

A House-Sitter's View of the Wychwoods

Richard Hubbard and his wife visit the Wychwoods from Milton Keynes each year to house-sit for friends. Here Richard tells us about their latest visit.

Once again, as every year for the past fifteen plus years, our summer holiday was spent in Shipton. For all those years, (and hopefully for more to come) we've 'house-sat' for our friends who live in Shipton, whilst they go off on their hols often to quite exotic shores like Japan or Canada, while we are super-content to spend a long, sunny, hot summer's day on a lounge in their garden.



a lovely view out of the windows (if they're not too steamed up from a cold day outside and hot breath inside.) We also spent a pleasant day in Chipping Norton, and in a very nice little café near the long-stay car park we found a magazine called *Family Focus*, and spotted that there was going to be a circular walk, run by the West Oxfordshire Field

Club, from the village green at Fifield, across the fields to Idbury. So we went along and had one of the finest days out all holiday!

'Baking Bar-B-Q' My Foot

This year (as all of you who live around these parts well know) the summer was a trifle less than the Met Office suggestion of a 'Baking Bar-B-Q Summer'. The day before we drove across from our home town (Milton Keynes), our friends phoned us to say; "It's belting down with rain," and we heard that Witney had a flash flood, so we began wondering if this summer was going to turn out like 2007. Anyway it didn't, though it was a hit and miss affair for the ten days we spent here. But as I said, it doesn't bother us much, because we so love the Cotswolds, and think of Shipton and Milton as our 'second home'. So when it's raining, we sit and read, comfy in the conservatory, listening to the rain and drinking coffee till the rain stops; and then off to the bus stop we go, bus-pass in hand, and catch the 233 to Witney, or *The Villager* for the 'fun' ride down tiny country lanes, through sleepy villages. We don't care where it's going, it's such

The Sound of Silence

My wife and I had never been to Fifield before. As we arrived, having parked down at the village green, I said "Listen to that." and my wife, and another friend, both said "Listen to what?", so I replied; "Exactly! The sound of silence."

In Milton Keynes, no matter where you live, there's always the constant sound of traffic, but here, in this idyllic village, there was just silence. Folks would pay good money for *that* kind of peace. The walkers were a great bunch, but the greatest pleasure was to be out in real countryside, where only the sounds of birdsong, buzzing bees, and clinking grasshoppers could be heard.

I wonder what delights we'll find next year. Tat Ta for now, and see you again, then.

Richard Hubbard