

# SOULBURY NEWSLETTER

November 2001

No. 300



## A DISAPPEARING SPECIES

Have you seen one of these little creatures recently? If so, I would very much like to hear from you.

I am at present conducting a survey into the possible existence of water voles in the waterways of Soulbury Parish. Many people who were about in the countryside 25 years ago would be familiar with the sight of a nose moving along the edge of the water leaving a 'V' shaped wake or the noise of a 'plop' as the vole dived into the water.

But sadly the likelihood is that the water vole or Ratty from 'Wind in the Willows' will be extinct in a few years as his habitat is

severely threatened and mink will attack and kill the remaining few. Jon Sheppard and I have been looking for colonies in the rivers and canals locally.

Small streams - provided they do not drop to less than about 6" of water may still support a small vole population.

Adults are about 20cm (8") from the nose to the base of the tail. They have a shaggy brown-black coat, a blunt nose, and short ears and tail (which is furry). They live near water, favouring steep riverbanks in which they make burrows. They prefer sites where the vegetation is tall enough to provide cover, but not overgrown with trees.

Their diet consists mainly of grasses and wetland plants. They breed between March and October, and each pair needs a territory of about 40 metres of riverside. If we can find any positive signs I will try to improve their chances of survival by increasing the food supply and cover, and introducing mink control with the co-operation of the landowner. So far, we have not found any really positive evidence but we are still hopeful, as several waterways in the vicinity look potentially attractive as habitat for water voles.

This is the second part of my project, which started with my trip to Belize to study manatees, and I am now working for endangered species locally. Earthwatch, a worldwide charity committed to conserving endangered species, sponsored my Caribbean experience and are also supporting this research. Over the next months we should complete the local survey, so if anyone has any information or sightings do please get in touch. Many thanks,  
Liz Miller, 1 Chapel Hill, 270545.

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

At the recent meeting discussions covered the topics of the replacement flag in the churchyard, the payment of the water bill for the allotments, planning applications, the children's playground in Mount Pleasant, grass cutting, street lighting in Manor Close and the Jubilee celebrations for next year.

County Cllr Brenda Jennings gave a short report about matters

affecting Soulbury and the surrounding area. Work is set to begin on the bypass next year, but not until August 2002. Everything seems to be going to plan and we can only hope and pray that the troubles Railtrack have experienced lately will not affect the building of our bypass, especially the bridge over the railway.

There was much discussion on the safety aspects of the playground. A bit of doom and gloom was expressed about the amount of money needed to upgrade the equipment to the high standards now required by new regulations. It was decided to arrange a special meeting to discuss the playground alone, since there seemed to be so many problems.

The Parish strimmer, which has a great deal of hard wear, had recently caught fire and the spare parts needed to repair it would be prohibitively expensive, so it has been decided to look into the cost of buying a new machine. Cllr Maurice Cross has already obtained some information on new strimmers and brush cutters and was prepared to carry on looking for the most suitable machine to buy.

District Cllr Mrs Maureen Payne informed the meeting that the Parish Forum this year will be on 29<sup>th</sup> October at Wingrave at 6.40pm for 7pm. This forum gives parish and district councillors a chance to meet one another and voice opinions.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on 19<sup>th</sup> November.

### JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The meeting took place on 17<sup>th</sup> October to analyse the results of the village questionnaires and to proceed with organising events. The questions about ways of covering the costs of the days of celebrations brought a mixed response but most people felt some fund raising before the event should take place. A bumper village raffle was proposed with a good variety of prizes, and the

possibility of the Parish Council assisting with this. The raffle would be drawn around Easter, which would give plenty of opportunity for offers of prizes! and for selling tickets. Further events might be a Carol sing-a-long concert, and a race night, avoiding clashes with other village groups who also need to fund raise. Several villagers said they would prefer to give a sum of money so that no other money raising would be required. There was still some hope of a grant towards the celebrations, but the group felt that they should not rely on this. The group would like to hear of more willing helpers, and also information on children in the households. It was also decided that the evening barn dance and pig roast should be tickets only, with a cost of around £7.50 per person. Possibly on one of the afternoons some stalls could be set up for selling goods, probably before the street party which it was felt would be best held in the marquee for safety reasons. This would be another way of covering the costs of the two days and souvenir gifts to villagers, and any profits could be shared between the village organisations.

The next Jubilee meeting will be 3<sup>rd</sup> December in the clubroom. Do come along, even if you haven't been before, if you feel you can contribute something.

If you have not yet returned your questionnaire, we would be grateful if you did.



### MILLENNIUM GREEN NEWS

There is not much to report on the Millennium Green this month. The swales, pond and ditch have all filled up with rainwater again. Another grass snake was seen crossing the main asphalt path at the weekend of 13<sup>th</sup> October - grass snakes not to be mistaken for adders, which have a dark, black mostly zigzag pattern down

the length of the body whereas grass snakes are a uniform dark brown/grey with a diagnostic yellow patch V-shaped on the back of the head and are usually much bigger.

There is some interesting news about a plum tree called the Aylesbury Prune. Liz Miller has found a source of this tree, which the trustees would like to put in the orchard. A Mr Hawkins from Pitstone has an orchard with Aylesbury Prune trees in. He has very kindly offered to give us a cutting or whip from one of his trees so that one day someone will be able to make some plum jam (said to be very tasty) from this neglected local tree, which we would like to help conserve on Soulbury Millennium Green.

I understand it thrives on the gault clay soil in the Aylesbury Vale area, (as gardeners here, you will know that wretched heavy soil you spend years trying to break down and improve!) - especially in the villages of Pitstone, Edlesborough, Northall and others. This tree likes clay soil! It's a late ripener, October time, with a dark blue-black plum, quite sharp in taste, good for jam.



### ALL SAINTS CHURCH NEWS

The Safari Supper organised by Jackie Ridley, Sheila Morgan and Jane Luxton was a great success. Everyone said it was very good fun. By the time people arrived at The Cottage, home of Mr and Mrs Pargeter, for desserts, towards the end of the evening, there was a great deal of rather loud noise and jollity. It's called a 'safari' supper because you keep moving on to another house for different courses. People get mixed up and you meet people you didn't know lived in Soulbury! The Friends of Soulbury Church raised £528 in total, with this event, and many thanks are due to the organisers, to those who opened their homes, to guests and everyone concerned.

The Quiz Evening at Liscombe House was also a great success. There were just over 60 people there, teams of 4 pitting their wits against one another in their efforts to answer some very hard questions set by Maureen Payne, the question master. It seemed some people were unable to get tickets. The organisers would like to offer their apologies to the later-comers but it was just impossible to fit more people in. Next time, everyone, remember to book early because the quiz is popular.

The food - baked potatoes, ham, salad and superb desserts, made by Margaret Rowe, were very good. Thanks are due to Sir Nicholas and Lady Bonsor for inviting people into their house, to Margaret particularly and all the other ladies who helped with food, to Stan Morris and Chris Bryant for heaving chairs and tables about and to Maureen for taking time and trouble to organise the questions. The amount raised was £301.

#### **School Dinner Evening at the Old School**

On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November at 8pm you are invited to a School Dinner Evening, a hilarious opportunity to dress up and recall the days of your childhood. Phone Jackie on 270619, Sheila on 270175 or Jane on 270493 for tickets and information. Thanks are due to Richard and Sheila for opening their home The Old School House to guests. Please get your tickets early to avoid disappointment.



#### **Church Coffee Morning**

There will be a Coffee Morning in the clubroom on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November at 10.30am-12 noon. Any offers of help, raffle prizes or goods for sale will be very gratefully received either at Stan Morris' house 3 Stewkley Rd, on the day before or on the morning

itself at the clubroom before 10.30am.

On Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> November the Patronal Festival Service will be celebrated at All Saints Church because it's All Saints Day on 1<sup>st</sup> November. The service is at 10.30am and some people from the other congregations will join us in the Benefice from Stewkley and Drayton Parslow.

On Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November, Remembrance Day, we shall meet at 10.50am at the War Memorial and then move into the church for a memorial service. Do please come along. In these troubled times, soldiers need to be remembered perhaps more than ever.



#### **CYCLING**

Would parents of children cycling in the vicinity of Mount Pleasant please make them aware of dangers from motor vehicles, especially the area leading into the garages. This section is a NO CYCLING area.

#### **MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING**

Miss Daphne Booth would like to thank those who attended or helped at the Coffee Morning in the clubroom on 28<sup>th</sup> September. Many orders for Christmas cards came in, taking over £100 and the coffee morning raffle and sale of goods and produce made £62.37. Raffle prizewinners were: -  
Mrs C Fairbairn Mrs J Linney  
Mr A Peacock Mrs M Jordan  
Mrs M White Mrs N Mercy  
Mrs M Gadsden Miss F Lines

#### **CONGRATULATIONS**

The residents of Hollingdon would like to send their congratulations to Natalie and Charlie Bunker on the safe arrival of baby Samuel who was delivered on 17<sup>th</sup> September weighing a healthy 7lbs 11oz. Charlie was last seen heading across the fields with Samuel ensconced in a baby sling on his back whilst Natalie was

heading for London for some much needed retail therapy. Oh Happy Days!

Congratulations to Lexia and Dan Collins on their recent wedding.

#### **COMPUTER TABLE**

Self-assembly computer table /bench - free to collector. The bench does need slight adjustment to keyboard shelf. Tel. 270483 after 6pm.



#### **STEWKLEY PLAYERS**

Present their 86<sup>th</sup> production - Jack and the Beanstalk in the Village Hall, Stewkley.

Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November at 8pm

Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November at 8pm

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December at 4pm

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December at 8pm.

Licensed bar for evening performances.

Tickets £4 (Matinee £3) on sale from 5<sup>th</sup> November. Tel. 01525 240236 (Chris & Jean Carter)

Please note that an adult must accompany children 12 years of age and under.



#### **CHRISTMAS TURKEYS**

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#### **PARTYLITE CONSULTANT**

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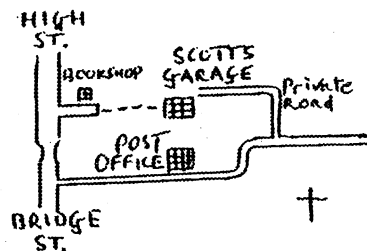
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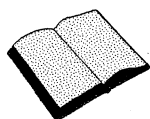
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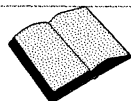
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*If you are interested in joining the Newsletter team, please contact one of the present members named below.*



**FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER 2001**  
(In the clubroom unless otherwise stated)

Thursday	1 <sup>st</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup>		A.V.D.C. Waste Paper & Recycling Collection
Thursday	1 <sup>st</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 15 <sup>th</sup> , 22 <sup>nd</sup> & 29 <sup>th</sup>	7.30pm	Bowls Evening
Saturday	3 <sup>rd</sup>	10am - 12noon	Church Cleaning
Saturday	10 <sup>th</sup>	8pm	School Dinner Evening
Monday	12 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup>	2.00pm - 2.15pm 2.20pm - 2.35pm	Mobile Library - Bungalows Lay-by Stewkley Road Bus Stop
Tuesday	13 <sup>th</sup>	8pm	W.I. Annual Meeting
Wednesday	14 <sup>th</sup>	2.30pm	Social Circle
Friday	16 <sup>th</sup>		SVCC Race Night
Wednesday	19 <sup>th</sup>	8pm	Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday	21 <sup>st</sup>	7.45pm	Women's Fellowship at the home of Mrs Joan Eyles, Chapel Hill
Saturday	24 <sup>th</sup>	10.30am	Coffee Morning for the Church
Monday	26 <sup>th</sup>	8.00pm	Millennium Green Meeting



**DIARY DATES**

DECEMBER	Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	8pm	Jubilee Meeting
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**ALL SAINTS CHURCH SERVICES**

Vicar: Rev. Norman Cotton, The Vicarage, Stewkley - Tel. 240287

Curate: Rev. Peter Lymbery, 17 Hartwell Crescent, Leighton Buzzard - Tel. 371235

Sunday	4 <sup>th</sup> November	10.30am	Patronal Festival Service
Sunday	11 <sup>th</sup> November	10.50am	Remembrance Service (beginning at war memorial)
Sunday	18 <sup>th</sup> & 25 <sup>th</sup> November	11.30am	Sung Communion in Church

**METHODIST CHURCH**

Minister: Rev. Brian Trudgian, The Manse, Stewkley - Tel 240251

Sunday	25 <sup>th</sup> November	6pm	Rev. A Cowburn
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Items for next issue by 21<sup>st</sup> November 2001 to: Mrs Miller 270545, Mrs Bunyan 270461, Mrs Norman 270483, Mrs Fairbairn 270674 or Debbie@dbegroup.co.uk