

Special feature

# Seasons in the Sun

Summer is a distant memory tucked away in a photograph album. Winds blew October out, and then November took the leaves. The birds no longer sing. Everywhere we look we see change and loss. The roll of the seasons has taken away Bob Bradley's Garage, the butchers shop in Milton, our Vicar and some well - known faces in the villages.

It can be a depressing time. For those who have lost someone they love, the build up to Christmas is particularly poignant. One feels that the world should stand still in acknowledgement of their loss. It seems brutal and insensitive that the seasons keep on turning regardless of personal tragedy.

## Summer Holidays

But wait a minute! December 21st is the shortest day. Before we sit down to Christmas lunch, spring will be on its way! January sees us planning summer holidays. Change and loss have their good sides too:

**'We had joy, we had fun, we had seasons in the sun**

**But the wine and the song like the seasons are all gone'**



new developments, new plays to go to, new friends and opportunities. Amidst constant change it is good to see that some things stay the same, the church bells, village greens, our pubs and shops. As for those we have so painfully lost, they may not be in our address books anymore, but they are in our hearts. We take them along on new adventures. We keep their unique spirit alive. We see aspects of them in children and grand children. The longed for green shoots appear, snowdrops and crocuses seeming earlier each year, and welcome because they bring a new beginning.

Summer- the bliss of it! Long days to walk and garden, chat and just loll around to catch the sun, blue

skies, the arrival of the swifts, fairs on the village greens, friends coming to stay, Bank Holiday's. Ah, at last! So intensely sweet but how short-lived! Prudently avoiding 'casting our clouts 'til May is out' we note

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to our horror that the longest day, June 21st has been and gone, and cruelly we are heading back to winter before summer has really got going!

Gardeners everywhere try to plan their visitors for that one 'nanosecond' when the garden looks perfect!

The swifts depart all too soon, the school holidays drag on, the weather gets heavy and overcast, lawns go dusty and rock hard, shops run out of cool air fans, we all sleep with the windows wide open, sweltering and complaining!

October is such a beautiful month, the blazing gold of the cornfields, the rich colours, the sense of smoke in the air. Somehow in the Wychwood villages one feels closer to the passing of the



seasons than in the cities. We can actually see the stars, watch the leaves colour and fall, and pick the berries.

In a city, neighbours are unknown, a death has no meaning. Here one is painfully aware of those who are sick or dying. Each death diminishes us. We are part of an age - old rhythm beyond the pace of an individual life.

How strange that autumn is revitalising, just at the point that we are cutting everything down and the year is moving to a close. In his autobiography, the actor, David Niven described how he preferred the word "goodbye" to "hello". He explained that when one says "hello", the only certainty is that it will be closely followed by "goodbye". Whereas in saying "goodbye", we can look forward to a new "hello".

So, goodbye to 2002!

**Liz Clarke-Watson**

## Safety First

### A plea to night riders!

**N**ow the hour has changed and we are plunged into night at about 5 o'clock may I urge all the local runners, joggers, walkers and riders who are out in the late afternoon and evening to wear some reflective clothing. It is very frightening – and dangerous – suddenly to realise that there is a dark figure just ahead. If a car is, at the same time, coming towards your vehicle with headlights dazzling you it is almost impossible to see the runner or rider. Halfords has a good choice of reflective jackets etc.; even armbands will give a measure of visibility. Bicycles without lights and dark horses are equally invisible.

**Janet Shackle**