

nformation

LOCAL GROUPS

Halle Group	Jim Rankin 651170
Holly Tree Riding Stables	Gloria Robinson 722188
IT Basic Skills	David Nichols - 723837
Guild	Chapel Hall last Tuesday in month, 2.30pm
Mums & Tots	Village Hall Tues. mornings (term time)
Parish Council	Sarah Sherwood 01606 48577
Plumley Celtic FC	J Betts 01606 737602
Probus Club	D. Tricker 634756
WI	Village Hall, 1st Monday in month Christine England 722283

LOCAL CONTACTS

Village Hall Committee Chairman	David Nichols	723837
Village Hall Bookings	Penny Allen	722259
Chapel Hall Bookings	Bert Southern	722444
Tennis Courts & Play Area	Iain McCulloch	722535
Borough Councillor	Ted Fisher	01565 873904
Newsletter Editor	Glen Godson	722811
Newsletter Reporter	Peter Frier	722140
Plumley Stores & Post Office	J. Royle	722277

Newsletter e.mail: glengodson@plumley1971.fsnet.co.uk
Parish Council e.mail: plumleybt.parcouncil@tiscali.co.uk
Website: www.plumley-bexton-toft-parish-council.co.uk

Glass recycling:

Golden Pheasant Car Park

Mobile Library:

every other Tuesday
Village Hall 9.55am
Ascol Drive 10.35am

Refuse collection: Tuesdays

TaxiRider: 01565 621222
Use it or lose it!

Please notify the Editor of any changes to information on this page.
Letters to the Editor to:
Glen Godson
2 Malt Kiln Road, Plumley

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Plumley Village Newsletter

June 2008



PLUMLEY with TOFT and BEXTON PARISH COUNCIL May/June 2008

Clerk's contact details: Mrs Sarah Sherwood: 01606 48577; 42 Birches Lane, Lostock Green, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 7SN.E mail: sarahsherwood@btinternet.com

Parish Council web site: www.plumley-bexton-toft-parish-council.co.uk
We hope that you are finding the web site useful. Amongst other items, you will find details of planning applications we have received, any proposed road works and any local information useful to the Parish. You may view the plans on Macclesfield Borough Council's own website as well as at their offices. If you would like something included on the web site please let Sarah have the relevant details.

Annual Assembly was held on Tuesday 27 May at 8.00pm. in Plumley Village Hall. We were honoured and delighted that the newly elected **Chairman of Cheshire County Council** Steve Wilkinson was present and was the main speaker. In addition, PC Charlotte Body (Cheshire Police), Jonathan Royle (Plumley Village Stores), James Eaton (Plumley Methodist Church) and Pat Wharfe (Plumley WI) gave presentations. We also invited the three Cheshire East Councillors for Bucklow Ward (George Walton, Jamie Macrae and Andrew Knowles). George Walton was able to attend and gave an update on the current plans of Cheshire East Council. Ted Fisher, our Macclesfield Borough Councillor who will be in post until 31 March 2009, was unfortunately unable to be with us. Thank you to those who attended and made this another successful 'village' evening. Light refreshments, including, 'Plumley Moor Wine' kindly provided by Anne and David Thompson, followed the business part of the evening.

The Parish Council's next meetings are scheduled for Wednesday 25 June and 30 July at Toft Church Hall at 8.00pm on. As usual, you are most welcome to attend these meetings.

Highways: We are still waiting to hear from the Highways Agency so that we know exactly what they are planning to do following their survey of the Smoker Junction. We do know that MOVA traffic lights are likely to be used. We have not been given any precise details. Unfortunately, right at the last minute David Fyvie of the H A let us know that he could not come to the Parish Council meeting at the end of April as arranged, so another date for his visit, or that of another HA person, is being arranged.

Stolen Grids: We are alarmed that two drainage grids were stolen from adjacent to the bridge over the Peover Eye in Cheadle Lane. This followed the theft of two others in Flittogate Lane, Tabley and fifteen in High Legh. We have been told that the replacement cost is well over £3000. If you notice anything suspicious please let the Police know. There have also been recent thefts of golf buggies and York Stone

Plumley Moor Road : Resurfacing work done on part of Plumley Moor Road last year has 'failed'. Remedial work is scheduled to be done during this summer.

A556 : We understand that all work at the A556/A559 junction will be fully completed by 4 June and that by that date all traffic lanes/lights will be in use.

Community Speedwatch: There is no doubt that the presence of the volunteers encourages drivers to reduce their speed through the village to within the legal limit. This is particularly important if the speed reduction to 30 mph, which many people have asked for over the years, is to be effective. Please try to keep to the new safer limit- be warned that our Speedwatch team, as well as the Police, are out and about. The Speedwatch team cannot impose fines or penalties but are there as a reminder to

The Speedwatch team cannot impose fines or penalties but are there as a reminder to all road users of the speed limit; they let the police know details of vehicles exceeding the speed limit who in turn send a 'warning' letter, but no fine or penalty. During the last two, one hour, Speedwatch sessions, 78 vehicles going over 30 mph were recorded.

A further training course is to be held by Cheshire Constabulary, so please let Sarah know if you would like to be involved.

Community Police: Our newly appointed police lady is PC Charlotte Body who can be contacted by leaving a message on 0845 458 6380. Other police contact numbers are 0845 458 0000 or, for emergencies only, 999. RuralWatch is aimed at farms and country houses and businesses please register by ringing 0845 458 6380 or ask Sarah for more details.

Activity Session : Following the successful activity session held during the Easter holidays for youngsters aged 8 to 14, a further session was being arranged for 29 May. Macclesfield Borough Council provided the two leaders and the Parish Council paid for hire of the village hall and other incidental expenses. Please let Sarah know if you are interested in renewing or gaining a Community Sports Leader Award (CSLA) .

Playingfield/The Parish Plan Implementation Team (PPIT): We hope to hear more soon following recent discussions. We are moving things along as quickly as we can although we knew this would be a protracted venture! If you can help or would like to be involved please let Anne Thompson (723944) or Sarah, our Clerk, know.

Cheshire's Year of Gardens 2008 (C Y of G 2008): The parish council propose holding a 'Best Garden Competition' as our local involvement. Gardens will be judged from the highway; the judges will not walk into gardens. Judging will take place on 17 and 18 July weather permitting. There is no entry fee or arrangements; all gardens in Plumley, Toft and Bexton will be considered by the judge who comes from outside the area. Prizes will be awarded by Andrew Yates of 'Plantation' (formerly the Hidden Nursery) Please do look for further details on our own web site as well as on : www.yearofgardens08.com or in the press for all the events across the county..

Community Pride (formerly Best Kept Village) Competition: We have entered this annual competition again this year, so please try to keep things well looked-after during the judging season, which runs from April to September. We received a Runner-up prize last year, so let's try to win First Prize in 2008.

Anne and Derek Panagakis tend the Railway Station gardens but would appreciate some help, so please ring them (722428) if you can spare a little time. It is hoped that planned improvements to the station garden, funded by a grant from C Y of G 2008, and with help of volunteers, will be done soon.

TaxiRider: Just a reminder: We understand that this will continue to operate until at least July 2009 Please remember to use the TaxiRider - 01565 621222: Use it or lose it.

Local Elections : As already mentioned, the Councillors for the Bucklow Ward of the new Cheshire East Unitary Council as elected on 1 May are George Walton, Jamie Macrae and Andrew Knowles. The Plumley with Toft and Bexton Parish Councillors have not changed and a full list, with areas of special responsibility as to be decided at the June Parish Council meeting, will be detailed in the August Newsletter.

Mrs Sybil Crossman (Chairman and Cheshire Association of Local Councils Rural Woman of the year 2007/8, and Mrs Sarah Sherwood (Clerk) on behalf of Plumley with Toft and Bexton Parish Council

The Newsletter is now partly funded by the Parish Council but principally by the Village Hall.

Something for the younger reader

Q. Who was the first underwater spy?

A. *James Pond.*

Q. What has 4 eyes and a mouth?

A. *The Mississippi.*

Q. What did they award the man who invented the door-knocker?

A. *The No-bell prize.*

Q. Did you hear about the robbers who fell into the sea?

A. *They started a crime-wave.*

Q. What happened to the sailors when the boat carrying blue paint collided with the boat carrying red paint?

A. *They were all marooned.*

Knock! Knock!

Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Sadie.

Sadie who?

Sadie magic wods and I'll tell you!

Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Adolph.

Adolph who?

Adolph ball hit me in de mowf!

Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Shirley.

Shirley who?

Shirley you can open the door?

Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Howard.

Howard who?

Howard was the maths test today?

Q. What time is it when 10 elephants are chasing after you?

A. *Ten after one!*



Q. What game do elephants like to play most?

A. *Squash!*



Q. Why don't elephants ride bikes?

A. *Because they don't have a thumb to ring the bell!*

Cooking

Games

The Sunday Club

Bible Stories

Crafts

The Sunday Club has been up and running for a few months now at Plumley Methodist Church and it seems to be going well so far.

However, if there are any more children who would like to join us you'd be more than welcome.

We are also in need of some more volunteers to help with the Club. We have a rota system so it wouldn't be every week. Experience with children would be beneficial.

If you are interested, please contact:

Sarah Royle at Plumley Village Stores on 01565 722277

All children aged 2 - 8 years welcome
at Plumley Methodist Church 10.30 - 11.30am

went via Knutsford and Holmes Chapel. In earlier times the principal route to the North West had been via Northwich and Great Budworth, crossing the Mersey at Warrington, so Great Budworth declined as Knutsford flourished!

John Macadam's improved method of road construction was not introduced until around 1820 and even then it merely involved the use of three layers of graded stone compacted by rollers and crowned so that water drained to a ditch at the side. It was only quite a lot later still that the surface was bound by tar ('tarmacadam'). It is hardly surprising that continual pounding by horses and narrow-wheeled coaches and wagons soon broke up the surface of earlier roads. And until the railways took over, the only way of transporting cattle was by road. The drovers naturally avoided paying turnpike tolls if they could, but up to 400 head of cattle must have left quite a mess behind them! Often with hundreds of miles to travel, the cattle had to be shod for the journey (with special shoes called 'cues'). The Holmes Chapel road was definitely a drovers' route and the presence of both an inn and a smithy at Holford Street (i.e. the Smoker) makes it likely that the Street was also used.

The Plumley stretch of the Street has been altered greatly in the last hundred years, particularly on the approach to the Northwich bypass (and they are still at it!). The Peover Eye was also re-routed to go under the road about fifty yards further towards Tabley (you can still see the old river bed). Near Holford Farm there had been a cottage right at the side of the road and the old lady who lived there refused to sell it. Only when she died were they able to knock it down and straighten the road. My suspicion is that it had been built in the days when roadside verges were common land and anyone who could build a house up to the roof in 24 hours was entitled to stay there. In Plumley itself, The Grove and Elm Cottage on Plumley Moor Road and Milton Bank on Trouthall Lane are said to be of this type.

Mike Horton

KEEP FIT



The keep-fit sessions at Plumley Village Hall are now run by Extend Exercises and a fully-qualified teacher takes you through a gentle series of exercises, mostly from a seated position, that ultimately moves every muscle in your body - especially those that you never knew you had!

The sessions are casual, pay-as-you-go and will now continue until June 26th when they will be reviewed to see if demand justifies resumption in early September.

So please come along, try it out and you could well be surprised at the fun the group enjoys. Sessions are every Thursday at 2pm - 3pm.

Plumley Village Hall

Plumley Garden Party, Saturday 28th June 2008 at 1pm

Just a brief reminder for you to note the date for this year's Garden Party in your diary.

I am pleased to report that arrangements are well in hand. Our thanks go to everyone who has already offered help and we are particularly grateful to Avril and Vinny Clarke who are organising the event again this year.

Entrance will be 50p per person and this will buy a programme which advertises local services and facilities.

If you wish to place an advert, please submit your request and 'copy' by email to: davidjnichols@lineone.net

As usual there will be a variety of events and a range of stalls and competitions, including:

Miniature Garden Competition

You can enter this by using a container not more than 16 inches round or square (e.g. a seed tray or dish.) Miniature Gardens to be placed on the Competition Table by 1.15pm on the day. Remember to put your name in an envelope and place it under your container. Prizes for Best Adult's display and Best Child's display.

Best Single Rose

Enter by displaying your SINGLE ROSE STEM in your own simple container. Put your name in an envelope and place it under your container on the Competition Table by 1.15pm on the day. Prize awarded.

Funny Veg

Just for a laugh! If you have a curiously shaped vegetable, bring it along and display it on the Competition Table.

Fancy Dress

For adults and children: please be at the Village Hall by 1pm. Prizes awarded.

Please come along and have a look round the many stalls:

- Test your skills at various games
- Stock up your garden from our Quality Plant Stalls
- Find a bargain at the Trinkets & Treasure Table

and don't forget the Tombola and Raffle!

After all that, sit down with a cup of tea or coffee and something to eat provided by Plumley WI and have a chat with your friends while JPD Mereside Brass Band entertain you. Refreshments will also be available in the Beer Tent.

If you would like to help, it would make things so much easier- just contact Avril or Vinnie Clarke on 722006, or any Village Hall Committee member. Many thanks.

David Nichols
Chairman

The Other Theatre Company

a local critique of the recent performance of The Canterville Ghost



It never ceases to amaze me that musical theatre of a high standard can be produced by a local, amateur cast and successfully performed in a small, rural Village Hall but that is precisely what The Other Theatre Company achieved once again, with their performance of Oscar Wilde's The Canterville Ghost.

Wilde's parody of a English country house ghost being browbeaten by a visiting American family does not have the most inspired dialogue but there are some interesting characters, clever observations and one-liners which have stood the test of time.

There were enthusiastic and confident performances all round, notably including the younger members of the cast, in the parts of the Otis children, Virginia (Hannah Mattock) and twins Washington (Greg Walker) and Junior (Teddy Wilshaw). Hiram Otis (Roger Barlow) led from the front the family's disregard for English tradition and blind belief in all things American. The ghost (Harry Kennedy) is, of course, the star of the show, being blessed with the best costumes, some of the best lines and the only false hand in the entire play. The part was devoured with gusto and obvious relish. My first impression of the phantoms (Katherine Bland, Helen Coultas, Glen Godson, Tom Lloyd, Paula Mattock) was that they were a little too quiet to be malevolent but they grew on me and their slightly understated performance became eerily spooky.

There is a lot of music in this show - but not many good tunes, in my view. One notable exception is a delightful little song, "Poor Ghost", which was performed very touchingly by Virginia. Much of the music makes difficult singing but it was tackled with verve and the line-up was headed with two fine, strong singers in the roles of Lucretia (Rebecca Taylor) and Mrs Umney (Sarah Sherwood). The twin Otis brothers delivered a powerful performance of "Terrible Twins".

Underpinning the high quality of the performances were excellent costumes and make-up, an imaginative set and seamless instrumental accompaniment.

In summary, another tour de force by The Other Theatre Company, a delightful evening's entertainment and I'm already looking forward to the next offering.

Manchester Airport Community Relations (excerpts from enews)

Closure of Runway 1

This will take place for five nights commencing Sunday July 7 at 22.15 until Friday July 11 at 0600 and is due to general maintenance together with the annual walking inspection. All operations will take place on Runway 2 during this time.



Rail News



There will be NO TRAINS running, due to engineering work on our line on Sunday June 15th, Saturday June 21st and Sunday June 22nd. A replacement bus service will operate but not at the same timetabled trains and it should be noted that bus passes are **not valid** on these buses. Trains between Northwich and Chester are not affected on the 15th and 21st but the line is closed entirely on the 22nd. (Work is being carried out at Knutsford).

Two very successful rail events occurred in May with the steam shuttle Altrincham - Chester on the 4th in appalling weather and the Somerset Coast Express on the 10th - in glorious sunshine. Both ran to time and were well supported and other schemes to promote the line are planned. On Thursday June 19th and again on August 21st the 1932 towards Manchester is a "music train" en route to the Railway Inn at Mobberley, returning from Mobberley at 2159 (Plumley 2208). Musicians will play on the train and at the pub. There are no charges - ordinary evening cheap return on the train and no pre-booking required. A similar train from Piccadilly on 23rd July and 24th September has the revived Golden Pheasant as its venue (train due 1909, dep 2135)

Nationally, said to be due to public request, the present system of up to 70 different fares structures is being abolished in favour of 3! From May 18th in comes the ADVANCE fare which replaces Savers, Cheap Day, Away Day and so on. Railcards will also now be accepted on the Advance tickets which can be booked up to one day before travel and are discounted rates. From September 7th an ANYTIME fare comes in which allows purchase on day of travel on any train but the Cheap Day version is not usable between 1530 and 1815. Railcards also accepted. Thus a lot of bargain early fares will go (e.g. you could get to Euston for £13 return) and another drawback is that if you cancel there are no refunds on tickets bought. We understand that local programmes are not affected e.g. Wayfarer (now £9.20 or £4.60 concession), Ranger tickets etc.

Peter Frier

The Street (continuing Mike Morton's ramble down the lanes)

One Plumley road that was never a 'lane' is Manchester Road. Being an old Roman road it was often just called the 'Street'. The portion near Tabley was called Tabley Street and the area between Holford and The Smoker was called Holford Street. During the 17th century there was a chapel alongside the road known as the 'Chapel in the Street'. It had been built half way between the Leycesters' estate at Nether Tabley and the Daniells' estate at Over Tabley in order to serve them both; it is shown on early 17th century maps of Cheshire (e.g. by John Speed). The house subsequently built on the site is on the left, just beyond the Knutsford traffic lights, tucked in behind some big yew trees that were probably in the original churchyard.

People have always complained about this road. In my youth it was a three-lane highway with the middle lane a sort of No Man's Land, supposedly reserved for overtaking - in either direction. Horrific! In my grandparents' day they counted themselves lucky if they could drive from Manchester to Chester without a puncture. In 1770 it was even worse. Let me quote from a description of a "Northern Tour" by Arthur Young: "From Dunholme (Dunham) to Knutsford Turnpike: it is impossible to describe these infernal roads in terms adequate to their deserts...and of all roads north of Newcastle (Staffs): I would advise all travellers to consider all this country as sea and as soon think of driving into the ocean as venturing into such detestable roads". This stretch of road had become a turnpike road in 1752 and was on the main coaching route from Manchester to London, which at that time



Plumley W.I.



Monday 7th July at 7.30pm. Penny Dean will be speaking about being small in a tall person's world. The competition is "Small and Beautiful".

There will be a Garden Party in August. Details will be in the next issue of the Plumley Village News.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that the Plumley W.I. Darts Team, of which I am pleased to say I am a member, has won the Cheshire Federation of Womens' Institute's Championship. The team is thrilled to bits; it's a dream come true and a great reward for all the practicing and matches we have played. We have decided to take it in turns to look after the cup.

The W.I. has such a lot to offer members. We get up to all sorts of things. Besides darts we have a regular walking group; we visit local places but if you want to you can go on one of the longer walks like the recent walk in Malham Dale in the Yorkshire Dales. This was a County walk and about forty W. I. members from Institutes all over Cheshire joined in and by all accounts had a jolly good time. The National Federation of Womens' Institutes A.G.M. will be held in Liverpool this year. This is when the W.I. can put forward their resolutions to be passed on to the Government, with a hope that they will be implemented.

We have classes for anyone who wishes to paint and if enough members are interested in a particular subject, a class can be arranged. At the moment some of the members are working very hard getting their entries ready for the Cheshire Show on 17th / 18th June. We are very lucky to have these talented ladies in our midst. Besides our own outings, we can join in with the C.F.W.I. events, as in the Federation Open Day at Capesthorpe Hall in May. On June 28th the W.I. will be looking after the catering for Plumley Village Fete. This is always an enjoyable event. Our monthly meetings are just part of a huge organisation which has so much to offer. A member can just attend the monthly meetings or if they wish can join in as many events as they can; it's left up to the individual. It's a great way to meet people and make friends. I have just touched on a small part of what goes on but it gives readers an idea of what we are all about. Our image of "Jam and Jerusalem" is fading into the past. The ladies who helped start the W.I. in this country have left us a wonderful legacy. My own late Mother-in-law was the first President of Plumley W.I. back in 1954. I think she would be pleased with the way the W.I. has grown and especially as we have our own rose now, named "Jam and Jerusalem", grown by Fryers of Knutsford. What a lovely tribute.

Virginia Williamson - Tel: 01565 722260

Mums & Toddlers



9.45 - 11.15 in term-time.

Pre-school children (and babies) can enjoy toys, craft activities, sing-a-longs and refreshments. New members are always welcome. Join us for a chat and a cup of tea.

Only £2.00 for one or more children.

Please tel: **Carolyn on 723190** for more information

Plumley Methodist Church



On Sunday 6th April we had a wonderful evening of worship and praise at the Circuit Home Missions Service led by Rev. B. Dodd. It was great to see the Church so full with friends, those from other Churches and many villagers too. Also included was the re-dedication of the newly refurbished and extended pipe organ by Rev. C. Makonde and a presentation of a certificate was made to Ian Lee for his long service to church music. It's hard to believe that he started playing the organ 50 years ago!

May we thank all of you who often join us for worship and continue to support our social events.

On Saturday 24th May we enjoyed a super evening of varied music with Robin Coulthard on the organ and soloists Barbara Turner and David Hay. Again, it was an opportunity to share musical talent and fellowship, with the newly refurbished organ.

Best Kept Village Awards

The judges were in Plumley on Saturday 24th May and Ian saw them looking at the Church and chatted to them. They were most impressed with how well cared for the grounds looked. A special thanks is due to Paul Sanderson who now cuts the grass each week, to Ian who recently cut the hedge and others who sweep up and pick up litter. No doubt we shall hear the overall verdict soon.

Forthcoming Events

Saturday 7th June 10 - noon. Coffee Morning with stalls and raffle.

Saturday 5th July 7.30pm. Summer Concert with strawberries and cream. Owen Wynne Chorale. Tickets £6.

Saturday 12th July Coffee Morning. N.B. not 1st Sat. of the month.

August - Date to be confirmed. David Shaw and his young friends will again entertain us with a Musical Evening. Look for posters nearer the time.



Gardening Tips

After a long, dry spell comes the warm rain and hungry slugs and snails venture forth looking for their favourite food - young dahlia shoots! To deter them, cut off the base of a 6" - 7" plastic pot and place around the plant as a collar. Push it into the ground about an inch to anchor it and then spray the outside surface with WD40 (from garages, B&Q etc.). The snails will then turn their attention to your runner beans which they find just as delectable and if you have grown them in 10" fibre tubes then plant them a couple of inches proud and spray the outside with WD40. Conserve moisture with rotted compost or bark chips thickly laid but do not use lawn clippings if you have used a weed and feed on your lawn. Rust and blackspot can easily mar roses in this area so spray fortnightly with Systhane or similar fungicide if you wish. **Green Finger**

“Down on the farm” from Stephen Wharfe



Anybody who has been gardening recently will not need me to remind them what a slow, late, difficult spring this has been. Spring work on the farm has been slow and disjointed with most crops being several weeks behind but as we all know, nature usually comes to the rescue and everything will catch up.

If you remember last month's report, we were due to have a number of school visits. Well, last week we had over 120 primary school children along with teachers and helpers. Two of the visits were from a Manchester inner city school and I found it both fascinating and rewarding to see how the children interacted with the farm, the animals and a life which must seem quite alien to them.

After a shy start we ran a demonstration of sheep handling and the youngsters were able to see the sheep at close quarters in the handling pens and experienced weighing and sorting the sheep. This really broke the ice. Their thirst for knowledge was almost unquenchable and we had to field a veritable avalanche of questions. We took them on a walk around the farm, explaining how and why we grow the various crops. Ironically, the highlight of the walk was when our sheepdog, Tess, in her quest to always be first everywhere, slipped and fell off a footbridge over the stream and landed upside down in the water. Thankfully nothing was hurt apart from her pride but it really did cause huge amusement for the children.

Finally we brought them into the farmyard to see the cattle and to see and feel the various cereals which we grow and an explanation of their uses. Cereal packets which they all recognised were employed to help them realise the connection between the crop in the field and the food on their plates, something that they, nor I suspect the adults, had ever connected. We hope that if these children form a positive image of farming and the countryside at an early age then it will stay with them for life.

With talk of global food and energy shortages it has become apparent to me that many people are beginning to show much more interest in food production. For several decades now it has been taken for granted that supermarket shelves would always be laden with food; now many are beginning to wonder if it will always be thus.

Food and energy production has always been inexorably linked and I rather suspect that it always will be. Growing energy crops is nothing new. Less than one hundred years ago over a quarter of the land in this country was so used. The horse was the prime mover and they were fed on grass, hay and oats, all of which were grown on the land.

“The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

A seemingly contradictory metaphor but one which really does have a ring of truth in it, especially when viewed from a distance with an open mind.

Letter from the Editor



We are grateful to Peggy Hoey and Susan McDonald for their kind donations to the running of the Newsletter. Thanks also to Mike Morton and Stephen Wharfe for their continuing contributions - both extremely interesting.

The Bell-ringers' "Grand Day Out"

“There were bells on a hill, but I never heard them ringing, no I never heard them at all, 'til there was you.....” - so went the lyrics to a Lennon and McCartney song, way back in the mists of time. I have heard that love can be blind, but I have never known love to be deaf! If the famous Beatles songwriters had written those words on a Sunday in Liverpool, then the phrase may not have “rung” true.

The Cathedral Church of Christ, Liverpool, was the destination this year for the Bell-ringers of St Oswald's. The sandstone monolith dominates the western skyline and is the largest Anglican cathedral in the world. Superlatives do not end here, for the bells are also the heaviest. At 219 feet above floor level (another record), thirteen bells surround the huge Bourdon bell “Great George” of 14.75 tons. Although only twelve bells make the peal, the thirteenth is occasionally used during practice rings. Their combined weight is 16 tons, with the tenor accounting for 4 tons, such is its mighty size.

As Led Zeppelin sang “*Stairway to Heaven*”, our intrepid party took to the luxury of two consecutive lifts to ascend to the ringing chamber. No wheezing or requisites for oxygen allowed us to join the Liverpool ringers with a non-asthmatic *hello*. Two hours of “heavy metal”, whereby new practices were gained and old skills redressed: we all enjoyed our brief visit. Certain hardy members also experienced the ear-splitting and brain-numbing sound of the bells from the belfry itself. And those of sturdy leg climbed further to the tower roof for a panoramic view of the city, Mersey estuary and the Wirral peninsular.

As we left the cathedral, refreshment of a liquid kind was called for. Our afternoon stroll was littered with a few notable landmarks. Liverpool Institute of Performing Arts had us dancing joyfully along the pavement. Street sculpture resembling lost luggage had one cynic comparing this to the woes of Terminal 5. Finally The Philharmonic Dining Rooms - a public house - was greeted by a stampede of non-temperance drinkers pledging to buy beer, Pinot Grigio and bar snacks.

The interior of “*The Phil*” resembled a Victorian gentleman's club. Why two of the rooms were called Brahms and Lizst, was lost to most of the party. The *Grande Lounge* was a hotchpotch of art nouveau and neo-classical. The semi-clad and somewhat nubile figures adorning the room added an artistic diversion as we quenched our thirst. However, the grade two listed gentlemen's lavatories, with the leopard skin effect urinals became a source of intellectual stimulus – indeed, they can even be seen on t'internet.

Finally, after substituting Sunday roast for a Chinese banquet, the charabanc returned. Liverpool celebrates the European Capital of Culture this year, but the Bell-ringers' contribution was limited to cheesy grins. And, as *Ding-dong merrily on high* rang through most people's ears, it was time to leave this historic city and head *homeward bound*.

Martin Wright April 2008