

The Villager

The community magazine for the parishes of Martley and Wichenford

Volume 13 No. 9

February 2004

Editor: Michelle Higgins (01886 888344)
Editorial Team: *Martley:* Alan Boon (01886 888527, Nellie Bradley (01886 888339), Kate King (01886 888439), Beth Williams (01886 888273) *Wichenford:* Janet Andrews (01886 888303), Sheila Richards (01886 888378)
Advertising: Neil Stammers (01886 888513)
Distribution: *Martley* George & June Lawrence (01886 821064) *Wichenford* Bill & Jo Root (01886 888585)

Contact The Villager: leave articles at Martley Post Office or 1 Oxford View Wichenford or email the Editor at editor@martley.org.uk

Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of The Villager. The Villager cannot be held responsible for any goods or services advertised in the magazine

Diary

Regular events:

Teme Valley Shufflers Line Dancing

Weds 7pm Martley Memorial Hall.

Enquiries: Jeff and Thelma 01886 821772

Citizens Advice Bureau Teme Valley

Telephone Service Mon & Tue 10am—3pm

Thu 10am—7.30pm 01584 810860

Great Witley & Knightwick Surgeries Weds

10am -4pm - by appt. Tel. 01584 810860

Short mat Bowling Tuesdays 2.30pm

Martley Memorial Hall

Weight Watchers Tue 6.30pm

Martley Memorial Hall

Enquiries Tracey Hopkins 07710 493 617

For Church services, please see Church Words

- Mon 2 **Candlemas**
Martley Parish Council Meeting
8pm Memorial Hall
- Sat 7 **Quiz Night with John Harwood**
7.30pm Wichenford memorial Hall
- Sun 8 **Teme Valley Farmers Market for local produce** 11am The Talbot, Knightwick
Martley Ramblers to Cleobury Mortimer. Meet 1pm Church car park
- Wed 11 **Martley WI: Margaret Cooper talks about Remarkable Worcestershire Women** 7.30pm Martley Memorial Hall
Wichenford Local Heritage Group: Lecture by Robin Jackson
- Sat 14 **St Valentine's Day**
- Mon 16 **School half term** until 20 February
Kenswick and Wichenford Parish Council Meeting 7.45pm Wichenford Memorial Hall
- Tue 17 **Wichenford Ladies' Fellowship**
2.30pm at the home of Pam Webb
- Thu 19 **Meeting of The Wine Club: French Regional Wines** 8pm Wichenford Memorial Hall
- Tue 24 **Shrove Tuesday**
- Wed 25 **Ash Wednesday**
- Thu 26 **Martley & District Horticultural Society:** Gareth Lowe talks on Wild Life and Wild Flowers of Bulgaria 7.30pm Martley Memorial Village Hall

Also see the Diary page on
www.martley.org.uk

Articles to go in The Villager must be with the Editor by the 1st of the previous month

OUT AND ABOUT IN MARTLEY

Visit our website—www.martley.org.uk

Martley Parish Council

An ordinary meeting of the Martley Parish Council was held on Monday 1 December 2003 at the Memorial Hall. Mr. D. Cropp, Chairman.

The Chairman introduced Mr. Alan Saunders who had been invited to brief the Parish Council on the subject of Affordable Housing. Mr. Saunders distributed copies of maps showing the six likely areas for development in Martley. He said that the Local Plan will be out for consultation in January 2004 and that nothing has been allocated in the rural areas for normal housing development. Councillors commented on the relative merits of the six sites on the map and a consensus reached that area six on the plan, land near the existing Hasting Close development, was the most suitable. Development in this area will, of course, be subject the land being acquired and a site survey. The Chairman thought that any development should be coherent with the existing. Mr. Saunders thought that there would be 10 -12 houses which could be available within two years. The development would be managed by The Worcestershire Housing Association. The Chairman stated that an open meeting would be arranged when the land acquisition had progressed sufficiently.

Matters Arising

It was decided to take item 5b (appointment of Clerk) after the meeting, it being a staff appointment and thus confidential.

The Clerk distributed a list of dates for the meeting in 2004 for comment. The meeting agreed to the dates. They will be distributed with copies of these minutes and displayed on the notice board.

The Clerk read out a letter from WCC Highways ref. the future use of a Lengthman. WCC will provide a budget of £100,000 to be divided amongst all parishes wishing to use a Lengthman. If all took up the offer then the amount allocated to Martley would be less than half the amount we are currently using. This would result in the Lengthman's hours being cut to less than half. It was agreed that Martley PC would bid for the same amount of funding currently being provided.

The Clerk reported that several complaints had been received about the large hoarding and external lighting at Heaton House. It was agreed that the Clerk should write to Malvern Hills DC and draw their attention to the fact that no planning permission had been received for the hoarding. It was acknowledged that some signing was to be expected, but

the very large structure now in place was too much. The external security lighting now stays on all night much to the annoyance of the resident nearby. It is assumed that the lighting is for security purposes. The Clerk to suggest to MHDC that the level of lighting be reduced after midnight.

Parish Matters

Mr. J. Bradley reported that there had been two “near misses” at the bend outside Hope House Farm. The visibility is poor for oncoming traffic from both directions. The Clerk to write to WCC Highways requesting an inspection and report.

County Councillor’s Report

Mr. A. Davies had offered his apologies so no report was available District Councillor’s Report

Mrs. B. Williams reported that she had attended an all-day training session on “Management Structure” recently. The Heaton House refurbishment scheme is on schedule. The Local Plan will be available for public consultation in January 2004. There do not seem to be any changes that affect Martley.

Parish Footpath Officer’s Report

Mr. Nicklin reported that the bridge on FP 59 had been replaced and the “Path-or-Nones” seat on the ridge above Rodge Hill Farm has been repaired.

Planning

Received: a. 03/01676/FUL The Wain House; no objection subject to the flue is for the main house and not for any change of use of the garage; b. 03/01712/FUL Millennium Green

notice board. A letter received from MHDC Planning informing that no permission is required. The Clerk to write reclaiming the fees paid; c. 03/01786/FUL 9 Mortlake Drive – new plans received. Granted: a. 03/01604/FUL Hope House Farm; b. 03/01503/CLE Treetops Bungalow. Refused: a. 03/01636/FUL Ankers Hipplecote. Withdrawn: a. 03/01218/FUL Land at (OS 7558 5996) Worcester Road.

Finance

There were four cheques totalling £718.90 for agreement and signature: Income Nov 03: £8665.83.

Correspondence

Macmillan Cancer Relief; Regional Action West Midlands; Bank of Ireland—response to change of Clerk; d MHDC—Better Care—leaflets; WCC Rural Transport Partnership – Letter; WCC Fruit trees for Worcestershire 2003/4 – letter; Rail Passengers Committee –letter; MHDC Standards Committee Mtg. 3 Dec; copy letter WCC Malvern Hills Partnership ref Mr Bruen Hipplecote; MHDC Chantry High School Public Entertainments license; CPRE Newsletter; Malvern Hills Area Committee; Freedom of Information Act; Data Protection Act; MHDC Mr. A Saunders affordable Housing – Clerk’s letter; Shanks Waste Management Footpaths – Clerk’s letter.

Councillors Reports and Future Agenda Items

The Chairman suggested that the

format for the annual parish meeting could be to invite all village organisations to exhibit in the Memorial Hall; offering a chance for all to meet and partake of light refreshment. The Parish Meeting would then take place during or after. The councillors agreed and suggested that this should take place in April or May. Mrs. E. Randall said that parking along Barbers Lane was a problem on days when parents brought their children to play sports. The cars would be better parked on the fields. Mr. N. Stammers drew the attention of the Lengthman to plastic netting around a pole in Horn Lane. The Lengthman to investigate and remove if possible. Mr G. Coomby-Jones enquired the progress with the Best Village Award. The Chairman reported he and Mr. Bradley would be travelling to London on 9th Dec for the ceremony and “our fate” would be known then. Mrs. D. Goodyear drew attention to rubbish on the lay-by Hillside. The Lengthman to investigate. Mr. G. Taylor said the bottle bank is full. The Clerk to notify MHDC. The Chairman drew attention to “Vision 21” the Local Strategic Partnership. He had also at the meeting seen the area from Shropshire to Gloucestershire now designated as a “Geopark”; an area of outstanding geological diversity. Vision 21 will be

looking to provide villages with a variety of facilities over the next two years; we may be asked to participate. The Chairman thought that Martley should offer young people a chance to “have their say” at the Annual Meeting and perhaps form a “Youth Council”; Councillors agreed.

The next meeting is on Monday 5 January 2004.

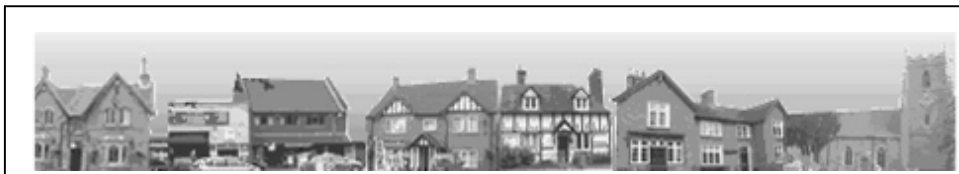
The chairman thanked all for their support throughout the year and wished them all a very Happy Christmas..

Tom Pearsall, Clerk

Village of the Year

December 9th - Decision Day! Jack Bradley and I made our way to the Millennium Mayfair Hotel in Grosvenor Square London, with a sense of hope, albeit faint. Jack stepped out of the taxi to be met by the top-hatted doorman, as I stepped out onto a drain and to meet the hand of the taxi driver.

Once in the foyer, packed with people who seemed to know each other very well, we were soon caught up in the crowd, Jack being singled out by one of the regional judges, Anne - what after-shave was he wearing?! And where can you buy it! With programme and Calor freebies we all



made our way into dinner.

The Ballroom of the hotel had been decked out as a dining area for 300 people -from villages up and down the country, guests, MP's, and Calor executives. Along one wall was a multi-screen, floor to ceiling, green logo, and "Calor Village of the Year". We landed up on Table 22 at the back of the room, which did not seem to be a cause for optimism, with two judges, two Calor executives,

“At that point I could not in my wildest dreams predict what in fact happened next.”

and six village representatives. But after pleasant company and two courses of salmon, and then duck, at least we felt we could enjoy the occasion, if nothing else. Waiters at hand did everything in white gloved cossetting to make you feel "honoured" - almost to the point of eating and drinking for you. Because the Sunday Times had "broken ranks" on the press embargo, we already knew part of our fate - not to be an overall regional winner.

The first series of awards began with the North of England then moved down region-by-region until at last South and South-Western England began to be announced - the final region to be decided. Here we were in a show-down with Herefordshire (Leintwardine), Gloucestershire, Avon, Somerset, Devon, and Cornwall. Categories based on the Community, Business, and Services

for Young People went past. There were only two more to go to the finish. At that point I could not in my wildest dreams predict what in fact happened next.

On the wall screen, at the same moment the announcer spoke – Martley appeared as winner of two categories: the Environment, and for Services for Older People. Lights and cameras swung on to us, as Jack and I - more like startled rabbits in the headlights - stood up and to applause went forward to receive the two plaques from

Alan Titchmarsh - all visible on the giant TV screen.

Words of congratulation came from Alan as photographers pushed us into place.



Returning to our seats - to a sense of total amazement and delight - we had only just had time to relax before in a few minutes we saw and heard our village again, awarded as a Category winner for ICT in Rural Communities, and hearing the specific judge from The University of Warwick say that ours was by far the best national entry she had seen. I can't remember too much after that, individual photos with Alan Titchmarsh to bring home, a bizarre underground journey clutching our trophies, a drive back up the M40 with increasing amounts of fog but finally arriving back in the very place

we had celebrated all day - Martley. My memory still is focussed on that moment, that second, when I saw Martley's name appear on the winners' screen and heard our village name called out. In total there were 36 prizes awarded nationally, Martley won three of them, the only village to take three awards. In total 1,200 villages had started out on the original quest to be Village of the Year, and here we were on our first year of entry winning the Worcestershire County Prize, and three Regional Category Prizes.

My abiding thoughts are that it was such an experience to have Martley recognised and valued both on a local, regional, and national level. We know our village has deep and rich qualities about it but being able to celebrate it in such a large company of people in London made it so wonderful. Now we in Martley have our year as Worcestershire Village of the Year 2003-4, and Regional Category Winners.

Dave Cropp



Martley WI

**Wednesday 11 February 2004
7.30pm**

We are still having a few chuckles over our December meeting. It was lovely to see so many friends who came to enjoy it with us. Any rumours circulating about missing underwear and trousers are monstrous lies. All

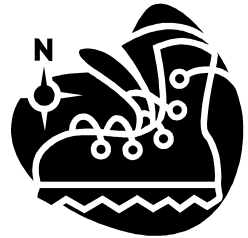
items were found or returned almost immediately. Over £20 was raised for Acorns Hospice by the sale of the mystery jam jars and the proceeds of the Red and Green table will be for ACWW. This month Mrs Margaret Cooper will be telling us about some remarkable women from Worcestershire's past.

Kate King

Martley Ramblers

Sunday 8 February 1pm

Now boots are getting supple again after the Christmas break and the local walk in January, come a little further afield to Cleobury Mortimer. Jenny Underhill and followers will be leaving Church car park at 1pm promptly.



Kate King

Welcome

Welcome to newcomers Arthur and Coralie Fidoe who have recently moved to Wants Green from St Johns, Worcester.

Martley & District Horticultural Society

The last event for Society members in 2003 was the Annual Dinner held in Martley Village Hall. The excellent

meal was prepared and served by Pat Finch and Ruby Williams who were ably assisted by Society members. During the evening gift tokens were presented to Jack and Nellie Bradley, Barbara Kirby, Judith O'Leary, Sylvia Jeffries and Rena Davidson in appreciation for all their help during the past year. To end a most enjoyable evening, the Rev David Sherwin led everyone in a seasonal 'sing-along'. At the monthly meeting on Thursday 26 February at 7.30pm in Martley Village Hall the guest speaker will be Garth Lowe - his subject "The Wild Life and Wild Flowers of Bulgaria". Garth returns with more stunning slides.

Spring Flower Show

On Saturday 27 March at 2pm in Martley Village Hall there will be a Spring Flower Show. Details will be in the March issue of The Villager.

Did You Know?

Did you know? - The Parish Council meets every month, usually the first Monday in the Village Memorial Hall

Did you know? - Anyone can attend

Did you know? - The Parish Council values your viewpoint.

Did you know? - You can raise your own ideas and concerns under "Parish Matters".



Martley Bellringers

With the end of 2003 and the start of 2004 celebrated in traditional style, hosted by Jan and John Haydon with a "Pies and Puddings" evening, before ringing in the New Year, we now go into 2004 with some anticipation.

Could this be the year that the first "home" quarter peal is rung? That is, all the six rings are "Martley - ites".

Could this be the year that we begin to get the hang of a ringing method called – and this is genuine! - "Prickley Green", and named after our P.G. along Horn Lane.

Could this be the year that we get to complete our third consecutive

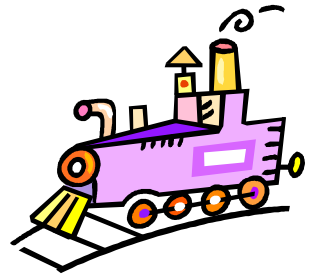
"Ringing Rails" visit.

After The Severn Valley, and the North Somerset

line, this year we are going to enjoy, and ring,

"The Watercress Line" in Hampshire (with strawberry cream teas on the train on the way) between Alresford and Alton. Also we hope to have a day "Ringing Cromwell's Churches" in Huntingdon.

If you fancy a try, why not join us and see what goes on. Most Friday evenings from about 8pm we practice ring at Martley.



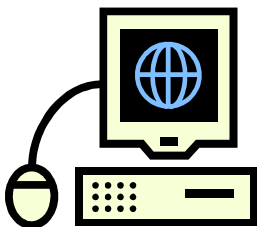
Dave Cropp

Are you a “Silver Surfer?”

No, not a shiny super-hero whose exploits were recorded in American comics of the 1950s, but a silver-haired Internet user!

Help is available for any pensioner who needs advise or help with their computer problems, particularly if you need help to access the Martley website (www.martley.org.uk).

The Martley Online Committee would also be interested to find out how many older users locally use the Internet and e-mail. For assistance or just to make contact, please email help@martley.org.uk or call John Layton on 01886 888460 if your email skills are not quite up to scratch!



Broadband Update

It is planned to hold a meeting of the Broadband group in Martley Village Hall either on Friday the 13 or the 20 February. This has to be confirmed first and the Wireless broadband people contacted to make sure they can attend on one of those dates. Further details will be published on www.martley.org.uk when the date has been confirmed.

There is a lot of work going on behind the scenes, thanks to two or three key

players, to maintain constant dialogue with the providers of both broadband and the Orange phone mast, to increase Martley’s communications options. Be assured that lack of progress is not an indicator of apathy—setting up new communications options involves a lot of “paperwork” and all that takes time.

Michelle Higgins

Martley Spurs

The Spurs have not made much progress towards climbing the league tables in the first part of the season but are hoping to do better in the second. December saw the Sunday Premier side beat Perrywood on the 7th when Chris Collins netted the only goal in the match. The Reserves, however, lost to Droitwich Reserves even though Steve Bartlett netted a pair. Saturday the 13th got the Premier eleven a two all draw with Hallow WMC. The next day the Reserves beat All Blacks 4 - 1 in their away game. Just before Christmas the Saturday Premier side managed to get a further point when they drew three all with Tolladine Sports. The Sunday sides had a dreadful morning when the Sunday Premier eleven succumbed 3 - 2 to Archdales and the Reserves buckled under losing 6 - 1 to Bransford Rovers.

A very enjoyable evening was had at the Crown on Sunday 21st when the annual Christmas raffle was drawn. All the available tickets were sold and

the first prize of £100.00 was won by Harry Jones of Broadheath.

A quiz was held to replace the Christmas bingo, fourteen teams took part and the quiz was won by Phil Taylor's team who very kindly donated £10.00 of their winnings to our funds. There was also a further 'on the spot' raffle, Neville Jones winning the enormous box of chocolates which was the first prize. The Club's social side ladies are extremely grateful to Andy and Mandy for their help in organizing the evening together with Aaron from the Crown. Our thanks go to all those kind people who donated prizes and helped to raise about £500.00 towards the Club funds. Thanks also go to Trevor Keegan for his donation of two very necessary footballs.

Beth Williams

Remember Lusty's?

Those who have lived in Martley for some time might remember Lusty's. One of the members of the Martley website committee has been corresponding with Geoffrey Lusty with a view to getting together some information that can be put onto our website. He wrote: "Dear John, yes, I was working in the plant in London and moved up to Martley in 1961 to run the operation there ... If you want some history I will know quite a bit. We now make it [the furniture] all in Vietnam and China. Best regards, Geoffrey Lusty."

If you have any memories of Lusty's that you would like to share, please email webmaster@martely.org.uk or you can leave material at Martley Post Office for the Editor of The Villager who will pass it on to the right person.

Michelle Higgins

Sheepdog Trials

7 March 2004 will see some of the finest sheepdogs and handlers in the UK competing in the 2004 Worcester Sheepdog Trials, to be held at Northington Farm by courtesy of pedigree Charollais sheep breeder Geoff Probert.

The trials have been organised by Kings Green sheepdog trials enthusiasts Andy Nickless and Gill Watson and are likely to be very well attended. This is an open trial, meaning that points gained by the leading dogs count towards qualification for national teams. Trial 1 will start at 8am, then all the remaining entries will take part in Trial 2. Dogs run approximately three hundred yards (outrun) to collect (lift) their group of sheep. They will then bring the sheep (fetch) through the fetch gates to the handler, who remains at his post. The dog then takes the sheep around the back of the handler before driving them about one hundred yards to pass through the first drive gate, then the dog turns the

(Continued on page 26)



Over the Garden Wall in Wichenford

WICHENFORD NEEDS YOUR NEWS

Altar Flowers for February 2004

8 February - Mrs A Smith
15 February - Mrs A Smith
22 February - Mrs Randall
29 February - No Service



Janet Andrews
01886 888303
Sheila Richards
01886 888378

Phone your Wichenford news to Janet or Sheila or leave articles at Martley Post Office or 1 Oxford View Wichenford

Ladies' Fellowship

By the time this report is read Christmas will be just a memory, but to those who attended our Christmas party in the Memorial Hall it will be a happy one.

We gathered round a festive table to sing carols, accompanied by Rev David Sherwin on this guitar. Members brought seasonal readings for us to enjoy. Rev Jennifer Whittaker was welcomed, also Mr & Mrs George Lawrence and Maurice our Church organist. We all did justice to a lovely tea provided by members.

Our next meeting is at 2.30pm on Tuesday 17 February at the home of Mrs Webb.

Wichenford Whist Drive

The Christmas Partner Whist Drive was very well supported, with twelve

and a half tables in play. The hall had been tastefully decorated creating a festive atmosphere. There were many excellent prizes to be won, and we do thank the Hall Management Committee members and the Parish Council members for their generous donation of these prizes.

Appreciation also goes to everyone who provided mince pies towards the refreshments.

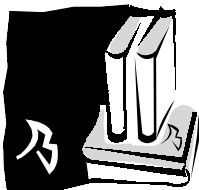
We wish everyone a Happy New Year, and will welcome players to the February, March and April Partner Whist Drives in the Memorial Hall.



Reading Group

Would anyone be interested in being part of a very informal reading group, meeting, say, once a month to talk about a pre selected enjoyable book or occasional film?

If you think you might be interested, please call Jean on 01886 888122.



Wichenford 100 Club

Christmas winner Sharon Clay. Ticket no. 171. £110.

Millennium Green Tidying & Inspection Rota

February: Georgina Britten Long

Quiz Night

Saturday 7 February at 7.30pm

Mr John Harwood, who gave us such enjoyable quiz nights in 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 has agreed to prepare and present the Quiz Night again this year. It is to be held on Saturday 7 February at 7.30pm for 7.45pm in Wichenford Memorial Hall, £3.50 per head for a table of four. There will be a raffle and blockbuster.

Please bring your friends and family to enjoy a fun evening and help to raise funds for the Village Hall.

To book your tables now, ring 01886-888214 or 01886-888368.

Payment may also be made at the door. There will also be a bar and refreshments available.

Smiling

Smiling is infectious
You catch it like the 'flu.
When someone smiled at me
today,
I started smiling too.
I passed around the corner
And someone saw my grin.
When he smiled, I realised
I'd passed it on to him.
I thought about the smile,
Then realised its worth,
A single smile like mine
Could travel round the
earth.
If you feel a smile begin,
Don't leave it undetected,
Let's start an epidemic
quick,
And get the world infected.

Have you got A.A.A.D.D?

I think we all know someone with this problem! I went to the Doctor yesterday and have been diagnosed with A.A.A.D.D. (Age Activated Attention Deficit Disorder).

This is how it manifests: I need to wash my car. As I start toward the garage, I notice that there is mail on the hall table. I decide to go through the mail before washing the car. I put my car keys down on the table, put the junk mail in the bin under the table, and notice that it is full. So, I decide to put the bills back on the table to take out the bin first. But then I say to myself, since I'm going to heading of the direction of the post box when I take out the bin anyway, I might as well pay the bills first. I take my cheque book off the table, and see that there is only one cheque left. My extra cheques are in my desk in the study, so I go to my desk where I find a can of pop that I had been drinking. I'm about to look for my cheques, but first I need to push the pop aside so that I wouldn't accidentally knock it over. I notice that the pop is getting warm, so I decide that I should put it in the refrigerator to keep it cold. I head towards the kitchen with the can.



A vase of flowers on the work-top catches my eye - they needed to be watered. As I put the can down on the work-top, I notice my reading glasses which I've been searching for all morning. I decide I had better take them back to my desk, but first I must water the flowers. I put the glasses back down on the work-top, fill a container with water when suddenly I spot the TV remote. Someone had left it on the kitchen table. I realise that tonight, when we go to watch TV, we will be looking for the remote, but nobody will remember that it's on the kitchen table, so I decide to take it back to the sitting-room where it belongs, but first I must water the flowers. I splash some water on the flowers, but most of it spills on the floor. So, I put the remote back down on the table, to get a cloth to wipe up the spill. Then I head down the hall trying to remember why I'm going that way and what I was planning to do.

Now, it's the end of the day; the car isn't washed, the bills aren't paid, there is a warm can of pop sitting on the work-top, the flowers aren't watered, there is still only one cheque in my cheque book, I can't find the TV remote, I can't find my glasses, and I don't remember what I did with the car keys. I try to figure out why nothing got done today.

I'm really baffled because I know I was busy all day long and now I'm really tired. I realise this is a serious problem, and I'll try to get some help for it, but first I'll check my e-mail. Do me a favour, will you? Pass on this message to everyone you know, because I don't remember to whom it has been sent.

Submitted by AH

Catalogue - A Life With Cats

It's that time of year again.... you know, the time of year that drives folk to make over-ambitious promises, vowing to their nearest and dearest that "this year things are going to be different." I have to admit that I am one of these sad, misguided souls, enthralled at the cusp of a New Year to turn over a new leaf, take control of my life, my ever-increasing waistline and not be at the beck and call of my furry family. Don't get me wrong. I adore my five cats (and one dog) but there are moments when I give way to the fantasy of a dog and cat-free household.

Fellow animal-owners will empathise here. There would be no vast drifts of hair, floors that I vacuumed yesterday would still retain that pristine look. (I have considered spraying the previous owners of aforesaid hair with fixative, or even the floor with a spray-on adhesive to create a unique warm, insulating, 100% natural carpet, but I feel this is taking the recycling ethos a tad too far). Then there would be the conspicuous absence of miscellaneous rodent body parts lurking festering in dark corners, awaiting discovery by unwary feet at 6.30 in the morning. There would be no sinister-looking damp spots in hidden corners. I could leave food out, confident in the

knowledge that it would still be there when I returned. My back and hands would rejoice at not having to lug home tons of cans of cat food from the supermarket. To be fair, they do supplement their meagre (their word, not mine) diet with rabbits, plentiful in the warmer months, but when the colder, darker and, more to the point,

Then there are the breakages, and spillages. I try not to dwell on the destruction of treasured china, glass, plants etc.

wetter months arrive, the cats' hibernation instinct kicks in and they are forced to endure a diet of expensive canned goo.

Another feline quirk is hatred of their "person" reading or writing and therefore not taking enough notice of them. One of my girls, Spider, has the annoying habit of launching herself directly onto the unsuspecting keyboard. This results in at best interesting, if illegible, results and at worst, deleting or losing complete files or other work. Email is something she is working on for 2004!

I also dream of hair-free laundry—I mean that which has been washed, dried and folded, ready to be put away. I think that if I had five wash baskets, I would still have nowhere to put washing! As I write, Flynne (named after the famous film star Errol Flynn, because of her habit of leaping at the

washing line and hanging on, swaying dramatically, until she lost her nerve. The 'e' was added when we discovered 'he' was about to have kittens) is feigning cataplexy, tightly curled in a ball in one basket and Spider is in the other. Baskets make highly-desirable places when in catatonic hibernation mode.

I'm not sure what or who she was in previous incarnations, but Minky (aptly named) seems to be hell-bent on destruction in this one. My cat family are all related and Minky takes great delight in jumping upon her unsuspecting 'grownups'. They tend not to share the joke and much caterwauling ensues. She is the youngest and a perennial kitten. By the end of 2003, she had succeeded in destroying favourite vases and many less-valuable items like plates, tumblers and plants. She has recently discovered the utter delight of lurking invisibly and with intent on top of a bookcase at the darkest end of the kitchen. From there, she can look down on everybody, undetected, then if the mood takes her, she can catapult down on unsuspecting family

members.....ooooh SUCH FUN! Except that she never did learn about looking before leaping and the other evening I watched helplessly as she dropped like a stone onto the fridge beneath, so intent and focussed was she on bouncing on Spider that she failed to avoid the vase of flowers that was directly in her line of fall. There followed a terrible cataclysmic crash as cat and vase fell. It was such a nice vase too

I must get round to fitting doors to my airing cupboard, which up to now has only curtains. The other night, Minky leapt into the airing cupboard and, having badly misjudged her rate of ascent, slithered back onto the floor, bringing with her towels and bed linen. Innocent enough, you might think, but also on the floor directly beneath the airing cupboard is my dog's water bowl, and yes, you guessed, the cat, plus clean laundry, fell into it. The towels acted like a wick so there was water everywhere. I do wonder if she needs glasses? Do they do specs for cats? Apparently they do for pigs!

There was a funny sort of smell insinuating itself around the house recently. Firstly I blamed my human family for bringing something gruesome in on their shoes, then realised it wasn't that—it was the sort of smell that alerts the primal senses to something's demise. The smell lingered, worsening daily. It is on days such as those that I dread having non-cat-loving visitors! Then I noticed



Spider merrily scooting something unidentifiable around the kitchen. She was having such fun. Closer inspection revealed its identity. It was the mouse that had caused the smell. Now desiccated and mummified, it made a great toy! The mouse duly despatched, we noticed there was no let-up of the pong in the sitting room. Panic was beginning to set in because we were expecting visitors in a few days. Just how many incense sticks would I have to burn to annihilate the smell? How many did I have? So, with the zeal of Kim and Aggie in the TV programme 'How Clean is Your House', I set about purging the sitting room to within an inch of its life, determined to discover the cause of the offensive odour. And I did. (Warning! This is not for the squeamish!) In that no-man's-land that exists down the back of all sofas, where you find coins, tissues, odd socks and sweet wrappings, lay the completely flattened remains of another mouse...ugh...(well, I think it was a mouse, but couldn't really tell as it was too far gone). This did not deter the mob. They wanted it back please! They were so delighted that I'd found it after all that time! Massed sulking ensued as it was consigned to the bin. I do sometimes wonder why I have cats. (I discovered a newly expired vole resting in my oven glove once. It made me laugh though, once I'd recovered from the shock. Minky is an ace shot!). But then, after cataloguing the disasters, trials and tribulations, I

realise that they bring me such joy. Life would seem so dull without them. They are the purrfect antidote to stress and depression. Their antics make me roar with laughter so often, but have to take care not to offend them. Like the time Dilys, sadly now deceased, decided to jump from a high branch onto a hammock below, landed on the edge and went into a complete spin! Having an animal to pet has been proven to help people recover faster from illness and surgery. It is a comfort to have a contented cat on my lap during long winter evenings. You could call it symbiosis! And a cat or two on the bed at night adds greatly to the 'tog' rating of my duvet! While on the subject of duvets, why do cats always bring up furrballs on the bed? I would really love to know.

Fortunately my cats don't have a taste for birds. I love birds and with dedication and subtle behaviour modification, (should I write a feline catechism?) I have deterred them from stalking birds. I can't help feeling sorry for the mice, but you can't win them all. However, the cats did sit up and take notice when a male pheasant visited our garden, but his size and assertive attitude put them off. I did laugh at the time, as they resembled a pride of lionesses on the Masai Mara, the five of them encircling the poor bird. Between you and me, I think they watch too much telly. Gives them ideas you know!

Coming soon.....**Catering for Cats**

Angie Hill

So you think you're healthy!

Spring is a good time to review your state of health and plan how to improve it! Well, we do have a sports centre on our doorstep! Here are some questions you could ask yourself. Score your answers by giving yourself 1 for each (a), 2 for each (b) and 3 for each (c).

How many portions of fruit and vegetables do you eat a day?

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3

How many hours sleep do you get a night?

- a) 4
- b) 6
- c) 8

How often do you eat ready-made meals?

- a) Most days
- b) Three or four times a week
- c) Once or twice a week

Do you smoke?

- a) Yes
- b) Occasionally
- c) No

Do you have regular health checks?

- a) Never had one
- b) More than two years ago
- c) Within the past two years

How quickly do you get your breath back after exercise?

- a) 5-6 minutes
- b) 3-4 minutes

- c) 1-2 minutes

How often do you take exercise?

- a) Never
- b) Once or twice a week
- c) At least three times a week

How often do you feel stressed at home or work?

- a) Most of the time
- b) Two or three times a week
- c) Hardly ever

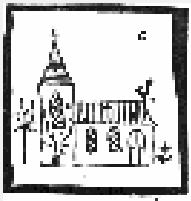
Do you consider yourself overweight?

- a) Very
- b) A little
- c) No

How many units of alcohol do you drink each week?

- a) Much more than 14 (women) 21 (men)
- b) About 14 (women) 21 (men)
- c) Fewer than 14 (women) 21 (men)

*Score 10-15: You need to change your lifestyle before it's too late!
Score 16-22: Not bad, but you need to take more control of your life and health.
Score 23 or more: Well done! Your heart should be healthy.*



Church Words

The Rectory 01886 888664

Church Services for February

Looking through a book I have on seasonal worship in the countryside, I noticed a 'Clypping service' which was traditionally held in February. It is a service rarely held and dates back to Roman times. 'Clypping' being the 'hugging' or 'embracing' of a church, when the congregation and parishioners form a ring around their parish church and embrace it. The ceremony is probably due to Britain then being a made up of unenclosed uplands, flatland and forested valleys. The sheep and goats upon which the inhabitants relied were easy prey to predators such as wolves. To protect themselves, the people sought the aid of their gods. With the arrival of Christianity, it was Christ to whom people prayed for help and protection, sometimes dancing around the church. The festival became associated with the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary on 2 February. Today congregations and parishioners still do this on occasions, especially where the church is subject to vandalism or opposition. The Congregation will pray around the building asking God to protect them from all evil. Sometimes links are made with ribbon or rope, or a human chain is made.

Continued on page 24

1 Feb	
Wichenford	9.30am Holy Communion
Martley	11am Family Service
Broadwas	11am Matins
Knightwick	8am Holy Communion
Cotheridge	6.30pm Evensong
8 Feb	
Wichenford	10.0am Family Service
Martley	11am Holy Communion
Broadwas	11am Morning Worship
Cotheridge	8am Holy Communion
15 Feb	
Wichenford	4pm Evensong
Martley	8am Holy Communion; 11am Morning Worship
Broadwas	11am Holy Communion
Cotheridge	9am Matins
Knightwick	3pm Evening Worship
22 Feb	
Wichenford	11am Holy Communion
Martley	9.30am Holy Communion; 6.30pm Evening Worship
Broadwas	8am Holy Communion; 11am Family Service
29 Feb	
Broadwas	10.30am Benefice Communion Service

Continued from page 23

I first experienced this ceremony in a town church where vandalism happened on a daily basis. The small congregation ‘embraced’ their little church building encircling it in prayer, and to their delight they saw a time of peace from the abuse.

We need God’s protection daily, encouraged by Christ in the Lord’s Prayer, “deliver us from evil”. May God protect our community and church and whatever you face in the days ahead. God Bless

Revd. David Sherwin

St. Mary’s Church Knightwick

You may be interested to know that the organ at St. Mary’s Church Knightwick has been moved to St. Leonard’s Cotheridge, enabling us to keep the organ in the Lower Teme Parish, since St. Mary’s closed. Other items such as furniture, stained glass and a bell have been spread amongst the churches of the parish.

Other dates for your diary:

Candlemas Service of Light for the Presentation of Christ in the Temple. Benefice Service—Monday 2 February 7.30pm Knightwick Chapel

Ash Wednesday Holy Communion Service St. Peter’s Martley—25 February 7.30pm



and nut mixture, roll it up and keep it warm.

5. Serve warm with fresh cream.

In the Kitchen



Honey and Hazelnut Pancakes

Serves 4-6

150g/5oz plain flour
1 egg and 1 extra egg yolk
1 tablespoon oil
300ml/½ pint milk
100g/4oz honey
100g/4oz hazelnuts, roasted and ground
Grated rind 1 orange
1 tablespoon Cointreau

1. Sift the flour into a bowl and add the egg, egg yolk, oil and half the milk. Mix well—ensure all the flour is mixed in, then add the rest of the milk and beat well.
2. Mix together the honey and nuts then stir in the orange rind and Cointreau.
3. Lightly oil a crêpe pan or frying pan and heat until very hot. Pour enough batter into the pan to make a thin layer and cook for 1-2 minutes. Turn the pancake over and cook the other side. Remove cooked pancake and keep warm. Cook the remaining batter in the same way.
4. Whilst the pancakes are hot, spread each one with the honey

Tea-break



1		2		3		4		5		6		7
8								9				
10					11				12			
				13				14				
		15					16					
						17						
18					19				20	21		
				22				23				
24						25						
26								27				

CLUES ACROSS:

- 1. SPEEDS (5)
- 4. RITE IN CHURCH (7)
- 8. DEEPLY EMOTIONAL (7)
- 9. STANDARD (5)
- 10. ATTENDED (4)
- 11. WORN IN CHURCH (3)
- 12. SOURCE (4)
- 15. MORIBUND (4)
- 16. WHAT WE DO IN LENT (4)
- 18. PART OF A CHURCH (4)
- 19. HOME FOR PIGS (3)
- 20. WISE MEN (4)
- 24. LIKENESS (5)
- 25. HAT WORN BY CLERGY (7)
- 26. TELL (7)
- 27. PRICKLY SHRUB (5)

CLUES DOWN:

- 1. REBIRTH OF A SOUL (13)
- 2. RELIGIOUS SYMBOL (5)
- 3. AIR (4)
- 4. EXTERNAL FRAMES (6)
- 5. REGRETTED (4)
- 6. THE MEEK SHAL THE EARTH (7)
- 7. CUT OFF FROM GOD (13)
- 13. INSANE (3)
- 14. THERE'S SOMETIMES ONE IN THE 15. BELFRY (3)
- 15. LOSE HOPE (7)
- 17. FIRM (6)
- 21. TABLE IN CHURCH (5)
- 22. GREEK LETTER (4)
- 23. A GARDEN BASKET (4)

In the Garden



Garden Tips for February

“February fill ditch” – a month renowned for rain, or have the seasons changed and the old sayings no longer remain appropriate?

Bulbs are beginning to show well and there is the feeling of Spring in February. Did you do all the things you intended to do during the winter? Trees, shrubs, roses etc can still be planted from containers. Bare-rooted plants can still be planted if you are prepared to pay a lot of attention to watering during dry periods, as these plants will take some time to produce new roots. Seed potatoes will be available. These need setting up in suitable containers in order to produce good solid shoots ready to plant out at the end of March or beginning of April. Peas and Spring broad beans can be sown in containers as they will produce early crops and grow well when planted out. The advantage of container-grown plants is that they can be held until soil conditions are favourable for planting out. Lettuce, cabbage, cauliflower and half-hardy annual flower seed can be sown. These will need slight heat. Tomato seed sown this month will need to be kept

in a temperature of 65 to 70 degrees. Clean up the flowerbeds and borders and dress with bone meal or general fertiliser. Keep an eye on delphiniums and other plants of this nature, as slugs have a habit of eating off the young shoots just below the surface of the soil.

Jack Bradley

(Continued from page 15)

sheep and drives them towards the second drive gate (crossdrive). After the third gate, the sheep are turned back and brought towards the handler, who is still at his post. The dog brings the sheep into a ring in front of the handler where competitor and dog part the sheep (shed) and drive one batch away from the other before reuniting them and then driving them into a pen. Closing the pen gate completes the run. Spectators are welcome - there's no admission charge but there will be a raffle, with profits going to a local charity. Please keep dogs strictly under control. Further details can be obtained from Andy or Gill on 01886 889221 or on the Working Sheepdog Website - www.workingsheepdog.co.uk

Advertise in The Villager

For information about advertising in The Villager, or inserting flyers, contact Neil Stammers, Advertising Manager, on 01886 888513. (neil.stammers@btinternet.com) To advertise on ww.martley.org.uk, email webmaster@martley.org.uk.