



# THE CHALGRAVE NEWS

Publication No. 18 2007-1

# Chalgrave Social Diary

- Parish Council meet Village Hall 7.30pm, last Tues of the month
- Plough Inn - Quiz nights every other Tuesday 9.00pm, Dominoes Tues & Thurs evenings
- Queens Head - Live entertainment every Friday 7.30pm  
Darts Weds, Dominos Tues & Thurs evenings
- Old Time Musical - Memorial Hall 7th,8th & 9th December
- Book Club meetings - weekdays - contact Linda Hadden
- Rogation Day 13th May meet 10.00am at Queens Head
- Chalgrave Games 14th July at the Memorial Hall
- Senior Citizens Annual Dinner 15th April

## *National Trust South Bedfordshire Association*

4 April, Wednesday

Life Downstairs at Shaw's Corner

*Paul Williamson*

*All talks start at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated and are held at the Salvation Army Centre, Bull Pond Lane, Dunstable. Visitors Welcome at £1.00.*

*For Further information phone 01582 527790*

If you would like to subscribe to this magazine please send a cheque for £15.00 (4 issues) made payable to "The Chalgrave News" together with your name and UK address to L Lothian, 30 The Lane, Tebworth, Beds, LU7 9QB.

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## *Editorial*

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With memories of Christmas fading I am looking forward to getting out in the garden, tidying up, pruning the roses, dividing and planting out the herbacious border plants. After the unseasonally warm weather we have had this year the daffodils are all out early and I have noticed the birds bagging the nesting boxes for themselves in my garden

The following is taken from the BBC News website

“One of the data series used to compile the UK temperature figures is the Central England Temperature Record (CET) record, which is the world's oldest continuous dataset for temperature, stretching back to January 1659. The CET had recorded a mean temperature of 11.22C (52.20F) for the 12-month period from March 2006 to the end of February 2007, which was the warmest year-long period on record.”

In this edition of the Chalgrave News find the continuing saga of Bill's pond, the latest report from the meeting with Richard Wolnough of the Green Sand Trust, a sobering message from “The Mole” and lots of pictures of the highly successful Old Time Music Hall, the funds from which were kindly donated to this magazine.

Despite constant requests we rarely get any news from the schools or our local councillors but our local MP has come up trumps again with a very interesting article about the Pensions Bill.

So we hope you enjoy this edition and have an enjoyable Easter break.

**We are very grateful to all our sponsors.**

**If anyone would like to sponsor the magazine in future  
please contact one of the editorial team.**

### **Found**

A small pendant (looks very expensive) was found at the Chalgrave Hall after the Boogie Night Dico.

Any claims to Roger Masters, 2 The Lane, Tebworth Tel 873039.



## *What's happened in Chalgrave since the Last Chalgrave News*

**P**arish met with the Greensand Trust for a second time to discuss the future of our surrounding green belt.

**O**ld Time Music Hall was a great success raising nearly £800 for this magazine.

**R**ay and Sue won the Christmas lights competition for a second time. Their wonderful display lit up the square in St Mary's Close.

**R**ector Nick McNeil has had to

stand down because of years of ill health. We all wish him well and hope that with rest he makes a full recovery.

**L**ooks like Bill has triumphed and the lake in Park View Lane will soon be a long distant memory. We wait with baited breath to see if the work is carried out.

**B**e warned about driving scam in the area. A local resident reports personal involvement.

## *What a Load of Rubbish!*

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**D**id you know that from September this year your District Council, that's the very same District Council that has 'some challenging work to do to improve community safety and public satisfaction with the council' is to cease weekly collection of refuse in favour of a fortnightly collection. In addition, you will be provided with yet another wheelie bin (this time with an orange lid) in which to put all your recyclable refuse. This will be collected every fortnight on alternative weeks to your black (refuse) bin. Therefore no more orange bags and nothing to be left next to the bin because it will not be collected (elf 'n safety).



The District Council says 'studies show' you won't get any more rats, maggots and flies than you get now – so there!

Before you ask, NO, your Council Tax won't be reduced. This is probably part of the so called efficiency savings that will pay for local Government reorganisation, or it may be that the savings will be going to pay for the Recycling Support Officer currently advertised at £20k per year!

'Aint life grand?

## *IF I Ruled the World...* .....

A rather interesting document arrived from the County Council with a thump on one of the Editorial Team's doormat a few weeks ago.

It turned out to be a large 84 page glossy brochure entitled 'All together Better' extolling the virtues of our County Council and making a pitch for it to become a unitary authority.

For those of you who don't know the difference between a Unitary authority and a rasher of bacon, I will explain:-

Bedfordshire has three levels of Local Government administration:

The County Council, which is intended to deliver County wide strategic services such as Social Services, Education, regional planning and waste disposal.

The District Councils, of which there are three – Mid-Beds, South Beds and Bedford Borough. These are intended to deliver more local services such as Leisure facilities, refuse collection, Housing services and Housing benefits, and finally,

The Parish Councils, of which there are numerous and which are there to act in a more consultative capacity although they do look after the bus shelters and cut the grass.

However, this is even more confusing when we add in Luton Unitary Council, which delivers all the County and District functions within the boundary of the old Luton Borough.

So a Unitary Council for Bedfordshire excluding Luton would result in the swallowing of all three District Councils by the Bedfordshire County Council. There would therefore be only two Councils for Bedfordshire (other than the parishes). The Unitary Council of Luton and the Unitary Council of Bedfordshire

Still with me? Hang on; it now starts to get interesting!

The County Council maintains that its proposals will ensure that services will be delivered better, cheaper, we will get better value for money, have better leadership, receive better customer service, and the 'new' County will be more visible, accountable and responsive as a whole.

'Fair Play' I hear you say. Sounds like a rattling good wheeze. If the County Council can deliver all these services cheaper, more efficiently, more effectively and more fairly than the current motley band then why not go for it? After all it will only cost us £16.9m in set up costs and the pay back period is only 4 years! Oh dear, I think we've been here before! Didn't they make the same claims some 15 years ago when their proposals were first turned down?

Anyway, let's just look at their recent performance history.

Some years ago, in 2002 to be precise, the Government introduced their Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) for local authorities with some success. The essence of CPA is that it draws on a range of information such as



performance indicators, assessments of corporate capacity, audit and inspection reports, and stakeholder opinions to reach a single judgement about the performance of a local authority. Its strength is that it results in a clear public rating on a local authority's performance.

Each council will have an assessment over a three year period. This assesses the council's ability to lead its local community having clearly identified its needs and set clear ambitions and priorities. It also gives an assessment of how likely the council is to improve in the near future.

Now for some quotes from the Bedfordshire County Council's corporate assessment: (and this is their auditors speaking!) -

**2002** – Overall assessment was that Beds CC was 'poor'

'Few or no identifiable strengths. Not yet sufficiently focussed on achieving real improvements in services for the people of Bedfordshire. It has not been able to use its generally sound consultation processes to deliver a clear and manageable set of priorities to deliver improvement.....There is an over-emphasis on processes and limited focus on outcomes and tangible improvements.

As yet, the Council has no clear plan for how it intends to manage the improvement agenda and speed up the delivery of improvements in services for the people of Bedfordshire.'

**2003** –again assessed as 'poor'

**2004** – 'Progress in weakest areas but weaknesses outweigh strengths in all areas.....Communication with the public is poor.....The capacity to deliver the future agenda...has neither been fully assessed nor put in place, giving fragility to future arrangements.'

**2005 (latest)** - 'The Council remains a high spending authority. Difficult decisions have yet to be taken to achieve its medium term financial strategy against the key priorities to be delivered. Ongoing work is required to improve financial controls ..... Performance management has shown improvement but is not yet consistently applied. Human resource management has shown little improvement. The scrutiny function has yet to make an effective contribution to future developments. There is also a need to better engage and communicate with the wider community'

Call me old fashioned, but are we the only ones thinking that our County Council would be better off concentrating its (our) valuable resources on improving its current services than pitching for more!

By the way, for the year 2006/7, out of 34 County Councils, Bedfordshire were third highest in terms of average Council tax requirement from each taxpayer!

..... and now for the alternative view (not surprisingly).

The District Councils of South Bedfordshire and Mid Bedfordshire propose a merger and say that between them they can “readily merge services and will achieve continuing high performance more efficiently”, there will be more clarity of accountability and at a lower cost, and of course they will be closer to communities.

Is this not beginning to sound rather familiar?

However, they do not recommend the abolition of Bedfordshire County, therefore preserving it for the purposes of loyalty, identity, history, ceremony and sporting purposes (whatever these may be, and at an unspecified cost).

The transitional cost of this grand plan is quoted at £17.3 million and relies on ‘savings to fund this with a payback period of – wait for it - a mere 16 months. After this, savings of 10% on Council Tax can be made BUT service levels are questionable and face prioritisation. Clearly a sting in the tail in that if we want existing levels of service then the 10% appears NOT achievable.

Just a little health warning at this stage. By their own admission, whilst the assumptions APPEAR sound and reasonable, they have not been able to undertake detailed analysis and significant further work is required to flesh out the broad figures. So now we have it. The cost and savings could be a pure myth, wishful thinking, a figment of someone’s imagination and only a possibility if we are prepared to cut future services.

Anyway, moving on to the Audit Commissions’ assessment of their past performance, Regarding South Bedfordshire, they give a rating of Good on the scale Excellent/good/fair/weak /poor.

Their strengths are:-

They are significantly improving performance in weaker areas

They have good plans for future improvement.

But.

They have not as yet embedded the Council Plan and agreed action plans for community strategy and

There is some challenging work to do to improve community safety and public satisfaction with the council.

For Mid Bedfordshire, the Audit Commission give a rating of Fair.

Their strengths are:-

Some good quality services.

They are working well in partnership

Their finances are sound.

But

There is a mixed picture of service improvement.

Some key services are failing to improve

Systems it uses to manage performance and predict and avoid problems are not yet fully effective.



So dear readers the choice is yours as choice there must be since the status quo is not an option. Which set of salesmen do we go for?The County Council with its poor performance record is offering us a wonderful future for just £16.9 million and ongoing savings of 10%.

The District Councils with their a poor history of service improvement and public satisfaction are also offering us a wonderful future at the bargain basement price of £17.3m transitional cost plus savings of 10% per year.....er, subject to significant further work!

Incidentally, I wonder how much this little exercise has cost the Council Tax payers of Bedfordshire so far?

Enough to pay for a decent bus service through the village?

Enough to provide us with a visible police presence?

Enough to provide a weekly collection of rubbish?

Etc etc etc

## THE AFTERLIFE

A couple made a deal that whoever died first would come back and tell the other what it was like in the afterlife. Their biggest worry was that there was no afterlife and there would be nothing to look forward to.

After a long and happy life the husband dies, and true to his word makes contact.

"Maggie, Maggie."

"Is that you Tom?"

"Yes I've come back like we agreed"

"What's it like?"

"Well I get up in the morning, have sex, have breakfast, then off to the golf course, have sex again, do a bit of sunbathing then I have sex just before lunch. After lunch another potter around the golf course then pretty much sex all afternoon.

After supper it's the golf course again until the sun goes down, and then have sex until late at night".

"Oh, Tom I'm a bit jealous you surely must be in heaven!"

"Well not exactly " said Tom  
"I'm a rabbit in Surrey".





## *Bootiful or Bountiful*

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Last April the country was put red alert when a dead swan was found in Scotland with avian flu.

I did think that with thousands of migratory birds during the summer and the wild fowl migrating in the winter months that further outbreaks were inevitable

We now learn (days after the event) that the outbreak on a turkey farm in Suffolk had the disease confirmed as the HN15 strain, which was identical to an outbreak in an abattoir in Hungary.

It seems that Bernard Matthews was using the abattoir, as apparently we do not have the capacity in the UK.

What on earth is the government and DEFRA doing allowing poultry and its by products into this country in the first place. Would the FRENCH allow this?? ?

I now read that the Transport & General Workers Union want compensation for the unfortunate workers laid off due to the collapse of sales. Perhaps this will be a lesson to the likes of Bernard Matthews who cut cost, importing cheap product for higher profits! It also seems that serious environmental breeches were made at the site and reproccussion hopefully will follow.

When are we, the consumers going to realize that these so called 'cheap' imports have a huge impact when things inevitably go wrong.

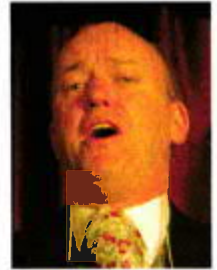
Surely, no one who saw these wretched birds reared, pumped full of antibiotics and hormones in such appalling conditions could fail to be moved by the sights shown by the media all for the sake of cheap food and large profits.

Perhaps this is the turning point, more and more consumers are demanding better quality and eventually Mr Asda/Tesco and company will have to supply it.

So, folks look for the Red Tractor Logo to ensure your produce meets high standards and traceability or better still support your local traders. Then perhaps the food industry will get its act together.

*The Chalgrave Mole*

# From the Parish Council



## **Housing growth in our region.**

The Parish Council has been active on the matter of the housing development proposals for many years. It has been on our agenda at every Parish Council meeting. We recognise a need for affordable housing, however we oppose such mass scale development and the use of Green Belt land. We also have highlighted the lack on any infrastructure to support such housing development. We have strongly objected to the lack of consultation and to the lack of power at District and County Council level in the face of Central Government.

We continue to write protest letters to everybody concerned. We are part of the Bedfordshire Councils Planning Consortium who meet regularly to try to contain the development. We are in the process of setting up a consortium with other local parish councils and we attend meetings to discuss the issues. One of our Councillors has been to the Westminster on three occasions and we look to contact as many different organisations to help our fight.

Last year we invited Richard Woolnough from the Greensand Trust to a Parish Council meeting. He explained the work of the Trust and its success in other Parishes. We saw this as another way - among many - to try to preserve our Parish by identifying wildlife and conservation areas that could be protected. As a consequence we invited Richard to speak to the residents of Chalgrave to help us identify and properly protect the parts of our Parish environment that make Chalgrave unique. The work of the Greensand Trust can be considered a 'fallback position' - we think it is important to have this position - as well as continue our fight against the housing development.

We had a well attended meeting last year and, by the time you have read this article, there will have been another meeting to feedback the results and create an action plan.

## **Winter gritting**

After much discussion with Bedfordshire Highways, it has been concluded that Chalgrave Road will not be gritted. This is because the road scores very low against the set criteria. The criteria include sharp bends, volume of traffic, bus route, frequency of buses and steep gradients.



## **Flightpath**

You will remember that concerns were raised about the number of aircraft flying over our Parish. This concentration is caused by the no-fly zone over Leighton Buzzard. Air traffic control routed most aircraft to the south of Leighton Buzzard - over our Parish - rather than have more even distribution across the flightpath routing aircraft to the north of Leighton Buzzard.

As a result of my discussions with London Luton Airport they are looking into a more even distribution.

We shall see.

## **Millennium Award**

We are still looking for nominations for this award. Remember it is open to anyone in the Parish as there is no longer an age limit. The award is for an achievement, which may be service to the community, sporting, academic, overcoming a challenge, etc. If you wish to nominate anyone please contact Lesley Smith, the Parish Clerk or any of the Parish Councillors.

## **Burglar Alarms**

South Beds District Council now requires anyone who has a burglar alarm to register a keyholder who can be contacted if it sounds unintentionally. 'Anyone who does not comply with the order will face a fixed penalty notice of £80.'

Details and the notification form can be obtained from their web site, their offices in Dunstable or by calling 01582 474031

## **Other matters**

A bench is being installed in the bus shelter at St Mary's Close. We are getting closer to having Hill Close resurfaced. We are again looking into the possibility of making the turn onto the A5 at the bottom of the Hockliffe Road safer – and making a safer crossing across the Toddington/Hockliffe Road in Tebworth.

*Phil Parry*

Chairman of the Parish Council

## Preservation of our Rural Environment

On the evening of Thursday 22 February, in the interest of the of the local community, The Parish Council arranged for another visit to the parish by The Greensand Trust to tell us all what progress had been made regarding the attempts by various local organisations to prevent the desecration of the green belt in and around the parish, in particular the building of thousands of houses between Chalgrave and Thorn.

The main speaker was introduced by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor Phil Parry - Mr Richard Woolnough of the Greensand Trust, who is very knowledgeable as regards how to preserve the local environment, using arguments such as preserving historical sites and wildlife habitats.

The few people who bothered to turn up were asked to mark on large scale maps the areas they thought were worthy of preservation such as where badger sets and bat colonies were situated and any ridge and furrow type of historical features they knew of. This was a repeat of the process that had been followed on the previous visit and the maps we used were the updated versions.

Some people were understandably upset that there seemed to be nothing that we could do to stop the building of these houses and that the Government seemed to be riding roughshod over any objections raised by the County, District or Parish Councils.

Mr Woolnough stated that whilst there was little that we could do to stop the building of these houses, there was quite a lot that we could do to make sure that they would not encroach on the parish, but we had to work together as a team and form a "battle plan" to present to all the agencies that make these decisions. To start with we must all respond to the flyer that was delivered to all properties in the Parish and follow the advice contained in it, i.e. write to The Minister Responsible (Ruth Kelly) our own local M.P. (Andrew Selous) our District Councillor (Norman Costin) and our County Councillor (Rhys Goodwin) expressing our dismay and explaining the facts that the local road infrastructure is not sufficient to support all the extra traffic that the development will create, also that there are not enough Schools, Doctors, or Dentists in the area, and any number of reasons for not accepting this spread of housing into the green belt. Mr Woolnough also stated that it was very unlikely that any housing would be built on the Parish side of the new bypass, (how does he know?) This is all very well but the building of the bypass has now been put back until 2013/14 so you can bet that the housing developments will start well before that.



All this boils down to the fact that if you like living in the countryside you will have to do something to make those who are seeking to destroy it sit up and take notice. If you leave it to someone else then nothing will get done because they have also left it to someone else, the choice is yours.

No date was given for the next meeting, but keep looking on the Parish Council notice board or website at [www.chalgrave.org](http://www.chalgrave.org) for updates to this very important issue.

## *Council Tax 2007/8*

Once again the unwelcome sight of our council tax bills have arrived together with the usual glossy brochures explaining just how good each council and the other services we pay for have been at maintaining costs and only having to increase our bills for the forthcoming year by xyz% above inflation.

The actual increases for this year are:-

Bedfordshire County Council	4.3%
South Beds District Council	3.0%
Chalgrave Parish Council	11.2%
Beds & Luton Fire Authority	4.7%
Beds Police Authority	5.0%

The overall increase in this year's bill is 4.4%

While a 4.4% increase does not sound very much the UK's present inflation rate stands at 2.8% and for all those living on fixed pension incomes who will not receive an annual rise over inflation rate, this can only bring more strain on the household purse and no doubt other 'luxuries' such as heating the home will have to be cut back once again. Help is on the horizon though, if global warming is coming then at least winters will become warmer and houses will need less heating fuel and so reduce these costs!

We should point out that although our Parish Council appear to have set a very high increase compared to the other authorities, the actual amount of money collected is still a very small part of our overall council tax bill. For example a Band 'F' house will have an overall council tax bill of £2105.56 to pay this year but Chalgrave Parish Council will only receive £32.27 of these monies.

Perhaps there is a case that we should pay less to our County and District councils and more to our Parish Council so that they have both the local knowledge and funding to provide the residents of Chalgrave Parish with more targeted services?

## CHALGRAVE LEADS THE WAY IN SUPERCASINO RESEARCH

Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell is eagerly awaiting a report from her research team from the parish of Chalgrave. She despatched a highly trained and thoroughly professional group on a clandestine mission to Las Vegas on Friday 23 February this year. The purpose of the visit was to find out if there were any financial gains to be made in allowing the proposed



development of Luton Town Football Club to be a cover for the building of a super casino next to junction 12 of the M1.

The report will no doubt be far reaching in its analysis and damning in its conclusion, mainly due to the fact that it was such a high profile gathering, its leader was none other than the “big boss” of the Parish Council Mr P Parry, another member was the wizened but hugely experienced Mr R Masters. Now you would have thought that with these two luminaries on the team there would be no need for anyone else, but in her wisdom Ms Jowell despatched her secret weapon from the field of agriculture Mr P Whitton. And to bring some sanity to the team your favourite cub reporter was asked to tag along just to make sure that they all stayed out of jail. (This was achieved but not without some difficulty).

After some thorough research into the drinking habits of habitual gamblers the group made their way somewhat unsteadily into the main Casino where they found “The Slots” and after unloading about 2 kilos of quarters into one of these fiendishly uncooperative machines we decided to call it a night, mainly because Big Boss was continually asking people “Do you know who I am?” and getting increasingly irritated when they all answered “No”.

After this things got a little hazy which we all put down to jet lag, yes that’s it! definitely jet lag and the following morning ..... Well that’s a different story.

*M McDonagh*  
*Cub reporter*



# QUEENS HEAD UPDATE

The Queens Head continues to be a friendly little pub despite Colin's best efforts, with the Darts team doing quite well winning more games than they are losing, and Domino's teams also doing well the sporting side of the pub is flourishing.

'Friday night is music night' spot continues to draw the crowds from far and near and all seems to be going swimmingly.

Some of the acts booked for the near future are:-

APRIL	6 <sup>th</sup> TBA	13 <sup>th</sup> Pete Spence
	20 <sup>th</sup> Steve Jones	27 <sup>th</sup> Lenny
MAY	4 <sup>th</sup> Snip	11 <sup>th</sup> Merv
	18 <sup>th</sup> Jim Turner	25 <sup>th</sup> Chris J
JUNE	6 <sup>th</sup> Snip	13 <sup>th</sup> Merv



Don't forget the brain tingling quiz on Thursday Nights ( domino's permitting) it's always worth a visit just to hear the dyslexic quizmaster!

## Human Givens

I am delighted that I, together with Frances Masters, have completed our first series of 'Reclaim Life the Human Givens Way' free talks at The Memorial Hall.

Subjects included 'Lifting Depression', 'Anger Management' (our own and dealing with others), 'Freedom from Addiction' and 'Overcoming Anxiety'.

They have been very well received, the final one on 20 March having an attendance of over 50 despite the freezing weather.

A big thank you to all who came and for their lively participation.

It really is true that the majority of mental illness can be overcome with a little knowledge and support. It is mainly modern life and not our brains that is the problem. However, learning how to calm the emotions and getting our human needs in balance can go a long way to help us cultivate psychological robustness.

Kate Smith - Wingfield

# The Plough



The Plough Inn Golf Society (P.I.G.S.) starts the 2007 season with a competition at Aylesbury Park Golf Club on Friday 31st March. Other venues during the year will be advertised at the Plough and anyone wishing to join will be welcome.

Every second Tuesday we hold a quiz evening which is good fun. A number of people come early and eat so they have their table reserved for the quiz. Although well populated we would welcome more local people to take part.

The domino season is entering the final stages and we are challenging for the title in both the Amphill and District League and the Barton and District League. A number of individuals are still contesting the individual prizes in both leagues with Ben Burden already in the final of the singles of the Barton League. The team also finished runners up in the knock out final in the Amphill League.

We will be entering a team in the Toddington summer league which will start in May. We will also be entering a team in the Maulden crib league where we will be hoping to improve on third place in the league and runners up in the cup. Anyone wishing to play for either team will be welcome.

Every Thursday evening at approximately 9pm we have a contract whist evening featuring around 6-12 players. This is a fun event and if anyone wishes to join in they will be welcome.

Last New Years Eve Party was a great success with the master DJ Kevan giving a great account of himself and everybody had a really enjoyable evening.

*Roger Burdon Publican*



Ashridge bluebells in early May - well worth a visit



## BOOGIE NIGHTS #2

PLACE CHALGRAVE PARISH HALL

TIME/DATE 20:00HRS 24 FEBRUARY 2007

PURPOSE SERIAL ENJOYMENT

RESULT MAJOR SUCCESS

This was yet another great evening of music and dance and we think that possibly a small amount of drink was taken. Although it started off slowly by the end of the night the place was 'rockin' to the great sounds of Party Time Entertainment, A Musical Extravaganza based in Toddington.

As is normal on these occasions a big thank you goes to the organising committee, namely Barbara Jackson and Debbie Parry.



## *Old Time Music Hall 7, 8, 9 December*

Last December, the Memorial Hall once again reverberated to the strains of songs of yesteryear when Linda and Peter Hadden wrote and directed their now famous (or is it infamous) Old Time Music Hall.

Three virtually full houses were treated to some well known and some not so well known local faces treading the boards, singing their hearts out and also throwing in a bit of panto.



The whole evening was superbly held together, (if that's the expression) by the Chairman Phil Parry and of course the brilliant organ playing of Brent Wilkes.

We started off with the whole company singing some Irish numbers followed by solo renditions from John Goodacre (The Flying Trapeze), Sandra Horne with a special interpretation of 'Bill Bailey', our own Vice Chairman of the Parish Council Ken Green with 'The Man who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo', Elizabeth Hall with a charming little ditty 'Why am I always the Bridesmaid' (why indeed?), and that well known double act of Bill Archer and

# CHALGRAVE NEWS

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		Daniel Osborn	873920
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		Roger Mence	874516
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Toddington Tennis Club	Ray Smith		874148
Chalgrave Parish News		Tony Cornes	874605
		Lyndie Lothian	874166
		Frances & Roger Masters	873039
		Mick McDonagh	873012





Peter Carne singing the Flanagan and Allen favourite 'Underneath the Arches'.

As usual, the Flower Girls were able to lower the tone of the evening perhaps because this year, Mike Wells and Richard Parsons were joined by John Goodacre from downmarket Hockliffe.

We were then treated to a lovely little panto where the youngest members of the cast – Eloise Hall, Imogen and Pheobe Parry, and Tory Wells as the Munchkins and Courteney Finch as Dorothy, were ably supported by Chris McDonagh as the wicked witch (typecast?),

Sarah Ralley in the role of the thigh slapping principal boy and Val and Frank Griffin as the King and Queen of Hearts.

The second half got off to a flyer



with some Scottish songs whereupon Chris McDonagh appeared with a bowl of fruit precariously balanced on her head while she gave a passable imitation of Carmen Miranda. Peter Carne then gave us 'When I Leave the World Behind', closely followed by Ken Green again with 'Champagne Charlie'.

The men in the audience were certainly on the edge of their chairs when Elizabeth Hall



Old Time Music Hall continued..... and Sarah Ralley gave a raunchy little rendition of 'Happy Eliza and Converted Jane' but were soon back to reality when the whole cast finished off the evening with some Christmas carols.

All in all, a thoroughly entertaining three evenings which raised £780 for the Chalgrave News.

And now for the 'thank you'. Obviously Peter and Linda and the full cast for giving up their time and putting in so much effort. Danielle Finch certainly deserves a big thank you for serving drinks so delightfully, especially in the Santa outfit. We would like to thank all those behind the bar and those behind the scenes who did such a marvellous job with costumes and scenery, and the 'other half's' for allowing their spouses, girlfriends/boyfriends etc to give so much time. All those who donated raffle prizes including Lady Bowman Shaw and Tim and Teresa Potter. We would also like to pass our thanks to those who sold our tickets, The Plough, The Queens Head, all those at 'Signs of the Times' and at Punch Opticians. The list is endless and if we have left anyone out, please accept our heartfelt apologies

Finally, a big 'thank you' to all who came to watch and gave of their hard earned money to support us – The Chalgrave News









# **YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU**

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Could you be a Potential Officer? Go on have a go!

- 1) How long did the Hundred Year War last?
- 2) Which country makes Panama Hats?
- 3) From which animal do we get cat gut?
- 4) In which month do Russians celebrate The October Revolution?
- 5) What is a camel's hair brush made of?
- 6) The Canary Islands in the Atlantic are named after which animal?
- 7) What was King George the VI's first name?
- 8) What colour is a Purple Finch?
- 9) Where are Chinese Gooseberries from?
- 10) What is the colour of the Black Box in a commercial airline?

Answers are on page 34

## ***M1/A5 Link Road - Dunstable Northern Bypass***

---

The Highways Agency has recently announced that the route of the proposed new road will be the northern option.

This will involve building a new roundabout just north of the existing roundabout at the junction of the A5 and the Leighton Buzzard bypass.

The new road will pass close to the existing electricity pylons before swinging round to a new junction with the M1 near Chalton (to be named junction 11a).

There will also be a new roundabout built where the new road crosses the A5210 near to Dunstablians Rugby Club. (The A5210 is the Toddington/Houghton Regis road).

The start date for these works is still some years away.

Once the road has been completed anyone who wants to use the M1 to travel south will have around 15 minutes or more cut off from today's journey time and of course the M1 widening scheme will have also been completed and improve journey times further.

# *Christmas Lights Competition 2006*

---

Once more your Chalgrave News Editorial Team escaped detection whilst lurking amongst the undergrowth checking out the loud and the lewd and the lovely illuminations that lit up the night sky in early December.

Competition was fierce with some displays showing a total disregard for global warming, using the same amount of power as the annual consumption of a medium sized third world country, others were very pretty and rather tasteful.

Those worth a special mention were Arthur and Carol of Toddington Road who it seems had spent last months salary upgrading their Christmas lights such was the glare radiating from their front garden. Another fine display was Steve and Pam at No.15 Toddington Road, their creative designs caught you unawares as you drove past the old Chapel, then it seemed to jump out at you.

There were numerous subtle and tasteful displays along the Wingfield Road and also in Lower Tebworth that also deserve a mention, but the one that everyone agreed was the loudest, most in your face, flamboyant, lurid, and showy display was in St Mary's Close, of course we know they have the advantage of having the biggest Christmas Tree outside Trafalgar Square but nevertheless to have the courage (or stupidity) to climb to the top of the thing is worthy of victory.

So the sumptuous New Year Hamper goes this year to Ray Willis and Sue Leuty. Many congratulations to them, but a serious pat on the back must also go to the other residents of St Mary's Close whose individual displays made the whole thing seem like one massive light show.

Do you agree?

If not then remember

there's always next year, another chance to get your own back!!



# Letters to the Editors

---

## *A letter from Chalgrave Parish Council*

Dear Editors

We are unhappy with your report in the latest issue of the Chalgrave News about the meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> November in the Memorial Hall to discuss Green Belt changes and the impact of new housing.

The article was inaccurate and possibly does more harm than good.

For the record, we invited Richard Woolnough from the Greensand Trust to a Parish Council meeting earlier in the year (see minutes). He explained the work of the Trust and their success in other Parishes.

We saw this as another way – among many – to try to preserve our Parish by identifying wildlife and conversation areas that could be protected.

As a consequence, we invited Richard to speak to the residents of Chalgrave. The meeting was called by the Parish Council and not the Greensand Trust.

The Parish Council has been active on the matter of the housing development proposals for many years. It has been on our meeting agenda at every Parish Council meeting.

As I have made clear in past issues of the Chalgrave News, we recognise a need for

affordable housing, however we oppose such mass scale development and the use of Green Belt land. We also have highlighted the lack of any infrastructure to support such housing development. We have strongly objected to the lack of consultation – and the lack of power at District and County Council level in the face of Central Government.

We also made it clear at the meeting that this initiative was not the only action we are, or indeed have taken. We continue to write protest letters to everybody concerned. We are part of the Beds Consortium who meet regularly to contain the development. We are in good contact with other local parish councils, we attend meetings to discuss these issues, one of our Councillors has been to Westminster on three occasions and we look to contact as many different organisations to help our fight – hence the Greensand Trust.

As discussed at the meeting, the work of the Greensand Trust can be considered a ‘fallback position’, we think it is important to have this position – as well as continue our fight against the development.

The meeting was a success because of the number of people attending, the debate on the issues and more importantly because it raised the profile of the problem we in Chalgrave face.



This is an important issue facing the community and we feel that you should be working together with us and not against us. It would have been helpful for a more positive and accurate article.

We have no problem with criticism or a scurrilous article, but in this instance we wish you had talked to one of the Parish Councillors to get the facts.

*Chairman  
Chalgrave Parish Council.*

### *Editors' note*

*The Chalgrave News fully supports our Parish Council in their actions on behalf of all parishioners in trying to stop the proposed major new housing development. The report of the meeting published in our previous issue was based on comments made both during and after the meeting from a number of those residents who attended the meeting. We apologise for any inaccuracies in our report of the meeting but at the same time would stress that the Chalgrave News is an impartial self-funding independent magazine.*

## **TIME TO GO SOLAR?**

With properties for sale soon to be rated for their energy efficiency and CO2 emissions (a requirement of new Home Information Pack), renewable energy systems start to look attractive. Add on global warming, rising gas and electricity prices and worries over UK energy security and it seems logical to harness the energy in the sun, wind and earth, so we are less dependent on gas, oil or coal.

But the basics must come first...

Many of us may still be able to reduce the amount of fuel we burn by simply moving up to today's recommended depth of 270mm loft insulation.

For more about insulation grants and discounts or advice on renewables and energy saving, call the Energy Efficiency Advice Centre on 0800 512 012 or visit the website ([www.mkea.org.uk](http://www.mkea.org.uk)). Lines are open Monday to Friday, 9am – 5pm.

### **Remember**

The Parish Annual Meeting  
is on 17 April at the  
Memorial Hall at 8.00pm

**Senior Citizens Dinner and Entertainment**  
Sunday 14 April at the Memorial Hall with Billy Keys

# *The Continuing Story of Parkview Lane*

---

*Bill (Scoop) Archer*



What will I do when the saga of Parkview pond comes to an end? I'll be back to the riotous assembly of Parish Council meetings. I suppose I'm looking for some kindly volunteer to create a scandal – exceeding the speed limit, shaking mats after 10.00 am, an OAP with an ASBO – you know, something really thrilling!

To bring the current saga up to date I've included the latest top and tailed e-mail. PV1 is the Parkview Lane drain.

'During the earlier investigation it was revealed that no connection exists between the drain opposite Parkview Lane and the next drain in the direction of the flow towards the Wingfield Road junction. Road water dispersal was achieved via a pipe under the road from this drain to PV1 drain at the top of Parkview Lane, thus to PV1's soak away. This situation has existed for at least 20 years and possibly longer. Now that PV1 has blocked, the Council has plugged the under-road pipe and wants nothing more to do with it, the impression being that the private road residents asked for this. When this idea was mooted it was countered by pointing out that the resultant drain overflow would still flood over the crown of the road and feed the Parkview Lane pond, which is what happened in spite of the road camber being said to prevent this.

Since the last flurry of activity a further point has arisen. The water backing up from the drain has flooded the Wingfield Road further towards Wingfield. This in turn entered the BT ducting system and issued forth from the box in the carriageway of Parkview Lane feeding Parkview Pond still further!

The practical step could have been to clear the blocked PV1 or dig a soak away on the small green owned by the Parish Council at the top of Parkview Lane which is the impression we were given initially. The ground there has less clay and would probably have been cheaper than the soak away to the drain on the other side of the road which has more clay.'

So to date; - Wednesday 28 February found my favourite highways technician on my front step. After some discussion in which a passing neighbour joined, our highways friend proposed putting a soak away on the top end of the Parkview Lane green provided the Parish Council would agree - in writing! My highways man

would only need to pass the letter on to the depot and work would start in April

That common sense has prevailed gives full credit to our Highways Department who although on the opposite side of the fence have always been courteous and helpful.

We shall see!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Editor's note**

**Good luck Bill but where are the ducks going to go now?**



**BILL IS FIRST IN THE QUEUE FOR A NATIONAL HEALTH ENEMA!!**

***West Charity***

The trustees met in February and allocated £11,309.28 to the youth of Chalgrave and Hockliffe.

The next allocation of grants will be decided in July so anyone eligible should make sure they apply with receipts before the end of June.

Grant application forms are available from the Clerk to the trust:-  
Mr Norman Costin, Heath Farm, Wingfield, LU7 9QH.

# *Around the Organisations*

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## *Sports Club*

The club is starting to gear up for the forthcoming cricket season and work has already started on ground maintenance despite the poor weather of late.

The clubhouse has come through another summer without any major deterioration – many would say there is not much left of it to deteriorate!

Nets practise will start sometime in late May or early April depending on the weather. Probably on Thursday evenings starting at 6.30pm but this has yet to be decided.

The clubs Annual General Meeting will be held at the Plough on Weds 11 April starting at 8.30pm. The AGM is open to anyone who wants to attend so if you think you might like to get involved in the cricket this year why not come along and speak to a few of the existing members? We will be very pleased to see you.

The first cricket game will be the traditional Plough v The Queens Head and this will take place in early June.

[chalgravesportsclub.co.uk](http://chalgravesportsclub.co.uk)

## *Book Club*

Enthusiasm for the book club remains high - we currently have nine members, and meet on a Mon or Tues monthly. Continuing from the last magazine, we finished 'Glass Houses' by Sandra Howard and most members enjoyed it as a light easy read. Some of the comments

regarding the behaviour of MPs in Westminster were funny but probably unrepeatable! I must agree with the person who said she would always think of Michael Howard in a very different light. Was he really instrumental in her vast knowledge of 'sex' or has she led a secret life too?

Our next book, chosen by Lyn Green was '*A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian by Marina Lewycka*'. This came with accolades from all the critics - Extremely funny - Outstanding - Mad - Hilarious. It tells the story of an octogenarian falling in love with a flighty glamorous blonde Ukrainian divorcee aged 36. She is a gold digger after a UK passport. But he loves her! His daughters are horrified and unite to make their father see sense (who wants to see sense when in their 80s?) Anyway, without giving too much of the story away as I am sure you will want to read it, everything backfires on them as they find things out about their roots. Enjoyed by all, it yielded a golden harvest of family truths!

Then on to the more serious but still extremely funny '*Stuart: a Life Backwards*' by Alexander Masters - chosen by Frances Masters - is there a connection I wonder?? This book won the Guardian First Book Award 2005 and other non-fiction awards. Stuart is a thief, hostage taker, psycho and street raconteur. He is homeless living in various hostels, on the streets and anywhere he can lay his head. A background of childhood abuse is



uncovered as the story progresses making it unforgettably

moving. Apart from his rather basic language he is very articulate in a straightforward compelling way. I know from a personal standpoint that I shall never look at the person sleeping on the street - or selling the Big Issue, with the same eyes. I am sure anyone working to help the homeless will recognise both the triumph and the despair ingrained in helping Stuarts everywhere.

I have chosen our next read - '*Northern Lights*' the first of *Philip Pullman's* The Dark Material trilogy. This is not a new book, it was first published in 1995, but is now enjoying a revival. It did win several awards and is considered by critics to be one of the great imaginative works in the English Language. The author creates parallel worlds in a universe so atmospheric and tangible that I couldn't help but believe it must exist somewhere! It will be interesting to hear what the other book club members make of it. I hope they are as enthralled as I was.

We did all enjoy a Christmas lunch at 'The Red Lion' Milton Bryan, meeting at Mulberry Lodge for some champagne first. Thank you Sherry!

After the flurry of snow last week I think we can now start looking forward to the spring.

*Linda Hadden*

### *Chalgrave Memorial Hall*

Things are certainly moving on for the Hall thanks to the sterling efforts of the committee.

Sadly however we lost the services of Velda Cooke who resigned in February. On behalf of the Committee I would like to thank Velda for all the hard work she put in as Secretary and if she changes her mind.....

On the bright side, I would welcome our two new members, Alison Young of St Mary's' Close, Tebworth who has taken over as our new and improved booking secretary, and Sue Parker from the Woodlands in Tebworth, who I am sure will prove an outstanding addition to the Committee. There are still vacancies if anyone has a little time to spare and would like to join our happy band!

Whilst worryingly bookings have been down this year, the finances are fairly sound overall thanks partly to the generosity of the Parish Council and the success of our two fundraising 'Boogie Nights'. Please consider using the Hall whenever you can. It is a village asset and very cheap!

At last we have acquired our very own 'ride-on' grass mower which means we will be self-dependant for grass cutting in future and I would take this opportunity of thanking Roger Fenwick for the many free grass cuts he has given us over the past years.

Finally, I would remind everyone that the world famous CHALGRAVE GAMES is scheduled for Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July. Please make every effort to support it and make it even more successful than previous years.

*Roger Masters*

# *Warning for all Motorists In The Parish*

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## **Beware of the following insurance scam!**

You have probably read of false claims being made for whiplash injuries in car 'accidents' as this scam has featured on a fairly regular basis in the national press over the last year or so. The police have advised that this scam has started to appear in this area and in fact happened to one of our residents in early March.

This particular incident occurred at the Flying Fox roundabout on the A5 on a Monday morning. Two vehicles 'staged' a near miss 'causing' the second vehicle to swerve and brake hard. This resulted in the car following these two vehicles having to do an emergency stop but unfortunately it went into a slow skid resulting in a very minor bump into the car that had swerved.

Despite no visible damage to either vehicle or occupants, around a week later our unlucky resident received solicitors letters, working on a 'no win no fee' basis, claiming all three of the young men in the other car involved in the accident had suffered whiplash injuries and were seeking compensation.

Unfortunately when someone runs into the back of another vehicle, unless they have a witness, they are always deemed to be at fault for driving too close to the car in front. However in this case (and we are told in many other cases) the front vehicle did not have any brakes lights (these are deliberately disconnected) which makes it very difficult to realise that the vehicle is suddenly applying it's brakes. This is of course the intention of the scam driver who wants to lure another vehicle to run into the back of him.

As it is very often difficult, if not impossible, to disprove this type of accident is not the fault of the driver who ran into the back of the vehicle insurance companies seem to agree to pay whiplash compensation claims merely on production of a doctors certificate without undertaking any full investigation presumably because the cost of an investigation will outweigh the cost of paying these compensation claims.

Help is now available for the wronged motorist to fight back or at least try to help others who get caught up in these scams. Last year the Insurance Fraud Bureau (IFB) was set up and is funded by a number of insurance companies. It's purpose is to collate inform relating to incidents of suspected insurance fraud which can then be cross referenced to see if they can identify similar names, addresses etc. and hopefully put a stop to this type of major insurance scam. Organised car insurance fraud is costing the insurance companies £200 million a year and adds around £40 pa to the cost of an average comprehensive insurance policy.

If you find yourself in a car accident that you think might be a scam please report the details to the IFB on 0800 328 2550.

Tips to try and avoid becoming involved in this type of scam. These people always use old vehicles and often have no brake lights. When out driving in traffic if you find yourself behind an older car which slows but no brake lights appear, stay well back for the rest of your journey, as this might be someone who will stage a collision with you at the next junction.

## Andrew Selous MP



### **PENSIONS BILL HERALDS HIGHER PENSIONS**

The first bill from the Department for Work and Pensions to be introduced to the House of Commons since I was appointed a shadow minister for the department in November is the Pensions Bill. It has cross party support on its overall principles, which is important as stability is needed over the long term on pensions whichever party is in power.

The need for action is urgent as the Pensions Commission has estimated that over 9 million people are not saving enough for retirement. Predicted demographic changes mean that, by 2050, there will be 50% more pensioners than today and the ratio of people in work to those in retirement will halve over the same period. Two million pensioners still live in poverty and only 30% of women have a full basic state pension when they reach 60, compared with 85% of men. If the current arrangements were left in place, by 2050, more than 70% of pensioner households would be eligible for a means-tested payment of pension credit. This would fatally undermine the incentive to save, with pension credit being withdrawn as private personal or occupational pension payments were made.

The bill will increase the basic state pension in line with earnings at some point between 2012 and 2015. This is known as “restoring the link” to many pensioners and was a Conservative manifesto commitment at the last general election, although opposed by Labour at the time.

The number of years needed to build up a full basic state pension will be reduced to 30 for both men and women from 6 April 2010. Currently men need 44 years and women 39 years. It will also become easier for carers to qualify for a full pension. People caring for children or sick or disabled people will be able to claim a full basic state pension after only 22 years of paying national insurance, provided certain conditions are satisfied.

What this will all add up to, for people who have worked the necessary number of years on average earnings is state pensions of £135 per week in today’s prices.

In order to pay for these higher state pensions, the state pension age will increase gradually to 68 for men and women by 2046. The pension age for women is already due to rise from 60 to 65 between 2010 and 2020. Life expectancy for men is now 81 years and for women it is 84 years. I am concerned that the government is not doing enough to retrain older workers, in particular those who will not be able to continue



physically demanding work up to the age of 68. I am pressing the government to focus more on this issue.

In order to increase saving there will also be new personal pension accounts aimed at the 10 million or so people not participating in a pension scheme with an employer contribution, who earn over £5,000. These employees will be automatically enrolled, with the right to opt out on their earnings between £5,000 and £33,500, with employees putting in 4% of their earnings, employers 3% and the government, 1%.

To ensure that trust is restored to pensions savings generally, it is my view however, that the government must accept the Parliamentary Ombudsman's report on the 125,000 people whose occupational pensions schemes collapsed.

*Andrew Selous is MP for South West Bedfordshire and can be contacted on 01582 662 821 or on [selousa@parliament.uk](mailto:selousa@parliament.uk).*

## New Bus Time Table



Just a reminder to anyone thinking of using the bus.

There has been a new timetable issued by the operating company which appears to be a more restricted service through the parish.

Unfortunately we do not have the space to print the new timetable but it is available at the bus stops around the parish and we recommend that you study it before planning any future journeys.

Remember the only way in which this parish is going to keep and improve bus service is by using it.

**A** little girl walks into the sitting room one Sunday Morning just as her father is reading the paper.

"Daddy, where does poo come from?" she asks. The father feeling a little perturbed that his 5 year old daughter is already asking difficult questions, thinks for a bit then answers, "Well you know we just ate breakfast?". "Yes" says the girl, "Well the food goes into our tummies and our bodies take out all the good stuff, and then, whatever is left comes out of our bottom when we go to the toilet, and that is poo".

The little girl looks perplexed, and stares at him in stunned silence for a few seconds and then say's "What about Tigger?"



# Chalgrave Church



## Welcome from All Saints Parish Church

Services and special events at All Saints.

### Usual Sunday Services.

First and third Sundays of the month – 9.30am Parish Communion

Second Sunday – Family Service 11am

(For people of all ages, lasting about 35mins)

Fourth Sunday – Family Communion 11am

Everyone is sure to receive a warm welcome

*Rector*

CHALGRAVE  
NEWS



### *Receive a Copy of The Chalgrave News by Post*

CHALGRAVE  
NEWS



The editorial team have had several requests from people living outside Chalgrave Parish who would like to receive regular copies of the Chalgrave News. Unfortunately the cost of producing the magazine in its present colour format is extremely expensive and whilst some of these costs are covered by our advertising income there is still a substantial shortfall each year.

We therefore have to organise fund raising events, to bring in additional income in order to keep the magazine going.

Please support these events whenever you can.

Our aim is to provide every house in the parish of Chalgrave with a free copy and so we regret that we are not in the financial position to be able to give away free copies of the Chalgrave News to non-residents. However, in view of the number of requests we have received the Chalgrave News editorial team have decided to offer the following service:-

We will post each copy of the Chalgrave News to anywhere in the UK for an annual subscription of £15.00. (There are 4 copies produced each year).  
For delivery outside of the UK please contact any of the editorial team for details.

## **GOOD NEIGHBOURS CAN PREVENT CRIME**

Unfortunately, we have seen a recent rise in the number of burglaries where the offenders have barged their way into a property and have pushed the elderly homeowner to the ground. Due to their age and frailness, the victims often sustain bad injuries. They are also left shocked and fearful for many weeks, if not months after the incident.

It is possible to predict where these incidents will happen, because there are signs that a burglar will look for that will help them target one particular property out of a whole street.

The burglar will look for an indication that an elderly or disabled person lives on the premises, often searching for signs of neglect such as an overgrown garden, dirty windows, peeling paintwork or blocked guttering. Ramps or white railings at the front will indicate that the homeowner is not particularly mobile. The burglar is prepared to take the risk because the elderly are prone to keeping large amounts of cash in the house.

Are you able to help with an elderly or vulnerable neighbour? Even 10 minutes spent picking up leaves or fixing a broken gate can help improve the appearance of a property. Or maybe you would be interested in running a 'Nominated Neighbour' Scheme where a sign on the vulnerable person's door tells the caller that the door will not be opened unless the nominated neighbour is with them. Full details of this scheme can be obtained from Neighbourhood watch on 01234 275165.

Bedfordshire Police run a 'Bobby Van' scheme, where our fully trained carpenters can carry out a home survey and fit security devices such as locks and door viewers free of charge. If you have a neighbour you think could benefit from a visit, please contact Police Headquarters on 01234 841212 and ask for the Bobby Van Administrator.

## **POTENTIAL OFFICERS** **SELECTION TEST**

### **ANSWERS**

- |                     |                |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1) 116 years        | 6) Dogs        |
| 2) Ecuador          | 7) Albert      |
| 3) Sheep and Horses | 8) Crimson     |
| 4) November         | 9) New Zealand |
| 5) Squirrel Fur     | 10) Orange     |

What do you mean you didn't score any? Shame on you.

# Auntie Agnes's Problem Page

*Personal problems resolved with a smile*

*Once again I find myself having to issue an apology for yet another typesetting error in the last edition of the Chalgrave News.*

*To Mrs Q of Tebworth – I am very sorry that you appear to have not realised that there was an error in my reply to your problem, and I am extremely surprised that you went ahead with my advice as set out in the last issue.*

*You wrote to me asking how you could find a cheap way of improving your family's health and in particular their eating habits.*

*I discovered that none of your family eat any vegetables and so explained that you should feed them a minimum of 5 pieces of fruit and vegetables every day, but sometimes change one or two of the vegetables to make this diet more interesting.*

*I wrote - why not try eating lots of carrots? Unfortunately this was printed as – why not try eating lots of parrots? Now I would have thought that anyone would have realised this was a printing error, but not apparently you and your family!*

*Whilst I note in your recent letter of complaint that you have found buying parrots very expensive causing you to get into debt, I would point out that by your own admission all your family have become very much healthier since buying parrots, due to the amount of time you have all spent chasing them around your kitchen once you brought them home.*

*Look on the bright side - they have also given you someone to talk to when your husband and children are out of the house during the week!*

*Well until our next issue dear readers.....*



