

FREE
to the residents of Snitterfield

ISSUE 8



CONGRATULATIONS TO US!
The Snipe Magazine recently won joint second place in the Village Ventures scheme.

The Snitterfield Parish Plan Steering Group are planning ahead...

PARISH PLAN 2004/5

The Parish Plan is currently in its draft form and with support from the Parish Council and The Countryside Agency the steering group has managed to obtain a grant to help in the production and publication of the Plan in August 2005.

Before we receive all of the grant we need to get feedback from the Parish on some of the data which is being used to enable the Steering Group to make the correct recommendations to the partners in this project, such as The County Council, District Council and Parish Council.

The Steering group is made up from a small number of villagers who have taken responsibility for the key issues that are based on the finding in our Parish Appraisal and Village Design statement. These issues are as follows:

- **FACILITIES:-** Schooling, Religion, Shops, Post office, Public houses, Healthcare, and Leisure.
- **HOUSING:-** Needs, Types, Sites, Numbers and Design Guidelines.
- **INFRASTRUCTURE:-** Roads, Traffic, Public transport, Parking, Drainage, Utilities, Communications, Footpaths, Street lighting and Signage.
- **EMPLOYMENT:-** Local in the village, Types, New opportunities, Impact upon the village facilities and infrastructure.
- **ENVIRONMENT:-** National and local policies, Wildlife, Hedgerows, Trees and plants, Pollution and Enhancement schemes.
- **OTHER:-** Emergency services, Visitors, involvement of the Parish and updating the Parish Plan.

Early in 2005 we will be having an enclosure in the next issue of SNIPE which will ask you to comment on key findings. Your responses are vital to us, and will help us to update the information we have and the data we have found from several sources. We are planning to have a Parish Plan Letterbox by the New Parish Council Notice board in The Square for you to post them in. Please help us to make the best recommendation for our Parish by supporting us and replying to this questionnaire.

Snitterfield Parish Plan Steering Group

The Stratford District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) that includes both Stratford District Council and Warwickshire Police is committed to reducing house burglaries, and in particular preventing repeat incidents. Householders in South Warwickshire are being offered SMARTWATER, a new property-marking solution at £11 for a single dwelling pack.

SMARTWATER

Smartwater is a unique solution containing a blend of harmless chemicals providing it with a 'forensic fingerprint'. This fingerprint has been likened in concept to 'DNA profiling'. Once applied, Smartwater makes the possession of stolen property a risky business. When subjected to ultra violet light, its presence is immediately obvious by a telltale fluorescent glow. The smallest amount is enough for forensic scientists to verify the registered owner. Warwickshire Police Personnel or Neighbourhood Watch members will be contacting Snitterfield residents in the coming months to inform us about security issues and demonstrate the product.

To make an appointment for Smartwater to be delivered to your home call Stratford Police Station 01789 414111. Alternatively you can email your details to: Smartwater. Stratford@Warwickshire.pnn.police.uk. Please leave your name, address including the postcode, and a daytime telephone number, in order that these details can be passed to a member of your Neighborhood Watch who can then arrange an appointment with you.



News from Richard Hobbs - your District and County Councillor

People often complain to me that the only service they receive from the council is having the bin emptied every week. You may be interested, therefore, to know how your money is spent and I should like to give you details of some of the services, which are provided by the Parish, District and County Councils, as well as the Police Force. It is worth pointing out, however, that the total spending on all of these services in Warwickshire amounts to about £700million including Council Tax with about three quarters of the money being provided by Central Government.

The Parish Council is the authority best able to respond to the needs of the villagers in Snitterfield, they meet every second Monday of the month, are responsible for the street

lights and the children's play areas. They also support the village hall and produce village appraisals and plans, which are adopted by the District Council for planning purposes and it should be noted that every planning application is carefully considered by the Parish Council to reflect local issues.

The District Council on the other hand determine individual applications and formulate planning policy. They collect the household waste and litter, in addition to maintaining the public open spaces in Stratford town. Leisure facilities and housing issues are also their responsibility along with licensing and food hygiene regulations. Grants given by the District Council are a useful way of helping the local community to provide their own facilities.

The majority of your money is spent by the County Council, with over half of their budget funding education for children and adults, governing bodies being responsible for administration of their local schools. It was the County Council that funded the two new classrooms recently built at Snitterfield School (pictured here). They also provide transport of children to schools at staggering cost of £12 million, which is taken for granted.

Residential care for the elderly, along with supporting people with long term needs at home, is the responsibility of Social Services – another large department of the County Council. Foster and adoption services, and responsibility for vulnerable children, also come under their remit. It costs the County £10 million to dispose

of all the waste collected by the districts and the household waste sites. The council maintains most of the roads and footpaths in the County as well as giving grants to maintain public transport in rural areas but it is often forgotten that County protect the environment and heritage of Warwickshire as well as providing the libraries and museums throughout the county. In order to protect the consumer, Trading Standards Officers spend many hours in the shops checking sell by dates, weights and measures as well as looking for imitation goods, but their main role is to help businesses to understand and comply with the many regulations we have in this country.

The Fire Service, which is part of the County Council, is always available for any emergency, which threatens life or property. As part of their fire prevention role they help install smoke detectors in the homes of the elderly and promote fire safety education in schools. As a keen member of the Fire Authority I helped to establish the young fire fighter service.

The Council plays a large role in making our roads safer and in working with the police and district councils to reduce crime. The modern criminal has no respect for County borders and as a result policing methods have dramatically changed over recent years – it is no longer sufficient to have policemen patrolling the streets to prevent crime as DNA, CCTV, efficient nationwide communications and surveillance are used to catch the modern criminal. The police have to target the crime hot spots and to be effective it is not wise to publicise their activities to the criminal world.

I hope you have found the information in this article useful but please contact me if you have any queries. As your local representative I attend most Parish Council Meetings, I am able therefore to listen to the concerns of Snitterfield residents and to give a brief update on the activities of the County and District Councils.

Parking in Stratford

The recent decriminalisation of parking in Stratford has been the topic of conversation of many motorists who regularly drive into Stratford. For some motorists the restrictions are very unpopular, but it is worth highlighting some of the background information behind the decision.

The present Government has a policy to reduce the use of the private motor car and the labour run County Council, who are the Highways authority, also have the same policy.

To improve the local road network the County rely on government grants, which are only available if certain criteria are met: decimalisation is one of them.

Although I am in favour of the new regime I did ask for the free waiting time to be extended to 30 minutes but this was not acceptable

I know it is early days, but there have been several positive comments about the advantages of the new system. Residents of the town have found it much easier to park near their own houses, traffic is flowing smoothly through the town now there is better enforcement, there are more parking spaces for motorists to nip in to the bank etc and it is much more convenient for disabled motorists to park nearer their destination.

I can assure you that these sort of decisions are not taken lightly and it is impossible to please everyone. RH

FROM THE EDITOR

Christmas will soon be upon us and our thoughts will be with friends and family. And especially so with those who are no longer with us. The talk by Bob Foster in November about the War Memorial names was fascinating and moving, this year's Remembrance Day service saw an exceptional turn out from young and old.

It is so sad when a village loses its well-loved characters. Walter Bachelor, aged 97, whose family lived in the same cottage on The Green for over a hundred years, could tell the most fascinating tales of village life through the years. Bill Parnham too, who had great recall of past times, will be sadly missed by many. Always 'his own man', he contributed so much to make the village what it is today. The views and stories gained from residents of our village are priceless, and we should record as much as possible - so listen to their tales and retell them here. We will be delighted to include items of interest in future issues. We want to hear from youngsters too, so get your children to put pen to paper and they can tell us what is important to them.

This year has flown by for me, and I have enjoyed taking over the role of editor. It has given me the opportunity to meet many residents of the village, old and young, who have contributed excellent articles and made this task all the more interesting.

Our call for donations is being met with a fantastic response. Our thanks go to those who have already contributed, and to those who haven't yet, we do still need funds to maintain the print quality. Thank you too for the many words of encouragement to the voluntary team that produce and deliver this newsletter. This year we entered the Village Ventures scheme which recognises the voluntary contribution made to villages by residents and were delighted to receive an award for joint second place in the communications category. The Scouts have asked me to remind you they are still collecting up unwanted and old mobile phones to raise funds for the Snitterfield group. Don't forget to make use of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Houses voucher on the back page of the last issue. If you prefer not to cut it out, it can still be used – just take the whole magazine in and they will stamp it. The houses and gardens are well worth a visit especially as they are right on our doorstep.

We all wish you all a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year!
GINNY CROW, tel 01789 731367

CRIME PREVENTION AND SECURITY

Community Safety Officer, PC Nick Stephens, and Warwickshire Police are currently working to step up the campaign to reduce crime in our area.

Nick has supplied this short guide to help you self-assess your security arrangements at home. There are several key things you can do to help stop burglary occurring at your property. The following will help you to make your home secure by identifying vulnerable areas, utilising security devices and good crime prevention practice.

BURGLAR ALARMS

The most important consideration must be the introduction of a burglar alarm. They are either a 'bells only' system or a 'monitored' system. If you live close enough to neighbours who would react to an alarm sounding and inform the police if there was an obvious problem - then a bells only system would be the one to choose. If you live in a remote area with no neighbours close by, then a monitored system would be for you. The monitored system is remotely monitored and on activation the police are notified of your alarm and would attend.

SMARTWATER PROPERTY MARKING

Many thieves escape conviction because the police are unable to identify the rightful owners of suspected stolen property found in their possession. In some cases if theft is impossible to prove, as property cannot be properly identified, the thief has to be allowed to keep his ill-gotten gains. Until now the method has been to mark property with an ultraviolet pen with your post code. This method although effective has its limitations. Now with Smartwater you can mark anything from the TV, to lawnmowers, jewellery, fine antiques and works of art. Smartwater was developed by the forensic science service, each bottle of the ultraviolet solution has a unique forensic fingerprint often likened to DNA. Each bottle of Smartwater is registered to an individual's address, and all property thus marked can be easily traced by the police to that address. It is virtually impossible to remove completely, and only the smallest amount is required for a successful identification. The criminal fraternity is well aware of the effectiveness of

BILL PARNHAM 1921-2004



It is difficult to write anything that could do justice to Bill and the effect that he had on the village and the people who knew him. We will no longer be cajoled into writing letters to the Parish Council or the District Council or to attend meetings on various village matters.

It would take a whole edition of the SNIPE to do justice to the work he did for the village in the years that he lived here. He contributed a great deal, he made notice boards, planted bulbs, maintained footpaths, helped build the Scout hut, cleared the brook... the list is endless. While many people just talked about doing things – Bill didn't waste time, he was the first to get up

Smartwater. Its use in other areas of the county has resulted in considerable reductions in the numbers of burglaries committed.

PHYSICAL SECURITY

The fitting of more substantial locking devices on doors and windows will enhance your security. All external door locks should be five lever mortice sash or dead locks to British Standard 3621. Your doors should also have security bolts top and bottom and on the front door a security chain and spy hole. Check that your existing locks are up to this standard. If they are not then they should be replaced. Window locks should be fitted to all ground floor wooden or metal windows. The general rule is two per window, opposite the hinge position on the closure side. Any window on the first floor that is accessible from the ground (from a flat roof, drainpipe etc) should have window locks fitted. Side/rear/front gates should be secured with either, hasp and staple and padlock or a chain and padlock. Sheds should also be locked and spades, forks and ladders should be locked away as they can be used in the commission of crime. Sensor lights may be fitted to the shell of your house to detect movement around your property. They should be fitted high enough not to be tampered with and to afford neighbours a good view of the light when it is activated. The fitting of a safe to keep jewellery and valuables in should be considered.

NATURAL SURVEILLANCE

To the front of your property try to keep hedges and shrubbery cut low and remove the lower branches of trees. This affords good natural surveillance from neighbours and passers-by, making it difficult for a burglar to operate in that area.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Please check whether a Neighbourhood Watch scheme is already established in your road. If not, why not enquire about starting one up. Neighbourhood Watch schemes are actively working in partnership with police in the fight against crime.

Please don't hesitate to contact the Community Safety Department on 01789 414111 if you need any further advice on crime prevention issues.

and do it. He hated bureaucracy and in particular the slow working of local authority. He attended meetings on behalf of the village on many issues including the local water supply, housing, and the problems with the culvert. He was also instrumental in the founding of the Tennis and Sports Club.

His great love was his pond and he wrote an article on this in a previous issue. And this how most of us will remember him – cheerfully hard at work in his hat and wellies working away at clearing the pond, or tending his bonfire.

He really cared about this community and although we may not always have agreed with him, perhaps we should all follow his example and get up and do something in the village instead of expecting someone else to.

Thank you Bill for all your enthusiasm. You will be greatly missed by all your friends and neighbours.

HEARD ON THE GRAPEVINE



Taking its name from the ancient land on the slopes above the village, the Welcombe Hills vineyard can be found near the fruit farm on Kings Lane.

Its owners, Chris and Jane Gallimore, began planting in 2001. 'I had been planning to make wine for several years,' explained Chris, 'but how we got started in Warwickshire is a long story!' When Chris left his career in international education five years ago he had already completed part of a degree in oenology at the University of California, and originally intended to plant vines in the Lot Valley in France. Once he and Jane had moved back into their house in Snitterfield, however, he realised that their own land, facing south east with a terroir not unlike Burgundy (clay with good drainage), was probably as ideal a location for grapes as he was likely to find in the Midlands: 'on the proverbial doorstep, as it were!'

An initial area of half an acre was planted with Pinot Noir together with Dornfelder and Bacchus - an idiosyncratic series of choices based on the taste of the wines Chris would ideally like to make. 'The dream would be to plant Chardonnay and perhaps some Sauvignon Blanc next time,' he said cautiously, but after some concerns with powdery mildew in 2004, he admits that tried-and-tested hybrids and other varieties suited to the English climate might temper this decision. Chris' 'heroes' in the English wine-making business include Owen Elias from New Wave Wines in Sussex, and the firm of Nyetimber, whose award-winning methode champenoise is served at Buckingham Palace gala dinners. 'Contrary to popular belief, red wine can be made successfully in this country,' said Chris. As early as 1986 Jancis Robinson was writing about the quality of English Pinot Noir.

Bacchus is fast becoming associated with a distinctive English style - aromatic with subtle wild flower character - and this was used to make the 120 bottles of methode champenoise here with part of our first vintage.'

Vines take three years to establish themselves so, apart from a small crop in 2002, the first harvest was taken to Three Choirs vineyard near Newent in 2003. This was finally bottled in November after a long process of maturation in oak and stainless steel, and several tastings to 'adjust' the final 'bouche' of the product. The Welcombe Hills estate red should be on sale in time for Christmas, and the methode champenoise early in the New Year, though Chris thinks that the former could probably be at its peak at Easter 2005.

And the plans for the future? 'We extended the vineyard in May 2003 with a second planting of 1200 more vines,' said Chris. 'And starting maybe next year, we would hope to be able to offer tastings and vineyard tours during the annual English Wine Weeks in June.'

Meanwhile, what began as a 'hobby job' (as the owners of Australian boutique wineries call it) has developed into a consuming interest, full of hard work and satisfaction in equal measure. 'Pruning is rather like tackling the painting of the Forth Bridge,' observed Jane. 'In the growing season, no sooner is it finished than you have to start all over again at the other end!' But there is immense pleasure in enjoying the views over the Welcombe Hills from the vineyard, especially in summer, and the spectacular autumn colours conjured up by the end of the season. 'There are over twenty members in the local Mercian Vineyards Association,' Jane ended by saying, and everyone is very supportive, and serious - we are all committed to improving the reputation and quality of English wine.'

So look out for the new Welcombe Hills label at a shop near you in the near future!

OVER THE GARDEN WALL

I've been wondering when you'd notice me standing here...

Over my garden wall I cannot help marvelling at the tall Redwoods towering high and sailing in the changing skies. Recently, Timothy Walker, Director of Oxford Botanical Garden, spoke of his quest to seek the forest home of these Pacific giants, the Wellingtonias, growing in their natural state to a staggering height of 320ft with trunks ranging between 10-20 ft diameter.

In 1853 William Lobb collected seed from these North American forests, bringing it back to England to grow at the Veitch nursery. In the summer of 1854, seedlings were sold at 2 guineas each or 12 guineas a dozen. This was an enormous sum of money, far more than the gardener's weekly wage but obviously the "must have" for the gentry. Several specimens are thriving today in the grounds of larger houses in Warwickshire, including Park House.

They were just one species of tree to be introduced from abroad. Snitterfield was actually on the fringe of the Forest of Arden, once abundant with native oaks, beech, elm, lime and sycamore. Many were felled in the annual Timber Sale held every Lammas Tide (August 1st) at the site of White Horse House (then an inn). Hundreds were felled between 1763 and 1788 and sold as timber. In 1786, 450 oaks and 180 ash were sold for £166 7 shillings. Unfortunately they were not replaced

so it is a joy to see the fine solitary oak still standing proud in the Park in Church Road. The Timber Sale was an occasion to merry make and to hold a fair spreading down to the junction of Church Lane where

Stocks' Tree is sited. As the name suggests, this was where village rogues were ridiculed and punished. Originally, an elm marked the stocks but unfortunately did not thrive as the ground according to hearsay was cursed. It was replaced by yet another elm followed by a horse chestnut unfortunately blown down in strong winds about sixteen years ago. The present horse chestnut seems to be maturing well providing seasonal interest and autumn colour.

So as we peep over garden walls at the trees in gardens and fields, admiring the spring blossoms, summer fruits, autumn shades and winter structures, we must wonder at the part they have played in the pageant of our village history.

Margaret Tweed



SNITTERFIELD VILLAGE HALL

**What would a village be without its Village Hall?
Where would villagers meet?**

Clearly this is not entirely true for Snitterfield but nonetheless there are many activities that take place in our Hall. These include the bastions of village society such as the Parish Council meetings, the Garden Club and the Women's Institute. Other very active meetings taking place are the Thursday Club, yoga, whist, bingo, Brownies, a nursery and toddler group - and several couples who practise their ballroom dancing. If you want to know more about the activities already happening in the Hall keep an eye open for details on the village notice boards.

How is the Village Hall paid for? The charges for hiring the hall help to cover the costs. It has its own Management Committee which oversees the maintenance and running. The Parish Council gives a small grant every year and

Friends of The Village Hall are villagers who donate money annually which helps to replace and improve the facilities. The Friends' Christmas Concert (held this year on the evening of Friday 10 December) is always a great success. Always proving to be very enjoyable evenings with local talent offering their unique blend of music, poetry and prose. Not to mention the mince pies and mulled wine. Last year's event raised funds enough to purchase much needed new curtains.

If you want to hire the Hall for your own function the fee is modest. The hall and kitchen with facilities, the electric piano, stage and microphone are all available. It is ideal for gatherings too large for your home such as children's parties. The Booking Secretary is Renata Stephens, Tel 01789 731426. She will be more than happy to discuss your requirements and show you round.

Ann Farr, Secretary

SNITTERFIELD GARDEN CLUB

4 January 2005 - 8pm
Snitterfield Village Hall

COMPOSTING

by Jack Lindsay,
Waste Minimisation Officer, WCC

WHY NOT COME AND ALONG AND FIND OUT HOW TO RECYCLE YOUR GREEN WASTE

Second hand gardening books and other garden bric-a-brac for sale.
Open to all at no charge.

SNITTERFIELD MILK ROUNDS



In the days before milk was pasteurized, collected by tanker lorries from central dairies and packaged in impenetrable cartons, local farmers produced milk mainly for local consumption.



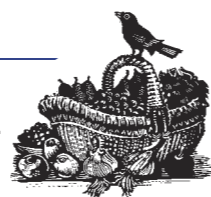
Cooled on a stone slab in the dairy after the morning milking, the milk was loaded into a great churn on the float, often a two-wheeled horse-drawn chariot with the owner's name emblazoned on the front. There were several milk rounds in most areas, each covering different routes and delivering loose milk from the pail, door to door. Hanging near the churn were measuring ladles with their long handles – quart, pint and gill. Milk bottles had been around since the beginning of the century (first with porcelain stoppers held on with wire, then with cardboard tops) but for many years in Snitterfield a jug had to be provided by the householder for filling from the measure dipped into the churn. Mr Evetts of Oak Farm, Bearley Road, drove his milk float on a Snitterfield round until 1955. He also cut, turned and raked his hay using horse-drawn implements, preferring the old ways rather than the tractors and new-fangled machinery that had been in wide usage since the Second World War. Another milk round was owned by Oliver Hanks of Brickyard Farm in Snitterfield and known as the Ingon Dairy round. He was the father of Olive Terry and grandfather of Val Parry, who both still



live in the farmhouse with their families. The milk was collected from Harry Hanks, Oliver's brother, at Pathlow Farm and the round covered Old Kings Lane, Gospel Oak Lane and areas of Stratford. Oliver Hanks did part of it using a motorbike and sidecar containing a large churn and the rest was done by his wife, Grace, with the horse-drawn milkfloat. This was pulled by either Polly or Nobby, ponies who were well known among villagers and who knew at exactly which houses to stop. Polly, known as Pretty Polly, was very placid and quiet, whereas Nobby was somewhat of a character. Olive Hanks remembers him regularly crossing Rother Street, all on his own, to visit the owner of Cox's Sweet Shop (where Lloyds Chemist now resides), who always greeted him with an apple.

Left: Olive Terry as a child on the milk round motorcycle.
Above: from left, Polly the horse, Grace Hanks with milk float, Oliver Hanks and his brother Harry Hanks next to motorbike, and the milk churn sidecar. It is thought these photos were taken sometime in the 1930s.
Inset: The metal plaque from the milk float.

Sally Hopkinson



We are so lucky being able to shop for the best produce right on our doorstep. Our wonderful Snitterfield Stores is one of the best village shops around, and now we have even more choice within walking distance of our homes...

MEDLARS FARM SHOP REOPENS AT SNITTERFIELD FRUIT FARM

Many villagers already know that Medlars Farm Shop has re-opened at the Fruit Farm, and they are becoming regular customers again after the shops closure last year.

Maureen Jeffery and Janet Smith, who now run the shop, write :

Coming to Snitterfield as strangers from further down the M40 we would like to introduce ourselves as the new owners of Medlars Farm Shop. We are still somewhat bemused at finding ourselves here as until a fateful day at the end of May we had no plans whatsoever to be selling carrots (which is all some of our friends and ex-work colleagues think we do!). We both worked together at Sulgrave Manor – George Washington's ancestral home; a little gem of a property in the heart of Sulgrave in South Northamptonshire, just seven miles north of Banbury. We had a big formal lunch to cater for at the Manor and knew the best place for good strawberries was Snitterfield. Having checked with Steve Dawkes that he had enough strawberries

for 150 people that early in the season, we drove up to collect them. And the rest has become our history! We saw the empty shop, so forlorn with its 'Closed' sign on it, looked at each other, said almost simultaneously "would you fancy running that place?" and both said "yes". We found Steve, asked him if he'd consider renting the shop to us, and he said "yes". Went back to work, knocked up the lunch for 150, went home, ran it past respective husbands, returned to work the next day, handed in our notice, and here we are! It really did happen as fast as that. We are loving every minute of our life at Medlars and every day we learn more about our new trade. Our aim is to sell mostly organic food, or if we simply can't source really good organic foods to sell we'll choose the very best of local produce. We are just starting an organic vegetable box scheme and have installed a café area in the shop which gives us a chance to make delicious soups and other dishes from the produce we sell. Each week we find new

lines to stock, conscious that those living in Snitterfield are lucky enough to already have the best village shop and butcher for miles around, so we are trying to find different foods for everyone to try. If anyone asks us to find a particular line, we will always be pleased to search until we find it. And, of course, we'll continue to run our catering business, where we offer everything including perhaps a single dish for your dinner party (made in your own serving dish should you prefer), a business lunch or buffet, or a wedding reception or family celebration. We simply love good food and hope to share our passion with everyone. Do come and meet us at Medlars - perhaps pop in for a cup of coffee or a light bite at lunch time. And for the next few weeks, whilst we still have some, you can try a medlar – which is a very old fruit (grown here since Tudor times) eaten when bletted (that's very, very ripe!) or made into a jelly.

We look forward to meeting you.



24th December, 1949

WILL BE HEARD ROUND THE WORLD Carol on Ancient Handbells BBC Recording at Warwicks Farm

A charming little feature made by Midlands Region, for BBC overseas services, had been recorded at a farmhouse near Snitterfield for a Christmas Day broadcast tomorrow.

In the darkness a big black recording car from Birmingham travelled slowly along the winding lanes and through the open fields to a lone farm on a South Warwickshire hillside known as Lower Welcombe.

The microphone was taken into the low-ceilinged oak-beamed room of a centuries-old building, once the Home Farm of the Great Welcombe Estate and now occupied by Mr and Mrs V Bloxham and their grown-up sons and daughters.

Lamplight and Beams

No electricity or gas there; paraffin lamps light and help warm the rooms. Everything was ready for Christmas – the mince pies cooked in advance, the walls decorated and mistletoe pinned on the beams overhead. Placed in musical order on the parlour table were about 24 ancient handbells ready to do overtime during the next few days.

Sons and daughters of the Bloxham family, supplemented by friends, including a lorry driver, a factory worker and farm workers, and encouraged by the vicar, started a bell-ringing team during the war.

For the Villagers

To-night is practise, night. Each Christmas they go carolling with their handbells in other villages and in Stratford-on-Avon. In recent years they have raised money for the tower bells, the organ fund and for the lych gate of the historic church at Snitterfield. Next week they are giving an entertainment and taking part in a Nativity play.

Miss Gwen Bloxham told of their activities to David Martin and then "O Come All Ye Faithful" was recorded by engineer Stanley Unwin.

Tomorrow the notes of the old handbells will be heard in America and around the Empire. The Bloxhams themselves have several friends in Canada. To them the bells will be a reminder of the old country from the heart of England.

RICHARD BLOXHAM supplied these interesting reports about memorable events of the SNITTERFIELD HANDBELL RINGERS.

Over the years the ringers have raised over £16,000, have bought several items for the church, cases for the handbells, bell ropes, tables and desks and several more items. Richard stopped playing the handbells two years ago. Today the handbell ringers are still active and are available to play at events and enjoy performing in homes, adding greatly to the festive spirit at Christmas time. Contact Siat Vincent, telephone 01789 730272 to book them.

Stratford Herald 10th December, 1954

THEY FOUND HANDBELLS IN AN OLD CHEST AT SNITTERFIELD AND...

Walk along King's Lane, Snitterfield, in early December and you may fancy, as you hear the strains of 'The First Noel' and 'Good King Wenceslas' on the night air, that you have mistaken the calendar and after all Christmas is upon you.

Investigation will bring you, however, to the Snitterfield handbell ringers who start practises early and have already been busy for more than a month. For many of the inhabitants of Snitterfield and district, Christmas would not be the same without the sweet bells rung so dexterously by a team of seven. This year the team has two young recruits in Michael Rollins and James Sinclair, but four 'veterans' of the original ringers remain, together with William Tipler, who joined them three years ago. The 'veterans' are all members of the Bloxham family, Richard and Albert Bloxham, of Lower Welcombe Farm, and their sisters, Mrs D A Smith and Mrs L Kibblewhite. Mrs. Smith told the Herald something of the story behind the reputation the team has built up over a period of nine years.

"It all began in 1945," she said, "when funds were needed urgently for the church. In an old chest we found a set of 16 handbells, more than 70 years old, which had lain unused for many years. With the help of the Rev A Pelham-Burton, who was Vicar of Snitterfield at the time, we got a team together and learned the technique of ringing."

Encouraged by the present Vicar (Rev C P Newton) the team have gone from strength to strength and they now have a repertoire of 16 tunes which range from 'Drink to me only' and the 'British Grenadiers' to traditional carols. They have played by lamplight and candles in cottages as well as in large halls and hotels, but their first call of the Christmas season is always on Mrs Harborne, of Snitterfield, now in her ninetieth year, whose favourite tune 'The Londonderry Air' opens the recital at her home.

"Timing is everything in handbell ringing" explained Mr Dick Bloxham who at practises manages a pipe of tobacco at the same time as two handbells. Recruits soon realise the wisdom of his words and only a slight error of timing is needed to show the skill behind the apparently effortless ringing.

Many of the team's airs are the original ones arranged by the Rev Pelham-Burton, but their repertoire is gradually increasing through the industry of Mr Donald Smith, organist and choirmaster at St James's Church, who now does the scoring. He describes it as a slow process, because the melody, which must be within the compass of the bells, has to be transposed into a suitable key and the harmonising is often a process of trial and error.

Looking back over nine years of ringing, the four members of the Bloxham family have many memories and raised much for the church funds. Their enthusiasm is infectious and Bill Tipler summed up for the younger members of the team when he said, "There is a great satisfaction in handbell ringing. You just can't give it up."



BEST KEPT SECRET

A well known 'Petrol head' of Snitterfield writes: Did you know that Snitterfield has very close ties with the manufacture of motor cars and that many residents work in or around the Midlands car production plants? You only have to look around the Parish to find plenty of

lovingly restored vintage and post-vintage cars ranging from an early MG TD and MGB to Triumph TR 6, Austin Healey and E Type Jaguar. More recent finds were an Armstrong Sidley Sapphire in need of restoration, and a Citroen SM, one of only 350 brought into the UK. It's not surprising then to find the birth of a completely new car within the village. Three young entrepreneurs have over the last four years been designing and developing a new 'Street Car' for the

'Petrol heads' with an eye to something different, something which will catch your attention and make you feel 'I Want One'. The HOPPA is produced at the Glebe Farm Industrial Units in Wolverton road by The Fubar Factory Limited. This car has already won several design awards and been shown all over Europe, resulting in worldwide enquiries for manufacturing licences to produce this fun car. Back in 1957 Jaguar were also starting a new car development and the key engineer and Technical Director once lived in our village his car became the most desired sports car in the world – the E Type Jaguar – and to this day a much sort after collectors piece. 72,000 E Types were made so this will give our young entrepreneurs something to go at over the next 5 years. The new fun car can be seen regularly in School Road as it makes proving runs to the village stores and local hostellers. Now going into production following it's official launch in Stratford last month, you can view it on www.fubarfactory.co.uk. And here's a little taster. Recent development in the launch of the Hoppa will be seen on the BBC Top Gear programme, so look out for it in the next few weeks.



SNIPPETS FROM THE PAST...

Reading about the WI in the last issue prompted **Dorothy Ager** to write: I wonder how many people remember one WI Summer Supper which was held many years ago. Tickets were in great demand and over one hundred guests were catered for, with a menu of cold turkey, ham, salad and home-made bread from Mrs V Bainbridge. Eileen Chamberlain and Doreen Fairbrother (sadly no longer with us) cooked the turkey. Delicious desserts were made by WI members, including strawberries picked early that day from the fruit farm. Looking back we must have been very lucky as I do not remember it ever raining. After-dinner speakers included Rev Woodward Court and Martha Woodford (who played Mollie in *The Archers*), and on one occasion we had a lady from Coventry called the White Witch. After the talk the late Mr Ogg told her he "did not believe a word she had said" to which she replied "You'll be sorry you said that before the evening is out" – amazingly half an hour later the leg came away from his chair and he fell on the floor! He was not hurt and we all found it really hilarious. As a member of the WI for over 40 years – first at Welford-on Avon, and then here at Snitterfield – I must say we had some really good times. I was once persuaded to go to the Albert Hall as a delegate, I remember I was so worried as some people said I should wear a hat and others said not. I compromised in the end and took my hat in a bag, which turned out to be a good thing as when we all sat outside for our lunch break, a gale came from nowhere and hats were flying all over the place!

Mike Neville, from Jasmine House, knows much about its interesting past and its series of past owners. First records indicate that in 1888 it was part of RN Philip's estate, with gas supplied in 1912 by Lady Trevalayn for the tenants. In March 1930 RC Trevalayn sold the property to Thomas Place, who then sold it on in November to Katherine Cooke for £375. She also bought the garden from R Eborall in February 1931, with access for the tenants of Tudor House to obtain water from the well. In November 1954 the Cooke Bakery closed when GM Ivens (nee Cooke) sold it on to AJ Peppercorn for £2500. The Nevilles bought the property in 1959 and have lived there since then. In about 1959 Mike was digging in the garden and found hundreds of tiny hip flasks, unfortunately all broken. Mike asked a neighbour, Mr Woodward, who lived in Tudor House, if the house could possibly have been a pub. The answer was no, but he was told it was Mr Woodward's duty when, as a lad returning home from school, he had to visit one of the pubs and purchase a hip flask of whisky for Mrs Cooke, who consumed it in the early hours whilst baking, and then threw the empty flask out into the garden.

If you have an interesting story to tell about your house, people or places in the village, please drop us a line or email (as a word.doc) to studio@smart-works.co.uk. Photographs are useful and would be returned once scanned.



TENNIS ELBOW

Snitterfield Tennis Club held its inaugural dinner at the Sports Club on Saturday 13 November.

Elbows were put to good use when they were raised in celebration of the gathering and at the presenting of trophies to deserving members. It is also appropriate that Bill Parnham should be remembered here, as Ken Chatland remarked during the award ceremony "had it not been for Bill's foresight and tenacity in the early days the Club would not have achieved as much as it has".

Pictured here are some of the guests enjoying the evening, the Snitterfield Tennis Club Trophies, including the Parnham Cup, and LTA coach Rolf Neilson presenting the Junior Trophy to Tom Griffiths.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS! Advice from Trading Standards

How to deal with doorstep sellers – It can be convenient to buy on the doorstep - but you can be pressured into buying something you do not want or that is not good value for money by a salesperson using clever selling tactics. If this happens you are not always protected by the law. The Office of Fair Trading has produced a new leaflet called **Your doorstep, your decision**, which describes some of these psychological tactics and gives advice on how to deal with them. It also tells you your legal rights. If you would like a copy of this booklet please contact Trading Standards at the address below. Alternatively, it can be viewed on the OFT website <http://www.of.gov.uk/Consumer/Doorstep+selling>.

For more advice on problems with shopping or buying services, contact: Trading Standards Advice Line, Old Budbrooke Road, Warwick CV35 7DP

tel: 01926 414000 or email ts-advice@warwickshire.gov.uk

LOCAL EVENT

There is a sale of ex chainstore Ladies new clothes from 10 - 4pm on Wednesday 5 January at Bearley Village Hall and on Friday 7 January at Aston Cantlow Village Hall.



SNIPER'S CORNER

Come on - think of others!
Walking through the village during a heavy downpour which was lasting all day, I was horrified to see that leaves had been deliberately swept from the front of houses into the gutter and over the drain covers thus blocking off any drainage and causing problems.
I cannot believe people can be so thoughtless - have they forgotten the horrific consequences many of us suffered as a result of the 98 flood!

From an uncomprehending villager

