

# COMMUNITY CALL

Edition 2010/01

Read it on our website

Spring 2010

[www.ashleygreen.org.uk](http://www.ashleygreen.org.uk)

Hey Ho, Come to the Fair!



**Come along and enjoy a Traditional Village Fair**

Put the date in your diary and come along to have a good time. Bring family and friends too, and support your village. Lots of Sideshows and stalls, Tug of War, Bouncy Castle, Pony Rides, Mini go-karts and lots more.

The annual fair is an event which probably takes the most organisation of all the events, and we always need help. There is still time to lend a hand, run a stall or a side-show, or help someone else run theirs, and even help with the clearing up afterwards (*something often forgotten at the end of the day!!*) so contact:-

*Rodney Newth - 01442 878795 or Gavin Rennie - 01442 864812.*

## Join the Community Association

Take an active part in your village. Meet your neighbours, come to some events, and get involved. Annual fee is just £5.00 and there are family rates too. Contact the membership Secretary on 01442 876965

## Editorial

Here is the **Eleventh** edition of your village newsletter.

Next Issue is planned for **November 2010** so if you have something to publish, comments, ideas, letters etc please contact:-

**David Harmer (Editor)**

Call: 01442 874931

or Email [davedharmer@aol.com](mailto:davedharmer@aol.com)

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS - 2010

**The Annual Fair - Saturday June 5th**

**Possible Fun Run - Sunday September 5th**

**Wine Tasting Event - Saturday October 16th**

**Bonfire Night - Friday November 5th**

**Quiz Night - Saturday November 20th.**

**Family Village Party - Sunday December 12th.**

*Put these dates in your diary NOW!! More details on the notice boards and the website, or call 01442 - 873279.*

## Word from the Chair

It's hard to believe that I have been in the chair for nearly a year. I for one have certainly had quite a lot of fun.

A particular highlight so far has to be the Comedy Night held on the March 6<sup>th</sup>. This was just like the West End comes to Ashley Green. Marshalled by compere Dan Evans two West End headliners and the winner of the Edinburgh Festivals Most Unusual Act a couple of years ago meant we had an evening of laughter from start to finish. Thanks to Ben Moorhouse who organises the comedy events in Tring for helping us out. This has to be considered a cheap night out at £12 a ticket. What's more a substantial sum was raised to help with the maintenance of our buildings and our charitable endeavours.

I should also mention the Church barn dance held earlier in the year which was a rip roaring success and no doubt will be repeated in the future.

It is this time of the year that we enjoy our Summer Fair. We strive to keep this very much a traditional event. This is one of those opportunities where a large number of people from the village get involved. All sorts of people turn out to run stalls and help man (or lady) the various events. It is also an opportunity for you to come and actively support the Community Association's work.

There are far far too many of you to mention for me to thank you all individually but our special thanks goes to

Gavin Rennie and Rodney Newth for organising the event in such an efficient way.

We have a busy time ahead of us. I am just getting quotes for the external redecoration of the Village Hall which needs to be dealt with this year.

We are in the process of purchasing some equipment which will allow us to show big screen productions in the Village Hall including having Film Nights, hosting Olympic events and supplementing talks and shows. In particular however look out for our World Cup Football events when you will have the opportunity to cheer on the nation's team in good company.

As I have your attention, just a couple of more longer term things to bear in mind. First, Chiltern District Council have indicated that they are happy for us to progress with the proposed extension to the Village Hall. It is now down to some hard work to get the details agreed and to raise funds.

Second, we have had an encouraging response from Mr Nash about the re-use of the old football pitch. The Ashley Green Football Club (currently playing away from home) are keen to return. We will keep you posted.

Finally, welcome to Ian and Ann our new Landlord and Landlady at The Golden Eagle. We wish you well with your endeavours in Ashley Green.

*Roger Watts - Chairman*

## HIGH SPEED RAIL LINK.



Most of you will have seen in the papers, or heard about, the protest meetings that were held after the Department of Transport published their report about a High Speed rail link between the Midlands and London.

This made recommendations that such a link should be built to pass through an Area Of Natural Beauty - **The Chilterns.**

The "Recommended Route" passes to the South of us and maybe we all commiserated with the people and businesses along that route, but perhaps also breathed a sigh of relief that it was not coming our way. Noticeably absent from the media reports was any suggestion that alternative routes might have been considered - well your correspondent didn't see any - or what these might be.

However, there are alternatives, and details of the same can be found either at the offices of the Chiltern District

Council in Amersham or at the Department of Transport's own website.

The latter is more informative and shows that a handful of alternative routes were considered leaving three options - The "Recommended Route", a "Preferred Alternative" and a "Further Alternative Route". All should be subject to serious scrutiny by us all, since there is still a long way to go, but here in Ashley Green we should be most concerned about the third one.

**This would bring up to 18 High Speed trains an hour travelling just about where the A41 roundabout is, less than a mile from the Green!!**

You can check the recommendations in detail at:-  
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/pi/highspeedrail/hs2ltd/hs2report/pdf/chapter3b.pdf>

Look at page 17, and even with the poor detail in the maps that they have produced there, it is easy to overlay that plan on to a map of our district and see that the line is right up on the A41.

Visit the Council offices in Amersham. See the plans there.

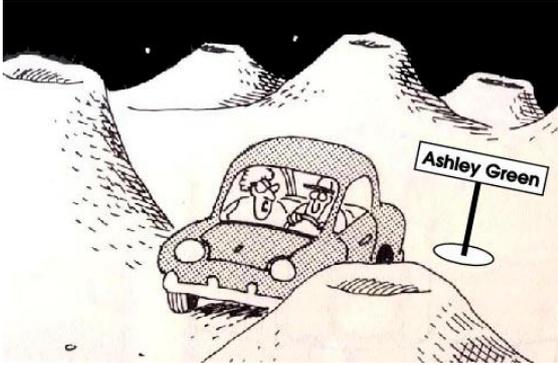
If you get any additional news, pass it in to the Ashley Green Community Association.

Contact details are on Page 1, or via the website.

[www.ashleygreen.org.uk](http://www.ashleygreen.org.uk)

*(Thanks to Mark Broschombe for alerting us to this news)*

## From Rocky Road to Smooth as Silk



(or nearly so).

The saga of Two Dells Lane in the winter of 2009/10 will go down in village history. The previous winter left the road in a patched-up state, with a great deal of hole-filling, but the first December snow stripped the filling away in a matter of days, and then new areas of disappearing road surface developed. Then came the long January freeze and potholes appeared where they had never done before so that the stretch of road from the church to Rushmoor Cottage became as bad as any of us had seen. I do not know if anyone counted them, but an estimate of 100 potholes in 400 yards would not be out of court. No need for speed limit signs - traffic just crawled, trying to avoid damage to tyres and wheels, and not always successfully. Some called it the road to Basra, which might well be unfair to Basra, or even downtown on the planet Zarg.

Appeals to the County Council to do something about it, backed up by a series of claims for consequential damage, were initiated by Sue and Alan Robson, The Parish Council took up the cause, and others wrote mails and letters to our MP. Some felt it unlikely that we would get anything done, or that if the County did turn up, the job would be a series of hole-fillings, which had been shown to be inadequate. But then, in the second half of March, a notice appeared. The road would be closed for 2 days.

Over a weekend, a formidable amount of equipment was delivered. Perhaps, something was about to be done - after an earlier delivery of equipment had proved to be a false dawn - that work was just to prevent flooding of the hall car park. On that Monday and Tuesday, the whole of the road surface was stripped away and a new surface laid, and now the road user had a completely new experience, a road that was smooth, instead of potholed, a road as roads ought to be, no need to consider it as a cross-country obstacle track.

A great deal of credit should be given to our county councillor, Noel Brown. He was asked to come and see the state of the road for himself, and he did. He then brought the relevant officer with him and persuaded him that this required a "plane and fill" approach, which is what was implemented. He had the same approach undertaken by the same contractor on the Wednesday by the swimming pool in Chesham, which is also in his ward - so hats off to Noel. It is the type of detailed work needed by our councillors - and he did it.

So from having the worst road in the county, we now have the best - for at least 400 yards. But there is so much more to do - the road to Chesham is poor, other rural roads have dangerous potholes lying in wait and the roads through Amersham are astonishingly bad. The County will have its work cut out to do all that needs doing before next winter, so on this occasion Ashley Green might feel a little blessed by its combination of local protest, effective county councillor and good contractor. Let us hope we still feel that way after our next winter!!!

*John Poston.*

*(Shortly after the work was completed, one of the all too regular leaks from the water main has appeared, leaving a wet patch in the pristine tarmac.*

*It has been marked for future work! We wait and see!!)*

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## PIANO NEEDED, AND OBTAINED!

In the last issue we advertised for a piano to replace the aged and ailing one in the village hall.

Within a few days we got one!! All we have to do now is to do now is wheel it in and start playing.

Our thanks to Rob and Kim Warren for their most generous gift.



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## Comedy Evening



On the 6th March the events committee organised the 2nd Comedy Evening to be held in the Village Hall in Ashley Green. About 100 people filled the hall, and with nibbles provided and a bar for refreshments, the evening was a resounding success, raising over £900. There were four comedians from the "Get Stuffed" Comedy Club who run numerous comedy events in the area. These entertainers were really good circuit, stand up, comedians who did a great job in entertaining us for the whole evening and keeping us in fits of laughter.

They were illuminated by the newly installed spot lights - a good buy - and the sound system was provided by John Wyatt and Christine Dennis for the evening.

Thanks to all who helped to make it a great evening and Ben for organising the comedians.

*Margaret Flowers*

## SAD NEWS

In this issue we have to announce the sad news of the deaths of two prominent village figures. **Vivienne Withall**, last chairman of, and a vigorous worker for, the Community Association, and **Hilary Sheppard**, instrumental in the setting up of the association in the early days - both of them tireless in their work for the church.

### Margaret Vivienne Withall



Glory be to God for dappled things". This beautiful poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins was read at Vivienne's funeral by her son, William and it epitomises her attitude to God's earth which she loved very much. Any visit to the garden at "A Happy Landing" will confirm this.

Viv, as she was known to her family, was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1945 in Clanfield, Oxfordshire, the eldest of three and destined to fly, as her father was a Spitfire pilot. Sure enough, on her 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, she acquired her private pilot's licence. She won many races with him, not least the King's Cup, and also on her own in her Turbulent aircraft. After school, she went to the Sorbonne to study French language and literature, returned to England to take many cookery courses and then to complete a business course near Aylesbury. So, by now, a very accomplished young woman!

In 1966, she met Carr and they were soon married. As he was a pilot and above all an enthusiastic and experienced glider, they had a great deal in common. Lucy, their daughter, was born in 1970 and then two sons, William and James. They bought "A Happy Landing" and set about making a beautiful family home and garden. Vivienne's family had worshipped at the Methodist church in Aylesbury during her girlhood which fostered her deep faith.

On arrival in Ashley Green, the family first went to Sunnyside in Berkhamsted where there was a Sunday School for the children. However, in 1989, when the vicar of St. John's appealed for some support as there were only 6 members in the congregation, she decided to join and see if something could be done.

It was the arrival of Rev. Margaret Hall in 1990 that turned the situation around and Vivienne was a tireless worker and enthusiastic supporter of the new regime. Her activities as a church member ran from scrubbing the chancel tiles on her hands and knees, to providing fabulous food for the annual Harvest Brunch, to making hundreds of pots of jam and marmalade and cakes for the annual Autumn Fair. Her standards were so high and her abilities legendary. Vivienne eventually became Church Warden, a post which she filled with integrity and efficiency.

One of Vivienne's great interests was the National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts (Nadfas). Over 20 years she held all the positions on the committee of the local branch including Chairman, and she and Carr enjoyed some memorable cultural tours at home and abroad.

Being a notable member of the local community and a member of the Ashley Green Community Association, it was not long before she became Chairman of that group as well. She endeavoured to enthuse other members of the community to take an active interest in its life and many of you will remember her "manifesto" published in the Spring, 2009 issue of "Community Call". It was a moving and personal document and in it Vivienne linked together the Community Association and the Church of St. John's as organisations that have the interests of the village at heart. Following her death, it is obvious that co-operation and support for each other are blooming as we arrange events together for the good of the whole community. She will be remembered with huge affection and we thank her for the enormous contribution she made to Ashley Green.

### Hilary Catherine Sheppard

Hilary was born on 11 June, 1944 and, after attending Lady Eleanor Holles School, went to St Hugh's College, Oxford where she attained both a B.Sc. and a Masters in Chemistry. She met Geoff while at Oxford and they were married in Esher on 20<sup>th</sup> July, 1968.

She began her professional career, a month after their wedding, at what was then the Radiochemical Centre in Amersham as a Scientific Officer. She progressed through the company until, in 1988, she joined the Regulatory Affairs Department and eventually became Senior Regulatory Affairs Executive.

Tributes from her work colleagues describing her extraordinary grasp of complicated detail were given at her funeral, together with eulogies from a Bishop, the Rural Dean, the Rector and the Archdeacon, all speaking of her contribution to the work of the Church.

Hilary's ability to meticulously examine literature of any kind was an enormous asset to our church here in Ashley Green and to the Diocese and to the Church of England!



She developed a keen interest in the governance of the C of E and, at her death, had been Lay Chairman of the Amersham Deanery for more than 14 years. She had magnificent and valuable expertise in the intricacies and idiosyncrasies of the Church of England and could explain the hierarchy of the Diocesan structure on one side of A4 and its financial structure on two! Her faith was of supreme importance to her and she worked tirelessly as Church Warden at St. John's, at her tasks in the Deanery and, where she could, in the Diocese too. Her interest in education meant she served as Trustee and Governor of Chesham Prep School for nearly 20 years.

Aside from her professional work and her devotion to the C of E, she had many other interests, not the least of which was music. She and Geoff were regular concert-goers and supported many local music activities. She was a member of the Oxford Bach Choir during her university years and singing in Amersham Choral Society (now Amchor) was a priority on her calendar. She was a member for more than 40 years.

She loved her garden. She was a member of the RHS and visited Chelsea and Rosemoor, the RHS Garden in Devon. She grew vegetables with great enthusiasm and her abundance and generosity meant that many of us had runner beans, courgettes and cucumbers throughout the summer. She and Geoff bought a little cottage in Chagford in 1988 and this became a welcome retreat from their busy lives. It is right on the edge of Dartmoor offering wonderful hill- and coastal-walks and bird-watching opportunities. Here we have another enthusiasm – bird-watching. This meant that she and Geoff would make regular visits to Tresco in the Scilly Isles, eventually buying a time-share there.

We were all stunned and saddened by her unexpected death, although she had been seriously ill for some six months. We all somehow felt she was going to beat the cancer that had attacked her, but sadly this was not to be. But her contribution to local life and her work in the Church of England will be remembered with gratitude.

*(Barbara Young)*

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## MUSIC at ST JOHNS

This is advance notice that The Consort will be coming to sing at St John's this Autumn.

They return to give another of their popular concerts, performing all A Cappella (unaccompanied part singing) music of all styles and for all tastes. with music ranging from the 16<sup>th</sup> Century up to the 21<sup>st</sup>. There will be Mediaeval motets, Madrigals, Folk songs, Lullabies, Humour and much, much more. Something for everyone.

Don't miss what promises to be a great evening. Put the date in your diary NOW - **Saturday September 11<sup>th</sup> - 7.30pm!!**  
Entry by programme, and all proceeds to the church.

Call 01442 874931 for details, and watch out on notice boards.

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## BARN DANCE



The Ashley Green Barn Dance on 23<sup>rd</sup> January, organised jointly by the Community Association and St John's, was a lively occasion to brighten a winter weekend.

Decor was traditional (think straw bales and scarecrows). Check shirts, high boots and other rustic garb had been dragged from wardrobes around the parish. Our caller quickly got us shedding our inhibitions, and young and old were soon skipping, clapping and willow-stripping their way around the hall.

Half way through the evening we were served a delicious supper of shepherd's pie and simply lashings of apple tart, after which we enjoyed the traditional church pursuits of gambling for alcohol – bowling coins for a whisky prize.

At this point many of us may have felt like a taking a brief nap, but if anything the band got faster, the laughter louder, and the steps more complicated. For those dancing, it was a chance to meet people from all around the parish (if only very briefly, and while muttering "one-two-three-and-step" under one's breath), but even non-dancing party goers had a hugely enjoyable evening.

## Intrepid Explorer Delayed by the Volcano

It doesn't get much better than this - trekking over 200 inhospitable miles of untouched snow in the Arctic Circle, with only a pack of dogs and some good friends for company. Just the sound of the sled accompanied by the panting of five faithful huskies breaks total silence.

A recent Arctic trip turned out to be one of a lifetime in more ways than one.....Our route took us 280 kilometers from Tromso in Norway to Kiruna in Sweden over a week on a trail known as Signal Valley - a frozen landscape in the north Scandinavian Arctic Circle.

After an initial day snowmobiling to get to our starting point, with brief instruction on the basics of dog sledding, we found ourselves each on our own sled pulled by Alaskan Huskies.

It was fascinating to travel on one of the most traditional forms of transport, used by hunters and travelers for thousands of years and one of the most exhilarating. The dogs are bred to run and to cover long distance and seem to love it as much as we do.

The sled forms a perfect moving platform from which to take in the magnificent scenery as the landscape changes from the open and windswept plains of ice and snow where temperatures drop to -20 even in April, to dense, coniferous forests.

Crossing the vast white wilderness at speed, we stop occasionally to catch our breath, refuel the dogs and take in our surroundings. Herds of reindeer roam the open plains along with the occasional moose. Each night we stop to stay in a remote refuge having enjoyed reindeer stew and a basic sauna followed by a dip in a freezing lake through a hole broken in the ice.

Feeling relaxed and refreshed after a magical experience, the trip finishes in Kiruna (North Sweden) and keen to see our families, we begin our trip home. However, returning the dogs to their owners in one piece proved the least of our problems as, due the Icelandic volcano, we find all flights are grounded.



Pressures of work dictate that we need to find a way home and we book the last available hire car in Kiruna for the 1,200km drive to Stockholm.

Five men and five rucksacks full of arctic kit make a squashed and uncomfortable journey for everyone but the driver, so a one hour rotation system is religiously stuck to as we all look forward to our turn behind the wheel. A day and night later in Stockholm, all resources are put into finding a route home but bus, train and even a berth on container ship ultimately come to nothing and a mini bus is hired for the 2,200km drive to Calais. Some 20 hours and six countries later we arrive at Calais at 5.30am and walk onto the ferry without the expected hoards of exhausted and weary travelers as portrayed in the media.

By lunchtime, three days later than scheduled, we're back at work, shattered but satisfied that the mid-life crisis is at least abated for another year.

*Jamie Russell - 10<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> April 2010*

## CHESHAM RURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD ACTION GROUP (NAG)

The last NAG meeting was held on the 16 March in St Leonards. Our priority in the Chesham Rural area for the time being remains speeding. The speed indicator device (SID) was used in South Heath, Chartridge, and Bellingdon. Results of which showed that over 30% of vehicles in South Heath and 43% in Bellingdon were speeding. It is likely therefore that the police will carry out speed enforcement in these areas in the near future. The Safer Roads Partnership are looking to utilise the Mobile Speed Enforcement Van in Chesham Rural in an effort to reduce speeding. Buckinghamshire now has a dedicated Road Safety Officer, PC Pete Hare. He is keen to target speeding, mobile phone use and other road safety issues.

As far as Crime figures are concerned, since the beginning of the year 18 offences were reported in the Ashley Green area, including theft from vehicles, assault and several offences at the petrol station. There was a slight rise in non dwelling burglaries, such as thefts from garden sheds - not unusual at this time of the year. PC Kevin Flint was keen to point out that across the Chilterns in general the crime rate is very low. House burglary - 0.9 a day, Theft from vehicle - 1.4 a day, Theft of vehicle - 0.1 a day, Total 2.8 a day.

PCSO Les Roache has now moved to Chesham West and has been replaced by PCSO Andy Piotrowski. Sgt Mel Mutch, has also moved on, and our new Sgt is Lindsay Falloon, The Chesham Community Police Van has returned, and the team can therefore visit Ashley Green to hold police surgeries if we feel there is a need for this.

Any comments or queries to either John Axon or myself and we will raise them at our next meeting.

Jacquie Rose [jacquierose@lineone.net](mailto:jacquierose@lineone.net) John Axon 01442 866549

# THE GOLDEN EAGLE REVIVED



After a short period under a temporary manager, The Golden Eagle has new management. Ian and Anne Benison have come down from Kettering, back to the area where once they lived, and into The Eagle to breathe new life into it.

Work has already started to landscape the garden and turn it back into a proper beer garden after so much neglect, and Ian tells me that further work of renovation and redecoration is planned for the outside. That should be starting soon, and the same for the interior - pending confirmation of the plans of course - should follow. With all that work completed Ian and Anne will relaunch the "Eagle". Lunch time food is available every day now, and after the facelift the pub will begin to serve evening meals once again. Watch out for the new menu!

The "Quiz Night" is already running every Wednesday, and Ian and Anne hope to introduce further, regular, entertainment.

We all wish Ian and Anne every success in this venture, and you are all encouraged to pop in, have a drink and say "Hallo" as soon as you can, see how the work is progressing, and show your support.

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## THE MAY BALL Our "Black Tie" event

On Saturday May 8<sup>th</sup> we staged our May Ball. Ladies most elegant in their finery and men smart and suited in their DJ's. We certainly know how to "buff up" when the occasion demands.

What a turn out!! The hall was packed - over 70 people came - and the live band gave us all the tunes we needed to dance the night away.

The evening began with a tremendous, three course dinner provided by outside caterers who really did us proud.

This was an event for the villagers to have fun, rather than specifically as a fund raiser, and everyone did have fun, and it certainly created the community spirit that the Community Association tries to foster - and we made a little profit for the funds as well.

All thanks to our organisers - especially those who decorated the hall so splendidly - the caterers and the band. Let's hope Ashley Green will do "Elegant" again in the future.



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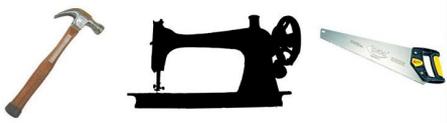
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Any questions please call or email me:  
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