

## Special Feature

# Wychwood Guides Face Herculean Challenges!

Have you wondered why there are three CDs hanging in the hedges beside the footpath from Meadow Lane? Or been surprised at the traces of flour in the New Beaconsfield Hall? Or seen little groups of girls



sketching on Shipton Green? Or been puzzled by a car boot full of broomsticks? Not only are these occurrences linked but almost all involve the kindness of local people. Wychwood Guides have completed six challenges to earn the special badge devised by Girlguiding in the county to mark *A Thousand Years of Oxfordshire*.

### Explaining the CD's and the Flour

Firstly, we went along the footpath one night shining torches on twenty CDs with clues on them. Unfortunately collecting them afterwards was only partly successful but the task was fun once we'd stopped being scared of the dark! As new Guides had joined us since our first walk, led by Helen Bayliss, our challenge was a supplementary walk along part of the Oxfordshire Way. There was no grumbling or lagging as Helen took us from Chadlington to Charlbury because it was a lovely walk on a lovely evening. She had even arranged for us to have refreshments at Charlbury Surgery where we surely left crumbs as evidence of our occupation. Food is always a popular theme so the flour is easily explained. F.W.P. Matthews Ltd kindly

donated the flour so the Guides could make fruit pies for their second challenge. They chose to use local ingredients to make the pies. We are grateful to FWP Matthews and to Christine Halliday and Beryl Taylor, who compromised their

reputations as good cooks by serving them at the Day Centre lunch! Margaret Ware, from the Local History Society, came to a meeting and told the story of the Cospatrick. We really appreciated the time she gave to teach us about this tragic event. Then, as our third challenge, we drew the memorial and acted a short play about it.

### So what about the Broomsticks?

Broomsticks? Witches? No. They were the basis for hobbyhorses made with scraps and then "ridden" to Banbury Cross as our fourth challenge. We also made a big effort to learn the Oxfordshire Vesper, a prayerful song for the end of the day, written and composed by one of Miss Walkinshaw's pupils in the 1950s. Does anyone in Ascott remember Miss Walkinshaw?

Finally, the Guides recorded what they had done and made front covers for their logbooks, which were judged by Sarah Allcock. The standard was so high that seven prizes were awarded. One winner was glad she had had a second attempt after being told that while octopuses and dolphins are aquatic, they were not to be found in the Thames as shown on her first version. *Continued on page 15*

Prizes went to Rebekah Burman, Gemma Dore, Alice Green, Emily Nolan, Alice Rose, Louisa Seers and Jojo Taylor. About 1,500 girls and women across the county have taken part in this challenge. It has seen 85 year olds climbing church towers and 5 year olds being introduced

to heraldry. It has been exclusive to Oxfordshire and Wychwood Guides who are proud to belong to: Charlbury District, Wychwood Division, The World, The Universe. Long may they continue!

**Bridget Walton**

## **Charity Ball Raises £7,000 for Young People**

On 17<sup>th</sup> November approximately 135 people attended the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual **Shipton Charity Ball** at the New Beaconsfield Hall and what a good night it was!

Phil Kent and Michelle Wathes of 'Unique Catering' prepared and served a fine meal, which was complemented by the 'Fair Maids of the Wychwoods' legendary home-made puddings.

Many local people and businesses donated generously to the raffle and auction, including the auction of three holiday weeks at home and abroad.

Astoundingly, we raised £7000! The Ball committee have decided that this money

is to be used to fund young people of the Wychwoods requiring some financial assistance to develop new or existing activities that will help the development of those young people.

Applications are welcome from individuals and organisations supporting activities for young people. **NOTHING IS EXCLUDED.**

For details of the criteria and how to apply, please contact Peter Hills on: 01993 830289 or

email [peter.hills35@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:peter.hills35@tiscali.co.uk)

Gordon Halliday on: 01993 831134 or

email [wychmag@fsmail.net](mailto:wychmag@fsmail.net)

**Gordon Halliday**

## **Preserve the Palm Sunday Wychwood Walk**

Our cover celebrates Palm Sunday, which this year falls on **16<sup>th</sup> March**. This is the one day of the year when walkers are allowed into the Wychwood Forest.

Although Leafield has always been outside the boundaries of Wychwood Forest, it has an interesting tradition.

On Palm Sunday, folk went into the forest to a spring called Wort's Well, or "Uzzle", pictured on our cover. They took with them bottles containing a spoonful of brown sugar, a piece of liquorice and a black peppermint. At the spring they filled the bottles with water, the resulting concoction was used as a general "cure-all." Wild liquorice plants grow next to Wort's Well; which before the introduction of black liquorice, was probably used as the basis for the concoction.

John Kibble, a local historian, writing in 1928, records that prayers were said at the spring:

**"Hast then a wound to heal; The wych doth grieve thee?**

**Come then unto this welle, It will relieve thee:**

**Nolie me tangeries, And other maladies"**

So, everyone, go out and walk, hopefully access will not be restricted by barbed wire.