



Pub openings

The Red House at Marsh Benham re-opened in November, with new tenants offering Cask Marque ales, lunch and dinner Mondays to Saturdays, and a Sunday lunch roast. Meanwhile the Craven Arms suffered an unscheduled opening of the gents lavatory when a passing lorry took off some corner brickwork.



Church tower repairs on track



Restoration of the brickwork on the seveneenth-century tower of St Mary's church has continued steadily despite the adverse weather, which at one point brought down some of the scaffolding. Church Conservation, the company carrying out the work, expects to finish at the end of January, but no corners will be cut, and if more time is required it will be taken to ensure a lasting result.

The site was visited on 27 November by the archdeacon of Berkshire, Norman Russell, the architect, members of the parochial church council and the builders.

The parochial church council wishes to thank all those who contributed food, drink and auction items for the harvest supper in October, and also those who generously bought the auction items. Almost £1,300 was raised on the night for church funds.

VILLAGE CAROL SINGING

Tue 22nd December
meet 7pm
at Chapel Corner post box
in brightly-coloured clothes & with torches
more details from 01488 658817
<sarahward1000@hotmail.com>

GARDEN SOCIETY

Christmas meeting at the village hall
7.30pm Wednesday 9th December
talk/demo on making Christmas decorations
mulled wine, mince pies & raffle
join or renew 2010 subscriptions
Dawn Taylor 01635 32006 or Penelope Lake 01635 48701

Art on the wild side

Local wildlife artists Angela French and Jonathan Pointer have their first joint exhibition at Thatcham Nature Discovery Centre from 26 February until 28 March 2010, with a private view on the afternoon/evening of Friday 26 February.

Jon grew up in Hamstead Marshall, where his parents still live, and has exhibited his work regularly all over the UK and abroad. At Thatcham he and his wife Angela will be showing original drawings, linocuts and prints inspired by the Hamstead Marshall area.

For more information see <www.pointer-wildlife-art.co.uk>.



Spring Pheasant 20 x 27in oil on canvas

News stories from the *Hamstead Hornet* are posted and updated on www.hamsteadmarshall.net which also carries detailed information about the village.

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Hamstead Hornet



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Will it work?

Six accidents in nine weeks at Chapel Corner, and some relentless lobbying from the Parish Plan Steering Group, have prompted West Berkshire Council to paint white lines for about 30 metres before and after the junction in the hopes of alerting drivers to the hazard.

The Parish Plan Steering Group has also asked for the VAS between Ash Tree Corner and the Craven Arms to be moved to this accident blackspot, where it might be more effective. No answer has been given on this, but seven reflective marker posts have been promised. The siting of these appears to be planned for

A chapter of accidents

Friday 6 November around 7pm

A car misjudged the corner and **dived nose first into the hedge**. The driver claimed to have skidded on leaves, but none were to be seen in the road. Skidmarks on the verge suggest that the car simply failed to make the turn.

Tuesday 27 October, mid-morning

A speeding motorist misjudged the corner and **rammed another parked car** (owned by the same household as 11 October incident). The incident was caught on video.

Sunday 11 October

A white car **hit and damaged a resident's parked car**. This collision was also caught on video.

Thursday 3 September

A white van speeding around the corner **rammed a 4WD** parked on the other side of the road. Unlike most of the offenders this driver left his details through the nearest letterbox.

Sunday 30 August

Early morning a blue Vauxhall was found **abandoned in the hedge, which it had damaged**, close to the 29 August damage. The car was photographed and its number was taken, before being removed later in the morning.

Saturday 29 August

A Nissan left the road just east of the corner and **damaged the hedge**. A resident obtained the car number.

See inside for information on the part you can play in making traffic respect the village speed limit.



Why now?

Chapel Corner residents have long been accustomed to cars from the Kintbury direction occasionally taking the corner too fast and leaving the road. Such incidents occur about once or twice a year, without (so far) serious injury or much attention from the authorities. However the recent spate is exceptional, and highways experts are at a loss to explain it. Several explanations have been suggested and discounted: **The road surface quality has been checked, and found to be within standard.**

It isn't a matter of night visibility several accidents have been in daylight.

The corner hasn't become a noted challenge for local boy racers the drivers aren't (all) crazy youngsters. Nor is it down to the recent extension of the speed limit which, contrary to local assumption, was implemented only on the eastern side of the Kintbury Road. The western boundary of the 30mph zone is still signed just east of Barr's Farm, less than 250 yards from Chapel Corner.

What's on December 2009 - March 2010

18.00 Sun 6 Dec	Christingle at St Mary's Church	<www.hamsteadmarshall.net/church/admin>
20.00 Sun 6 Dec	White Hart quiz £2 per person – all proceeds to charity	01488 658201
19.30 Wed 9 Dec	Garden Society talk on Christmas wreaths and decorations at village hall	Dawn Taylor 01635 32006 Penelope Lake 01635 48701
19.30-21.30 Thu 10 Dec	Circle of Friends (ladies' group) in village hall	Sue Watts 01488 658932
10.00-13.00 Sat 11 Dec	Community Christmas Market in village hall - local produce & refreshments	Sue 01488 658932 Lanie 01488 658168
19.00 Tue 22 Dec	carol singing: meet at Chapel Corner	Sarah Ward 01488 658817 <sarahward1000@hotmail.com>
09.45 Fri 25 Dec	Christmas Day service at St Mary's Church	<www.hamsteadmarshall.net/church/admin>
20.00 Sun 3 Jan	White Hart quiz £2 per person - all for charity	01488 658201
19.30-21.30 Thu 7 Jan	Circle of Friends (ladies' group) in village hall	Sue Watts 01488 658932
10.00-13.00 Sat 9 Jan	Community Market in village hall local produce & refreshments	Lanie 01488 658168
19.30-21.30 Thu 4 Feb	Circle of Friends (ladies' group) in village hall	Sue Watts 01488 658932
20.00 Sun 7 Feb	White Hart quiz £2 per person - all for charity	01488 658201
10.00-13.00 Sat 13 Feb	Community Market in village hall local produce & refreshments	Sue 01488 658932 Lanie 01488 658168
19.30-21.30 Thu 4 Mar	Circle of Friends (ladies' group) in village hall	Sue Watts 01488 658932
20.00 Sun 7 Mar	White Hart quiz £2 per person - all for charity	01488 658201
10.00-13.00 Sat 13 Mar	Community Market in village hall local produce & refreshments	Sue 01488 658932 Lanie 01488 658168
10.00-11.30 Weds termtime	yoga classes	Inga Craven 01488 658744
13.30-16.00 Mons termtime	oil painting classes for beginners & improvers	Newbury College 01635 42824
weekdays termtime	Little Sunflowers nursery school	Teresa 01635 253201 Trudy 01635 255363

Boot up for Spring walking

Two leaflets detailing walks within the parish have been compiled and produced by the Village Information Group, a sub-committee of the Parish Plan Steering Group.

Each leaflet describes two walks of between three and four miles, which can be combined as a figure-of-eight walk for those who want to stretch themselves. One of the figures of eight centres upon the White Hart/Elm Farm area, the other on Hamstead Mill. The walks are all on public rights of way, mostly off-road, taking in the best of the village scenery and points of historic interest.

Printing of the leaflets has been funded by the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Copies will be delivered to every household in the village early next year, and further supplies will be available from key points in the village such as the White Hart, the Dogs Trust, the village hall, and the church porch.

The leaflets may also be used as the basis for a village event next spring, in conjunction with Countryside 2010 <www.countryside2010.org.UK>. The event would probably be a guided walk ending with afternoon tea at the village hall.

Planning applications

as detailed on the WBC planning website 1 December 2009

An application filed 5 October for amendments to the previously approved application for **Holtwood House** is pending consideration.

Holtwood Farm s 4 November application for a hay and straw barn demonstrates that the Village Design Statement is already being invoked: an objection is noted *on grounds of impact on the AONB supported by Hamstead Marshall Design Statement and belief that there is insufficient information re agricultural justification for such a large building...* Further application is required.

Irish Hill House has obtained approval for a two-storey extension, car port and new access.

Approval has been given to the rear extension at **no 24 Chapel Corner**.

The **Morewood** horse-walker application was approved on 2 November. The parish council had expressed concern about potential traffic increase, but council officers consider these fears to be unfounded.

The decision on **Rickety Gate Farm** s application for poultry houses and runs is pending, following a site visit and the parish council s strong reservations with regard to waste management. The highways department of WBC wants more information with regard to the proposed open days which might be held in the future.

<www.rightmove.co.UK> listed no houses for sale in the village on 1 December. Jones Robinson is offering Knowle House at Chapel Corner to let from January at £1,250 pcm.

Community Speed Watch

If you are fed up with drivers ignoring the village speed limit you can now take an active part in bringing them to book. Robin Tandy is gathering volunteers to join in him operating a police initiative called Community Speed Watch, in which villagers will work in conjunction with the police recording the registration numbers of cars which speed through the village. Offenders will then receive a warning letter from Thames Valley Police. The database will identify repeat offenders within the TVP area, and they may eventually face prosecution.

The Hamstead scheme, which is part of the Parish Plan, requires a minimum of six volunteers, who must be over 18 years of age. Training will be given, and all will be issued with high visibility jackets and roadside signs. Speed checks will be arranged on a random basis at different times of the day and month, and they are not expected to be very time-consuming. If you would like to take part please contact Robin Tandy on 01488 658048 or <randptandy@googlemail.com>.

ORC offers to share its expertise in veg gardening

With its rebuilding programme now completed, the Organic Research Centre (ORC) at Elm Farm is planning to re-establish its vegetable garden, and alongside this is hoping to offer to local families, and particularly young people, the opportunity to develop their knowledge of food growing.

The centre is seeking local opinion as to what form this might take. Your suggestions would be welcome, and should be sent to <info@organicresearchcentre.com>. A small ORC desk calendar will be sent to anyone who emails before Christmas.

The ORC has wide experience in such schemes, and continued to run horticultural science projects for schools, even whilst the vegetable garden was severely disrupted by building work.

News in brief

Anne Budd is no longer the bookings contact for the village hall. Enquiries and bookings should now be directed to Sue Watts.

How would you feel if the village hall recreation field were to be renamed the village green? This could make it eligible for grant money. If you have a view let Sue Watts know.

<soosy.watts@gmail.com>

Usually there isn't a Community Market in January, but this year a

small one is planned.

Sue Watts 2009 ballet outing attracted 32 to see the Ballet Russe perform The Nutcracker at the Arlington Arts Centre. This is likely to become a regular yearly event.

The parish council continues to pursue the matter of security lighting at Ash Tree Grove. At the request of the village hall committee the PC will also ask WBC to empty the dog waste bin at the recreation field more frequently.

<www.hamsteadmarshall.net> has had a makeover

See the **noticeboard**, updated regularly with village news, the new **gallery** of local photos, the **wildlife page** to which all are invited to contribute sighting reports, easier downloading of **Craven Country** and the **village gazetteer**. And now the whole site can be searched with its **own Google search engine**.