

COMMUNITY CALL

Edition 2007/02

Newsletter

Autumn 2007

ASHLEY GREEN FAIR 2007



Amazingly we managed to choose a day for the Fair which turned out to be one of the few hot, sunny, dry days this year. It was a great success, yet again, and hopefully managed to provide something for everyone to enjoy. Word is now about that Ashley Green Fair is one of the best traditional Fairs in the Chilterns!!!

This year we had even more stalls thanks to superb organisation by Margaret Flowers; everything from a hat stall run by Juliet Rinkel to ceramic pots made by Val Zac, plus books, plants, fashion items and stalls run by various charities. The side-shows were organised by Cindy Poston and seemed to keep all ages busy throughout the afternoon. The coconut shy won the prize for the side-show which raised the most money. Ann Broschomb and Kim Warren ran the Raffle again and my thanks to all who so generously donated the lovely prizes. Overall we managed to make a profit of £2,500 for the day, a marvellous result.

All this plus entertainment too! The Dog Display team provided us with a professional standard of highly obedient dogs showing their skills. This was followed by those of us with the more ordinary four-legged friends who entered the contests for agility circuits, most handsome dog, best biscuit catcher etc. Thanks to Tim Cutter for arranging this.

Our ever enthusiastic Youth Club leader, Di Burnett, kept all the younger children on their toes with the races and some of the parents who were persuaded to join in.

It was the Tug of War that provided one of the highlights of the Fair. We were challenged again by The Rose and Crown, but sadly lost for the second year running. We MUST beat them next year! (Hint for some of the more muscular members of the village to start training). Then the children had their turn – enthusiasm from the parents. (The girls won!! See picture above).

Of course none of us could get through the afternoon without sustenance. The WI ladies did a stalwart job providing delicious cakes and tea; my thanks to them, and also to Rob Warren for running the Beer Tent and to Brenda and Kevin from Johns Lane Farm who provided delicious ice cream and farm produce.

We all owe a very big thank you to Kim Norman from the Golden Eagle who ran the barbecue throughout the afternoon. As if this wasn't enough, he returned later on to cook for all of us who stayed to enjoy a meal in the evening, some of us sitting out on the Green till the early hours. A perfect end to a perfect day.

Mary Axon

Diary Dates

Make a note of the events planned in Ashley Green from now into next year.

- **Quiz Night**
Saturday 17th November.
- **Family Party**
Sunday 16th December.
- **Murder Mystery Evening**
Saturday 2nd February.
- **Barn Dance**
Saturday 26th April.
- **St George's Day Picnic**
Sunday 27th April.

More Details on Ads page, but watch out for Flyers for later events.

Details of services and events at St Johns may be found on Page 2.

Newsletter - Sixth Issue

"Community Call" is your village newsletter, and we ask all villagers to contribute articles, letters, news and comment to:-

David Harmer - Editor

Email - davedharmer@aol.com
Tel: 01442 874931

The Chairman Writes

As winter approaches we may not feel the heat of the sun in Ashley Green for a while but we could allow ourselves to bask in some happy memories of times we have spent together during the past few months.

Do you remember the fun of the evening in May when families gathered to pick a winner from the 'racing' ferrets; the heat of the sun when it appeared on the only Saturday in June for the Village Fair keeping us warm well into the evening as we enjoyed a barbecue after the exertions of the day; the relief when the planning application to erect a communication mast on the site of the waterworks was rejected thanks to a campaign led by John Harris and Tim Cutter; the all-age games of rounders on St. George's Day and cricket in September and the heartening sight of the 80's generation, rather than that of the 60's, occupying the floor of the Village Hall at the disco on 6th October?

You may have noticed that the exterior woodwork and windows of the Old School have been repainted during the summer, thanks to Chiltern District Council, and users of the School will surely have been impressed by the redecoration of the entrance hall and kitchen. The Parish Council kindly acquired a grant of £600 for us so that we might ensure that there is an effective heating system in the Old School. This money has been used to repair the existing heaters in the main rooms and to upgrade the heaters in the ancillary rooms.

I hope you will take note of the forthcoming events and insert them into your diaries. We try to organize a variety of events throughout the year so that everyone in our community might be tempted to attend at least one of them. If you feel ignored or have a suggestion please let us know. This year the Christmas party will be held in the Village Hall so that there is room for everyone of you - I hope to meet you there!

Vivienne Withall (Chairman)

Letter From "Abroad"

Dear All,

Although Cornwall is technically part of England its inhabitants don't agree so that is why this is a letter from some foreign correspondents.

We got a permanent home in March this year complete with a small "blank canvas" garden. Our furniture took a month to arrive, enabling us to do some painting and decorating, and we used our son's put-u-up settee, a small TV and some garden chairs and tables in the meantime. Luckily we had a built in cooker and our own pots and pans.

Our first job in the garden, of course, was the creation of a compost heap which is going well. It took us some time to evict the piskies and gnomes with the help of Alfie the dog. Then Dave, ably assisted by me, erected a greenhouse and shed and we were in business. There were no flower beds and we soon found out why. The house is built on an old carpentry yard so the top six inches consists of flat paddle stones which have to be attacked using pick axe and mattock (good for the stomach muscles). We now have a good supply of these which can be used for paths.

This village (South Petherwin) is very friendly but quite a bit different from Ashley Green. The village hall is a pale green corrugated iron shed with no heating, where we soon hope to play skittles. The church heating system has broken down and needs to be replaced at a cost of £9000, so there has been a sponsored abseil and fair to raise funds.

There isn't a village green but there is a shop-cum-Post Office which the village is very keen to keep in business. We are more aware of being in an agricultural community as there is a farm in the village.

We have had a few visitors from England this summer in between the tropical downpours, and enjoyed our two visits to Ashley Green very much. Many thanks to our hosts.

Missing you all. *Jill and Dave Lea.*

St John the Evangelist

Dates of special services and events

Saturday 2nd 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 so do come along and support your village church.

Sunday 9th 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 16th December.
9.30am

Nine Lessons and Carols.

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

Monday 24th December
Crib Service 4.30pm

For families with young children.

Monday 24th December
Holy Communion 11.30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

Tuesday 25th December
Family Service 9.30am

Our Minister Gill Rowell

It is sad that so many of you will have missed out on Gill Rowell's ministry at St. John's.

For the past eighteen months we have been stimulated by her words and enlivened by her exuberance. It has been a joyous period in the life of our Church but now she is moving on and we pray for her as she starts a new period in her life.

Don't forget our ever open invitation to join us in our beautiful Church.

LOCAL ISSUES

The Mast at Ashley Green

In Ashley Green we enjoy an idyllic location with the village green, the church, the traditional village pub and a true sense of community. But most of all, I think what many of us appreciate is the unspoilt nature of the countryside on our doorstep. It was therefore somewhat of a shock back in November 2006 when it emerged that T Mobile were proposing to build a 60 foot mobile phone transmitter, a mast which would dominate the village skyline, blight views and cause concerns for many residents.



Artists impression from play area

This article explains a little more about the proposal, the implications and the steps that the community took to ensure that eventually it was rejected by the Chiltern District Council Planning Committee. The good news is that rejection means that it won't go ahead. However, should T Mobile appeal by December 6th, we may have to do it all again.

Right from the start, I want to make it clear that I am no luddite or "NIMBY" (Not In My Back Yard) and neither were any of the residents with whom I consulted or got to know whilst working against this proposal. We appreciate that we are all dependent on modern technology which requires infrastructure and always has done - whether it is pylons, electricity substations, water treatment works or mobile phone transmitters. They all have their place in modern life and are necessary. But when you consider just how common these pieces of infrastructure are, it's only then that you realise just how good a job is usually done of locating and camouflaging such equipment so it blends with the environment and is not placed in a position that causes stress and anxiety to a local community.

We have good planning legislation and generally our councils do an excellent job of making decisions that balance community need versus environmental disruption.

The frustration with the T Mobile proposal in Ashley Green was that it appeared to challenge that balance between community need and impact on the environment and it was not brought forward in a way that inspired confidence that our needs were being considered.

Out of the blue in November 2006, a handful of residents were informed that T Mobile proposed to build a 60 foot high transmitter in the Thames Water Treatment works to meet an unspecified need for telephony services in our village. The original proposal announced that a 2 week consultation period would take place with relevant parties, including local residents, during November 2006 pending a formal application in December 2006.

Despite only informing a handful of residents, during November 2006, T Mobile received written letters of protest, requests for information and comments from more than 120 residents, including a formal petition put together and tenaciously circulated by my neighbour Tim Cutter. The concerns and questions raised included impact on the greenbelt, anxiety over health risks, proximity to the Montessori nursery and questions as to what the specific need was in Ashley Green that required such a major structure.

The response received from T Mobile was perfunctory. It became apparent that the "consultation" was not to be carried out with the vigour and integrity that we had hoped for. There was then a lull in proceedings for 2 or 3 months and in March 2007, a formal planning application was submitted which stated that a consultation *had* taken place but made no mention of the objections received.

At this point we realised we had a real battle on our hands and the residents of Ashley Green needed to speak out to avoid this inappropriate proposal going ahead.

Over the next few weeks, a number of villagers including Tim Cutter, Laura Cutter, Yvonne Flanagan and many others worked tirelessly to ensure that

this proposal was challenged in an effective and balanced manner.

The key facts and data which our objections were based on were as follows:

- *planning legislation requires a "network need" to be proved by the telecom company. In this case T Mobile were not able to establish such a need effectively.*

- *once a need is proven, planning legislation requires the telecom company to identify the BEST site for a transmitter.*

- *T Mobile did not appear to demonstrate that alternatives had been pursued with any serious intent.*

- *health risks pertaining to mobile phone transmitters are unproven and are not taken into account by planning authorities, yet the proximity to any schools and the levels of anxiety and stress induced in local residents are key decision factors. Clearly the proposed location overlooking the Montessori nursery was relevant and was a cause of great concern, something which was not acknowledged.*

- *the proposed site is surrounded by an area designated as greenbelt and as "locally important landscape". Any developments in such area should be in keeping with the local environment. A 60 foot transmitter rising above the tree-line seemed unlikely to meet that criteria*

Many issues and concerns were raised by individual villagers, often with great passion and emotion and it was clear from numerous objection letters posted on the Chiltern District Council just how worried individuals were.

On Thursday 24th May, a well attended public meeting was initiated by the Ashley Green Parish Council and the points above were presented to them.

The council acted with great integrity, seeking a balanced viewpoint and reached the conclusion that the T Mobile planning application could not be supported and issued a formal letter of objection.

In addition, over 50 letters of objection had been sent by villagers direct to the council together with a petition with over 120 signatures opposing the plan.



Artists impression from the Green

Thankfully, in early June, Chiltern District Council Planning authority published their decision to unanimously reject the proposal due to the implications on the greenbelt, and it was not called to the formal planning committee - a positive sign.

However, T Mobile are allowed to appeal within 6 months of the CDC ruling and if they do so, it will be imperative that the village speaks out again.

I hope this article has been interesting and informative.

It is issues like this that make us realise just how blessed we are in this village and ensure that we don't take our surroundings for granted.

There is no doubt that the collective voice of the village is powerful and in this case it was clearly heard by our elected officials and they represented us well. Lets hope that we don't have to do it all again; T Mobile choosing not to appeal before the deadline of 6th December would be a welcome early Christmas present for all of us!!

John Harris

Our thanks to John and the team, and everyone who contributed to the success of this key issue for Ashley Green.

Not a Member?

Have you joined the association yet?
Join us and take an active part in your village.
Annual Fees are only £5.00 per person.
Family rates too!

Contact our membership secretary.
01442-863275

Ashley Green Youth Club

In 1991 Di Burnett was asked if she would attend a meeting in Ashley Green with the view to giving some advice on how to start a youth club. She duly did this and eventually agreed to get the club up and running and stay for just 1 month before handing it over to parents and a less busy club leader.

After **16 years** she is still attempting to do this!

During these years Ashley Green Youth Club has been open each Friday night during the term times. The club was originally opened to encourage children from the village to enjoy a range of activities on a Friday evening, giving them a chance to meet new people and chill out after a week at school.

The programme caters for 2 age groups: Juniors (7-11) and Seniors (11 and over) and the club offers a range of activities, including pool, table tennis, air hockey, table football and PS2.

The young people play a variety of ball games, most popular is the football and in the summer we often use the green for rounders and other summer sports.

The club also offers an optional weekly programme which includes an additional activity such as tie dying, cookery, quizzes (usually with chips), late night videos for seniors, video making, photography, 'Deal or No Deal', barbecues, woodland walks etc.

At least two outings are organised each term to venues such as Kidzone, bowling, ice skating, quasar etc.

Central to the club is the Tuck Shop! Di believes that her membership would be non existent if the tuck shop was not available. She did try selling apples for a few weeks but they sadly went mouldy!

More importantly than anything, Di believes that the club should be a place where the young people can meet new friends, feel relaxed, chill out after a week at school, talk through issues that may be concerning them and essentially
HAVE FUN!!

Di runs the club with youth workers Ed Tamkin and Philip Grace, plus the help of valued volunteers and parents.

Youth Club subs are £1.00 per night plus a termly membership of £1.00. Any outings are an additional cost.

Ashley Green Youth Club - AGYC - meets on Friday nights at The Old School - 6.00pm to 7.30 for juniors and 8.15pm - 10.00pm for seniors.

For more information, please call Di Burnett on
01494 773917 or 07977147273

NB The senior club has been closed for a few weeks, but hopes to be up and running again soon.

Ashley Green Youth Theatre

Although Di Burnett runs the local youth club, she really specialises in Drama. She was trained at Mountview Theatre School and spent many years as a professional actress working in the provinces, the West End and on TV.

After having children of her own, she decided to settle in one place, and built up a new career working with young people in drama. She has worked extensively in Theatre in Education, and with young people in drama in the Chiltern Area. Her drama sessions are very much about self development, self expression and confidence building.

Everyone in the groups are given equal opportunities to develop their own individual skills. Performance is not the main aim of these groups. However when they do perform, the work is devised and created entirely by the group members. This gives them a chance to work comfortably within their own capabilities.

As members become more experienced and confident, they are encouraged to take greater risks, thus stretching them as performers and allowing them to reach their potential, and they are encouraged to build up new, and positive friendships through the group.

Cont'd

Most importantly the aim is to have FUN during these sessions.

Ashley Green Youth Theatre runs on Mondays and Tuesdays, in the Old School for 7-12year olds and The Village Hall for 11 years upwards respectively.

Over the years all Di's groups have devised their own plays and performed publicly, often at The Elgiva Theatre in Chesham.

Both of these groups are about to perform their own work at 'The Little Theatre by the Park' in Chesham. 'Director Director' and 'Ali's Party' will go on as double bill on Saturday 24th November.

The programme starts at 7.30pm . For ticket details call Di on : 01494 773917 / 07977147273.

Please note these dates, support the Youth Theatre and call Di Burnett now for tickets

Other Events in ASHLEY GREEN

The Events Committee organise a series of events throughout the year. Here are reports of some more.

ST. GEORGES DAY PICNIC

This was well attended by many families with young children.

The weather was kind and rugs and picnic baskets were out in force.

The older children and parents joined in the games with gusto. There was volley ball, informal rounders and beat the goalie.

As the picnic was in the Glebe all the children enjoyed making use of the swings and the play house. It was a great 'get-together' and we will organise another Sunday.

As St. George's Day is on a mid-week next year we will arrange a suitable date and hope the weather will be warm and sunny.

Watch "Diary Dates" for details.

80's DISCO

This event was organised by Cath and Dave Hurling who are new to the village. It was a great idea, clever decorations and a delicious curry supper.

It was so good to welcome so many new people.

FERRET RACING EVENING

This took place on March 10th and was thoroughly enjoyed by all ages. The children entranced by the ferrets and the adults by the betting!!

The races were very exciting as the ferrets were quite unpredictable. Sometimes they wouldn't race, sometimes climbed out of the starting gate or turned back !

A Ferret was not judged to be the winner unless its tail was completely out of the tunnel. The more they were encouraged, the more they were wary to come out and another ferret would whiz past to win.

We were grateful to local firms who sponsored the races and those people who 'owned' a ferret - the winning 'owners' won a bottle of champagne.

The fish and chip supper was a great success.

Village Events - More Ideas!

Keep your eyes open for details of all forthcoming events which are advertised in Community Call (see back page) and circulated through the village letterboxes on a regular basis.

Also, keep your eyes on the notice board at the Village Hall.

Should you have an idea for an event contact the Events Committee and discuss the idea with them. We do welcome newcomers with fresh ideas.

*Contact Elizabeth Foster
01442 - 873279*

Diana's Ditty

If you fancy our Art Group
We're a lively crowd
A couple are quiet...ish
The rest pretty loud.

We discuss Barry's shirts
And then Gerry's glis
Hear tales of her neighbours
From the glamorous Chris.

Then Marion stands up
The refreshments to make
So it's down with our brushes
And out with the cake.

On each member's birthday
There's even more fun
A glass of good wine
And a cake dowsed in rum.

We break for a while
And continue to chat
Look at each other's art
Then in comes the cat!

He jumps on the table
Then back on the floor
Up on the worktop
Till he's 'sent' thro' the door (gently)

Yoga girls in the next room
Cause quite a diversion
One or two of our members
Fight back their perversion (it's all in the mind)

On a serious note though
We do paint very well
Churn out many masterpieces
Of which most of them sell.

So if you fancy joining our Art Group
And are not yet ninety nine
We'll welcome you in
With a large glass of wine!

*Interested in joining the Art Group?
Contact Margaret Bowller
01442 - 862294*

Events in Whelpley Hill

Christmas Fayre
Sat December 8th - 2pm

Carol Service
Sun December 9th - 6pm

Both events will be held in the **Coronation Hall**, and are to help raise funds for the restoration and refurbishment of the village hall.

HISTORY PAGES

We try to bring you articles concerning life in the village and surrounding area and the people who have been part of our heritage. We now bring you:-

DYNAMIC DES

There are not many 80 year olds who spend their birthday flying single engine planes but Des Reid is that one in a million. A much-loved member of Lye Green village (though his house is in the Ashley Green parish) all his village friends clubbed together for his birthday present. They knew that a dynamic octogenarian who refuses to retire, would not be into cosy slippers so instead he got his dream of a first time flying lesson from Denham airfield. The village came out in force to watch him fly over the green 4 times; out came the tea and cakes and it looked all so inviting that passing drivers thought it was a cream tea stop!

Des was born and grew up at the bus depot in Lye Green where his Uncle ran the Rover Bus Company there from 1928. His Great Granny Dell although, having come from Lye Green, lived at Hog Lane in Ashley Green with her husband where they farmed.



(This photograph of Great Granny Dell can be found in "Around Chesham In Camera", a book by Clive Birch.)

Des's dad had an almost Dickensian upbringing in the London's East End.

He was born in 1895, one of four children, and as a child used to have to put cardboard in his shoes when the holes let in the rain. His father was a baker in West Ham, but despite being very generous he often spent all his earnings on drink, so the family struggled. As a consequence Des's father never drank but he did tell Des tales of bare knuckle boxing when he was just 14, so it was perhaps no surprise that he ran away from home, took a train as far as he could and got a job in the boot factory in Chesham. It was there he met Des's mum a country girl from Bovington.

Life during the First World War for Des's parents was tough. His mother used to tell him how the women had to do backbreaking work picking stones from the fields to help make roads as part of the war effort. Conscription was not left to chance, either. When war broke out soldiers would visit homes and accompany men to registration – there was one story about a Mr Peter Reeves of Ashley Green who was taken first thing in the morning, so quickly that he left with only half his face shaved and the rest covered in soap.

Des's father was called up for training in Oxford but was sent back home after a few months and was told he had a weak heart. It might have seemed bad news at the time but missing the trenches most likely ensured Des's future. And despite the weak heart Des's dad was a very hard worker and during the General Strike he had to walk all the way to Rickmansworth to work. By the time of the Second World War he had a job as a Farm Manager at Sloelands Farm, Chesham, owned by the Watts family and that meant the family got egg's and ham etc. at a time when others could only dream of such luxuries.

As the fourth of six children, three boys and three girls, Des's childhood would not be recognisable to young people today. There was no technological entertainment, to keep them amused, games did not require batteries just lots of jumping, skipping and running with hopscotch, tops and hoops or pretending to be Flash Gordon.

At the age of just 7 he could spend all day out in the fields and walk down to Chesham whenever he liked. Occasionally if the local farmer Mr Mash caught them playing in the road he'd tell them to go and play in his fields where they could help themselves to raspberries and strawberries. With so little traffic and so few people owning cars there was never any problem playing outside, the only real trouble Des got into was at age 10 when he *accidentally* catapulted the local policeman's helmet. Mr Topham was a larger than life constable who rode his bike everywhere and all the kids were scared stiff of him. Des was aiming through a hedge when Mr Topham rode by and his helmet flew off. He immediately got off his bike and ran into the field where Des's gang were playing "Who did that?" he thundered at the boys but everyone kept quiet.

The offending catapult had already been thrown far across the field and as soon as he rode off Des went to fetch it back but Mr Topham popped his head above the hedge and immediately confiscated it.

Many years later when Des was taking a group of pensioners on an outing from an old people's home in Prestwood, one of the group looked at him and said "Your face is very familiar". He had that unmistakable voice of authority - it was Mr Topham - and as soon as Des told him his name he instantly remembered the catapult story!

The one regret of Des's childhood is that his education was cut short by the outbreak of war. With so many evacuees leaving London, local schools were overflowing so in 1939 from the age of 12 his schooling consisted of just 3 hours every morning walking down to Pednor Bottom to dig allotments as part of the war effort. At 14 he left school, and his mother got him a job at Apsley Mills printing books. For those who have never been in a working mill the noise is unbearable and Des hated every minute of his 18 months working there.

Today there are now tours of the Mill where you can see how the old printers operated.

Even without the machines in operation you can't hear yourself talk over the noise of the water rushing through.

Even when he was still at school Des had worked part time for the family firm as a bus conductor but he got his first bus driving job with Rover's on the Bovingdon contract running the Americans around the airport.

Working for the Americans was a real education for Des. Entering Bovingdon airbase was like discovering a whole new world. The Americans had an abundance of new electrical equipment that was unheard of locally. They literally shipped every home comfort over with them so brand new Sedans, Freezers and Washing Machines were commonplace and an endless supply of food that ration books could never extend to. The officer's mess (*Gilbert's on Ley Hill Road*) was always full of coffee and doughnuts on tap and whisky or cigarettes were never a problem. Des would often take a route from Bovingdon down to Hemel and some of the soldiers when they ran out of cash would just give Des their watch instead of the fare and quite often they'd forget to ask for it back.

The local pubs were always full of Americans and the buses couldn't keep up with the passengers. Des remembers that on quite a few occasions his 32-seater bus would have 90 soldiers all standing and they were only held in by the back door. One night they passed a local, Tom Smith and Des called out that he'd have to come back later but he didn't realise that Tom had still tried to get on and had prised the emergency door open so as he went up the hill from Boxmoor someone fell out. In the blackout it was very difficult to find the soldier – he'd fallen in a trench and was in a bad way so to get him back to base they had to get rid of 30 soldiers so he could lie on the floor. Today's health and safety officials couldn't contemplate such a world but when soldiers risked their lives every day during the war falling out of a bus after a night at the pub was just par for the course.

The blackout could often cause confusion. Des's father was quite strict and Des remembers that one night his eldest sister got into a lot of trouble as she overstayed her curfew. She was told to be in by 9pm and was late. His Dad put on his coat and went out to look for her in the dark, he heard a couple talking at a nearby turnstile and took immediate action – separating the courting pair he told the lad to get off home and the girl to get back inside only to discover to his embarrassment that it wasn't his daughter.

There were many local girls who got themselves American boyfriends from Bovingdon and Des himself nearly found his way across the Atlantic. He had a passing acquaintance with one of the girls at the base and one day out of the blue she invited him to go home to her ranch. Des was just 17 and he went home to tell his mother who just dismissed it out of hand.

It was not long after in 1944 that Des got called up into the Army.

At this point in his life he had never been on a holiday never mind leave the country, so even going away to Colchester for training was a complete eye opener. He was sent to Alexandria in Egypt with the Royal Army Service Corps and ended up becoming the driver for Colonel Richards who was in charge of all the landing craft and high-speed motor launches along the Suez Canal. He was with him for 2 years and had an amazing time as the war was nearly over in North Africa.

After the war they had the responsibility of disposing of all the ammunition, weapons, motorbikes, and engines the army had taken there and it was decided that rather than the expense of shipping back to England everything should be dumped 30 miles out to sea so the Arabs could not make use of it in what might become a tricky situation around the Suez canal.

Although Des was never directly involved in front line service, Egypt did bring him a very close shave with death.

One Saturday night Des decided that rather than go out as usual with the rest of his troop he'd eat with a friend at the Salvation Army, Red Shield Canteen where for the princely sum of a shilling you could get a hot meal and a cuppa. Unfortunately Des's mates decided to frequent an out-of-bounds cafe to complete their night out. Within 48 hours, 11 of his friends were dead, they'd contracted typhoid fever from contaminated goats milk, so Des owes his life to the Salvation Army.

Des finished his national service in 1947 and returned home and straight back to the buses, which have been at the core of his life. He decided to run his own company, Des's Coaches, which he started in 1964 ferrying many generations of Ashley Green children to and from school.



Des at the wheel

Although he closed his company in 1996 he still works for Wooten's Coaches once or twice a week, as he couldn't bear not to be involved.

At 80 Des is probably one of the safest drivers on the road as he is regularly tested every 12 months and I'm sure he'll continue for as long as he enjoys the work, which by the look of the twinkle in his eye will be for many more years.

Many thanks to Lorna Ingham who interviewed Des to provide this article. Maybe it jogs your memory enough for you to recall your own experiences of life in the village. If you have a story to tell, please contact me. Ed

Adverts and Announcements



Brick Point

Re Pointing Contractors
and Builders

John Hollylee
Tel: 01442 865673
Mobile: 07788 768313



No need for Party Bags
Ideal venue at Berkhamsted Arts and Crafts centre
(or choose your own venue)
Only £15 per head

For more information Call Jo
on 07711339492 or 01443 864520

For Meetings & Parties try Ashley Green



Old School & Village Hall

Comfortable accommodation with flexibility
Excellent facilities in Convenient location.

Rooms for Meetings, Activities, Events and Parties
(Old School up to 80 people. Village Hall up to 150 people)
Bar and Kitchen facilities - glassware, crockery & cutlery
Well heated and with Ample car parking
Secure grounds at Old School



For further information and bookings call:
The Lettings Officer : 07979 634988 or 01442 874834
Email - ashley.halls@btinternet.com
Ashley Green & District Community Association. Registered Charity No. 292478

Wanted
Dog Walker
Part time, for village resident.

Call:-
Marian Manning - 01442 876502

Murder Mystery Evening

Saturday 2nd February 2008
At the "White Lion" in the Village Hall

Tickets £16 include 3 course Dinner. Tables of Eight.

Available from Margaret Flowers or Helen Stacey
at the Christmas Party.

Call 01442 865553 Or 01494 772301 for details

QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday 17th November

Tickets £8.00 each

Teams of six.

For Details Call

Malcolm Rimington 01442 875762.

?????

FAMILY XMAS PARTY

Sunday 16th December

6.00pm in Village Hall

Come along and meet Father Christmas and enjoy a glass of mulled wine. Ample refreshments available for all. Carols and festive fun. All ages welcome! Raffle.

No charge for entry!

Whelpley Hill

needs YOU!

Are you interested in helping to look after the Whelpley Hill end of Ashley Green Parish by becoming a parish councillor for the Whelpley Hill Ward?

If so, please call the Parish Clerk on 01442 866754.

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