

# The Wychwood Starts it's 25<sup>th</sup> Year!

"THE WYCHWOOD"

Vol 1, No 1

April/May, 1980

Price 12p

Here it is at last! The first number of your new Magazine!

We would like to take this opportunity of thanking all those kind friends who have worked so hard to bring this first number out on sale. We are particularly grateful to all those who have supported us financially by buying advertising space; those who have contributed articles and items of news; and those who have arranged to distribute copies of "The Wychwood" in Ascott, Milton and Shipton.

It's March 1980, and the Old Beaconsfield Hall is buzzing, as 20 volunteers rush around collating the very first issue of The Wychwood. Two hours later they have finished, and are celebrating the birth of the first issue with a cup of tea. Using volunteers to collate and staple the magazine copies, saved on printing cost, and over the years the collation process became a considerable social occasion in its own right! At the centre of this occasion was Reg Ray, a staunch supporter from the word go. He and his famous giant stapler were absolutely critical to the magazine process, and remained so for many years until we were computerised.

## Leadership and hard work

The Magazine was the brainchild of Commander R.O.B. Long of Shipton Court. After putting his ideas to a well attended meeting at the old St John's Ambulance Hut, everyone decided to go ahead. Dudley Hopkins was swiftly co-

opted as Business Manager, whilst Colonel Oliver Stedall became Chairman. Colonel Stedall took over as Publisher and Editor in 1982, a post he held until his death on 8<sup>th</sup> March 1989. The success of the magazine was due in no small measure to his leadership and hard work. In another age Colonel Stedall would have been known as 'The Squire'. He was exactly that – a leader, a great friend to many and a very generous benefactor. Dudley Hopkins stayed with the Magazine until 1987, when he and his second wife, Vivien, left for a 5 month honeymoon, incompatible with getting a magazine out! Dudley, now over 90 says; "I am very fond of the Magazine and proud of it, there is so much goodwill involved."

## Our Fantastic Supporters!

The founders wanted to ensure that when any visitor or new arrival came into the villages, they could find out in the pages

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of The Wychwood everything they needed to know about local events. As a lot of people were not very mobile, it was nice to hear about friends and fellow villagers and, by paying an annual subscription, copies could be personally delivered. The magazine funded itself through advertising from Day 1. Many people were called upon in one form or another, to collate, write articles, distribute magazines, place advertising or to serve on the Committee. Over the years, well over 100 people have made significant contributions to ensuring the success and continuity of the magazine. Each deserves our grateful thanks, but one in particular stands out. This is Rosemary Salter, who according to Dudley Hopkins, made a quite exceptional contribution in creating the vibrant and healthy magazine we have today. (For news of Rosemary and Don see Page 29).

### **A Flav our of Vol 1: No 1**

The first issue looked very much as it does today. The cover featured the well loved Wychwood forest scene designed by Mrs D. Cotsell. The content included a full range of advertisements. Although some such as The Old Post Bookshop on Shipton Village Green are no more, it is good to know that many, such as the Shaven Crown, Station Road Garage, P. A Meecham - Clockmaker and Bradley's Garage are still advertising today! The Bradley's advertisement started off: "established over 50 years", (make that "over 75" now Andrew!) All our stalwarts were there; Bowls Club, Tennis and Cricket Clubs, Guides and Scouts, Village Hall timetables, the Red Cross and WI. I wonder how many of our readers remember taking the 434 bus from Milton to Chippy, or using the 450

Witney-Wychwoods Service?

### **What's in a name?**

Well according to the very first article by GW Hannah; quite a lot! The 1086 Domesday book first mentioned Shipton as "Scipton", later to become "Sipton", "Scupton" and "Septon". Shipton itself means a "sheep town". Milton emerged at the same date as "Midelstone", meaning "middle village", and has no connection to a mill, as once thought. Ascott was known as "Estcote" in 1220, becoming "Ascote" by 1291. Fifield derives from "Five Hides"; a hide being an area of land required to support one household and reckoned at 100 acres.

### **Banana Soup and Brassicas**

The recipe for that first issue was Banana Soup, and what's more it sounded delicious! Gardening columns were already well under way with DW in the vegetable garden and V. Mitchell at Bruern Abbey helping us raise bedding plants. Not a water feature in sight!

### **So Nothing Changes?**

Well, inevitably a bit does change in 25 years. The first issue was 16 pages long and cost 12p. We start Volume 25 with 64 pages at a cost of 30p. The first order was 600 or so, now our circulation is over 1,300. But the essentials remain the same. As R.O.B. Long says in that first editorial;

*" Remember, this is YOUR magazine. We want to hear YOUR views on every subject. Don't be shy. Everyone has something that is worth saying. And don't forget we are just as interested in your criticisms "*

Thanks to George Longhurst and Dudley Hopkins for sharing their memories.

**Liz Clarke-Watson**