

# COMMUNITY CALL

Edition 2006/02

Newsletter

Autumn 2006

## Newsletter - Fourth Issue

Welcome to this fourth issue of the new Community Call. Please feel free to submit articles or send in letters and comments.

Contact myself, or any member of the committee, if you feel you have something to share.

**David Harmer - Editor**

Email - [davedharmer@aol.com](mailto:davedharmer@aol.com)  
phone 01442-874931

## Newcomers

A warm welcome to the many new residents who have moved in to Ashley Green in the past year or so. We are delighted to see so many new faces coming and supporting recent events and taking an active part to support the maintenance of buildings in the village and helping to foster community spirit here in the village.

### Not a Member Yet?

Join the Ashley Green Community Association now and take a more active part in your village. Annual fee £5.00 per person - Family rates too!

Contact Membership Secretary  
01442-876965

## Future Events

- **FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY - Old School 6pm.**  
Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December
- **A TASTE OF BURNS**  
Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January
- **FERRET RACING**  
Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March

Please support these events. They are great fun and a useful source of funds.

*(Watch out for details on Posters and Flyers, or call/mail for information)*

## The Chairman writes

The search for renewable sources of reliable energy features regularly in our national media. Allow me to introduce a similar theme to this newsletter.

An input of energy and enthusiasm is required to maintain our inheritance of the community facilities that surround the Green so that they may be of benefit to all who live in the locality. Without contributions from members of our community the Old School and Village Hall would become dilapidated and unsuitable for use by the various societies and groups that meet there regularly. St. John's could no longer afford its ministry and the spirit of community life might be extinguished.

Thankfully, there are a number of members of the community who steadfastly contribute vim and vigour to conserve these amenities and the conviviality of village life. Some are committed members of the Community Association council. Other supporters boost the supply of energy when they can; for example the army of helpers at the Village Fair and the bonfire and fireworks evening, and the foursome who devised a quiz to challenge our intellects at Quiz night. Not forgetting clientele of the Golden Eagle who will sponsor a Christmas meal for the more senior members of the Village.

As a committed member, Mark Broschomb completed his three years as Chairman of the Association in June but continues to serve on the Executive Committee to mastermind the care of the various Community Association premises. His friendly, exuberant personality has fired the community spirit that is prevalent in the Village and his generosity and expertise have transformed the structure and appearance of the Village Hall.

Under Mark's benevolent supervision the kitchen in the Hall is currently being refurbished. The space has been completely gutted and the water tanks relocated.

The walls and floor will be re-clad and the equipment, that we can currently afford, was installed at the beginning of November. No longer will those willing to cater for events need to cope with the worn and inadequate capacity of the equipment. The stainless steel, commercial standard, facilities should lighten their task.

We have been accruing funds to pay for these improvements over the past few years but once the bills for the materials and equipment have been paid our bank account will be precariously low hence the need to organise fund raising events such as the Auction of Promises on 7<sup>th</sup> October). The number of those able and willing to attend this event may have been disappointing but the generosity of the donors and the bidders was astounding. The £2,550 raised is a real restorative boost to our finances. (*see later report*). Our auctioneer, Malcolm Rimmington, deserves special mention for taking on the role of auctioneer that evening and for his reappearance in the role of quiz master at the quiz evening.

Before concluding I would like to thank two individuals who have contributed much to Ashley Green. The first is Fred Wykes, long term inhabitant of Ashley Green who fought determinedly with the authorities to maintain the use of the redundant village school for the use of the community, applied his DIY skills to renovate the premises and was the first chairman of the Association. The second is Jill Lea - (see later article). Fred moved to a new home in Cornwall earlier this summer, and Jill is following her family to Cornwall before the end of the year. We shall miss them.

Let me encourage all readers of this newsletter to respond positively to invitations to the listed forthcoming events and to take up membership of the Community Association so that together we can continue to light up life in our community.

**Vivienne Withall - Chairman**

# Village Events Roundup

## Village Fair

Well - we did it again! The sun shone on our annual village fair. And yet again it turned out to be a huge success. We made a profit of over £2,100, so many thanks to the team of helpers and also to those who came and parted with their money and hopefully enjoyed themselves at the same time.

This year we had to compete with the England football match. Initially we thought this would cause people to stay away from the fair, but in fact the reverse was true. Mark Broschomb and helpers set up a wide screen plasma screen in the village hall. This, along with a steady supply of beer, kept the football supporters happy, particularly as England won.

We had an even greater array of stalls this year thanks to a stalwart effort by Margaret Flowers. We particularly like to support locals who can contribute with their own small businesses or hobbies. . It was good this year to be joined by Brenda and Kevin from Johns Lane Farm who were selling delicious locally produced ice cream and home made cakes and who brought along a newborn calf for a Guess the Weight competition. Many of the stall holders from outside the village commented on what a friendly lot we are and asked if they could come again next year!

The local Dog Display team gave a spectacular show with some very clever and agile dogs running through tunnels and balancing on planks etc. A big thank you to Colin for organising this. Laura Cutter bravely followed up with a show for the more average dogs parading for the best looking (won by Alf) and best biscuit catcher (won by Jake).

Di Burnett, our enthusiastic youth leader, kept the children on their toes with races and games, after which they had their annual tug of war - girls vs boys - which the girls won this year. After the football had finished the Tug of War team from the Rose and Crown at Hawridge and The Golden Eagle were ready to do battle. The Rose and Crown won this one – better luck next time Golden Eagle. We couldn't do any of this without a steady supply of food and drink on such a hot day.

Thanks again to the ladies of the WI who produced a steady supply of tea and cakes.

Kim and staff from the Golden Eagle bravely manned the b-b-q throughout the heat of the day.

We had a rousing start to the festivities of the evening with two local gigs provided by Jamie and Jenny Hayward. It's good to encourage local talent - and they are good! We then relaxed on the green with a lovely meal provided by Kim's barbecue. It was a beautiful warm summer's evening with the last revellers leaving after midnight.

Thanks to the many people who made this Fair such a success. I can't mention all the names, but you know who you are. I think we had a lot of fun ourselves organising and being part of such a great event. Our annual Fair brings together the whole village. It gives us a sense of community and belonging, and a chance to catch up with old friends, and meet our new neighbours. *Mary Axon.*

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## THE AUCTION OF PROMISES

On October 7th, the village hall was the location for a new type of event, an auction of promises made by, or through, people of Ashley Green. It was a most enjoyable evening for those who attended and, in addition, raised over £2,500 towards the hall's kitchen project, making it financially the most successful evening event that we can remember.

The promises were extremely varied, from a day's fishing at Latimer (promised by John Howe) to a silk scarf specially dyed by Elizabeth Foster. From a night's baby - sitting (Jamie and Jenny Hayward) to a day's gliding (Carr Withall). From a special massage (Yvonne Flanagan) to a promise of temptation in chocolate shortbread (Margaret Edenborough) - and there were many more. Several local firms and specialists chipped in - Alan Turner promised gutter clearance for a house, the Golden Eagle offered a 3 course meal for 2, Matthew Rance of Wood Image promised a garden Arbour and Kevin Hughes of Shooters Way driving range offered 2 golf lessons.

The bees, damsons and sloes of Ashley Green also appeared in various guises.

And we could all be looked down on by the winner of Jill and Lee Craze's offer of a hot - air balloon ride.

Not all can be mentioned here, but the range of promises was wide and involved many generous people.

Everything was sold, thanks in no small measure to the excellent auctioneer, Malcolm Rimmington. He seemed to the manor born and certainly looked the part, ably assisted by his clerk, Elizabeth Foster, with Jill Lea representing those who could not be present but had made bids in advance - the sealed bids - which did win some of the promises. We should not overlook the contribution of Keith Foster either, who assisted Malcolm to wear a REAL bow tie, by showing how to tie it.

Bidding was often fiercely competitive, taking some of the figures well beyond the expectations of those who had made the promises. There were reports of some family disputations - wives bidding when husbands were not looking, daughters pushing prices well over their mothers' sense of value, couples disagreeing over when to stop bidding. However, none of these were terminal (!) and your reporter has not heard of any pending divorces as yet.

A lot of hard work went into the preparation. Elizabeth dealt with the overall organisation, Cindy Poston collected the promises and Yvonne Flanagan prepared the catalogue. They and Ann Turner bought the food and drink for the evening and John Hollylee provided the music at the disco. Our thanks to them all! Because there had not been such an auction in the village, in recent times at least, there was some nervousness about 2 weeks before the event as to its success - but it was better than alright on the night!!

The auction itself raised over £1850. Several people made donations, with one of £200, and adding everything up gave a grand total of just under **£2,550**.

So thanks to you all - the promisers, the workers, the bidders, present and not present, the donors, all of those who attended.

**A very good evening indeed!!**  
John Poston.

## A bit of History

### Ashley Green Characters

(By Lorna Ingham)

The new and welcome speed restrictions have slowed the rush of traffic through the village but even at 30 mph a 21<sup>st</sup> Century traveller simply has time to register the standard village equipment in Ashley Green of pub, old school, village green and church.

When everyone can surf the world at home the unique nature of our own surroundings are often lost in a blur of commuting. Every village is unique with it's own particular stories and the corners of Ashley Green from the school to the graveyard all carry voices from the past.

Bare historical facts can't really give you much of a flavour of what life was like in years gone by but just the name of our village allows a glimpse into what this land used to look like. It's of Anglo Saxon origin meaning Ash Field and refers to the huge swathe of forest that once covered this part of the Chiltern Hills, so it's possible that a dwelling or two may have been centred around the village well since the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Who knows what comings and goings the well saw but by the time of a local census in 1798 there were apparently 98 men between the ages of 16 –60 who lived in the village and in the earliest government census of 1801 whilst Chesham Town was home to 1,910 people, Ashley Green and Bellingdon had 559 inhabitants in 115 families living in 101 houses. But it wasn't until 1876 that the village finally became a parish in it's own right. The church of St John the Evangelist was built at a total cost of over £2,000 and provided a centrepiece for the village.



*Children on the Green circa 1910 - Bucks County Library*

But it's the people rather than the buildings that put the flesh on the stories of a village and one well remembered character was the Rev'd Whitwell. He was the village vicar during the Second World War and had been an actor before he was ordained. He had a fine and very powerful "stage" voice and knew how to use it. Every Friday a sermon came through the post giving him plenty of time to learn it off by heart. People loved to hear him and the church was always full. So many said that they loved to hear a man preach direct from the heart!

It was the Rev'd Whitwell who planted the laburnum tree in the church yard opposite the Old Vicarage in memory of his son Peter, a bomber pilot who was killed in the first raid on Berlin. The vicar could always see the tree from his study.

The wartime village Policeman was a Mr Topham who lived at the police house on the Green, Silverdale, rented by the police from the Bakers of Rose Cottage who had recently had the house built at the end of their garden. Almost opposite was Rosie Darvil's cherry orchard, which was a lovely sight in the spring but the birds had most of the cherries. It must be said that much of Mr Topham's time was spent digging for victory planting potatoes, wearing dungarees and wellingtons rather than his special uniform but he was once called out to action when two girls thought they spotted a German parachutist in the Glebe Meadow. Jumping out of his wellies and into his uniform by the time he was ready to confront the invader most of the village had already appeared on the green and the Headteacher was able to tell him "It's alright Mr Baker! This is Mr Sommerville's nephew who was given permission to pitch his tent in the Glebe on his RAF leave".

It was during the war that the well was sealed up and concreted over. Children used to swing on the wheel and go down in the bucket but with an extra influx of refugee children unused to village ways it was deemed unsafe.

Ashley Green still had very few houses during the war so every spare room was taken up by the London evacuees and there were so many extra pupils at the school that another school mistress, Mrs Turner, came up from Berkhamsted daily to take an extra class in the village hall. She didn't dress like other teachers and could probably be describe as a "green" long before it became fashionable. She was very natural and wore long flowery skirts and amber beads and taught the children a lot about nature. On sunny days she played a little tune on a whistle and the children came out of the hot room to have lessons under the chestnut tree.

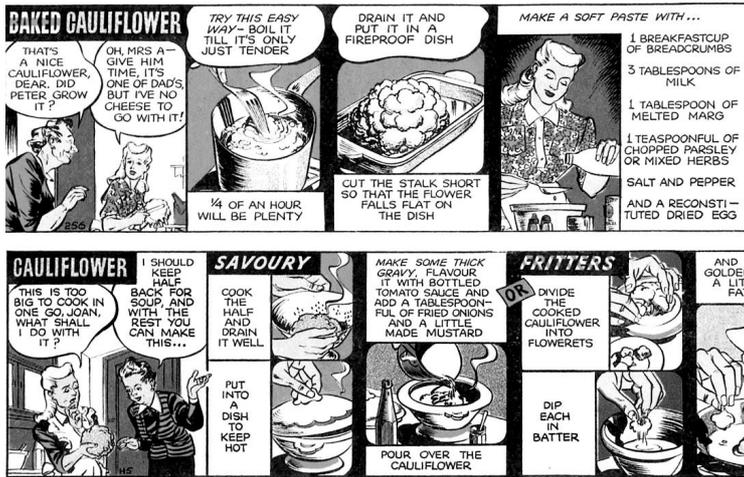
(This is the same Mrs Turner who featured in the last two issues. Obviously someone a bit before her time perhaps, different, and well remembered.)

The children adored Mrs James the headmistress, she came from Kendal in the Lake District was very rotund and like the vicar had a wonderful speaking voice. They often made jokes about her size but Mrs James would only laugh, she wouldn't think of accusing the children of being "sizest" and told even better jokes against herself. One little boy said he wished Hitler could come to Ashley Green, as then he would know that he had failed and we were not starving in England!

Perhaps the Government decision that farm workers needed more energy foods might explain Mrs James size. Every week there was a good display of meat pies and lumps of cheese in the village hall with crowds of people going in to claim their rations. Town dwellers who weren't so lucky had to make do with what supplies they could and there were plenty of recipe books on how to make the most of your rations.

*(continued over)*

Many grew their own vegetables and one cauliflower could make three meals! Here are some ideas from a wartime recipe book.



*(Eat your heart out Jamie Oliver!!)*

The village shop would do it's best for supplies providing fresh bread from the oven at the back and milk from the farm and the counter would be heaped up with square biscuit tins. Stamps for the post office were kept in a wooden fruit bowl and when larger stamps were issued there was not enough room in the fruit bowl so an extension was made. It was a pudding bowl.



*The Corner Shop - Bucks County Library*

At night when it was lights out for all, the Hall was used by the Home Guard to patrol the blackout and ensure that there weren't too many spectators for the air raids over London and once or twice a year the hall was used for a dance to cheer everyone up. Tea and coffee could not be supplied, so the usual drink was orange squash made up in Rose Cottage and carried across the Green in buckets. What would those wartime dancers have thought of the new kitchen if they could see the hall today?

Wartime stories from "Within Living Memory" published by the Buckinghamshire Federation of Women's Institutes and Countryside Books. With contributions from villagers **Enid Reeves & Joan Ayres.**

*(Our thanks to Lorna Ingham for drawing these memories together.)*

## Ashley Green Women's Institute



The W.I. has had an eventful year with 4 new members joining us. Three of our members have been very ill but are now back in the fold, much to our relief.

We have had delightful walks and chatty lunches nearly every month throughout the year and some very entertaining speakers at our monthly meetings.

These have included Mr. David Wass, an ex-policeman who spoke on the many ingenious ways people shoplift, Mrs. Jill Lea who entertainingly informed us on the art of carefree composting, Zena Skinner (Yes - the TV cookery expert in the 60's and 70's) on her life from W.R.N.S. to the present day and Mr. Vic Botterill who read our palms and gave us some basic instructions in the art of palmistry.

We have had theatre outings, a summer cream tea party and yet to come is our Christmas Party.

The W.I. is a great way to make new friends and meet people in the village and I only wish that I had joined the group when I moved here in 1995, instead of 8 years later!

Pat Harmer

## St John the Evangelist

Date of special services and events

### Services:

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December 3.00pm

Christingle service - A candle in a decorated orange is given to each child attending the service in exchange for their gift of money for the Children's Society who then help more unfortunate children in this country.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 9.30am

Nine Lessons and Carols. The talents of many of our congregation combine to make this a very special service start to the Christmas celebrations.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 4.00pm

Crib Service for families with young children.

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 11.30pm

Holy Communion

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December 9.30am

Morning Prayer

### Events:

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December from 2.00pm to 4.30pm

Advent Fair in the Village Hall

Gifts, craft stalls, bric-a-brac, cakes, jams and preserves, games, raffle and refreshments. This is the principle fund raising event of the year for St. John's at which we hope to give a boost to our funds so that we might meet our annual budget of £26,000

## Some Thanks

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### In Appreciation of Triffids

Like people, all plants have diverse characters and attributes. While some plants take all they can get from the soil in order to blossom, some will take nitrogen from the air and fix it in the soil rendering it fertile for others. The roots of some have the power to break up cold and inhospitable clods, while those of others will hold and stabilize soil that would otherwise be shifted and blown by wind or water.

Five years ago triffids reached up from Berkhamsted to put their roots down in Ashley Green behind the modest façade of 11 Curtis Cottages. It was there that “Triffic Triffids” a specialist plant nursery was established by Jill Lea with the help of her husband Dave.

Having dug themselves into their plot in Ashley Green, Jill and Dave looked over their fence to see how they might integrate themselves into Village life. I was immeasurably grateful when Jill responded to the Community Association’s request for an administrator and lettings officer, thus relieving me of a position that I had held for the previous seven years.

Since then she has taken on the role of Treasurer keeping the accounts of the Community Association in immaculate order and providing the Executive with clear monthly updates on our financial state. Within the last two years she passed on her responsibility for lettings but continued to give support to our current lettings officer. Jill has participated in, initiated and organized village events and has been a driving force in upgrading the facilities of the Village Hall facilities. The WI and the Community Association have derived much benefit from Jill’s energy and initiative and Dave’s cheerful supportive toil in all aspects of village life.

Triffids surely have tendrils that reach out to entwine and support and many of us have been mesmerized by Dave and Jill’s synchromeshed gyrations and movements on the dance floor, undeterred even when a plastered leg anchored Dave to the chair.

According to my dictionary Triffid is a botanical adjective for plants that are partly or wholly divided into three. Jill, Dave and their dog, Alf, are certainly a trio that have enriched village life in Ashley Green, but they are now moving on to retire and join their family in Cornwall. Dave plans to find his sealegs again, and Jill wants to make time for her patchwork. We wish them all the best, but we will miss them.

Triffids they are not, but **TRIFFIC!!!** they are!

*Vivienne Withall - Chairman AGCA*

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### George Digs Deep!

George Lane from GHJ Tree Services was recently felling an old Rowan tree in my back garden.

Having made him coffee, I tried in vain to sell him some tickets for the Auction of Promises, but “it wasn’t his sort of thing”. I told him about the process of upgrading the Village Hall kitchen and the necessity for the Community Association to raise funds quickly.

On the evening of the Auction of Promises, George turned up at my door with a very generous donation to the kitchen fundraising.

George has lived in Hog Lane all his life, and is often to be seen working around the village, and he felt he wanted to make a donation to show his support for the village.

On behalf of the Ashley Green Community Association, I would like to say a big thank you to George for his generosity.

*Yvonne Flanagan, Vice Chairman, AGCA.*

## Other matters

### An event to look forward to!

#### The Consort

will be returning to Ashley Green next year.

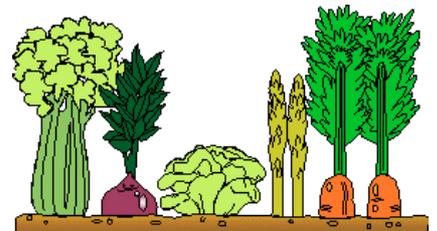
They will be giving one of their most enjoyable concerts on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2007 in St John’s to help raise funds for the church.

This singing group of eight voices provides A Cappella music from mediaeval to modern day - something for everyone to enjoy.

Watch out for details!!

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### Going Green



Ever fancied growing your own vegetables or flowers which you know will not have been sprayed over 20 times before they reach your table??

Now’s your chance!

There is just **one** plot available on the Ashley Green allotment site. Measuring about 200 square yards it should be plenty for growing a whole range of things.

At an annual rental fee of only £10 that has to be something that you really need - and you will get in some healthy exercise as you dig as well.

Why not contact the Clerk to the Parish Council - Mrs Lucy Spriggs on 01442 866754 - if you are interested.

To contribute to Community Call  
Phone 01442-874931  
or Email  
**davedharmer@aol.com**

## Adverts and Announcements

Advertise your enterprise or activity here.  
(There is a charge for Commercial Businesses:

Contact us with details of what you want.  
Eighth Page (approx.) - £10. Quarter page - £20)



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### **Old School & Village Hall**

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(Old School up to 80 people. Village Hall up to 150 people)  
**Bar and Kitchen facilities - glassware, crockery & cutlery**  
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For further information and bookings call:

The Lettings Officer : 07979 634988 or 01442 874834

Email - [ashley.halls@btinternet.com](mailto:ashley.halls@btinternet.com)

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Email - [heritage\\_landscapes@btconnect.com](mailto:heritage_landscapes@btconnect.com)

  
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The Community Association invites  
Ashley Green villagers (all ages) to:

### **THE FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**on Sunday December 10<sup>th</sup>**

**IN THE OLD SCHOOL - MEET AT 6.00 PM**

(There is no charge for entry)

There will be mulled wine for the adults and soft drinks for the children and delicious refreshments provided by the Committee. The Children will sell the tickets for the children's raffle and distribute the prizes. There will be a few games for the children.

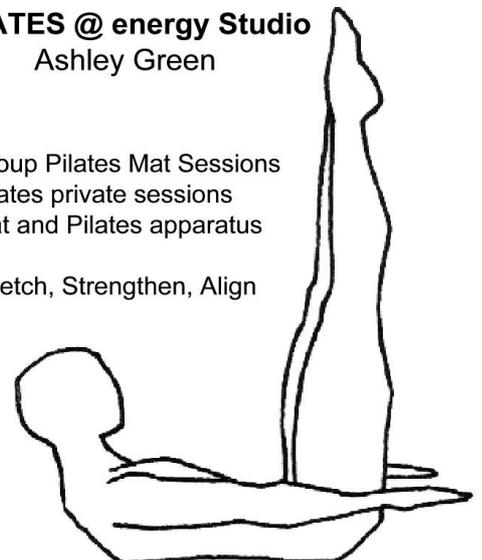
The adult's raffle will have many prizes and a large Christmas hamper will be the star prize. Father Christmas will arrive and distribute lollipops to the children and turn on the Christmas tree lights. The party will end with some enthusiastic carol singing.

Do come along and meet old and new friends and neighbours

**PILATES @ energy Studio**  
Ashley Green

Group Pilates Mat Sessions  
Pilates private sessions  
Mat and Pilates apparatus

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For details and registration please call Monique  
on 07881925181 or 01494-890810