

DIARY OF A NEWCOMER - ONE YEAR ON

AMAZINGLY it has been nearly a year since I submitted my first observation to "Wychwood" as a newcomer to the beautiful part of Oxfordshire in which we reside. Oddly I'm jotting down these thoughts miles away on holiday in another lovely part of the British Isles in the border region of Scotland, with its sweeping hillsides and burns teeming with brook trout. There is a tranquillity in abundance here, seemingly no urgency except the busy sheep farmers and their working dogs whom we watch in admiration as they go about their daily routine.

A walk along the burn reveals all sorts of interesting wildlife, the wheatears that we see on occasions at home (not wheateaters as printed in the last copy!), sandpipers, oyster catchers and dippers are all in evidence, and curlews and the cuckoo call their own names.

At home we move into high summer, for some the time for elaborate garden parties with painstaking preparation. Will one marquee be sufficient? Better be safe and hire two. Mountains of delicately cut cucumber and salmon, fresh of course, sandwiches, vol-au-vents and canapes which we used to refer to as dead things on toast. Croquet on the lawn, tennis parties, the firm crack of leather on willow followed by polite but generous applause, are all part of the summer scene for which we all long in the miserable grey months of winter.

You see it is all part of the rich pattern of the British way of life

which sets us apart from the rest of the world. People from abroad may not always be able to fathom us out, but I believe they do envy us at times.

Naturally for the majority of us when confronted with a glorious summer's day, the only decision with which we may have to struggle is whether to open a tin of pineapple as well as the mixed fruit in case anybody calls in!

Tea on the lawn for the Ascot or Henley set is one of months of planning, even to long-range weather forecasts - everything has to be correct to the last immaculate tiny sandwich designed to pop into the mouth of elegantly dressed ladies. My only encounter with this delicate form of feeding has been at occasional weddings with the customary marquee where one normally teeters around in the gloom, tripping over guide ropes, at the same time endeavouring to contribute to the cacophony of sound within the tent. The novice at these kind of events grasp their glasses in the fervent hope that they avoid hurling the contents at an expensive dress.

The stress of the Moss Bros. clad male at these pleasantries is intense because if you are accident prone like me, the ghastly thought of making as ass of yourself is uppermost in your mind!

My wife will readily confirm my unfortunate claim to being accident-prone, as this was displayed at the earliest moment of our married life. Following the vicar after the ceremony, I managed to tread on his surplice, sharply pulling the reverend

gentleman backwards and causing acute embarrassment to my new bride and my clumsy self. Reflecting further on the minuscule sandwich; does one take just one off the proffered tray and starve until another chance visit from the catering staff? If you are built like a prop in a rugby scrum, this must be an agonising decision.

Now the magenta coloured rose bay willow herb is adding its colour in wasteland and on banks. By the time the flowers fade and the fine fluffy seeds disperse, we shall be into the soccer season again. Enjoy your salad days while you can.

Tony Boardman.

RE-ROOFING OF ASCOTT CHURCH

The re-roofing of the Church with Bradstone Cotswold Slates is now virtually complete. Most of the old coping stones have been re-used, but some new coping stones will need to be specially made for the chancel.....Very many thanks to all who have so generously supported our appeal and made it possible for this work to be carried out.

Later on, the timbers inside the Church will probably need to be treated against woodworm and death-watch beetle, as some signs of infestation have been evident among some roof timbers.

Timothy Thornton

ASCOTT-U-WYCHWOOD YOUNG FARMERS CLUB

Summer programme.

Tuesday 28 July	Rounders
Tuesday 4 August	Treasure Hunt
Tuesday 11 August	Mystery Visit
Tuesday 18 August	Aunt Sally
Tuesday 25 August	Rounders



Details of the September programme can be obtained by phoning Ruth on 0993 830790.

Ascott did very well at the Young Farmers Rally back in May. We didn't win overall, but were placed in many of the classes. Our juniors did very well, having most points per member. I think everyone who went had a good day out and enjoyed the dancing afterwards.

Club meetings have been well attended over the last few months. We have been on a car treasure hunt, ice skating, played skittles and rounders and many more activities, as well as going to discos, BBQs, dances and parties.

We have had quite a lot of new members joining the club, especially juniors, which is really nice to see. Members are aged between 14 and 26 years. We normally meet at the Swan, Ascott-u-Wychwood at 8p.m. on Tuesdays. For more information, please phone Duncan on 0993 830790.