

## COUNTRY PIE

Tony Boardman

**M**IDSUMMER'S DAY has come and gone and still we await a spell of fine sunny weather with clear blue skies to tone us all up. I recognise the fact that the sun and heat is not to everyone's taste and certainly an excess of it, particularly nowadays, is extremely dangerous. Direct sunlight in moderation and with protection I believe is beneficial however, and as we have now gone halfway through the year with waterproof clothing the norm, it would certainly be pleasant to be able to dress for the summer for a while.

Devotees of the much missed Morecombe and Wise will know what I mean when I ask what do you think of the weather (Show) so far? The answer, usually from a bust of a Roman or Greek God which happened to be nearby, would be -rubbish!

In what we have already established is certainly one of the wettest summers for some time the skies have been particularly devoid of the familiar sightings of swallows, swifts and martins. They are there, of course, but in frighteningly reduced numbers and on occasions you can scan the sky for some time for any sign of them.

When you do see them, you might see a group of half a dozen swifts and maybe a pair of swallows patrolling the heavens in their continual search for insect life. What really alarmed me was the fact that up until the beginning of June I hadn't seen a single house martin.

However I was happier when Sue and I visited the gardens at Wilcote House near Finstock with our friends, for there in the courtyard high up were several mud cupped nest with these delightful chirruping white rumped birds dashing about feeding their insatiable youngsters. I have seen a few more since that Sunday but a few days before our visit to Wilcote House, which I can thoroughly recommend incidentally, I read in the Daily Express that experts are mystified by the enormous decline of the house martin in the British isles and one member of the British Trust for Ornithology estimates that house martins numbers have declined by 25% which amounts to the loss of hundreds of thousands of birds.

Now why is this? Why are my memories of childhood, where a springtime dawn chorus was a magnificent experience and our skies and countryside were abounding with flora and fauna of all kinds. Well for one thing this country was at war and we had to make do and improvise with what we had, good organic material to put back into the soil. There were no poisonous sprays, poison to combat this pest, poisons to enhance the growth of that plant or crop, or if there were some it was minimal.

Since those far off days mankind in his infinite wisdom seems to me to have gone loopy! You cannot tamper with nature without creating problems. Apart from the poisons and pollution, the world has ageing nuclear power stations, submarines etc., accidents happen, remember Chernobyl.

We can only voice opinions of our concern but whether those in authority are remotely interested is another question after all ultimately it is the future of the world, our children and the creatures who share life with us that are in contention. Sadly I believe much of this is overlooked in the perceptual quest for financial benefit.

We are now a two dog family, our youngest border terrier is no longer with us. If you are a pet lover you know that inevitably you must bid farewell to an old friend when they become very sick and you hope that they may slip peacefully away before you have to make that dreadful decision at the vets. When your pet is a vibrant four year old the decision to let go is even worse. Unhappily, Primrose and her mum, Jessica, after being originally very happy together wanted to assume the Top Dog status and thus they became vicious toward each other. We tried so hard to prevent the ensuing fights but realised that little 'Primmies' would have to go.

Now the story has a happy ending for she is dog of the house with Karen and Peter Rawlins and their children in neighbouring Milton. She is a little dog who adores love and attention and we know that she gets plenty of that with her new family

and although we miss her terribly, both Sue and I are delighted that she has the family and home that she deserves. She has now been joined by a kitten, and that's a new experience for her.

To finish with I am indebted to a friend of ours from Stratford who came up with the following beauties accredited to his daughter. When she was a child they were watching loop the loops performed by a small aircraft one day near their home. Rebecca pointed upwards and said "Daddy look at that plane doing operatics in the sky!"

More recently when poor old father was particularly under the weather health wise, but also concerned with the amount of work awaiting him, was advised by his anxious daughter "If you'll take my advise I'd get the doctor to write you off!" Some times the truth is difficult to accept don't you think.

Please, if you have something amusing in our "Out of the Mouths of" section I really would appreciate it if you would give me a call on 01993 831332. Fortunately kids keep trotting these gems out and we all enjoy a laugh don't we? Finally have you realised how infrequently walruses come up as a topic of conversation at the breakfast table?!!

## NORTH OXON AMATEUR VIDEO CLUB

### Provisional programme.

**August** "Cam Pick" Jo Chadwick has invited us to a picnic at Hook Norton on a date to be arranged closer to the time.

**September 15** This meeting has been left open for a subject (but not compulsory) "Local Activities", however if you have another idea we will be pleased to see it. (Max 12 mins.) Each entrant will be invited to tell us a few words about how they got over (or coped) with difficulties when editing or filming their production.