



Oakley Newsletter

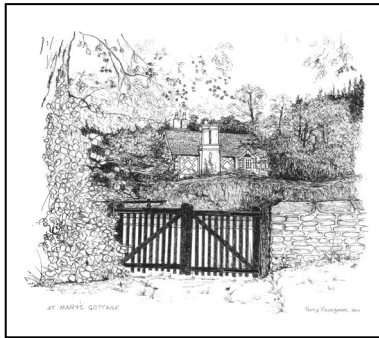


ST MARY'S COTTAGE

Terry Youngman 2011

Winter 2013

Number 57



Front Cover

St Mary's Cottage
Church Lane.

Drawing in pen and ink
by the artist Terry Youngman.

The Oakley Newsletter

is published quarterly by Oakley
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house in Oakley – about
1,000 copies.

Opinions and information

in the Newsletter, both text and
adverts, may not be endorsed by
the Editor or the Parish Council.

Next issue

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Half page: £30
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Please send cheques to the Editor, but
payable to Oakley Parish Council.

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(Hi Kids - Find 16 of me!)

Parish Council News

Winter 2013

By JANE WALKER (Chair)

Christmas lights switch on

We will be switching on the Christmas lights on the tree at St Mary's church at 5pm on Saturday 7th December. Afterwards the Churches together are providing refreshments and carols in the church. (See their article later in the newsletter for more details)

This year we will also be lighting a tree on the cross roads with the help of local lighting expert Phil Supple. This tree will not be part of the ceremony but will be lit shortly afterwards and remain so for the Christmas period. The parish council has purchased the lights and we intend to light this tree every Christmas as part of the village's Christmas celebrations.

Parking on verges

We have recently had some success in stopping vehicles parking on footpaths and verges where they have been blocking the pavement or damaging the grass.

In early October a parent contacted the parish council because she had been walking along High Street and hadn't been able to push her buggy past the vehicles. She had been forced to walk on the road whilst her young child squeezed past on the pavement. She asked another parent to take a picture of the situation and of the vehicles showing their number plates. She then forwarded the pictures to the police via the parish council. Our local PCSO dealt with it immediately, contacting the owners of the vehicles to let them know about the problems they were causing.

If you see a car, van or lorry blocking the pavement or causing damage to a verge please take a picture of it showing the registration plate and we will forward it to the police to follow up.

Continued on page 3

OAKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

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Police crime reports

If you would like to be up-dated on police crime reports and notices from the local police you can receive these automatically by signing up to Ringmaster online at www.safer-beds.org. You will then receive any reports of suspicious behaviour and advice from the police about crime prevention.

Web site

We are continuing to develop the village web site. Links to local groups, societies and schools are now on the site. We hope to build up the calendar of events so that you can see everything that is going on in the village each week. This relies on societies and groups letting us know what they are doing. If you are a member of a village organisation please can you appoint someone on your committee to be responsible for informing our web site editor, Robbie, of any news or activities going on in your group. He will then add it to the news page and calendar and put it on Facebook. The parish council has agreed to allow the web site to promote any activities or classes going on in the village that are open to the whole village so please use it to promote your event to other residents.

Youth club

The Friday Youth club which is funded by the parish council is extremely popular and we are very grateful to Lindsay Saunders who has been running the club for us. Lindsay has now gone back to work as a teacher. I would like to take the opportunity to thank her for everything she has done for us in building up the club into a fun and safe place for our young people to meet on a Friday evening.

Lindsay was always supported by a group of wonderful volunteers and the longest serving is Carol Sudnick. Carol has agreed to take over the club until our new leader, Leigh, starts in January. I'm sure that Leigh will introduce herself and explain what she is going to do later in the newsletter. On behalf of the parish council I would like to thank Carol for her commitment to the young people of Oakley.

Grass cutting

There have been several complaints about the last two grass cuts in the village. We have inspected each time and passed on the issues to the contractors. There will not be another cut now until the spring but we hope to see an improvement then.



Please bear with the first cut however as when the grass is particularly long it takes a couple of cuts to bring it to the standard that we want. Please do report particular problems that you see so that we can make sure that the contractor knows when there is an issue.

Bus shelters

The design of the new shelter on Station Road has not provided adequate protection against the wind coming across the fields. We have looked at ways of adapting it to improve it but the cost and solutions offered were not appropriate. As a result the parish council has made a decision to move this shelter to the corner of Dewlands which is the next shelter due to be up-graded. A new shelter will then be ordered for Station Road which will be designed with the shelter at the back of the glass rather than the front. This will not happen in time for the winter as the new shelter for Dewlands would be bought in the next financial year, but we will plan for it to happen as soon as possible in April.

Speed reduction measures

We are still liaising with the Borough council over the number and position of the average speed cameras we hope to have installed around the village next year. Our intention is to have all of the plans available at the annual parish meeting in the village hall on 1st April 2014. After listening to villager's comments at that meeting parish councillors will make their decision on how to proceed. Please put the date in your diary and come along and let us know what you think of the proposals.

Low flying helicopters

At the same annual parish meeting, a representative from the helicopters' base, RAF Odiham, will come along to talk about what they do and listen to residents' concerns about the low flying helicopters. Please come along and find out why they have to fly so low over the village and what we can do if we want their flight path changed.

Jane Walker

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Borough Council News

by Cllr Pat Olney

Bedford Hospital Update - Paediatric Services

Please take your child to the Bedford Hospital A&E department if they have had an accident or need emergency help. Otherwise contact your doctor's surgery or the help line.

The A&E department at Bedford Hospital is open for all children if they need urgent care. The children's ward is open but if your child needs more specialised care they will be transferred to the appropriate hospital. You can be assured that your child will have the best care possible, either in Bedford or at another hospital that can meet their needs.

The consultation into what people would like to see for a children's service at Bedford Hospital has been completed and showed that they wanted the paediatric services to stay at Bedford hospital with specialist treatment at the appropriate hospital. People highly valued the fact that their hospital was local. They also wanted a local hospital joined up with the community services.

There were two preferred options which unfortunately will not be consulted on at the present time, although work will continue on getting Bedford Hospital Paediatric Service up to full service as soon as possible.

NHS England, TDA and Monitor, all national departments have decided to review all the Bedford Hospital departments including their finances. Our local GP Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) will be part of that review. There is a very short timetable that will be completed by 2015. At the end of December 2013 we will know the remit of the review. The BCCG have stated they want to keep the hospital open. Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire have joined together to scrutinise how the review is conducted and will be able to make recommendations on any proposals put forward. Both Bedford and Central Beds Councils are opposed to losing the hospital. They wish to see an investigation into best practice of health services and how that best practice can be delivered by Bedford Hospital and within the community.

The wide ranging consultation that was conducted into the paediatric service was excellent. The joint local authorities have asked for the same wide ranging consultation be conducted into the rest of the hospital services. So hopefully local wishes will be taken into consideration.

It is very important that you become part of this review by replying to the consultation. The Parish Council will be consulted and I, as well as Oakley P.C., will keep you informed by this newsletter and the Oakley Village website, ensuring you can have your views taken into account on how you see the joint hospital and community services operating.

Oakley Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan has now been registered by the Borough Council and Oakley now can start work on how we would like to see our village in another 10 to 20 years. People have responded to the request to be part of a group to coordinate the work that will be needed to collect your views and finally to publish the Neighbourhood Plan.

There is a process to follow and we need to take account of Statutory plans as we proceed.

One thing we have to look at is the demographics of the village. I have the figures from the 2011 census. The village have a relatively young profile with 23% of residents aged 0-15 and only 16% over 65 years. A diverse mix of non-white British residents comprise 8% of our population. This might mean the housing mix in Oakley is great for families but there might be a need for smaller houses and bungalows for when these young couples wish to stay in the village and downsize.

As you can see this will be an exciting process with much to consider. We will not only need a core group but also other willing helpers. People with computer skills, knowledge of Statutory Plans and the landscape and deliverers, amongst others, will be needed if we are to produce a plan that is as good as the previous Village Plan

Some people have already come forward and there will be an initial meeting in the new year. However please let myself or Jane Walker know if you have an interest in any subject that is relevant, so that we can call on your knowledge. We will need your expertise and many hands make light work. You can contact me on pat.olney@btopenworld.com and Jane on the Parish Council website.



Bus Station

The new car park is open in Greyfriars and best of all the Bus Station toilets have been completely gutted and refurbished and are now good for you to visit, thank goodness. The rebuilding of the bus station will start in the spring and will be open hopefully by Christmas 2014. .

Christmas - There are many exciting events happening during the Christmas period. Love Bedford magazine has been put through your door which lists shopping, events and extended and free times for car parking in Bedford. Look on the website - www.lovebedford.co.uk.

There are also lots of events in Oakley. Please look at www.oakleyvillage.co.uk for information.

Have a good Christmas.

Cllr Pat Olney



Is life sometimes a struggle?

Oakley's own Village Agent is here to help

Did you know that Oakley has a dedicated

Village Agent, **Lizzie Barnicoat**,

who is here to help you? Her services are always free of charge and she will phone or visit you at home. She is here to help you access the services and support you might need.

For example:-

- Do you need advice about benefits & allowances, such as Pension Credit & Attendance Allowance?
- Perhaps you need help filling in forms?
- She can give you help & advice about keeping warm & healthy.
- Would you like a free home safety check by Bedfordshire's Bobby Van?
- Are you a carer in need of support?
- Do you need home adaptations to help keep your independence?
- She can advise you about community transport & other community services
- These are just examples. Any help you need – please just ask!

Free **"Message in a Bottle"** and **"Message in a Wallet"** – for people who live on their own and take important medication in case they fall ill and can't speak to the emergency services. We have a number of these to give away to anyone who needs one. If you would like one, please just give us a call..

"Just Ask" Village Agents

are a free service, funded by Bedford Borough Council through the BRCC. They are here to help you when you don't really know where to turn. If you need help or advice about anything at all, or know someone else who does, just call:

Freephone 0800 039 1234

(Be ready to leave your contact details and your Village Agent will call you back.)

LINCROFT MIDDLE SCHOOL



Portable Building

to relieve Overcrowding

The school would like to thank its neighbours for tolerating some disruption over the summer months for the installation of much needed accommodation for the boys and girls. Many of you will know that Lincroft was built as a secondary school in 1963. In 1973 it became a 9-13 middle school. The School has had 4 successive outstanding Ofsted inspections, most recently in June 2012, which accounts for its popularity in the wider community. Pupils are drawn, in the main, from local parishes and we have experienced pressure on numbers at the school due to housing growth and extra numbers in the feeder lower schools.

We applied to the Department for Education for much needed Science and Technology accommodation to release capacity for teaching and learning, but without success. While this is disappointing and this remains the highest priority for the school's present and future needs, the reality remained that we didn't have enough room. We have over 800 pupils in a school that was built originally for about 600 students.

For this reason, governors decided to provide the school with temporary accommodation in the form of a 10 classroom block as an urgent solution to overcrowding. We now have 210 pupils in each of the four year groups. At the turn of the century it was 162. With close to 200 additional pupils in the school this equated to an under-capacity of 8 classrooms. When subjects are provided with preferential staffing such as in English and Mathematics lessons this grows to 10 classrooms.

We are also grateful to Oakley Lower School, the Parish Council and the Local Authority for helping the school achieve the September 2013 opening.

Michael Lavelle

Executive Headteacher

Rainbows Leader Needed

A group of enthusiastic 5—7 year old girls in the village, not to mention their younger friends, are desperate for a friendly, committed adult or two to keep their Rainbow Unit running.

If you can help please contact Brenda Barnes—824614 or Lindy Chalker 824002

There is a new online registering system for Girlguiding. If you would like to ensure your daughter is on the **Rainbow Waiting List** or to add their name for the first time, please go to <http://www.girlguiding.org.uk/interested>

click on "Register your interest in Girlguiding" and then click on "Register your daughter" and fill in the details on the form. The leaders will be automatically informed.

Rainbows is our section for girls aged five to seven.

Rainbows is all about developing self-confidence, building friendships, learning new things and having fun. Girls get their hands dirty with arts and crafts, trying out cooking and playing games. Rainbows is all about learning by doing in a girl only environment.

Look

Learn



Laugh

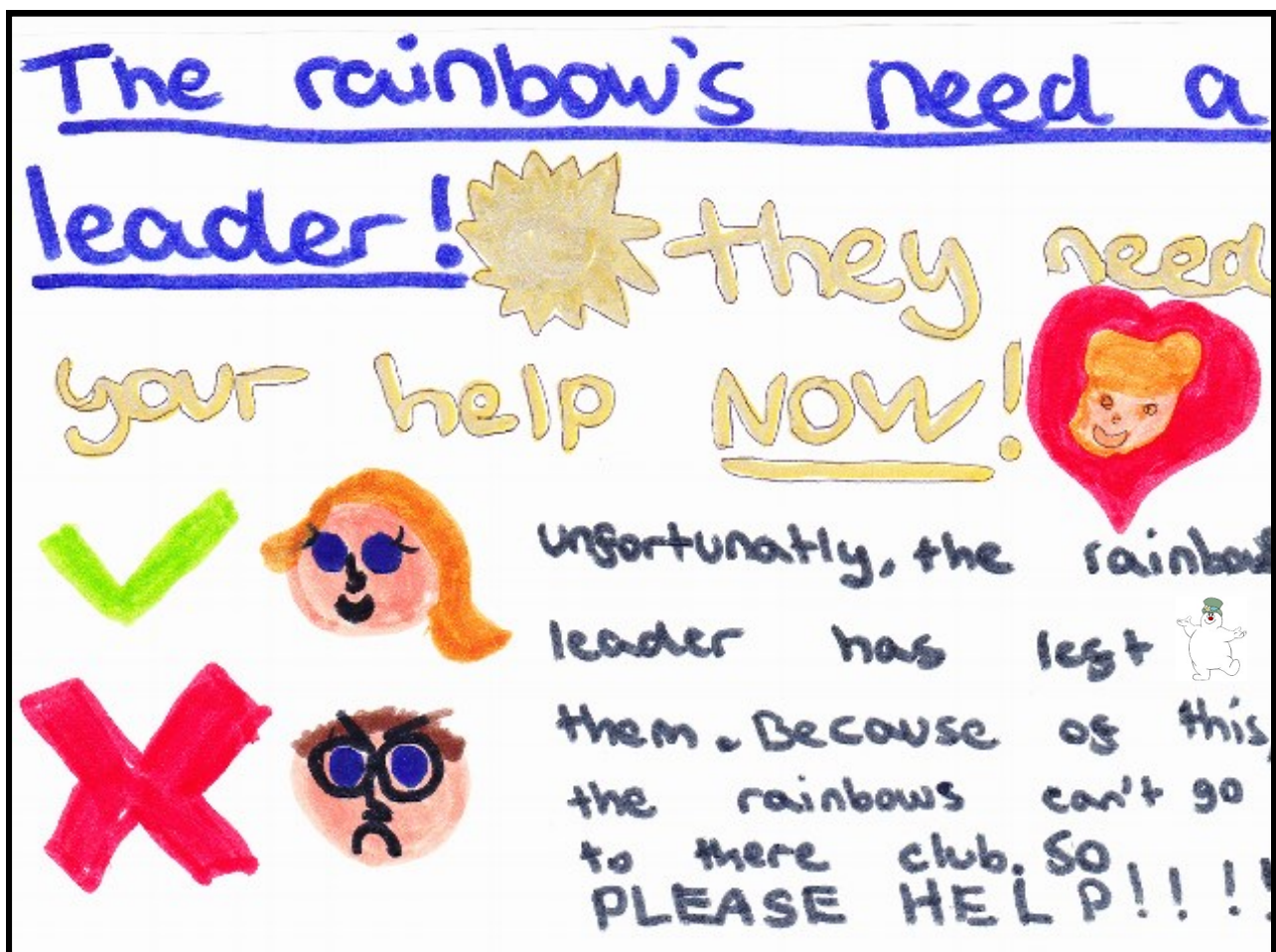
Love

Look: We encourage girls to look around them

Learn: Rainbows learn by taking part

Laugh: Rainbows have lots of fun

Love: girls learn about caring and sharing



Oakley Pre-school news



We have had a fantastic and fun year of fund raising for our extension. The committee has worked really hard to provide a range of family events to raise money at the same time as bringing everyone together to have a good time. It has been very successful in terms of raising funds and we are well on our way, with the help of the Methodist church, to being able to improve our provision for all pre-school children in the village.

The events will continue next year. Everyone in the village is invited to attend even if you don't have a child at pre-school. Our events are suitable for families and their friends. All ages are welcome to join us for a bacon butty or afternoon tea. Please look out on the village notice boards or like our Facebook page, for details of happenings throughout the year.

Dates for your diary at the moment are

Saturday 18th January Bacon butties in the Methodist Church room with activities for children in the pre-school room throughout the morning. Our Mother's Day celebration on Saturday 22nd March will be Afternoon tea in the Church room with activities for Mums and families in the pre-school. Saturday 14th June, is our father's day celebration with bacon butties and activities for families in the pre-school and (hopefully) in the outside play area. We are also holding another of our popular Valentines family discos in February at the village hall, with the date to be confirmed soon.

We have very few vacancies left for this school year. If you would like a place for your child in the next school year please contact me as soon as possible so that we can add them to the waiting list. We take children from the term after they are two and a half and they will be funded by the council for up to 15 hours a week from the term after their 3rd birthday.

Please contact Jane Walker by telephone on 826542 during term time or email oakleypreschool@btconnect.com.

For more information please see our web site at www.oakleypreschool.org.uk



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Farm and Country – Winter 2013

By John Saunders, College Farm

It is the middle of October and all the cereals have been sown; the wheat, barley and rape. The conditions were nearly perfect. In fact after the cold spring the summer has been good weather wise. It makes a change not to grumble too much!

A friend of mine sold his herd of dairy cows in the summer. There were 170 milking cows and 120 young stock, which means calves, heifers and yearlings. I thought I would explain what was involved in selling a herd of that size all in one day. The cows were all taken to Leek livestock market in Staffordshire. They are taken there as more dairy farmers milk in the north and west of the UK; which means more buyers at the market. If you had a sale in this area, where there are fewer dairy farmers, it would be difficult to find enough buyers.

Once you have made the decision to sell, you would contact the auctioneers and come up with a suitable date. They would then come to the farm and look at the cows and discuss the sale. A few weeks before the sale you have to prepare catalogues and list each animal with their pedigree, if they are pedigree, with their date of birth, their sire, the milk records of the dam and granddame where possible, if they are in milk. The young stock - just their pedigrees. All the milk yields have to be shown with butterfat and protein percentages, whether they are in calf, with the service date and the sire.

When the catalogues are printed some have to be sent to prospective buyers a fortnight before the sale. To get 300 head of cattle to the market you hire a fleet of livestock lorries who specialise in this work. All the young stock and dry cows are sent the day before, all the cows in milk have to be milked at midnight on the day of the sale, then loaded on the lorries at about two to three in the morning. They may have got dirty in transport and when they arrive at the market they have to be washed and clipped to look smart for the sale.

The sale will start at 10.30am. Buyers will come from anywhere in the UK, but mainly from the Welsh borders and North. It would take about five hours to sell 300 head and then the buyers are responsible for getting their buys back to their farms. It is quite a worry getting to the sale day. So many things can go wrong, the weather, holdups on motorways, etc. So when the day of the sale arrives you keep your fingers crossed and hope for the best.

John Saunders



Joshua

Orphan & Community Care

I thought you might like to have an update on the Joshua Secondary School.

Aliford who is the Headmaster at the secondary school has confirmed that the exam results are really good. The results for the Junior exams 76% which are taken at the end of Year 2 are fab and the senior results 44% are great. The National average 52% takes into account all the very best schools in Malawi - a bit like comparing them with Bedford Modern and Bedford School. The results of the top student will put him in the top 5 per cent in the country.

I am so pleased that the Science club is thriving. All the work to build and equip the science lab has been so worthwhile!

Jacky Mould

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Oakley Allotments



Our allotments now enter their 4th year and the changes and developments have been considerable. Since writing for the last newsletter we have found new tenants and only have one full plot left vacant.

The paths and tracks are gradually turning to grass as we have been able to mow them occasionally through the year and this process will continue next year. We now have a shed on site with a resident mower and various machines to aid in the essential maintenance.

The year got off to a very slow start with winter reluctant to leave and it looked as though nothing would get a chance to grow and thrive. Although the growing season had a late start the results in the end were surprisingly good. This is one of the delights of allotment gardening as you never quite know how things are going to turn out.

I have used most of the area of my own plot over the last three years. It had looked quite a daunting task at first but gradual digging and expansion across the area has led to it being quite productive. There is no sense of formal layout so I have to be careful when considering crop rotation, which is an essential part of allotment management.

This year I made two substantial raised beds using donated railway sleepers, finding them quite easy to maintain and an efficient use of the small space involved. I now intend to install more raised beds.

Since we have had so much rain recently the soil is virtually unworkable. I have joined forces with two other tenants to acquire some good manure (three years old - brilliant stuff!). Part of my share will be spread over the ground I managed to dig and weed before the onset of the damp. The remainder will be spread experimentally to determine how a no-dig regime might work.

My plot seems to be taken-over by creeping buttercup but where that name comes from I haven't quite worked out since it seems more like a galloping buttercup. It appears to be a persistent and resistant weed; even the slugs stay well clear except for using it to hide under.

As I write I am aware that the long-term weather forecast threatens snow in the coming weeks. I have also read a prediction that we are heading towards the harshest winter for some years. By the time the next newsletter is out we will know. I can hardly contain my excitement at the prospect of weeks of the freezing stuff!

Meanwhile I'm heading off to buy snow-shoes and skis before the news spreads and there is a shortage of supply...

Steve Nicholas

New crusher for community apple pressing group



Thanks to a grant of £125 from Borough Councillor Pat Olney's Ward Fund, the Sustainable Oakley Apple Pressing Group has been able to buy a new apple crusher.

The crusher turns the apples into a pulp more easily than before and so will enable us to press a larger volume of apples at any one time.

In the last few years we've done apple pressing for the children at the Lower School, the Rural Day Centre and for residents who came along to the various apple pressing days held at the allotments.

The Group gave the new crusher its first outing a few weeks ago at an apple pressing at the Rural Day Centre for elderly people which is held at the Old School in the village.

The clients at the Day Centre had fun helping to wash, prepare and crush the apples as well as taking a turn on the press. The result was the most delicious apple juice which everyone really enjoyed.

The new apple crusher will mean that the Sustainable Oakley Group will be able to press your apples next year at a community event on the Village Green. We're planning for it to be held towards the end of September or early October 2014.

Look out for announcements on the Village Notice Boards and in the newsletter. Bring along your apples next year and help to press really fresh, great tasting juice.

PETANQUE (BOULE) PITCH LAUNCHED

An open day was held on Saturday 21 September to launch the new Petanque pitch at Oakley Sports and Social Club. Despite the cloud and drizzle 17 people attended and stayed on to enjoy a good couple of hours play.

We were fortunate to have four "experts" join us from the Chiltern Region of the England Petanque Association, who explained the rules of the game and gave a brief demonstration of how the game should be played. It was very impressive to watch these regional and national level players and we were all very grateful to them.

The pitch allows for two groups of triples to be played at once, allowing 12 of us to play at any one time. We picked up lots of tips on how to shoot and point and basic tactics – now we just need lots of practice!

Petanque is suitable for all ages and levels of fitness or mobility. (There is a ramp for wheel-chairs) To play you need to join the Oakley Sports and Social Club (£5 per year). You will be able to borrow boules from the OSSC, who can also give you a copy of the rules. You can bring guests to play but they must be signed in at the club.

If you are interested in playing regularly and to meet others, we hope to play on:

Wednesdays at 10.00 am

Saturdays at 10.00 am

Sundays at 2.00 pm.

For further information please contact

Richard Baily,

Tel No: 823251

or the Oakley Sports and Social Club,

Tel No: 824977

OAKLEY CARNIVAL 2013

Building on the fantastic work of previous years, in 2013 we have been able to make the biggest donations to village groups to date. Over the years we've built up a pot of money to ensure that the next carnival has the funds to go ahead. That pot is now sufficient and we've been able to donate more money this year... a massive £4,000. Once again, we would like to thank absolutely everybody that contributed in whatever they did and we look forward to more fundraising over the coming years.

Clubs that have benefited from 2013 fundraising are:

Oakley Lower School, Pre-school, Toddlers, Scouts, Brownies, Oakley Sports Football Club, Oakley Saturday Football Club, Oakley Badminton, Netball, Oakley Day Centre, Village Hall, Footprints, Motorcycle Club.

Sue Wren

Chair

Carnival Committee

Uncomfortable with letting strange people into your home?

We are an **all-female** team of interior painters and decorators, working in the north beds village area. Fully experienced in hanging wallpaper, painting – including paint effects, restoring and repairing surfaces, wallpaper stripping and all general home decorating. We are all individually CRB checked, will provide references and testimonials showing the standard of our workmanship giving you peace of mind. We will come to your home to discuss your exact requirement, offer advice and produce a free written specification and quotation. We will then arrive on time, keeping disturbance to the minimum and deliver a quality job using only top quality materials.



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Big OL' Build

Oakley Lower School

in association with Oakley Lower PTA

When the old school finally closed its doors to move to a new site in 1971 having outgrown the building, the number of children on roll was 114. The number of children on roll at the current Oakley Lower School site has continued to grow, as the village has grown, now reaching over 200 at the start of each new school year. Many of our current parents who are former pupils remember the arrival of the mobile classrooms, already second hand when we received them, to house the ever increasing numbers of pupils.

The school has grown way beyond the capacity it was originally designed for. The mobile units have served their purpose and we would like to replace them with a permanent build. This would be designed to fit our growing needs, more child friendly and more environmentally friendly. To this end this summer we applied for and received planning permission to build new classrooms to the rear of the school.

So we come to the launch of the Big Oakley Lower Build fundraising project, or 'Big OL' Build and to introduce the build mascot BOB the Bear, seen below visiting the children at school. He also attends all our fundraisers.

We started with a torch lit walk round parts of Oakley on 30th Nov. It was a fantastic evening with great costumes, a stunning carved pumpkin competition and luscious hot chocolate to round the evening off. We would like to thank those residents who came out and threw money in our buckets as we passed by! We raised £300.

This is just the first of many and varied fundraising events that will be happening. We will keep you all posted and hope you feel able to support us in this, slightly daunting but much needed, undertaking.

You can visit our Facebook page "Big OL' Build" for photos and information on events. If you would like to offer a donation or sponsorship, you can contact the fundraisers on:

www.bigolbuild@gmail.com

Thanks to everyone for their support.

BOB the Bear and his friends are keen to get building their new classrooms.





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VILLAGE HALL NEWS

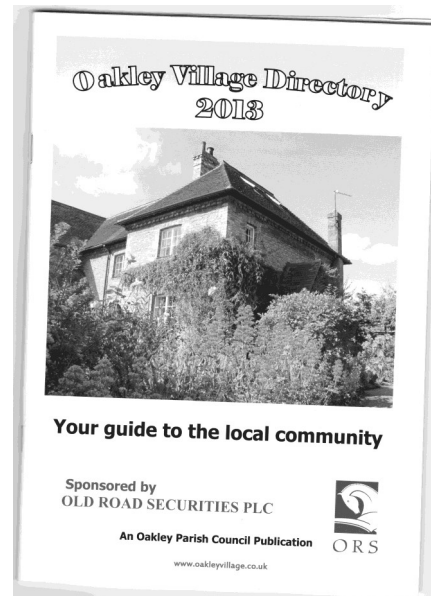
After a heartfelt plea for new volunteers to come and join the committee of the Village Hall, there are now four extra members to share the work. These people will bring fresh thoughts on the running of our excellent facility and who knows what will be achieved in the coming months?

The past twelve months has seen extensive work to the plumbing system, some of which is of great benefit to Tracy Hewitt who cleans the Hall. Anyone who has sat for any length of time will know that many of the chairs squeak. This is hopefully a problem solved by the purchase of some new furniture (these chairs are also slightly padded and so they should be more comfortable). Parts of the building, inside, are to have a fresh coat of paint so the New Year will start on a brighter note.

If you use the Hall, as many of you do and should you think of an addition or improvement that will be of benefit, please phone 07788 796996 and leave the details. These will be considered at our committee meetings.

After five years of taking the hall bookings I am standing down and Jenny Knight, one of our newcomers, is taking over – she will have an interesting and at times challenging job.

Jean Weston



Oakley Village Directory 2014 edition

As we will shortly be starting work on the 2014 Village directory, I wanted to give you a background to it.

The directory promotes businesses based in Oakley, businesses of Oakley residents and clubs and societies in Oakley.

The directory is distributed in January to every household in Oakley (around 1000) and it is a great way to promote your business or club. You can take a listing in the directory free of charge.

If you want to place an advert then rates are very reasonable – in fact they haven't increased in 7 years! For businesses a full page advert is £50, £25 for a half page and £12.50 for a quarter page. For club adverts our prices are half the above.

All proceeds raised from the Village Directory are used within the Village. We have spent money on the orchard and the Linch Furlong sculptures amongst other things.

With people seeking to support local businesses appearing in the Oakley Village Directory is a very cost effective way of letting others know you are here. If you want to join a club then the directory promotes a wide range of options for children and adults.

If you want to find out more then please email me at sarafardon@yahoo.co.uk, or call me on 824516.

Sara Fardon

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New Youth Leader at Oakley Youth Club

Despite all the economic gloom our spirits are lifted that the Youth Club still enjoys generous funding from Oakley Parish Council to pay for a Youth Worker and help with running costs. In these times of financial constraint we have had to introduce a small admission fee to offset the cost of running the club. This contributes to updating equipment and replenishing stocks for activities such as cooking, arts and crafts, table tennis balls, batteries for the Wii controls and things like that. This allows us to respond to requests from the members to try different activities and organise entertaining events such as this year's Christmas party.

Introducing our new Youth Worker ...

Leigh Hopkinson

We're delighted that Leigh has accepted the role as Youth Worker. We look forward to seeing her wonderful ideas in action when she starts at the first Youth Club session after the Christmas break on 10th January 2014.



Apart from the Youth Club, Leigh also runs art and craft After School Club, Figure Drawing for A Level and Christmas Workshops. She certainly is enthusiastic and has lots of creative ideas for our 12 to 16 year olds to enjoy and to have fun coming to the Friday sessions.



Thanks to Lindsay Saunders for all her hard work running the Youth Club for the past 2 years, providing fun and interesting activities for the benefit of the young people who attended in significant numbers each week. Lindsay has left a legacy of a safe, well organised club with a small band of volunteers, one of whom has developed a brilliant website. Have a look at it at www.oakleyyouthclub. Thanks to Jon Lever who gets full credit for that.

We have a group of wonderful volunteers and parent helpers who give at least one Friday night per term to help out at the Youth Club. We are very grateful to them all and appreciate their commitment as the Youth Club couldn't keep going without them. However, our membership numbers have grown, and we are finding that we really could do with some more help. There is a serious need for the Youth Club. If there are any volunteers out there that could spare an hour, perhaps to run the Tuck Shop, or who might even have a skill they could share, we would be happy to see you. As you'd expect, there are free CRB checks for adults. The volunteers and members come along because they want to have a congenial time. We have zero tolerance for rough play or unacceptable behaviour. If you could volunteer the odd Friday night for such a worthwhile purpose, or would like further information, please contact us at oakleyyouthclub@yahoo.co.uk or ring Carol on 823751 or text to 07940 164009. By joining our friendly group of volunteers you will be rewarded with the exuberance of young people having somewhere safe to go and really enjoying themselves in the heart of the community.

So we call on our



young people aged 12 to 16

who need something to do on a Friday night to come along and check it out for themselves at the Old School on Lovell Road, from 8pm until 10pm, term time only. Get involved, make friends in a safe environment. Join in entertaining games and activities, simply chill out with mates after a hard week at school, fill up on tuck or eat the results of a cooking session! All you need to bring is £1.00 admission and, if you like, money for the Tuck Shop.



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A letter from Revd Linda

My dear friends

Encounters: faith, hope and love for Advent.

If you haven't been to church for sometime, why not give it a try and begin again with God. Advent is a special time of year, a time of new beginnings and is the beginning of the church's year. This year Advent Sunday is on December 1st. It is the beginning of a penitential season when we can look at ourselves and our relationships with others as we prepare for the coming of Christ at Christmas. It is an opportunity to encounter God. We are not getting ready for Santa, but seeking to understand the real meaning of Christ's coming into the world and why we are here!

Advent is a very special time of the year. I love it; it's a time of expectancy, when we look at our relationships with God and each other. The Christian faith is an exciting and meaningful way of life. In her book 'The Coming of God' Maria Boulding writes: 'If you want God, and long for union with him, yet sometimes wonder what that means or whether it can mean anything at all, you are already walking with the God who comes'. We all feel like this, we just want to draw closer to God.

The word Advent is derived from a Latin word *Adventus* meaning to "arrive" or "come". We celebrate the two fold coming of Christ: the first as a human being born in humility and simplicity in a stable in Bethlehem; the second still awaited, when he shall come in power and triumph to judge the world.

The word Advent means that 'something is about to happen'.

If we desire to draw closer to God and encounter him in a profound way we need to be receptive, awake and watchful. When we are receptive our minds, actions, relationships, and prayer make us more Christ like. We see others and ourselves in a more positive light. Let us remove our dark glasses and see how quickly everything looks brighter. We are to witness to truth, justice, love and peace so that we can witness to Jesus. In short, the most effective way to witness is to live a Christian life. You have four weeks to prepare for the coming of God.

This year in your Advent encounter why not try all or some of the following:

Look at your relationship with God and others and maybe attend a mid week service and/or study group.

Deepen your relationship with God through prayer, reading and communion. Read a spiritual book.

Share the good news about him with others and explain what advent is all about. Christmas does not begin until Christmas Eve!

During Advent sign up for a daily email or text at www.livethechallenge.co.uk or follow @live_challenge

This year Tesco have a 'Real Advent Calendar' with a 24 page story book. A donation is made to the Children's Society from each sale.

Happy encounters, have a truly spiritual Advent and feel the benefit when Christmas arrives. May the joy of the Christ child be yours this Christmas.

Very special blessings

Revd Linda

OAKLEY GARDENING CLUB

Please do come along. Our programme of events continues, 7.45pm at the Methodist Church Hall. We are a very friendly club and there is a warm welcome awaiting you.

2014 Dates

January 20th

February 17th (annual dinner)

March 17th

April 14th

See you there!



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OAKLEY WI

We meet at Oakley Village Hall on the second Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm and are happy to welcome you as a visitor or as a member. Here is what we have planned for the next few months.

Tuesday 14th January

Malcolm Jones is a well respected local Funeral Director with the independent family business, Molyneux Jones. His talk is entitled 'The role of a funeral director'.

Tuesday 11th February

Kerry Cash from Fifth Avenue, Lurke Street, Bedford will be providing a beauty demonstration.

Tuesday 11th March

Our AGM. A social evening with games and quizzes - and a glass of wine!

Tuesday 8th April

Steve Munyard gives an insight to 'Colossus and Bletchley Park'.

Theatre and Cinema visits are arranged throughout the year, as well as walks and outings by coach to places of interest.

For further information phone 407460 or 823788

Anne McNab



Coffee Mornings in Oakley.

The Churches Together in Oakley Coffee Mornings, together with some generous donations, have raised enough money to purchase a special computer and accessories for Connor Payne, aged 10, who lives in Oakley and has been blind since birth.

The computer was presented to Connor at a coffee morning in St Mary's Church in August by Amos Salisbury, a local Methodist Preacher who is also blind. It is hoped that this computer will be a great benefit to Connor for his continuing education.

Coffee mornings are held at 10.30 -12.00 on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month, and are open to anyone who would like to come along. For more details please contact

Linda Young on 824994.

Steve's Snippet No.7

Someone, possibly with far too much time on their hands, has calculated that for every single grain of sand on our planet there must be something of the order of 10,000 stars in the Universe.

As if large numbers were not difficult enough to comprehend I ask myself how much use this fact can possibly be. It may come up in a pub quiz but the number may vary depending on who did the calculation and the criteria they decided to apply.

Where would you start?

I suppose that the number of grains of sand could only be estimated by deciding on the possible weight of sand in the world and then counting sand grains in a gram and so on...

Deep-space telescoping has revealed that even dark regions of sky contain untold numbers of distant galaxies, literally on the edge of the observable universe. Our own home galaxy is estimated to contain, possibly, 4 billion stars.

They are all mind-boggling numbers. Their main reason for existence is to confound us.

What concerns me is the margin for error when so much has to be estimated...and does it matter in the slightest?

(My own calculation is nearer to 12,000 stars - but then, I was using a slightly longer envelope to jot the figures down).



Steve Nicholas

Neighbourhood Watch

Crime was virtually unknown in Oakley for years but in 2013 we have had two burglaries, two attempted burglaries, theft of a quad bike and a catalytic converter stolen. The decision has therefore been made to reawaken Neighbourhood Watch from its slumber. As a start we need to find street co-ordinators for :-

Farrows Close, Farsands and Flax Close

Please contact Bill Chalker the Area Co-Ordinator on 824002 or bill@chalker.uk.net if you are interested.

A meeting will be arranged early next year for all street co-ordinators and for those who want to be involved in the prevention and reduction of local crime.

OAKLEY MOTORCYCLE CLUB

2013 WHAT A YEAR!

Well, records were broken last year on membership numbers and Thursday night attendees. However that has been nothing compared to this year!

At the time of writing this article we have a paid up membership for 2013 standing at a mighty 431 members, an all-time record. Basically that means that in the last three years we have more or less doubled the membership, surely a sign that we must be doing something right? I suppose I should have guessed as much when, at the AGM in February, we had around 135 members attending. I'm sure that wasn't just for the buffet and the wit of the Chairman. It shows that people really care about how this club runs and progresses.

Obviously the weather this last summer has helped considerably, with probably the best summer for three or more years. On most Thursday nights the nice evenings have resulted in the normal attendance being 100 plus bikes. OMC have held ten theme evenings over the summer weeks with a prize for the best in class bike. On one particular theme night 202 bikes were counted during the course of the evening and yes, we are sad enough to count them!

Due to the high profile of the club, this has resulted in it becoming an extremely popular venue and has attracted bikers from other Counties to visit.

The problem with this has been that it has also attracted the odd moronic biker who decided to rev and race their bike. This is something we do not condone and really don't want associating with OMC. I can assure you that these are NOT members. We started to put steps in place to prevent this and it will be high on our agenda next year. Basically, anyone blatantly speeding or riding in an anti-social manner will be banned!

Anyway, on a better note, the feedback we are receiving about OMC shows that not only are we now one of the biggest clubs in the Country, we are also one of the best!

Thursday nights are not members only. Anyone is welcome, even if you just want to bring the kids along for a coke, burger and marvel at the sight of a couple of hundred motorbikes on a summer's evening. Everyone is welcome.

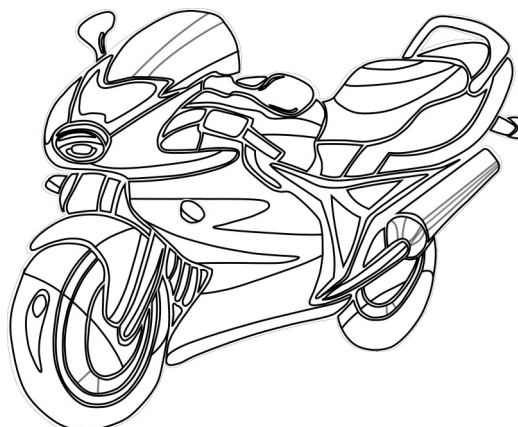
Check us out at www.oakleymc.net

Kind regards

Baysie

Roger Bays

Chair - OMC



Oakley Educational Foundation



This Foundation exists to assist young people between the ages of 16 and 25, who live in the Parish, with grants towards the cost of books and tools, etc. in furtherance of their education.

Applications are accepted in the months of May and November and must be accompanied by receipts of purchase. Application forms can be obtained from the Clerk, Louise Tunley.

For further information, or for an application form, please contact Louise Tunley on 07917 462213, by post at 19 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3JY or by email at louise_tunley@yahoo.co.uk.

Wanderers and Whittlebury

- Winning combination

Oakley Wanderers Football Club has teamed up with Whittlebury Hall, which is so far proving to be a winning duo. Oakley Wanderers are a local Sunday football side now currently in their 3rd season in the Bedford and District Sunday Football League. After a mediocre first season that saw a mid table finish, but promotion still achieved from Division 5 to Division 4, Wanderers had a much better 2nd season. They finished joint 2nd in Division 4 and missed out on the league title by just 1 point.

Leading into the current season optimism was high in the Wanderers ranks as the assembled squad for the season showed much promise in the pre-season fixtures. However, affairs off the field were not as promising as those on it. The financial burden of running a Sunday football side was starting to take its toll. With no money in the pot, a fine or two owed here and there, a new kit needed along with footballs, things were looking a little bleak.

A new secretary Maria Strolia was appointed by the club to try and clear up the off field hurdles. Maria wasted no time going out in search for a club sponsor. Of the many local companies and businesses she contacted there was one that replied as a potential suitor.

Whittlebury Hall, the Northampton based Hotel and Spa, had some scope to sponsor the side. After negotiations were completed a new kit and set of balls were purchased. This alleviated much of the financial burden on the players and put the club in good stead for the upcoming season. Oakley Wanderers now turn out each week in their new yellow and black strip, proudly sporting the Whittlebury Hall logo. The new look so far seems to have gone down well. Wanderers currently sit joint top of the 3rd division, and are in the 3rd round of the County Cup competition. The only set back so far has been the recent loss in the 3rd round of the league cup.

There is still a long way to go in the season and nothing is being taken for granted. The club is hopeful that the early season form continues to the end and Oakley are up there competing for honours when it really counts. Whilst it is down to the players to deliver the results on the pitch the whole club is extremely grateful to Whittlebury Hall. Providing their aid off the field has essentially put the team in a position to be able to continue competing. Financial restrictions are one of the biggest obstacles facing the grass roots game and each year you see several clubs folding mid season. Fortunately thanks to Whittlebury Hall and Oakley Wanderers tight knit squad, there is no chance of this happening to them.

Ashley Ayles - Oakley Wanderers Manager





**The Oakley
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**A warm welcome
is given
to come to our
special
Christmas
Celebrations**

Sun. 8th Dec : Churches Together **Family Christingle Service** at 10.30 am at Methodist church

Sun. 15th Dec : **Carol Service** at 4.00pm at Methodist Church

Wed. 18th Dec : **Carol singing** and Handbells in the Bedford Arms from 7.30 pm

Sun . 22nd Dec : **Carol Service** at 6.00pm at St. Mary's Church

Tues. 24th Dec : Christmas Eve **Family Crib Services** at 2.00pm* and 4.00 pm* at St. Mary's Church

Midnight Communion at 11.30 pm at Methodist Church

Midnight Eucharist at 11.30 pm at St. Mary's Church

Wed. 25th Dec : **Christmas Day All Age Eucharist** with gifts- 9.30 am St. Mary's

Christmas Day Morning Service 10.30 am at Methodist Church

Sun. 29th Dec : **Parish Eucharist** 8.00 am at St. Mary's Church

No service at Methodist Church (Morning Worship at 10.00 am at Clapham Methodist Church)



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CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES

Friday 20th December 2.00pm - 11.00pm	Friday 27th December 3.00pm - 11.00pm
Saturday 21st December 12.00pm - 11.00pm	Saturday 28th December 12.00pm - 11.00pm
Sunday 22nd December 12.00pm - 11.00pm	Sunday 29th December 12.00 - 11.00pm
Monday 23rd December 3.00pm - 11.00pm	Monday 30th December 3.00pm - 11.00pm
Tuesday 24th December 2.00pm - 11.00pm	New Years Eve (Day) 3.00pm - 6.00pm
Christmas Day 11.30am - 1.30pm	New Years Eve (Night) 7.30pm - 1.00am
Boxing day 12.00pm - 11.00pm	New Years Day 1.00pm - 11.00pm

Forthcoming Events

- Friday 6th December Cricket Club Quiz Night - All welcome
- Saturday 14th December OMC Christmas Party - Live Band all welcome
- Saturday 21st December AFC Oakley Santa's Grotto
- Sunday 22nd December OSSC Santa's Grotto (Child up to 11yrs) Free to all members'
- Tuesday 31st December New Years Eve Party (Ticket £10.00 per person Inc children)
- Live Band - **MERCY STREET**.

As the year draws to close and Christmas fast approaches we reflect on a fabulous year at OSSC both for our sports clubs, social members and the committee alike. Our club has seen a growth in its membership, continual investment upgrading the clubhouse and kitchens, with a very successful food and bar selection.

We have invested in both the playing surface and equipment for the football pitches. Groundsman 'Sully' continues with the maintenance and upgrading. A big thank you to Martin Sutherland from the Committee of the OSSC for all the work and time you have invested. The Cricket pitches have also seen a great deal of work and the playing area next season will be a testimony to this. Our links with cricket, Youth and Adult, continue to strengthen. We are happy to support them as we work together to develop cricket for everyone, including the Youth set up Very well done to all.

The Tennis Court continues to thrive with both popular tennis bookings and our Netball Team. Bookings can be made behind the bar. We would like to see the Boules pitch be just as successful. Why don't you come and try out the game? (Details inside on page 10)

Throughout the year we have held many functions for members of the club. We saw a very successful Oakley Carnival 2013 that ran smoothly. It was one of the biggest yet due to the efforts of the carnival Committee, the OSSC Committee, the Club stewards and their staff, without whom it would not have been such a great success. The newly formed AFC Oakley saw the football teams amalgamate under one banner. The held a very busy and successful inaugural night to launch the new AFC Oakley. For the first time we held a hugely successful Fire-works Night that had people attending from far and wide. Nothing but positive comments regarding what a great night it was. We are looking to build upon these successes for 2014 and onwards.

All that remain is to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and very healthy New Year from all at OSSC.

Join us @ <http://Oakleyssc.com/membership/>