 1st (King's) Dragoon Guards established the Depot here and was the first to command it²; he had been involved in remount duties in South Africa and was approaching retirement. He and his family lived initially at Old Biggs Farm. In 1906 they moved into the newly-built Moat House just to the south, where they were recorded both for Barkham and Arborfield in the 1911 Census! Of his five children only the youngest was born in Barkham, in 1908. Remarkably several months before WWI Captain Barry was despatched to North America in April 1914 to buy remounts for the British Army, anticipating the demand. For this work he was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) which seems to be a grand honour which underlines the importance of the work.

Colonel Charles BRIDGE, the Inspector of Remounts (or purchasing officer) was also appointed to the new Depot. He had had experience of buying horses in Syria in the 1880s and had been Adjutant-General for Transport in South Africa. He controlled the distribution of animals to regiments and corps and was responsible for the purchase of draught animals. He must have come to the new Depot after the 1911 Census and he left it soon after as he accompanied James Barry to North America. He received a knighthood for his work.

Barry was replaced by Major George H. BADCOCK as Superintendent, later Colonel. An

advertisement written by him was published in August 1915: *'Remount Depot Arborfield Cross, near Reading: Wanted in a National Emergency a Large Number of Grooms at Arborfield Remount Depot Near Reading. Wages £1 1s (21/-) a week. For the present Tent Accommodation will be provided and a Mess will be instituted at the Depot. If foodstuffs advance in price, the wage will be raised. Only men of Good Character need apply; they must bring with them certificates to this effect from their last place and all applications should be made in person to Major Badcock at above address'*³.

A quartermaster, veterinary officer and farrier-major were also appointed to the 4th Company of the ASC at the Depot. The quartermaster lived initially in Old Biggs Farm. The farrier major lived in White Cottage, a small thatched cottage on the south boundary of the Depot², which I have been unable to locate.

In the 1911 Census of Barkham, Arborfield, Finchampstead and Wokingham Without combined, the workforce ratio in the Depot was 16 civilians to 5 service personnel. In Barkham alone the Depot does not seem to have been a very important employer in terms of numbers as the Census indicated that out of 59 heads of households, only five men (possibly six) living in the parish were employed there.

Their occupations were naturally mostly involved with the actual care of the horses or in support of their needs. Of these, three civilian grooms were living in Barkham: Ernest MARTIN aged 43 lived on Coppid Hill, Barkham Road; Albert POPE, 34, along Langley Common Road and William Alfred WERNHAM, aged 41

in Ellis's Farm within the Depot. A fourth groom lived in Sandy Bottom, (Sandy Lane area) then in the adjacent parish of St Paul's, Wokingham Without. Although two of them were born in Berkshire, none were born in Barkham. The other grooms were serving with the ASC and boarding as described below.

Three soldiers serving in the ASC were shoeing blacksmiths: John HAYWARD was living at Ellis's Farm, with his family. He was aged 40, had enlisted in 1891, served with the Gloucestershire Regiment and was then transferred to the Depot.

William ROBINS aged 42 of Barkham Street, father of the late George Robins who died earlier this year, was recorded as an electrical engineer for the Depot. George Herbert GRIFFIN aged 20, who lived along Langley Common Road, Barkham with his family described himself simply as a soldier (his father was an army pensioner); so it is unclear if he himself worked in the Remount Depot.

However more, probably just under twenty civilians, were boarding in the non-Barkham part of the Depot or in the village of Arborfield. A succession of veterinary officers, who were appointed from The Army Veterinary Corps before the War also lived in Arborfield.

When World War I began the number of horses and mules in all the Remount Depots across the country rose from 1,200 animals in August 1914 to 60,000 in August 1915. A Registration Scheme had been set up for some decades in anticipation of about 14,000 more horses being required on the outbreak of war. This number

was not adequate and so the Mobilisation Scheme of compulsory purchase from private and commercial horse owners was set up¹¹. The farmers of Barkham must have sorely felt the effects of this; the loss of a valued animal was a financial and emotional blow.

It is claimed that a total of 468, 323 horses was purchased during WWI from within the United Kingdom¹¹.

Locally, about 1,000 horses and mules a week were brought over from Ireland and after a period in the coal yard next to Wokingham Station were driven down the Barkham Road to the Depot. This took place after midnight in batches of 500⁴; a few lads ran down before them to shut the garden gates of the about 18 houses along the Barkham Road. Presumably, but I have not found a description, as many horses were driven in the other direction for transport to the other army units who needed them and for periods of rest and recuperation at a 'remount farm' which provided extra pasture. One at Chiddingfold, Surrey was controlled from Arborfield².

If at the opening of the Remount Depot only a few soldiers of the Army Service Corps were required, the situation must have changed after the start of the First World War as the numbers of horses increased and as a result of advertisements as described above. One of the Veterinary Officers who arrived at about this time, Major F W O'ROURKE CMG remained in post until he was drafted to France in 1917. As a result of an Inquest following the death of a soldier who had been kicked in the stomach, the Reading Mercury mentioned other positions within the Depot in 1915,

such as a 'dresser of sick horses' Frank WILLIAMS (the deceased); paddock foreman Frederick William SLADE; a camp orderly Frederick GRIFFIN and a hospital orderly John BATCHELOR³. Also mentioned by name were 12 ASC members of a football team. We do not know where they all lived, but some of them were likely to be under canvas.

One local lad from Barkham enlisted at Reading in the ASC Forage Department at the age of seventeen. This was Frederick St Quentin Victor LAILEY (1898-1918), who was born in Rutt Hill Lane (now Hayes Lane) then moved to Church Cottages. The Forage Department had the vital role of feeding not only the horses in the Depot, but the almost 870,000 horses and mules who served on the front. Freddy later served in France in the 10th Battalion of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment (Private 34867), was wounded in March 1918 and died of septicaemia in July in the Military Hospital in Northampton. He is buried in St James churchyard Barkham and is mentioned on the memorial both in Barkham church and the Royal British Legion in Arborfield.

The Barkham parish records are further illuminating about other soldiers serving in the ASC⁵. From 1908 until 1919 the number of marriages celebrated in the parish church of St James increased. Ten members of the military married local Barkham girls; half of them were serving in the ASC. Eight baptisms between 1906 and 1919 were of children whose fathers were serving in the ASC, three others were the children of military personnel serving in other regiments.

At the outbreak of War the character of the Remount Depot locally also changed sharply² as the civilian staff of the right age enlisted in the Army and a military hierarchy emerged. Until 1916, Army Service Corps men were enlisted on a purely voluntary basis. This changed following the Military Service Act 1916; after 2nd March 1916 all men in the country were deemed to have enlisted between the ages of 18 and 41. Conscription had arrived. On enlistment if a man was employed in a hospital, the depot of a mounted unit (and presumably remount depots were included in these), or as a clerk, the soldier might expect to be retained after the termination of hostilities up to a maximum of six months 'until his services could be spared'⁸.

There is a reference from Wokingham Rural District Council that Colonel Badcock had obtained seed potatoes and the soldiers in the Depot were producing their own food. Details of the provision of services to the Depot are hard to come by. Water was provided from a 37 foot deep well and pumped by windmill situated slightly east of Windmill Farm in Commonfield Lane, Barkham^{1,6}. Electricity was provided from the Depot's own dynamo in the charge of William MORSE who was living on an unnamed farm in Arborfield. A supply of gas was proposed in March 1918 but the matter was dropped⁷.

The Remount Depot caused in an increase in traffic and more wear than before on local roads, which were mostly just gravelled, although tarring was mentioned during the course of the War. In June 1915 concern was expressed in the Minutes of the Wokingham Rural District Council⁷ about

the damage done to 'the District road leading from Wokingham Railway Station to the Depot' (Barkham and Langley Common Roads). By October that year £220/10/- had been allocated for repairs; Two thirds was paid by the War Office Authority. A year later in October 1916 another sum of £2,100 had to be spent on repairing Barkham Road. Concerns were raised regularly at least to December 1918.

Another problem was drainage; this caused much wrangling, most likely because of expense. Nowhere in Barkham was on main drainage this early in the century. The subject of the needs of the Depot was first raised in the Wokingham Rural District Council Minutes in July 1916⁷, which stated that sewerage was required for 300-400 persons, which indicated the anticipated potential steep rise in staff numbers at the Depot, but also for the new stabling.

A discussion followed on different methods of tackling this problem. One idea was to use duplicate sedimentation tanks, the effluent from which would pass over permanent grassland into a watercourse which joined the Barkham Brook at Ellis's Farm. WBC suggested an alternative. The Royal Engineers did not agree. In the end WDC expressed dissatisfaction and disappointment that what they considered a more efficient system was not to be installed⁶. Eventually of course, but much later, the whole of the parish of Barkham was put onto main drainage and supplied not only with gas, but electricity and piped running water, but it took time.

At the end of and after WWI many horses were sold off from

all the Remount Depots in the country and staffing levels were reduced. Some horses remained at Arborfield⁶; draught horses were still used in the camp until 1966. One of these was Gilbert, a grey who was a regular popular visitor at local shows¹.

The Arborfield Remount Depot only closed in 1937. At the same time the windmill on Commonfield Lane which had supplied water to the Depot was dismantled. The camp was rapidly adapted for other military purposes and continued to be a major local employer.

References

1. French D. and Firth J. 2000 *Barkham a History*, Barkham
2. Hume R. 1980 Arborfield and the Army Remount Service *R.E.M.E. Journal* No 30 April 1980 pp35-43
3. *Reading Mercury* with grateful thanks to The Arborfield History Society website
4. Thomas C., D. Robins and B. Woolford nd *Recollections of Barkham Village 1915-1940*, unpublished typescript
5. Barkham Parish Records, Berkshire Record Office: Marriages D/P/13/1/7; Baptisms D/P/13/1/8
6. Personal information from the late Douglas COKER
7. Wokingham Rural District Council Minutes: Berkshire Record Office RD/WO/CA/1/7-9
8. Enlistment papers with the records of William FLOWER (6377) Royal Fusiliers, via Ancestry.co.uk
9. Personal information from the late George ROBINS
10. The Military Service Act 1916 – *The Long, Long Trail*, via Ancestry.co.uk

11. Army Remount Service Wikipedia.

Janet Firth



The East and West Infirmary (stables for horses, still standing at the Garrison).
Courtesy of Arborfield History Society

The following poem about the plight of remount horses travelling on trains is from a book by Phoebe Merrick, *Romsey and the Remount Service* published in 2014.

The Remount Train (1915) by Will Ogilvie

Every head across the bar,
Every blaze and snip and star,
Every nervous tritching ear,
Every soft eye filled with fear,
Seeks a friends and seems to say:
'Whither now, and where away?'

Wave the green flag! Let them go! –
Only horses? Yes, I know;
But my heart foes down the line
With them, and their grief is mine! –
There goes honour, there goes faith,
Down the way of dule and death,
Hidden in the cloud that clings
To the battle-wrath of kings!

There goes timid childlike trust
To the burden and the dust!
High born courage, princely grace
To the peril it must face!
There goes stoutness, strength, and speed
To be spent where none shall heed,
And great hearts to face their fate
In the clash of human hate!

Wave the flag, and let them go! –
Hats off to that wistful row
Of lean heads of brown and bay,
Black and chestnut, roan and grey!
Here's good luck in lands afar –
Snow-white streak, and blaze, and star!
May you find in those far lands
Kindly hearts and horseman's hands!

CROWTHORNE Symphony ORCHESTRA

Our Summer Concert at Wellington College in July was a really exciting evening. Our young soloist, Leon Keuffer, who played the virtuosic Paganini 1st Violin Concerto deservedly had a standing ovation after a stunning performance. The second half of the concert was equally popular with the capacity audience, with a performance of Shostakovich's Symphony No 5 leaving everyone - players and audience

12th December at St John The Baptist Church, Waterloo Road, Crowthorne at 4.30pm and as usual will be a family friendly concert of seasonal music and carols.

Tickets will be available from our usual outlets - Traveltime Travel Agents in High St. Crowthorne and Bookends in Wokingham, £10 in advance or £12 on the door, or can be purchased on-line via



alike - thrilled by this amazing work. What a privilege to be able to play with such a marvellous group of musicians and under the directorship of a truly inspiring conductor in Robert Roscoe. And here in Crowthorne! We had the largest ever number of players on stage at the Old Gym, around 85 in all and requiring us to hire extra staging to accommodate everyone! The photo shows the orchestra at the final rehearsal.

our website. Children 16 years and under are free and it is good to see an increasing number of young people at our concerts.

The orchestra has a regular membership of over 60 players and rehearses on Monday evenings in term-time from 7.45 - 10pm at Oaklands Junior School in Butler Road Crowthorne. If you play an orchestral instrument to a good standard, even if you haven't played for a while, and would be interested in joining the orchestra, we welcome new members subject to vacancies. We have a reputation of being a friendly bunch! Have a look at our website which gives contact information as well as details of rehearsals, workshops and past and future concerts. www.crowthorneorchestra.com

If you haven't been to one of our concerts yet, the next one will be our Autumn Concert on Saturday 21st November at 8.00pm again at The Old Gym, Wellington College, Crowthorne. The programme includes Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1 in D Minor with soloist Tom Hicks as well as works by Elgar and Grieg.

Our annual afternoon Christmas Concert will be on Saturday

Chris Gadsby

Wokingham Choral Society

Mendelssohn's Elijah

On Saturday 21st November, WCS will be performing Mendelssohn's acclaimed oratorio, Elijah, at the Great Hall, University of Reading, London Road Campus, at 7.30pm. This launches our 2015/16 season of exciting concerts conducted by our new Musical Director, Patrick Allies, with professional soloists Alice Privett (Soprano), Anna Huntley (Mezzo-Soprano), Andrew Dickinson (Tenor) and Edward Grint (Baritone) as Elijah accompanied by the Orchestra Vitae.

The first performance, conducted by Mendelssohn himself, took place on the 26th August 1846 before an audience of two thousand in Birmingham Town Hall. No less than four choruses and four arias were encored and The Times' music correspondent was particularly effusive reporting: 'The last note of Elijah was drowned in a long-continued unanimous volley of plaudits, vociferous, and deafening. Mendelssohn..... descended from his position on the conductor's rostrum; but he was compelled to appear again, amidst renewed cheers and huzzas. Never was there a more complete triumph; never a more thorough and speedy recognition of a great work of art.' It was without doubt the crowning glory of Mendelssohn's career.

Tickets will be available in advance from: tickets@wokingham-choral-society.org.uk; Information Centre, Wokingham Town Hall; Newbury Building Society; Wokingham Bookends, Wokingham; www.wegottickets.com or on the door. For further details, please visit our website on www.wokingham-choral-society.org.uk

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Arborfield Gardening Association

Hello Everyone !

Despite the cold wind, our Plant Sale on Saturday 9th May still raised £236:50 after costs, thanks to our Committee and helpers and in particular Phil Oram, who kindly donated all the proceeds of the sale of his dahlias to AGA. This was followed a few days later by our popular Plant Swop attended by 23 people.

We had a really good day for the Arborfield Village Fete in June ... and the sun shone! The plant stall was very popular (we made £237.29) - not surprising as the mass of great quality plants were incredibly good value.



Our summer outdoor visits began with June's meeting - an afternoon visit to the **Living Rain Forest**. This included a guided tour which 16 people attended. The brilliant sunshine added to the atmosphere & needless to say, we were ready for a cool drink on leaving the enclosures! We saw enviable specimens of some of our houseplants, as well as a few creepy-crawlies we are happy to leave behind ! We had also enjoyed a delicious meal beforehand in the Four Points Pub.

July's visit was to the **Conservation Lake** at Theale. This started at 6pm on a beautiful evening & was attended by 25 people. Catherine McEwan was our knowledgeable guide & was thanked with a donation of £40 from the AGA funds for the Conservation Trust. Three complexes of various sized gravel pits are spread out across the Theale flood plain, the peaceful lakes being inhabited by huge pike fish. The natural flora surrounding the lakes was varied & beautiful, even including wild pink orchids. The paddocks are cleared by Exmoor ponies on a rota system with other conservation areas! Damsel flies & Imperial Dragon flies were in

profusion, we spotted mottled white butterflies & meadow brown butterflies & occasionally other species can be seen. It is one of Berkshire's finest and most important birdwatching areas. We saw Black Headed Gulls, a Cormorant, Terns' nests & even a Buzzard. The Sand Martin wall was a hive of activity. Our meal in the Fox and Hounds Pub afterwards, served by the pleasant staff, was superb.

In August, we held our very popular Garden Party at Mar-

garet Edwards home. This time members were asked to bring a plate of food to enjoy with the Pimm's cocktails.

Our meetings return to Arborfield Village Hall on 10th September, when Dr Pat Morris will be giving a delightful talk on the life of Hedgehogs, followed by our mini-competition of the best home-grown fruit. Did you know we have a National Hedgehog week? It's the 26th October - 1st November (see the RHS "Wild About Gardens" - www.wildaboutgardensweek.org.uk) More about this in the next issue.

On September 21st we will be participating in the Inter-Societies Quiz, at Henry Street - you can get tickets for this event at Henry Street. Wish us luck!

In October (Thursday 8th) we are looking forward to Derek Leary talking to us about photography in the garden & we will have a mini-competition of the Best Foliage.

On November 12th John Negus joins us to discuss 12 Months of Colour in the garden & we will have our Best Berry mini-competition.

Of course December brings our Christmas Party ...but I'll leave you with a photo of summer

Best wishes
Catherine Breen, Chair

For further information, e-mail catherinebreen@ymail.com, or telephone 976 1848



Alan's Patch

After being away for nearly fifteen years we returned to our home in Barkham last December. Shortly afterwards two or three people asked if I was going to revive 'Alan's Patch'. This was my regular article on fruit and vegetable gardening, recording my trials and tribulations as well as the occasional success, perhaps more of an antidote to gardening articles. So here it is, back by popular demand!

I was lucky that our tenants had looked after the garden very well so when they left in Spring 2014 I was able to start to use the patch straight away, while still at our previous home in Warfield. During this time I discovered that there are badgers in the area as reported by the tenants. Now badgers have an insatiable appe-

tite for sweet corn, a farming relative confirmed. They can make a real mess of a crop of maize which is used as cattle fodder. This influenced my plans for the garden - to make it as impregnable as possible to deer, rabbits and now, add to the list, badgers. During the early Spring we built a brick wall to replace a dilapidated fence behind our neighbours and replaced the whole fence between the garden and the field, high enough to keep out the deer with stock-proof fencing and rabbit wire buried in the ground. We also installed gates chosen with badgers in mind. So far so good but nothing keeps out birds, squirrels or moles!

I also installed a new greenhouse to replace the one my tenants had kindly lent me last year and finally to complete the ground works I built a new set of compost heaps. That's what all the hammering was! Now onto the planting and growing.....

One of the reasons for building the wall was to plant fruit along it, as it retains the heat and makes for better and sweeter fruit. In late March I was just in time to

plant some cordon apple trees. More fruit will follow next winter. I also had to prune some of the existing fruit trees severely as they had gotten seriously out of hand. More will need to be done each winter to get them back into the right shape and size. The best apple tree, planted some 25 years ago, is a Discovery, probably the best early apple you can get. I took a huge amount of wood out of it and it has rewarded me with another excellent crop of delicious apples that I have been enjoying for the past month. As I write, over the bank holiday weekend, I am down to my last one or two:(Still there are other trees to pick from now.

Successes this season include a succession of peas (we still have more to come), broad beans, French and runner beans, sweet corn, squashes maturing nicely, spinach, shallots, a bumper crop of carrots and parsnips.

My biggest disappointment so far this year has been the new potatoes. The size of the crop was good however for first earlies I chose a variety I had not grown before called Javelin. Unfortunately they were not particularly



General view of the garden in July showing peas in the foreground. You can also see spinach, sweet corn, onions, carrots and parsnips (hiding under the netting) and potatoes. Rampant fruit trees and garden wall form the background.

tasty and worse still they broke up in the water, regardless of the precision of the cooking time. It seemed impossible to get them just cooked before they started to disintegrate. For second earlies I chose an old favourite, Charlotte, usually recommended as a salad potato but we like it for regular new potatoes too. Again the crop size was good, as was the flavour, however for the first time these disintegrated too. I am at a loss to explain why they should disintegrate. Is it the growing method? I'm not aware of doing anything different. Is it the season, something about the weather? I really don't know, so if anyone else has experienced similar effects then I'd be interested to know. I don't plan to move away from Charlotte after one season with problems but I'll not be growing Javelin, they just don't have the taste.

Another failure was onions, which had a fungal disease known as white rot. They used to get this when I was here before and had hoped it would have cleared up by now, but evidently not. So no more onions then. Fortunately it's not the most important crop to me because to be honest I can't tell much difference in flavour between onions whereas with most of the others there is a massive difference home grown and shop bought.

Finally while picking some Autumn raspberries this morning I am reminded that there are a lot of bees in the garden pollinating my fruit trees and bushes, so here's a big thank you if the bees are yours, please let me know if you sell honey. I'll want a discount of course, after all I've been feeding them for you!

Alan Edwards

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Barkham Diary

28-Sep-15	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
3-Oct-15	BVRA dance	BVH	7pm
7-Oct-15	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
8-Oct-15	Arborfield Gardening Association	AVH	7.45pm
13-Oct-15	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
13-Oct-15	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
14-Oct-15	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
26-Oct-15	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
27-Oct-15	Parish Council Planning Review	BVH	7.30pm
31-Oct-15	BVRA Children's Halloween Party	BVH	3.00pm
4-Nov-15	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
6-Nov-15	Copy deadline for Winter Newsletter		
10-Nov-15	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
10-Nov-15	Dinton Pastures Walkers Group	BVH	7.30pm
11-Nov-15	Bonsai Club	BVH	7.30pm
12-Nov-15	Arborfield Gardening Association	AVH	7.45pm
21-Nov-15	BVRA Quiz Night	BVH	7.30pm
23-Nov-15	Finchampstead Flower Club	CRH	7.30pm
24-Nov-15	Parish Council Planning Review	BVH	7.30pm
2-Dec-15	Barkham Ladies Social Club	BVH	7.45pm
8-Dec-15	Barkham Parish Council	BVH	8.00pm
Weekly Events			
Mondays	Pilates Class	BVH	11.30am
Mondays	Dog Training	BVH	6.30pm
Tues-Fri	Barkham Pre-School	BVH	9.00am
Thursdays	Pilates Class	BVH	6.15pm

AVH is Arborfield Village Hall BVH is Barkham Village Hall
CRH is California Ratepayers Hall

Wokingham News

If you have any stories or events you would like to publicise, contact Alex Drury on 955 3316

adrury@berksmedia.co.uk

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- The Quiz - Answers
1. Advance Australia Fair
 2. Men at Work (a 1983 number 1)
 3. Perth (the Western Australia Cricket Association ground)
 4. Nicole Kidman
 5. Melbourne
 6. Uluru
 7. A (historic) passenger train that runs on the railway between Adelaide and Darwin, via Alice Springs.
 8. Tony Abbott
 9. Left
 10. Sir Les Patterson

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