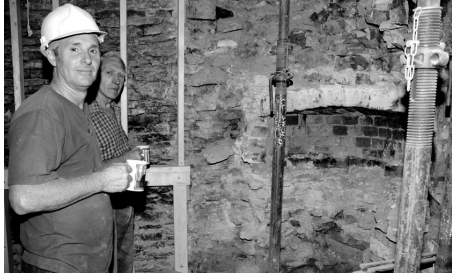


## The Place to take Your Sunday Roast

You must expect a few surprises when you undertake a building project in an old house and we recently had several while knocking through from the existing kitchen into the outside utility room.



Builders Chris Cowley and George Mills take a deserved cup of tea after moving tons of masonry to reveal the long hidden oven.

highest point was 14 inches. The height of the interior walls was 11½ inches.

### More Surprises

The second surprise came when we examined the broken beam, which had lain

above the hearth and the oven probably for centuries and which we had to replace. This was deeply charred. For how many years had the owners of the house slept soundly in their beds unaware that there was a glowing beam deep in the bowels of the house!

### Baker's Oven

It had been suspected that hidden somewhere in the house was a brick oven. According to the Wychwoods Album, published by the Wychwoods Local History Society, the house "is remembered as the place where people took their Sunday joint to be roasted in the baker's oven". After some exploratory chisel work to the right of a former hearth, an opening was revealed. A torch illuminated a domed structure built of soot covered bricks.

Unfortunately the entrance from the hearth had been damaged in the past when the hearth itself had been filled and it was not possible to preserve the oven in any meaningful way - it would have been a small black hole in the middle of a mass of masonry.

We took measurements and photographs as the masonry was demolished. The floor of the oven was 41 inches from the ground. From what remained of the front opening to the rear of the oven was approximately 34 inches. The widest point across the oven floor in the other direction was 33 inches. The dome at the

### Skip Tips into Trotts Brook

All this masonry led to a third surprise. It had been a problem negotiating a full size skip into position at the back of the building. Fully loaded, it was even more difficult making an exit and the whole lorry with skip tipped into Trotts Brook smashing the bank. A large crane was summoned and, to the delight of the Souch grandchildren, eventually pulled the lorry out of the stream.

Early the following morning, I wandered disconsolately down to the bottom of the garden to assess the amount of work needed to reconstruct the bank. I did a double take. Somebody had already pushed everything back into shape with a digger. This turned out to be one of Chris Cowley's team.

Now that was a pleasant and unexpected surprise!

**Alan Vickers**