

COMMUNITY CALL

Edition 2008/02

Newsletter

Winter 2008

ASHLEY GREEN VILLAGE FAIR 2008

Another year, another Fair, another success and another sunny day. In the middle of what turned out to be a miserable summer, we yet again picked a lovely warm summer's day. Our Fair is now so well established that we manage to attract many visitors from outside the village and this all helps to contribute to the large number of people attending.

We aim to keep this fair as traditional as possible and to raise funds for the upkeep of the village, and this we did, raising a grand total of **£1873**.

Of course none of this would be possible without a huge team of willing helpers. The Dog Display team is now a really popular event with amazingly well-trained dogs, followed by a Fun Dog Show organised by Tim and Laura Cutter for those dogs with lesser skills but willing to join in the fun. A big thank you yet again to Di Burnett for organising the children's races (and 'persuading' some brave parents to join in).

The Tug of War always gets everyone involved, but yet again the Ashley Green Team lost out to The Rose and Crown for the third year running. We really must do better next time and get in some early training. Also the girls beat the boys - again!

Will this be our Champ next year???



Lots of stalls and side-shows with. Splat the rat and Hoopla being popular.

With all this activity, food and drink were very welcome and provided by the WI with teas and cakes. The barbecue was organised this year by Jean-Paul Leveque. The beer tent did a roaring trade on such a hot day, and ice cream was also on hand provided by Kevin and Brenda from John's Lane Farm.



The Raffle organised by Ann Broschomb and Kim Warren always raises a lot of money and this year was no exception, along with the Coconut Shy run by Annette Cathcart. We yet again hired the Mobile Laser Arena and new for this year a super slide which was extremely popular with the children.

Our evening barbecue on the Green on a lovely balmy evening was the perfect end to the day.

Thanks to everyone who helped to make this event such a success this year and in previous years – even if I haven't mentioned you, you know who you are and I am really grateful.

This is to be the last Fair that I will organise. I have been co-ordinating the annual Fair since we held our Festival on the Green to celebrate the Millennium, so I now feel it is time to hand this over to someone else. Are there any volunteers????? *Mary Axon*

Diary Dates

Make a note of these dates on your calendar!

- **Advent Fair - Village Hall**
Saturday 6th December 2.00pm
- **Christingle Service - St Johns**
Sunday 7th December 3.00pm
- **Family Party - Village Hall**
Sunday 14th December.
- **Readings and Carols in St Johns**
Sunday 21st December 6.00pm
- **Valentines Dinner - Village Hall**
Saturday 14th February.
- **Comedy Evening - Village Hall**
Saturday 26th April.
- **Family Picnic and Games**
Date to be announced
- **Village Fair on the Green**
Saturday 6th June

Watch out for Flyers/Posters for details.

Editorial

This is the eighth edition of your own village newsletter. Sorry it's a bit late, but we do rely on community association members, people contributing articles, letters, news and comment.

This Autumn has been a bit of a lean time for contributions, but happily we are now able to go into print again, and hope you find something of interest.

For all previous seven issues we have had the generous support of Patrick White and his company PWA, who have done a splendid job of printing the Newsletter, and giving us such a high quality product.

For this edition, the Association is providing the funding, and using Orbit of Chesham.

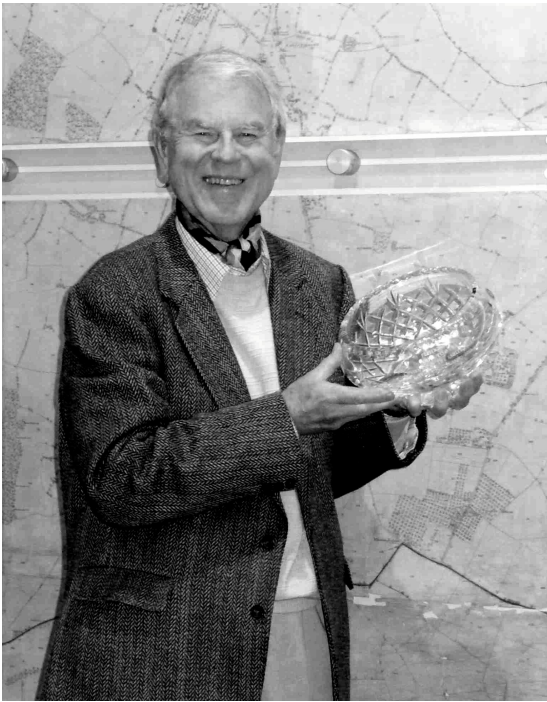
The members of the AGCA Executive and Council would like to thank Patrick and PWA for all the work and support in the past to make this such a great success.

David Harmer - Editor

Email - davedharmer@aol.com

Tel: 01442 874931

TEN YEARS IN THE SADDLE



(John seen here with his retirement gift by the village map)

This year John Toovey retired as Chairman of the Parish Council after 10 years.

In the short time that I have been a Councillor I have been struck by John's attention to detail and his patient lobbying ability with District and County officials, all in the interest of the communities of Ashley Green and Whelpley Hill. Our Parish Council has minor resources of money and no grand influence in the affairs of local government. But John's careful analysis of planning applications, contact with Bucks and Chiltern Councillors, and knowledge of the 'system' has ensured over the last decade that Ashley Green and Whelpley Hill have got many small schemes through for the improvement of greens, the AG village pond, allotments, together with pavement and road repairs, while other parishes are still wishing for such things.

Of particular note have been John's contributions to our villages' heritage: restoration of the 1874 parish map, and the securing and opening up of the Glebe, which is enjoyed by many more people than before, and not just on Fair day or Fireworks night either. Lastly I must mention John's clever and persistent work in getting our 17 miles of footpaths cleared, signposted and made more accessible. This work will last for years, for our benefit and that of thousands of Chiltern walkers.

Luckily for us John remains a Councillor to advise and chivvy us. His final report, last May to the Parish Council as Chairman, is published in the November edition of Parish News. He really has made a difference for the better to our local environment. Well done John.

He is succeeded by David Natali, another longstanding resident of the parish.

John Axon. November 2008

"Web Site Here We Come"

If you have ever searched the Internet for "Ashley Green" using one of the many search "engines" available, you will have found a lot of sites, but none which were representative of our village or the work of the Ashley Green Community Association.

That has now changed, and the first "Official" Web Site was loaded up on November 16th 2008.

Why not take a look?

Go To :- www.ashleygreen.org.uk

Then think about what more we might have, and pass on your suggestions so that we can make the site into a real source of information and interest. You can post your suggestions using the contact page on the site.

Community Call is Online there too! All eight pages take a little time to access if you have the slowest Broadband connection, but be a little patient and you can have your own online copy.

We now need to hear from all the organisers of all the activities in the village such as, Arts Group, Bridge clubs, Pilates, WI, Youth Club etc. for we need you online too.



(All we have to do now is to work to get our site more visible to people trying to search for "Ashley Green!". Watch this space)

QUIZ NIGHT

Yet another resounding success!! Over 100 people crowded into the village hall at the Quiz Night held on November 15th, and everyone had a really great time.

Malcolm Rimington, questionmaster and organiser, did a wonderful job, and his team of helpers made everything run like clockwork.

On top of that, Jamie Russell-Flint produced a superb Thai Curry for the hungry herd, and the giant helpings (and the enthusiasm of his helpers) just about finished everyone off.

We even ran out of beer and white wine, and extra stocks has to be imported. A really great evening for everyone.

The winning team was "Greenacres Pride" who walked away with the shield - the Colin Bowler trophy.

Well Done!!

Bygone Days

Some of you will have undoubtedly seen the television programme "The Way We Were" in July this year.

Two old pupils, the little boy in the film, and one of the evacuees, met this November in the old school and Lorna Ingham, a villager and journalist and producer, sat in and recorded their recollections. Let her story unfold for you now.

THE WAY WE WERE - Dick & Doris

For our children the World War II history they are taught at school is all about deprivation, rationing and hardship. The Blitz, the Battle of Britain and concentration camps are the stories that need to be told so they can never be forgotten. However beneath the headlines there are stories of everyday life that aren't part of the official history but can tell us just as much about what life was really like then. Although dreadful things did happen in the war the children who lived through it often look back at those times as being some of the happiest of their life.

Parted for over 63 years, this summer two former Ashley Green wartime schoolmates had an emotional reunion, courtesy of Fragment Films the company who produced *THE WAY WE WERE* documentary series, part of which "School Days" was broadcast this July and featured the very evocative wartime film made about the school.

The little boy running across the Green on his way to school, late again, is a young Dick Waller who at 75 has not lost any of his enthusiastic nature although he might not run quite so fast these days. Currently a Wigginton resident, he and his wartime friend Doris Bennett (then Munday) who now lives in Essex were kind enough to share many of their wartime memories with me back at the school, which outwardly appears to be the same building. We sat in one room while just next door the young children who attend the Montessori school sang and painted.

During the war the main entrance to the school, was not at the side from the car park but via the big wooden door adjacent to what was the lobby facing the green. The bell that called everyone to school is still on the roof and the current kitchen and bathrooms at the back were actually the living quarters of the Head Teacher Mrs James. School toilets were then an outdoor block that would be freezing in winter and heating for the school involved two big stoves, fed mostly with local chippings collected from forestry tree felling in Hockeridge Woods.

Doris was an evacuee from Hackney. Ashley Green was her second billet. The first time she and her elder sister and brother were sent away in 1939 was to Bishop Stortford where they didn't stay for long but on their return to Hackney the bombing got worse. There were eight in her family and some of her earliest memories are of huddling with her sisters in the hall of their flat surrounded by cushions and the noise of the planes coming over seeming to last forever.

What she found most upsetting of all at the time though, was seeing her mother so distraught and afraid she sobbed all through the bombing raid.

Once her sister Violet witnessed a bomb drop so close to her that her mouth opened in horror and then stuck as though she had got lockjaw. Her father had to massage her mouth closed again.

The evacuation to Ashley Green came in 1940 when all they were allowed to take with them were a few clothes, their gas masks and their nametag. Her mother waved Doris and her older sister Joyce and brother Reg off and asked them to try and stay together. They took the train to Chesham and were then bussed to what was then the Ashley Green Village Institute and stood in the hall as local families came and chose who they wanted to stay with them. Sadly for Doris, Reg her older brother then 13 went to live on a farm in Hog Lane, as he'd obviously been seen as an extra pair of hands to help out. Joyce at 11 was chosen by the Hewitts who lived in a semi-detached cottage opposite the church and at just 7 Doris was picked by another family. The Hewitt's were a very kind hearted family and as it became clear the sisters would have preferred to stay together it wasn't long before Doris was invited to come and live with them. Their son Frank was already serving as a sapper in the Army and daughter Edie was in service.

It's difficult for our children to imagine now, but in a world without telephones or the internet and a war on, even though London was only a train ride away, Doris only saw her mother two or three times for the rest of the war. Even when she was rushed to hospital in Chesham with appendicitis a few years later, it was her sister who sat at her bedside

Doris and Dick were now neighbours and schoolmates but there was no need of a phone for all you had to do to let your friends know you were ready to play was tap on the adjoining wall between the cottages with a poker – the text messaging of it's day!

Doris remembers that school was just a lovely experience for a little kid from Hackney the freedom and space was heaven and Dick doesn't recall there being any hard feelings between the new evacuees and the villagers. They were just all young kids who got on with it. Competition was left for catapults, conkers and marbles and all those activities that our children are not allowed to take part in nowadays because of "Health and Safety". Dick remembers he and his friends would stand at the well with home made bows and fire arrows across the green to see if they could get them over the old chestnut tree, which used to stand outside the vicarage. They also would aim their catapults at rabbits and obviously in wartime rabbit was part of the staple diet.

Doris and Dick both remember the vegetable patch at the side of the school were they would "Dig for Victory" and grow cabbages, carrots, potatoes and anything else Mrs James organised. They each had their own loom as well for weaving as they would gather sheep's wool from the local bushes, tease, spin and dye it before weaving but even after all that hard work Doris remembers her scarf was so itchy she just couldn't wear it. Mrs Turner was their Art teacher and she helped them with weaving and making linocuts, the patterns from which would be used to print on to material.

Although Dick insists he's not arty he vividly remembers really enjoying rolling the ink on to the block linocut before applying it to the material. It was much more of a hands on education as they learnt by exploring and doing and yet at the same time they never forget the 3 R's and some of them including Dick passed the 11+ to gain scholarships to Amersham Grammar. The only bad memory Dick has of his school days and sometimes he thinks he might have dreamt it, is the time the School Dentist arrived with her own pedal drill and he recalls screaming in agony as she drilled away at his tooth without any anaesthetic.

Once Doris had got over the initial shock of being an evacuee she loved every minute of her time in the village and adored living in the countryside. There was one particular Yew tree, which is still standing at the end of the school car park, where she spend hours looking around the village from her own special branch. Dick recalls that at lunchtime he and others playing fox and hounds often wandered over a mile and a half away and would then have to run like mad to get back when they heard the bell, There were no restrictions on where they could and couldn't go, traffic was non-existent apart from a few army convoys and so they could just run wild over the fields and in the woods. All the boys loved swinging on vines of Old Man's Beard and pretending they were Tarzan. Smoking didn't have the social stigma it has now and those same Old Man's beard stems were lit and used as cigarettes and the boys got even more inventive making pipes out of cherry wood with an elderberry stem and smoked dried leaves! Scrumpling was another favourite activity with the best pickings from the beautiful Cherry orchard, which was opposite the village hall. You could also earn a few pennies by helping out at the Nut orchard where you would get 6d for a large basket of cobnuts.

In those days the Village had it's own policeman Mr Topham and any youthful high jinks, were instantly dealt with by a cuff around the ear and the worst threat of all - "*Do that again and I'll tell your parents*". The best way Dick worked out to avoid too much trouble was just to make sure John Topham the policeman's son was always in your gang!

The rhythm of village life then was very much geared around the changing seasons each with it's own special activities. Spring was always a great time with the promise of warmer weather, days getting longer and trees breaking into leaf, a chance to check out nesting habits of many birds. During the War Years "Double Summer Time" meant the clocks going forward two hours, so long warm summer evenings could stretch to 11pm and might involve charging around on trucks, made up from old pram chassis, roller skating, and early "Scrumpling". In Autumn it was time for "gleaning" when you would collect ears of corn missed when harvesting and Bonfire night became a great competition between local villages to see who could build the biggest fire. With everyone using the fire for burning their rubbish it could be kept going for a week or more! Winter saw the introduction of "home made" sledges of timber and, if one was lucky, with runners made from old curtain rails With the slightest covering of snow these sledges could be seen on the "Alpine Slopes" of the fields leading down to Hockeridge Woods.

There would often be sliding & skating on the frozen ponds. Christmas time Mrs James would take the school Carol Singing outside the farms and many hours were spent making paper chain decorations. There was nearly always a Christmas tree but presents were rationed. They could fit into stockings (as opposed to pillowcases) and always included an orange together with a toy, and even that might be second hand.

Doris joined the Church Choir and Sunday school so Sunday was a very busy day for her with three visits to Church. However although she loved the peace of the countryside and the village traditions of fetes and cricket on the green she was still very aware of the war being fought around them. The odd bomb dropped nearby and all the children knew the sound of the V1 and V2 bombers coming over. If you saw the tail light go out it was about to come down and several did over Cholesbury. In the early days of the war with Bovingdon just down the road Doris would count the Flying Fortresses leaving the airfield and then try to count them back in. The children were also allowed to collect shrapnel and the silver foil that the Germans dropped as a way of deflecting radar signals.

There were often soldiers passing through and they frequently camped out on the Green and all the children would try to cadge gum or biscuits from them but Dick and friends collected blank cartridges from the Army 303 rifles. One of their favourite pastimes was to put a blank cartridge into an iron post on the corner of the cemetery and hit it hard with a nail - in fact he's sure there might still be one left there now. Doris remembers seeing a convoy of prisoners of war being driven through the village, she knew they were Italian as they had a distinct uniform with a circle on their backs - so as to be easily spotted if they tried to escape. She also remembers being in the village hall during one raid when the teacher got them all to sit under the billiard table and she read them stories to keep them calm. Dick recalls walking with his parents some weekends to the Black Cat at Lye Green and looking across to the London skyline, which was just a carpet blaze and a constant red glow during those early days of the war. Both of them also remember the gliders flying over to take troops for the Normandy Landings in 1944 and it was at those landings that the Hewitt's son Frank was wounded - his kneecap was blown off and so he came back home an invalid.

Sadly for Doris her departure from Ashley Green was just as much of a shock as her arrival. One day in 1945 she went home for lunch and she found her bags packed and her brother waiting to take her home, she didn't even have time to say goodbye to her friends or teachers - something she still regrets. Her father had fallen ill and with no benefit system her mother had to take on two jobs and Doris was needed to look after her younger brother and sister, who had been born during the war.

For Doris living in a village for the first time in her life gave her a love of the countryside that has never left her and she always kept in touch with the Hewitts who had been so kind to her and as soon as she got married and was able, she moved away from the city into the suburbs and now in retirement lives in the Essex countryside.



In this Class Photo, Doris is standing 5th from right and Dick is sitting in the front row 4th from right

Other names they recall are:-

Rosie Hewitt, Doris's close friend & neighbour, also a relative of the Hewitt family (6th from the right), Jean Law (Sillett) who came to live with the Hewitts from Dr Barnardo's after Doris's sister returned to work in London at 14 (7th from right). There is also Clive Blofield, Stanley & Clifford Bowden, Sheila Cawdrey, Cecil Denham, Dorothy Darvill (daughter of the family that owned the nut orchard), Georgie Eames, Sheila Gowlett (daughter of the village shop owner), Geoffrey Pedder, Ruby Puddephat, John Redding, & Tommy Wallis.



This is a picture of Doris and Dick today.

They are in the same position outside the main door just as in the next picture of their Wartime class photo outside the front door.

Can you identify anyone else in the class picture?

Could it be that you still live in the village and are you in there? If you are, have you got a story to tell?

We would love to hear from you if you have any additional information, stories or pictures.

Please contact the editor if you can help.

What a great tale from almost 70 years ago when times were certainly a lot different. Our thanks to Dick and Doris for re-living their time in Ashley Green, and to Lorna Ingham for making it come alive for us. Ed.

THE GOLDEN EAGLE

Since July, we have a new Licensee at our Pub, and we welcome Marion Jones to Ashley Green. This is a first for Marion who has taken a change of career to come to the pub.

She previously managed a children's home in Chesham, coming from Reading 30 years ago to become a Chesham resident. She may not have hands on experience, but lived for a while above "The George" in the centre of the town, and that is near enough.

Her aim is to improve the service and make "The Eagle" a real focus for the community - a real village pub - where you will get good food, and good service!

On New Years Eve Marion plans to hold a themed evening - theme "The Moulin Rouge" Entry will be by ticket, so why not pop in to the pub for a ticket and have a drink or a meal while you do.

Have a look at the website www.thegoldeneagle.co.uk to see more.

I am sure we all wish Marion every success in her new role.



The Eagle in days gone by.

FAMILY PICNIC IN THE GLEBE

The Family Picnic in September was held on a beautiful sunny day. Several families gathered in the Glebe, bringing with them their picnics and drinks. Tea and Coffee was provided free.

All ages had fun playing rounders, Volleyball and badminton, while the smaller children enjoyed the swings in the play area.

These Games on the Green events are a great opportunity for families to meet and chat and for the children to play together. They are for all ages so do come along and enjoy the fun.

The next Picnic and Games event will be next May.

Look out for posters and details and then simply come along.



THANKS

The Supper and Dance in aid of Breast Cancer Care - an independent event staged in the village hall - raised £1460. It was a most successful evening, and everyone enjoyed themselves.

My thanks go to all who helped me organise this event, particularly Helen Stacey, Margaret Flowers and Kim Warren, and to all villagers and friends, and everyone who came to support it and fill the hall to capacity.

The supper was excellent, and afterwards we were entertained by Guy and David.

Music was provided by my son Tom and the band he plays and sings with. It was great music and everyone danced!

My thanks again. *Mary Axon*

Not a Member?

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.
01442-876965

Forthcoming Events in the Village

Ashley Green Community Association

FAMILY PARTY
SUNDAY 14TH DECEMBER
6.00pm in the Village Hall

Mulled wine
Refreshments
Raffle
Special Children's Raffle
Father Christmas
Christmas Carols

Association Members - FREE
Children - FREE
Non Members - £2.00

Do make a point of coming along to this very popular, annual, event and meet friends and neighbours and have a lot of fun too.

ASHLEY GREEN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

WELCOMES YOU
TO



A VALENTINE'S DINNER

Saturday February 14th 2009
7.30 for 8.00pm

At Ashley Green Memorial Hall

Licensed Bar
Raffle

3 Course Meal
**Live Music by
INFINITY**
Dress - Smart Party

Tickets £20.00

Available from:

Margaret Flowers - 01442 865552
Elizabeth Foster - 01442 873279

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST

Advent fair

In the Village Hall
Saturday 6th December - 2.00 to 4.30pm

Tombola, Raffle, Treasure Hunt, refreshments.
There will be a range of stalls including:
Bric-a-Brac, Toys, Cakes and produce, Gifts etc.

We really need your support at this annual event - so do come along.

and

Christingle Service In the Church.

Sunday 7th December - 3.00pm

In aid of the Children's Society
Everyone Welcome!

St John the Evangelist
Ashley Green

A Service of Readings and Carols

The Bishop of Buckingham
officiating

SUNDAY 21st DECEMBER
6.00pm

A Traditional Service for all the family

Adverts

Advertise your enterprise or activity here. Contact us with details of what you want.

(There is a charge for **Commercial Businesses**: Apply for details.)



Brick Point

Re Pointing Contractors
and Builders

John Hollylee
Tel: 01442 865673
Mobile: 07788 768313

SOLID GOLD

"DISCO"

60S 70S 80S 90S

Disco for every event.

Music to dance the night away.

Great prices

Call - John Hollylee

Tel - 01442 - 865673

Mob - 07788 768313



Funky Felt
Bead Bonanza
Groovy Glass

- No Need for Party Bags
- Ideal venue at Berkhamsted Arts & Crafts (or a venue of your choice)
- Only £15 per child

For more information contact Jo
Tel.: 07711339492
Email: jo@lamaloo.co.uk



New Independent
Estate Agency

Experienced, Professional
and Caring Estate Agents
offering residential sales
and lettings.

(Ann Turner - Formerly of George David)
Free valuations

3 Broad Street, Chesham, Bucks HP5 3AE 01494 792552
www.georgeturnerestates.com



Berkhamsted Arts & Crafts

For all your art & Craft requirements
Visit www.art4crafts.co.uk for details of:
Special Offers
Demonstrations & Classes
How To Find Us & Opening Times
On-line shop coming soon!
Ask in-store about our Reward Card scheme

29-31 Lower Kings Road, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire
HP4 2AB 01442 866632

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