

# *ABBOTTS ANN PARISH COUNCIL*

*Newsletter: June 2008*

## **CELEBRATION**

Aren't we lucky - or sensible - to live in a village, especially one whose history starts long before those tiresome Normans gave King Harold one in the eye and started trying to tidy everything up? And surely it is significant, if you look through that little blue book - indispensable to Parish Clerks and others - called the Abbots Ann Directory, that you will find that nearly all the names are Anglo-Saxon or Celtic; meaning that this is a community whose history, customs and general ethos have deep roots with a tendency to resist the encroachments of people like Romans, Normans, Roundheads or Planners. However, most of you can hardly have failed to notice some quite dramatic tidying up, inspired from inside the community, in the region of Dance's Corner where Pennymarsh, the oldest cottage in the village by a good century and a half, has witnessed a massive cutting back of luxuriant growth, not only of hedges, trees, lawns and shrubs, but also of a well-known set of whiskers. The latter were banished to (?temporary) oblivion shortly before an equally famous green boiler-suit and black beret were exchanged for a frock coat and an amazing technicolor waistcoat for a very special occasion on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

The wedding of Bernard Griffiths and Rosemary Groves was part of a long and romantic personal story of a classic boy-meets-girl/boy-loses-girl/boy-meets-girl-again pattern; sadly the Clerk played an unwitting part in the boy-loses-girl bit, because the girl rather gave up on the boy when he returned very late from a Boxing Day party at Ash Barn next door back in the 80s. It must have been the company rather than the mulled punch, of which a major ingredient was not rum but cold tea, but - well, I said it was a long story - happily the b-meets-g-again part resulted from an amazing chance meeting, some 25 years later, with our own Rev. Nicky Judd. The latter was clearly delighted to tie the marital knot in a jam-packed St. Mary's, after Rosemary had arrived a fashionable ten minutes late (anything to do with the fact that she was escorted to church all the way from Little Ann by a convoy of gleaming but venerable Austin 7s?). On the way from church to reception the newly-weds walked in a procession led by Graham and Polly Whyte with drum and hurdy-gurdy, which led to frequent comparisons with Thomas Hardy - well yes, but he wrote about Dorset, not Hampshire, and was not noted for cheerfulness or happy endings, and we should all have been wearing smocks and hob-nailed boots.

Like certain other growths, the lawn at Pennymarsh had been trimmed for the occasion and was trampled by hundreds of friends, relatives and neighbours, representing all sections of the village, eager to include Rosemary in their affection for her husband and to show appreciation of his own great affection for, and commitment to, our village. All sorts of home-based entertainment were there to be enjoyed, including a masterly speech by the Best Man, Professor Peter Gibson, and magic by Michael King, together with more rustic attractions such as a hog-roast, country music, scrumpy and, under the beady organisational eye of groomsman Arthur Peters, masses of contributions, both culinary and practical, from dozens of helpful neighbours. All this participation helped to transform the occasion from the personal to the communal and turned the whole bright rain-free Spring day (and most of the following night, too) into an unforgettable celebration of village life in general and of Abbots Ann in particular.

## **THE CHURCH CLOCK**

Just in time for the happy occasion, the Church clock was working again and its face resplendent with new gold leaf. At an earlier meeting, the Parish Council - and some generous donors - had decided to find the funds for this restoration, as everyone felt that the clock, like our very unusual church itself, is a major feature of the village as a whole.

## **NOTICES**

It is said that notices are read by only about 15% of the people who are supposed to notice them and acted on by about the same percentage of that percentage. It is doubtful, therefore, that the appearance of the Chinese Olympic village - or Abbots Ann - would be much improved by the following, however heartily your Council would agree with the sentiment on this one:

### **THE CIVILISED AND TIDY CIRCUMSTANCE IS A KIND OF ENJOYMENT**

or would like to back it up with measures like the following:

Please do not spilt everywhere  
and litter up. The violators will  
be amerced with in range of 20  
to 50 yuan.

Well, on the whole (but see below) we do enjoy a tidy circumstance, so let's keep it like that with out any amercing.

## **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: 5<sup>TH</sup> June 2008**

### **CARBON FOOTPRINT**

We are all supposed to be worked up into a fever of anxiety about causing the death of the planet, not to mention us, by pushing tons of CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere, though cynics see the allegedly resulting global warming (have you noticed any so far this summer?) as a golden opportunity for Governments to tax us out of our cars and onto bikes. With the mighty industries of America and China not seeming to care two hoots about what comes out of their factory chimneys, it is not easy to see what can be achieved by a rural village. However, if national governments are unable or unwilling to act, maybe a difference really could be made if enough local communities world-wide, from City Corporations to Parish Meetings, took the matter in hand. Accordingly the Parish Council of Upper Clatford has suggested that more would be achieved if local communities work together rather than separately, so one of their parishioners, Mr. Charles Crossthwaite-Eyre, came to the meeting to share his expertise and to ask us to combine forces with the Clatfords in setting up a structure to get purposeful action going. Your Council gladly expressed support for the idea and asked Jo Dixon to represent the Parish in future discussions, since, in her work for Community Action Hampshire, this sort of co-operative enterprise is just her cup of tea.. So, if the world has not come to an end later this year, watch this space.

### **DOG BINS (AGAIN)**

Mr John Swann does not give up easily, and he returned to the Jubilee Room to tell us that, realising the strong feelings of parishioners against installing a dog-bin on Church Path, he has obtained the support of residents and land-owners for the placing of bins on their property at the car-park opposite the entrance to Church Path (provided it is discreet and green rather than red) and on the verge of Webbs Lane. In discussion the Council bore in mind the weight of opinion against having any bins at all, on the grounds that responsible dog-owners already cause no problems, while irresponsible ones would not use bins anyway - a view strongly expressed in a letter to the Council from Brigadier Burson. So it was decided, subject to costing and availability of external funding, to allow the installation of the two bins, plus possibly a third on Dunkirt Lane, for a one-year trial period.

## **CLERK'S REPORT and CORRESPONDENCE**

The Clerk would be pretty bored if he only had to deal with routine things like accounts, but he is kept on his toes by a wide variety of communications by post, e-mail, publications or word of mouth, and he can't always find someone else to deal with them.

No-one on the Council could help with a request, via the Website, for information about a house called Naramata, or a lady called Alice Blanshard who lived there some 40 years ago. Anyone with information please contact the Clerk.

A consultation from TVBC about improving facilities for cyclists looks promising for those hardy citizens - it would certainly be a Good Thing if pedallers could get to Andover without (a) having to go the long way round through Anna Valley, or (b) to run the gauntlet of the Salisbury Road or (c) to risk having the bike "borrowed" at the other end. Cllr Stanton volunteered to see if there was anything in the document for Abbotts Ann to comment on.

In an annoying act of vandalism someone has sprayed graffiti on the village sign in Cattle Lane. It is hoped that TVBC will have got rid of it by the time you read this.

A recent statistical survey tells us that out of a population of 2,348, this Parish has 545 residents over 60, which is 23% - an awful lot of bus-passes, which, incidentally, will now get you a free ride on almost any bus almost anywhere, even in London.

One of the Clerk's more curious tasks is that of running the Burial Ground, and he has recently up-dated the fees (not by very much) and the regulations, which were approved by the Council and will be available on the Burial Ground notice-board and in the book in the Village Shop. Among the regulations is one that forbids the placing of lights on graves or cremation plots, and families are requested to remove those already in place.

Flooding. It looks as if the Hampshire Highways people have more urgent things to do than clearing drains - one parishioner counted ten blocked drains between St. John's Cross and the Garden Centre, while several temporary lakes have been appearing all over the place. More nagging by the Clerk, but don't hold your breath. Does anyone remember the "lengthmen" of old?

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

There was plenty more business, which can be found in detail in the Minutes, available in the usual places, but here is a selection to think about:

Megashed. The Highways Agency and HCC have finally sent in their submissions in connection with the Megashed development; as they are not saying what we all wanted - that the effect on the A303 and surrounding minor roads is unacceptable - it is hoped that their report contains some stringent restrictions. Meanwhile our Dr. John Moon has sent in an extremely closely argued Memorandum highlighting countless flaws in the developers' facts and figures about noise pollution; this follows an earlier document in which he severely criticises the proposed traffic controls. He has earned the admiration and gratitude of this and all the neighbouring Parish Councils for the tremendous amount of work involved.

School. With the plans all passed, the new school building has received the green light.

Crime. Our relatively crime-free record has been reduced by a break-in in Old Salisbury Road, and the Police have been warning us to look at the security of oil-storage tanks, which are being raided all round the county, no doubt motivated by the frightening rise in the cost of oil.

Another worrying development is an increase in horse-stealing, and people have been observed taking photographs of horses. This should be regarded as suspicious, and we are asked to take details of car registrations etc and call the Police immediately if we see this going on.

Wheely-bins. Please remember that this is a pretty village, and wheely-bins are hideous. Far too many bins are being left outside in the street for long periods, or even permanently, so we are all strongly urged to get them back out of sight as soon as possible after being emptied, so as not to spoil our civilised and tidy circumstance.

Next Meeting. 3<sup>rd</sup> July at 7 p.m.

*Adrian Stokes, Clerk*