

Village news

September 2025

Puttenham
Astrope
Long Marston
Gubblecote
Wilstone
Little Tring



Your independent village magazine - produced and delivered free to every home in Tring Rural villages entirely by local volunteers

Fantastic Village Show! at Long Marston

by Tim Dean



It felt like the whole of Long Marston – and lots of other villages too – had come out for an afternoon of fun at the Village Show. The car park was full, and cars lined the village from top to bottom. The sun shone and the showground was heaving. The produce and craft show in the hall was also well supported – see the report on page 24

New Moon Morris encouraged everyone to join in.

There was so much going on it was hard to take it all in. It never stopped in the arena, with Rock Chorus belting out their songs, to the children balancing their Happy Eggs on spoons. Jukebox Junction Retro Line Dancers were quickly followed by New Moon Morris – both groups encouraging us to join in. Man on the mic, Nathan Ing, of Radley Windows Aylesbury, was master of ceremonies and kept the show rolling. Helping Kate Addison to run the Children's games he was just as enthusiastic as the children. His jokes were "Eggstrordinary" too!

There were a fantastic number and variety of stalls. Local artists, jewellery makers, bakers and beekeepers were all there showing and selling their wares. And people were **Continued on page2**



The urns were under pressure in the WI tea tent.

The BBQ boys were as hot as their dogs!

For the residents of Puttenham, Astrope, Long Marston, Gubblecote, Wilstone & Little Tring.

seen groaning under the weight of locally grown plants bought at the plant stall!

There was plenty of winning to do and fun to be had too. The Tombola and the Raffle had lots of great prizes, generously donated by villagers and local businesses. Games from Hook-a-Duck to Splat-the-Rat and Golf Challenges, were very popular. The Crockery Smashing stall was new this year and by the sound of it everyone had a cracking time.

The show provides an opportunity for local clubs and organisations to show off what they have to offer. The Tennis Club was there with its popular tennis game and our local History Group teamed up with the Old Tower support group and had a roaring trade in Tower tea towels. As usual our fantastic dog trainers, Willowbrook, put on their popular dog show.

All this fun meant that the food and drink on offer was in high demand. The BBQ was so busy they had to bring in reinforcements and by the end of the afternoon there wasn't a sausage to be had (the Grooms burgers were so tasty). The Bar and Pimm's stall were drunk dry and even the well-oiled machine that is the WI Tea Tent struggled to keep the urns topped up.

A big thank you to everyone who contributed and worked so hard to make the show a success. Particularly those manning the stalls and games all afternoon and the incredible 'Lifters and Shifters', who gave up their weekend to set up and take down the show. The whole village pulled together.

Last but not least, special thanks go to Yvonne Addison, Kim Fox and Chris Hodges and the Horti Village Society for making it all happen.



The Mayor and our MP thoroughly enjoyed their afternoon in the Village.



One of the many local crafts people's stalls.



Having a smashing time.



Pimm's at a summer show – what's not to like?



The plant stall was as popular as ever.



The Rock Chorus kept everyone 'rockin'.



Tennis Club with Jacob and his prize at the Tennis.

GRATEFUL THANKS TO THIS YEARS SPONSORS: CHRISTOPHER PALLET, NOBLE FOODS, THE TYRE CHANGERS, TRING MARKET AUCTIONS and ALEX ENGINEERING

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Village News is written, edited, produced and distributed entirely by local volunteers. We aim to be local, interesting, informative, fun and a good read. Please let us know if we are not!

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The editor for the September edition is Caroline Clist and the deadline for items is: Wednesday 17 Sept.

I just hope you enjoy this months Magazine as much as those who visited the Long Marston Show.
I was down the canal the other day between the Gudgeon stream and Puttenham upper lock. The canal on this stretch is over grown with Canadian pond weed and algae and in the midst of this was a turtle **Can you spot it in the picture below.** It is about the size of a dinner plate and has apparently been living in the canal for some years. Solution on page 20.



Stop Press The Home Ground Cafe opened at 9.30am on Saturday 16th August on the Long Marston Recreation ground.

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What's on in & around our villages

Diary Dates

Tring Farmers Market

Saturday 13 September
Saturday 27 September
at The Market Place

Film Nights

Friday Oct 17, Nov 21, Dec 12, 2026

Jan 16, Feb 20, Mar 20, Apr 17
at Wilstone Village Hall 7.15pm

Tring Rural Parish Council

Meeting start at 7.30pm The public are welcome to attend

Wednesday 3 September Cecilia Hall, Puttenham

Wednesday 1 October Wilstone Village Hall

Church Services

Below is a list of the Services for the Village churches for July & August – **these could change so please check online** at <https://www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events> or phone the Rectory on 01442 822170

We also will have live streamed services online so please take a look

Tuesday 2 September

10am – Morning Prayer– St Cross, Wilstone

Sunday 7 September – Trinity 12

6pm – Celtic Prayer – All Saints, Long Marston

Tuesday 9 September

10am – Holy Communion -St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 14 September – Trinity 13

8am BCP & 10am WfA at Tring, 10am HC at Aldbury

Tuesday 16 Sept

10am Holy Cross Patronal – St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 21 September – Trinity 14

10am – Holy Communion – All Saints, Long Marston

3pm – Harvest and Pet Service – St Cross Wilstone

Tuesday 23 September

10am – Holy Communion cw -St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 28 September – Trinity 15

3.30pm – Evensong Harvest– St Mary's Puttenham

Tuesday 30 September

10am – Morning Prayer– St Cross, Wilstone



FARM P.E. MEAD & SONS SHOP

CHRISTMAS FOOD FAIR

We welcome you to our annual food fair, for an evening of food, drink and celebrating all our Local Producers!

FRIDAY 14TH NOVEMBER
6-9PM

#SHOPLOCAL

LONG MARSTON ALLOTMENTS

There are several vacant allotment plots at Long Marston Allotments in Potash Lane. If you are interested in trying your hand at growing your own vegetables please call or email.

Elaine Winter
(Secretary to the Trustees of Tring Charities)
01442 827913 or info@tringcharities.co.uk

ST CROSS HARVEST AND PET BLESSING SERVICE



SUNDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER
AT 3.00PM

JOIN REV'D JANE AND MUNGUS TO CELEBRATE ALL CREATION.

THE SERVICE WILL BE FOLLOWED BY AFTERNOON TEA.



Sponsored Bike 'n Hike
BEDS AND HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

Bike 'n Hike

Saturday 13 September 2025
9am to 5pm



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Whitchurch Morris



Interested in Morris Dancing?

Looking for a new way to keep fit?

You are invited to any of our Free Taster Sessions on Tuesday 7th, 14th and 21st October at Wilstone Village Hall at 8.15pm.

This is your opportunity to learn English Traditional Dances from the Cotswolds.

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This is open to all, but under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.

Go on, you know you want to!

Contact Details: email: info@whitchurchmorris.org.uk phone: 07778 609678





Macmillan Coffee Morning


at
All Saints Church, Long Marston
on
Saturday 27th September
10 - 12am

Bring and Buy Competitions

Cake donations gratefully received

Entrance : £2 - tea/coffee/squash plus cake or biscuits

ST CROSS PATRONAL SERVICE



JOIN US TO CELEBRATE
WILSTONE CHURCH'S
SPECIAL DAY

**TUESDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER AT
10.00AM**

**FOLLOWED BY
REFRESHMENTS**

EVERYONE IS VERY WELCOME

Wilstone Wasters plan for crunch match next year.

By Richard Peel

Wilstone Wasters are already making plans for their annual charity cricket match against Buckland Baggies in 2026 after losing for the second successive year against their local rivals at Long Marston Cricket Ground.

Put into bat by Wasters captain Tom Folley, the Baggies scored steadily with valuable contributions from their captain, Jon Sainsbury, who scored 27, and Tim Taylor, who, following the game's rules, retired after making 25.



Wilstone Wasters...happy in defeat!

There were other useful cameo performances from the Baggies batters, and by the end of 15 overs they had amassed 101-7, a decent total for the Wasters to chase on a sultry summer's evening.

Wilstone started well, with Dave Underwood notching up 25 and skipper Folley, looking dangerous, hitting 27. After that the scoring slowed, and by the 10th over it seemed unlikely that the side would reach their target.

With the Baggies fielders on the boundary, wickets started to fall as the Wasters batters attempted to swing their way to victory, but by the close of play, eight wickets had fallen and the score stood at 80.

The result meant that the teams have both won two matches apiece, making next year's game another exciting prospect. The match, played on the evening of Friday, August 15, was organised by Richard Peel from Buckland and Guy Campbell, the landlord of the Half Moon, Wilstone, who provided a barbecue. The Cricket Club also opened the bar for spectators and players. The organisers want to thank all the spectators for their donations and Long Marston Cricket Club's Paul Dumpleton for enabling the fixture.



Baggies in action

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Website details: www.tringcharities.co.uk/education

**Telephone: Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees
01442 827913**

Email: info@tringcharities.co.uk

Please note that the closing date is 15 November 2025 to lodge a completed application for grants payable from Autumn 2026.





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Our MP holds a community surgery in our shop

On Thursday 7 August, we were delighted to welcome Victoria Collins, the MP for the constituency of Harpenden and Berkhamsted which includes Wilstone, to spend the morning in our shop talking to the residents of the village.

The event was very well attended with Victoria listening to the views and concerns of people of all ages. 'Popular' topics included the perennial issue of the speed of the traffic through the village, the parking for

the ever-increasing number of cars, over-development, and the occasional Wilstone Whiff from the substation in Sandbrook Lane.

Victoria was very generous with her time and said that she would be writing to many of the residents in the light of her conversations. She was also very complimentary about the shop and we were pleased that she found a space in her busy schedule to visit us. As far as we can tell she is the first MP to hold a surgery in the village.

All systems go on the new till

As we go to press, the new electronic point of sale system (the till to you and me) has been undergoing its final test runs. As reported in July's newsletter, this is a fully updated system that takes advantage of all the latest technology and software. It seamlessly links the counter to the back office making ordering easier and even though the actual manual 'till' operation is very similar to the existing system we do ask for your forbearance as the staff get used to the new system.

We hope that all the efforts made by a small number of our staff in researching, developing and installing this new system will see the shop operate in the future as smoothly and efficiently as it always has in the past.



Victoria Collins MP with some of our wonderful volunteers - Denise, Virginia and Deb and shop manager Ali.



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Wilstone Film Nights

Film nights at Wilstone Village Hall recommence on October 17th

Film nights have been a popular feature on the villages' social calendar, offering the opportunity to meet with friends and neighbours and enjoy a first-rate film. With a subsidised bar, what is there not to like?

The line up so far for this season is, in no particular order:

Penguin Lessons with Steve Coogan

Bridget Jones, Mad about the Boy

Mothers Pride with Martin Clunes

Mr Burton with Toby Jones

Goodness Gracious

FILM NIGHT DATES

October 17 th	January 16 th
November 21 st	February 20 th
December 12 th	March 20 th
	April 17 th

Tickets for film nights will be on sale at Wilstone Community Shop at the beginning of October, priced £7.50.

Films start at 8pm with a short interval. Doors open at 7.15pm.



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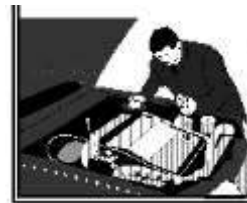
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One Man's Legacy for Wilstone.

by Alison Cockerill

St Cross Church has stood in the centre of Wilstone for over 140 years. It was built by public subscription in 1877, with most of the furnishings and fittings gifted by generous donation. The minister who was the driving force behind the inception of the building was the Rev'd Masters, who must have had immense faith to believe he could create a church from nothing. His original plan was for a much

larger church than the one that was actually built, but the estimated cost of £3189 was far in excess of what could be raised. Apart from organising the whole project, with a scaled-back plan, which cost a total of £1470, the Rev'd Masters also provided the altar. It was made in Wilstone at the wheelwright's shop at Pear Tree Cottage, owned at that time by Joseph Hare. The craftsman was Walter Timson, who lived in one of the cottages at Wilstone Green, and his work is as good today as when it was first created.

Rev'd Masters worked tirelessly for the villages of Wilstone and Long Marston and appears to have been a popular figure in the community, records showing that over 100 people attended services in each of the two villages every Sunday. After he left the parish in 1885, St Cross suffered mixed fortune, perhaps best remembered for the legacy of Rev'd Anthony, minister from 1931 until 1962. Father Anthony's high church ideas upset many regular congregants, and as numbers fell and his stipend remained

unchanged, he declared he couldn't carry on, and services at St Cross became few and far between. The grounds became overgrown, despite the cows grazing there, and it was reported that brambles were growing through one of the windows. The interior furnishings also suffered, and it was a very sad church which Rev'd Hugh Warwick took on in 1963. But with a lot of hard work, commitment, and the enthusiastic support of many villagers, he returned the church to its former glory.

Today, St Cross is still loved and cared for, and we hope it is the intended legacy of the Rev'd Masters and the hard work of Hugh Warwick, which people enjoy when they visit the church. The church is open every day, and there is a service every Tuesday at 10am. Everyone is very welcome, of any faith or no faith, and in September there are two special services. One is the Patronal Festival, on Tuesday 16th September at 10am. Very few churches are dedicated to St Cross; more commonly they are Holy Cross. Wilstone Church, however, was dedicated to St Cross, and the day in the church calendar to celebrate our 'saint' is in the second week of September. Then on Sunday, 21st September, at 3pm, there will be an outdoor service for Harvest, with Pet Blessing. Rev'd. Jane is officiating, assisted by her dog Mungus, so come and meet Mungus, bring all your pets for a blessing, and then stay for afternoon tea.

We look forward to welcoming you to St Cross, which, despite many ups and downs, is still in the heart of the community, thanks to the determination of one man to ensure that there was a church in the village. Without the Rev'd Masters, Wilstone would not have a church, even if the building is not quite as grand as he hoped and is still without the tower he wanted to complete the east end.

From the Vicarage

by The Reverent Michelle Grace

Pet service in Wilstone, 3pm, Sunday 21st September - all warmly welcome!

I've enjoyed the remake of All Creatures Great and Small on Channel 5. With animals of all sorts cared for and helped in their

distress and pain, and exploration of the sometimes complex relationship between humans and animals, it's perhaps a good show to watch in the lead-up to the Pet Service at St Cross Church in Wilstone on Sunday 21st September at 3pm.

St Cross prides itself on being a church for everyone where everyone is welcome – and that also includes our special companions! All creatures great and small may not quite fit in, but any pets are warmly invited and very welcome. Dogs usually form the bulk of such a gathering, but tortoises, goldfish, lizards, etc. are welcome, as long as they can be safe during the service and are on a leash or in a carrier! You are welcome to bring a photo of your pet if your fish tank is a bit awkward to carry or your cat can't fit the service into their busy schedule.

As part of the church's annual harvest celebrations, this Pet Service is held to give thanks for our pets, to acknowledge the importance of animal welfare, and in recognition of the fifth mark of mission of the Anglican Church, which is 'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain the life of the earth'.

We are looking forward to a joyful occasion, perhaps accompanied by some different sounds to a usual service!

Eternal God,

We thank you for animals who live alongside us as our companions and friends for their loyalty,

love and trust, which enriches our lives and gives us joy.

Help us to be kind and gentle and to treasure and care for them.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, whose love gives life to us all.

Amen.

TEA AT THE TOWER

The Old Church Tower Group announce the return of this highly popular event

Sunday 7th Sept

2.00pm to 5.00pm

At The Old Church Tower

End of Chapel Lane

Long Marston

Treasure Hunt

Guess the Height of the Tower

Raffle

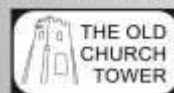
Children's Tombola

Vintage Lawnmowers

Souvenir items

And TEA and CAKE

All welcome



The Old Church Tower Group – Raising funds for the preservation of a local landmark

All According to Plant

A Story of Longub Puttastone

By Martin Winship

The Women's Association of Longub Puttastone has been enjoying great success and popularity in recent times. A group of younger "strong women" had taken the reins from the older Jam and Jerusalem brigade and had injected fresh and innovative activities

and ideas into the venerable organisation. The monthly meetings were always well attended; all those turning up in the village hall were keen to be fascinated and entertained by an eclectic mix of speakers, each one an expert in their own particular subject. From "Guinea Pig Hunting in the Mato Grosso" to "Collecting Banana Labels", the talks were lively and absorbing. Some of the regular gatherings, however, did not feature a guest speaker but were events organised and run by the W.A. members themselves. "What Have I Got In My Handbag?" always proved an exciting (and often extremely surprising) evening, and the "Committee's Specials" frequently raised several eyebrows. There was often lively debate as to what the format of upcoming meetings should be: an invited guest speaker or a homegrown event. When on one occasion it was suggested that an afternoon tea could be put on, there was more or less universal approval. It had been done before – and very popular it had proved – but not for some time; many of the newer members had not had the pleasure. Few, if any, of the ladies were in the least bit surprised when Prunella stepped forward, determinedly, and announced that she would be in charge. She would, she confirmed, organise the whole event and see to every detail. They all knew (but said nothing) that this meant that Prunella would decide what was to be done and then tell her husband to do it (and pay for it, of course).

Prunella did indeed waste no time in working out her plans, which became, needless to say, more elaborate (and expensive) as her ambitions grew. She remembered, quite vividly, when she had been a young "gel", spending an occasional but delightful holiday with her maiden aunt, who lived in civilised comfort among the northern savages in Yorkshire, specifically in the genteel town of Harrogate. Her aunt had habitually treated the young and gushing Prunella to wonderful teas in the glorious surrounds of the Royal Pump Rooms, sitting amongst the exotic fronds of potted palms, illuminated by wan sunshine filtering through the stained glass. And all the while beguiled by the delightful strains of a well-dressed string quartet. Prunella was determined to recreate the experience for her fellow W.A. ladies, both in the physical arrangements and the magical ambience. Her husband, once he had been made aware of the challenge he faced, gave his wallet a comforting hug and braced himself.

The first item on Prunella's daunting agenda was furniture. The village hall had its own collection of very useful tables and chairs, but they were utilitarian and really most unsuitable for the kind of sophisticated venue Prunella was set on creating. Her husband was told off, therefore, to arrange for the hiring of lovely round tables (with beautiful white tablecloths, of course) and an appropriate number of elegant dining chairs, each equipped with a snug-fitting white cover, which also decently covered their legs, something Prunella recalled her aunt considered essential in polite company. Her husband meekly obeyed, and the hire

of the furniture was arranged for the day of the afternoon tea.

Next on Prunella's list was the provision of suitable music for the event. In this enterprise her husband was less successful. Most of the agencies he contacted met his avowed requirements with amusement or disbelief. He was informed, despite the evidence of his own inquiry, that **no-one** wanted string quartets these days. He knew better than to dare to admit defeat to Prunella, so he persevered. At last, after many fruitless and frustrating hours spent on the telephone, he managed to secure the services of an extraordinary foursome of musicians. This consisted of two elderly and spinsterish ladies on violins who rejoiced under the names of the Misses Twinge and Racket, and they were to be accompanied by two bearded gentlemen in cloth caps: Baz – who played the banjo – and Dave – who kept up the volume on a honky-tonk piano. The repertoire of this odd grouping consisted of some graceful chamber music from the genius of Franz Danzi and "Rockney" songs which featured lyrics such as "You've got more rabbit than Sainsbury's" and "I've got my beer on the sideboard 'ere." Well aware that this was by no means exactly what Prunella had in mind, it was the best her husband could come up with, so he restricted himself to confirming that he had booked a "talented" quartet and left it at that, trusting to fate and being able to find somewhere to hide should it become necessary.

Next came the delicate subject of catering; delicate, because Prunella knew only too well how variable and unpredictable were the cake- and savoury-making talents of her fellow W.A. members. Their produce ranged from truly professional-standard excellent to the (much more common) dreadfully ceramic. Her own skill in the cooking department was, to all intents and purposes, non-existent, and she did not want this aspect of the event to spoil everything. Delicate the situation might be, but fortunately Prunella did not do "delicate". She simply informed everyone that the catering was taken care of, and no contribution would be required from any of them, and that was that. No one was inclined to kick or make a fuss; indeed, they all knew that this almost certainly meant they could look forward to some choice fare from Prunella's preferred suppliers, Fortnum and Mason's, and that no doubt her husband would be arranging everything and in ample quantities.

That left only the potted palms, ferns and other greenery to decorate the hall and create just the right suggestion of conservatorial fine living that Prunella was set on conjuring up. She was notoriously fastidious and careful of the smallest detail, so she made absolutely certain that her husband fully understood exactly what it was she required before dismissing him with his orders. She relaxed in a blissful calm of anticipation. Her husband was not so unburdened. He began his quest to obtain Prunella's wants by first visiting local florists' shops. He received the same rebuff at every one he tried. He then rang more florists, spreading his net wider, but with similar negative results. He thought he had had a brainwave when he came up with the idea of trying garden centres and nurseries, but they too told him that while he would be welcome to buy as many small trees of whatever kind and any other potted plants he fancied, they were not in the business of renting them out. Even his apparently bottomless wallet would not stretch that far. In great nervousness and trepidation, he approached Prunella and admitted his abject failure. She would have none of it. She told him that he would secure her plants by whatever means necessary, or face the consequences. He understood (probably not for the first time) what it felt like to be between a rock and a hard

Continued on page 13

Continued from page 12

place and wondered if the French Foreign Legion was still recruiting. Old Siegfried, who always had an ear to the ground, soon got to hear about the dilemma Prunella's husband found himself in and gave the problem some thought, during which deliberation a sly and distinctly shifty smirk crept over his physiognomy. He chose to speak to Prunella rather than her husband – to the organ grinder, not the blooming monkey – and he told her about a company he knew and had used himself who would, he was "blooming certain", exceed her expectations. He gave her their name and phone number, for which, while surprised, she was truly grateful. In view of Siegfried's renowned horticultural prowess, she was confident that her husband's troubles were over. She passed Siegfried's information to him. He, in his turn, tried to say something to Prunella. "Er, I'm not so sure about this, my dear....." he began. "Nonsense. Ring them up immediately. Tell them I want two of everything they have, as long as they are big and impressive," she rebuked him. He shrugged his drooping shoulders. "Yes, dear." Prunella was up and out early on the Wednesday morning

of the afternoon tea, on her way to the hall to put the few finishing touches in place; and because she anticipated some moving and adjusting might be required, she took her husband. As they neared the hall, Prunella's pace slowed, and she came to a complete halt, her mouth hanging open rather foolishly. The car park of the hall was full. Not of cars, but of all manner of equipment, in bright primary colours. There were mini excavators and hi-tip dumpsters, site telehandlers and forklifts, tipping skips and mobile site mixers, and many others. Prunella, of course, knew nothing about what they all were; she only knew they were big and colourful, and there seemed to be two of everything. And they all had emblazoned in large letters down their sides the legend TWERPHAMSTED PLANT HIRE. Prunella slowly turned blazing eyes on her husband. "Where is Siegfried?" she demanded. Her husband had the suspicion of a smile on his face. This soon disappeared. "I don't know. He hasn't been seen for a while," he replied. In Siegfried's very convenient absence, Prunella had no choice but to blame her husband for the debacle, which she did, and he really got it in the neck. But in the following days, he still had a quiet smile now and then.



Allotment blues

by Ashley Firmin

Wilstone Allotment Association

It has been, I regret to say, the sort of summer that makes even the most stalwart marrow wilt in its bed. A record number of heatwaves have been bearing down on our modest Wilstone allotment, and our old hand-dug well, our only source of water, now manages little more than the odd splutter. Some days it wheezes like an asthmatic accordion and gives nothing but a puff of warm air, as if the water has packed its bags and gone somewhere cooler. The truth is, there just isn't enough water anymore, and there hasn't been for the past four years.

The vegetables, too, have taken a dim view of proceedings. Runner beans, usually the very model of civility, have developed a sharpness that could cut glass. Cucumbers have picked up a bitterness you'd normally only find in the comments section of a local Facebook group. Courgettes have grown smaller, tougher, and more prickly to the touch, while the lettuce, in an act of botanical melodrama, shot upwards, flowered, and declared the season over.

We've been plotting next year's tactics with all the seriousness of generals before a campaign. Squash and chard are likely to feature heavily, along with Mediterranean herbs and deep-rooted perennials, while sweetcorn and peas can remain on the guest list if granted a bit of shade and occasional refreshment. The raspberries have sat this year out entirely, but with luck, they will reappear in a better frame of mind next summer.

Watering, for those who still can, has become a calculated business: aim for the roots, keep the leaves out of it, and stick to mornings or evenings when the sun is less intent on mischief. Mulch is the word on everyone's lips, and every

shed and greenhouse is being eyed up for its potential to capture even the smallest dribble of rain.

It hasn't all been grim. Some residents of the vegetable kingdom have taken to the dry weather like ducks to... well, not water exactly, but perhaps a comfortable deckchair. Onions came in early and dried almost before one had a chance to admire them. Early parsnips have been hearty and full of promise. Carrots may be on the smaller side, but they've been full of flavour, and potatoes, despite receiving no extra water, have done rather well for themselves.

The fruit has staged its own small victory parade. My plum tree, left to its own devices, has yielded enough fruit to fill plum cakes for several expeditionary forces, with jam reserves to see Wilstone and surrounding areas through many a winter breakfast. Apples, too, are ahead of schedule, so it's high time to dig out the preserving pans before the opportunity slips away.

One curious side effect of all this aridity has been the near-total disappearance of slugs and snails. Normally they mount nightly raids on the lettuces, but this year they've kept a low profile. While one might extend a small measure of sympathy (it must be thirsty work), their absence has been something of a relief.

Still, there's no avoiding the serious point. These prolonged spells of hot, dry weather are no passing fancy; they're becoming the rule rather than the exception. The well depends on a steady supply of groundwater, and without it, it is as useful as an empty teacup at a picnic.

So we adjust. We choose our crops with care, we change our methods, and we make sure every drop of rain is treasured.

On a more serious front, this is all down to climate change. We all need to look after what's around us, but as I rinse out my little Marmite jar for the recycling bin, it strikes me that perhaps we must also think bigger, petition those with the means to make a difference, and support those already doing the work. Sorry to bring politics into it, but I never did get a reply to my last letter to Donald Trump Junior about the Wilstone Allotment Water Table Crisis and what he proposes to do. Perhaps it got lost in the post; I'll try to find someone to answer to that (or perhaps I should lambast the Royal Mail on the letters to editors page?

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A true story "A Cat Called Fudgey"

by Christine Rutter



Our much-loved Jack Russell terrier had not long passed away, and we were at my cottage in Devon taking an afternoon cup of tea and biscuits in the little summerhouse in the garden. Down the garden path wandered a cream-coloured cat with some soft ginger markings. He walked straight into the summerhouse and introduced himself. I stroked him – he was painfully thin and ate some of our biscuits with relish.

Going back in time, he was owned by a family with dogs over on the next hill (my area in Devon is very hilly). I had seen the cat before when he overnighted in the barn, but at that time we still had the terrier dog. It transpired that Billy (that was his original name) had decided to leave his home and become a vagrant, catching or stealing food where he could. I had heard a tale of a sponge cake being left to cool on the worksurface in a kitchen of one of the neighbouring cottages. Billy accessed the house and took his fill of the sponge cake!

Being used to the outside life, he became a very convenient pet for us as we regularly travelled from Puttenham to Devon. At the time he took to living with us, I was not aware of his original name, and so I called him Fudge (Fudgey) because the colour of his fur reminded me of vanilla fudge. He was fully capable of defending himself and seemed to have a fear of being in a confined space. Walking through a doorway with Fudgey beside you was a dangerous operation, as he would hiss and lash out at your legs. However, time and the feeling of security healed this initial unfortunate trait.

My husband made two wooden chutes for dry food with a tray at the bottom, and these were filled with food when we were away from the cottage, and we also left him with a washing-up bowl of water so he had enough fluids. A cat flap was fitted to a shed door, and a cosy bed and the two food containers and bowl were installed. These he used when we were away or if he needed a nighttime snack. We let him out at night so that there would be some consistency when we were away.

From thereon, Fudge remained close to the cottage and would always be sunning himself and waiting for us when we returned. Once we were back, he resumed his "indoor routine".

For a man who was not keen on cats (my husband was a dog man), he adored Fudgey, and Fudgey adored him. As soon as my husband sat in an armchair, the cat would leap up and be stretched across him, looking like an enormous furry slug. He never curled up on his lap. At meal times he was often on his hind legs, pulling down my arm with a paw, checking to see what I was eating. Just as it was only Paul whom he lay across, it was only myself at dinnertime that he stood up to and pulled down my arm with his paw. After each evening meal we moved into the next room. Fudge didn't go there until we did and then resumed his position laid across my husband.

In April, some years later on, my husband died, and Fudgey spent a lot of time in the evenings waiting for him to come through the door, but, of course, he never came. The cat just didn't seem to understand this and waited patiently by the door. I think the cat really missed him.

A few months later, I noticed that Fudge was not eating so enthusiastically as he normally did and decided that if he was still like this on my return, however difficult it was going to be trying to get him into a cat basket, it would be a visit to the vet. That visit never happened. Fudge had gone missing. I asked all our neighbours if they had seen him, and one told me that he was "donkeys years old". I finally visited his original owners, where I found that, yes, he was very old, thought to be at least 20. I was amazed because he had always looked no more than about 12 or 14 at the most.

Fudge never materialised. He had settled under a bush somewhere away in the wilds and had passed away. He had lived life on his own terms, was a wonderful cat, and was fully self-reliant. I still miss him a great deal.

Letter

I am writing having read an article on page 11 of the July issue of Wilstone Village News suggesting that I write to your two email addresses with suggestions concerning speeding in Wilstone, copying in Village News.

I live at 10 Tring Road, Wilstone, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 4PB and have lived at this address since 1999. My property is almost opposite the entrance to Chapel End Lane (the entrance to Chapel End Lane is directly opposite my neighbour at no. 8 Tring Road and the bus stop). There is frequently a row of parked cars in front of 2-14 Tring Road that obscures the view of traffic emerging from these properties. There are no restrictions on parking and a growing shortage of parking at this location as visitors to Chapel End Lane and Chapel Fields routinely park here.

The 30 mph speed limit sign is just on the eastern side of the entrance to Chapel End Lane.

We routinely see cars speeding either into or out of the village. Some cars come into the village from the eastern (reservoir) side of the village, pass the row of parked cars from 2 to 6 Tring Road at speed, then brake hard just before the 30 mph speed limit sign. Coming from the west, because the road to Icknield Way is a straight stretch, car drivers often put their foot down as they see the straight and the end of the 30 mph speed limit sign. They frequently pass the row of parked cars at no. 2-14 at 30 mph (which is not technically illegal but dangerous at this location), and some are doing more than 30 mph before they reach the junction between Chapel End Lane and Tring Road. We have been seeing this behaviour for 25 years, and we commonly hear the cars revving their engines in front of our house as they pick up speed for the 60mph limit, particularly in the mornings as the commuter traffic goes through. Doing 60 mph between Chapel End Lane and Icknield Way doesn't save many seconds on a typical commuter journey and isn't very sustainable even in an electric car. I have in the past also seen a car overtake another car at speed on the western (30 mph speed limit) side of Chapel End Lane.

There are frequently pedestrians on the stretch of 10 Tring Road coming to or from Meads Farm shop or from the entrances to the footpaths or driveways leading to the two groups of (residential) barns on the north and south sides of Tring Road. There is no pedestrian walkway at this location, and it can be difficult to get to and from the amenities in the village from these locations safely at night, as the verge is rough and has holes in it.

My suggestion is that you make Wilstone Village a 20mph speed limit zone all the way through the village from at least the canal bridge to the junction with Icknield Way and consult with the residents near Watery Lane as to how far a 20mph speed limit restriction should extend towards the T junction with the road to Long Marston: these residents will have a better idea of problems along this stretch.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Jeremy Johnson

Sudoku Corner

by Colin Moore

No 191 moderate

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Solution on page 18



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The Puttenham Page

by Christine Rutter

How quickly the year has gone – here we are advertising

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Christine 07514 548289 or email: Christine.rutter2@gmail.com

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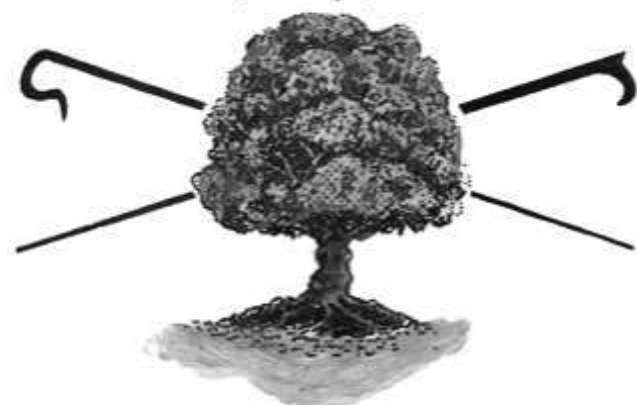
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No 191 solution

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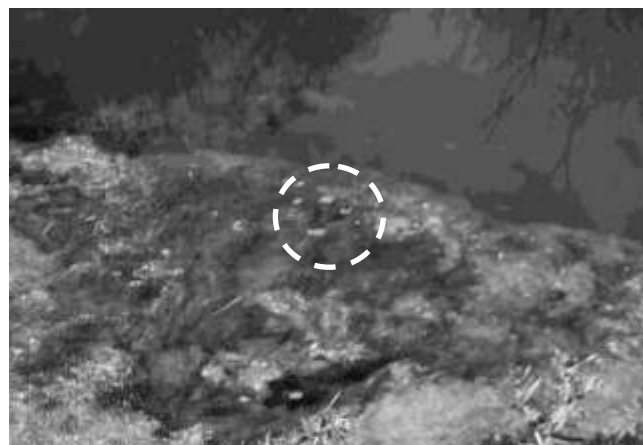
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**Spot the turtle
from page 3**



Margaret Kelland – a stalwart contributor to village life

By Tim Dean

A tradition at the Village Show is the awarding by the Horti Village Society of the Tom Chapman Award. This is given to someone who goes above and beyond to contribute to village life in Long Marston and Puttenham.

This year the award was given to Margaret Kelland. As many will know, Margaret lives in Astrope and has played an active part in the communities of both Long Marston and Puttenham for many years.

Whatever the event, if there's a job to be done, Margaret is there.

She is a long time WI member, organising the litter picks and helping with gardening projects in the village. She is on the committees of the Victory Hall and the Tennis Club and always very involved in their events – running a quiz, managing a BBQ or in charge of the tea urn.

Being an Astropian, she makes a significant contribution to events in Puttenham – helping at the Puttenham jumble sale, serving breakfast at May Day madrigals and decorating the church at Christmas.

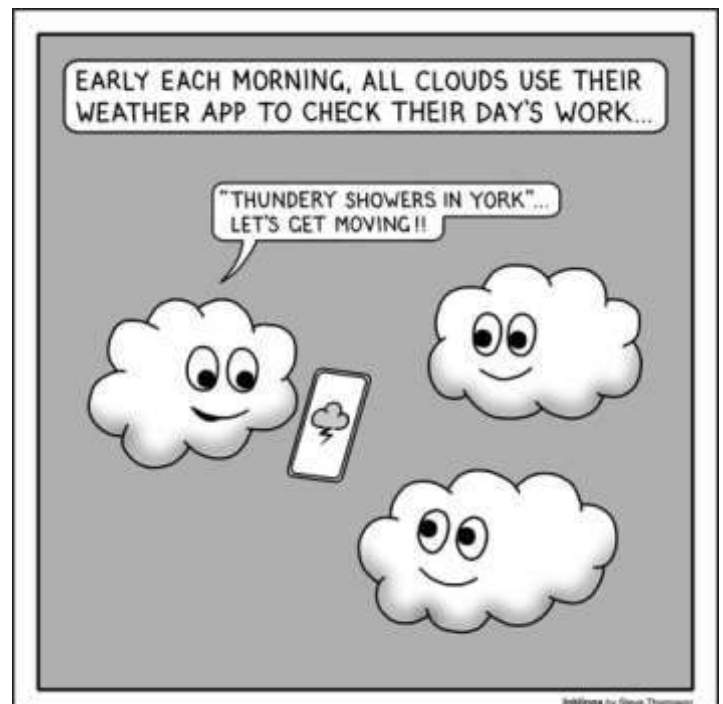
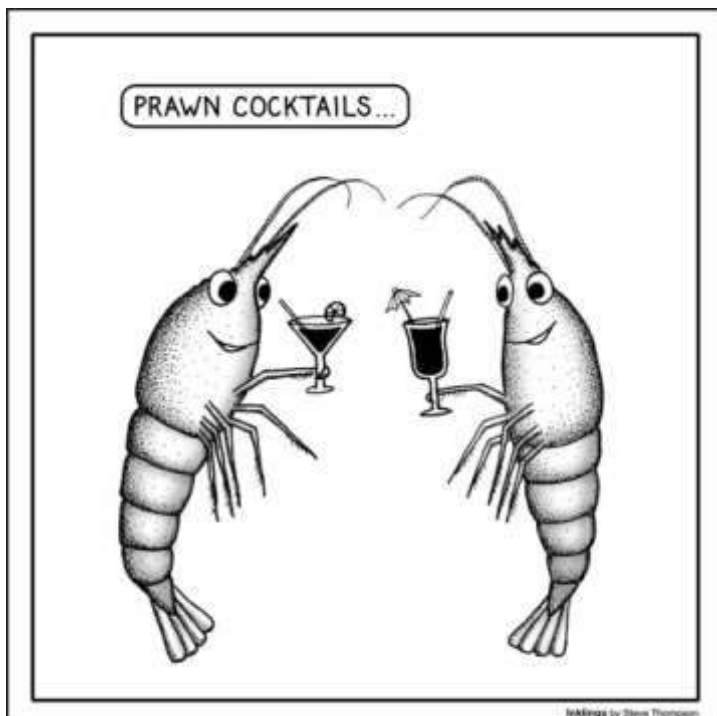
Margaret has always been a great supporter of Horti events including the Village Show, the pantomimes and the bonfire night fireworks.

Margaret isn't alone in all she does and the Horti would like to thank husband David for letting the village have so much of Margaret's time and for the support he gives her.



Margaret Kelland receiving the Village Award from Horti Chair, Oliver Mathews

Cartoon Corner - Inklings by Steve Thompson



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Richard Foster (Vice-Chairman)

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Vacancies 2

Clerk to the Parish Council

Chloe Collins 07516344248

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Villages Warden

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email: TRPCWarden@gmail.com

Where no personal telephone
number is shown use the clerks
Number 07516344248

More from the Show

Wilstone

In fields of green, where sheep do graze,
And springtime lambs in sunlight blaze.
Bullocks roam and oilseed sways,
As Meads Farmshop's warmth fills our days.

The Meads family's kindness, heart and soul,
In every smile, they make us whole.
On straw bales, we rest and share,
While tractors hum in morning air.

Logs for the fire, warmth we find,
By the Halfmoon Pub, where friends unwind.
Guy and Abi, with a welcoming cheer,
Serve Tring Sidepocket and Campfire Beer.

Souvlaki nights, with flavours so sweet,
Jam sessions fill the village street.
Jane's pub quiz, a lively affair,
With banter and laughter everywhere.

Reverend Jane at St. Cross stands tall,
Guiding with kindness, embracing us all.
Tea and cakes in gentle hands,
A village where everyone understands.

Open gardens, where colours bloom,
The fete in summer, joy to consume.
Classic cars and Farmer Dave's donkeys play,
In every corner, happiness stays.

Jackie's art captures life's grace,
While the choir lifts spirits with every embrace.
Peter the Mayor, with a heart so wide,
Keeps the village together with pride.

The Dog Olympics, a cheer in the air,
Volunteers work with love and care.
Ally runs the shop, a steady hand,
Where bacon baps and gossip are in demand.

Crochet, knitting, laughter so bright,
Morris dancers twirl through the night.
Canal boats glide on waters clear,
In this village, joy is always near.

From the roaring log fire, to the songs we sing,
The village's warmth is a beautiful thing.

above **Nigel Chaplin winning poem about Wilstone**

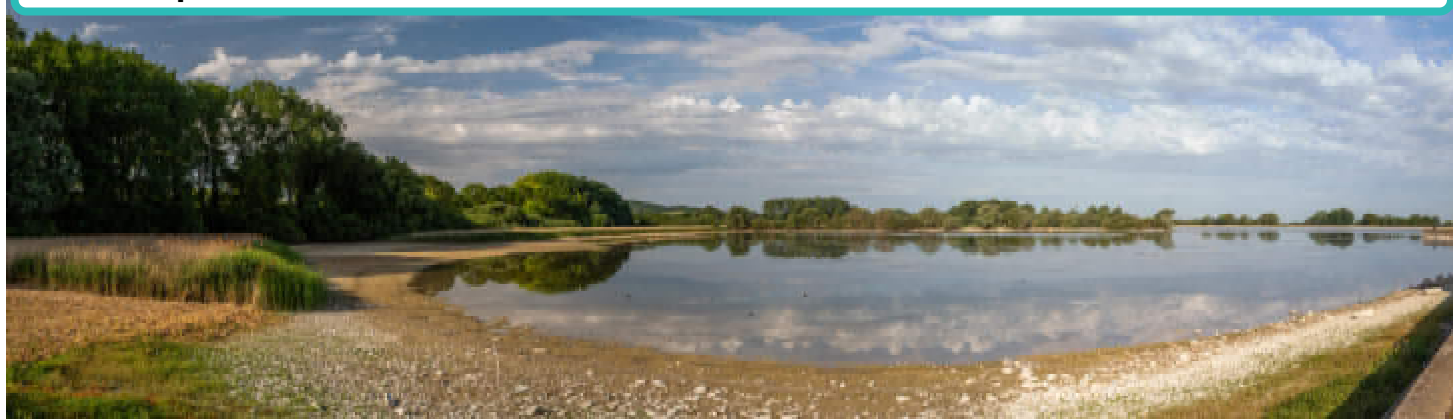
Above right **"Summer scene"- The winning photograph by Victoria Valkass.**

Right **Aerial shot of the show ground**



Photo spot "Solace"

by Mark Fowler



Weather warm but competition hot in Victory Hall

by Tim Dean

The

Victory Hall was bustling all afternoon at the Village Show with people eager to see who had won in the many fruit, veg, bakery and craft classes.

Entries were up on previous years, and as usual, they were laid out on the long tables covered in crisp white tablecloths and the all-important tickets with the judges' decisions and any comments.

The dry weather made the vegetable section a real challenge this year. However, congratulations to Lynn Bruges, who came away with the William Dean Cup and the Grace Trophy. Although the stars in this section were possibly Liz Josling's onions – she certainly knows them and for kerb appeal, Alan Knights' artichokes were beautiful. Daph Bateman's winning weirdly shaped potato does make you wonder what's in the soil in her garden!

Despite the weather, the flower section provided a fantastic display of blooms. Competition among the sweet peas was particularly strong. Overall, again, it was Lynn Bruges who came away with the Ernest Gregory Cup. Daph Bateman winning with her roses and Christine Rutter with her flower arrangement. Special mention for Yvonne Addison, who, despite spending many months organising the show, still managed to take prizes with her dahlias, rhubarb and eggs.

The bakery offerings looked delicious, and as always, competition was as stiff as a stiff peak. Given the large slices taken by the judges for 'tasting', they probably agreed. Christine Rutter took both cups in this section.

So, the grown-ups did good – but the real stars, and this bodes well for the future of this part of the show, were undoubtedly the children. Lots of entries, from small painted pebbles, edible necklaces, and miniature gardens to scary animals made from recycled materials, the tables were rammed. Congratulations to cup winners Olive Chapman, Isabelle Lear, Francesca Sewart and Sophie Hayden. Thanks to all the children who joined in and to Long Marston School Head, Laura, for encouraging the children to take part.



Young cup winners



Ladybirds



Recycled Monster

The photographic competition is increasingly popular. With mobile phones everyone is a potential David Bailey. Some stunning entries this year, including Victoria Valkass with her beautiful summer scene photo (see page 23). New Chapel Lane resident Daniel Adderley won with a lovely painting of the old chapel tower. Hopefully prints will be available soon (in aid of the tower fund?). Lynn Bruges and Clive Green won the cups for most points in the show overall.

Last but not least, the Joan Dean Allotment Cup was awarded to Alan Knight. Although we couldn't see it in the Hall, the judges were impressed by the variety of produce on his Potash Lane plot, the health of the plants, and its overall pleasing layout.

Thanks go to Noble Foods and Freshlay Farms for giving all our entrants a pack of their Golden Yolkers eggs. Thanks too to all of you who entered, to the judges and to Sally Smith and the Horti Hall team.



Clive Green - most points in show



Christine Rutter with both cups for bakery



Alan Knight