

Chalfont St Peter Village Voice

MARCH 2008



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Chalfont St Peter website: www.chalfontstpeter.com/villagevoice

CHALFONT COMMON WI : “I’m not vertically challenged – I am a dwarf.” And proud of it too, according to actor Rusty Goffe who, at 4ft 2ins tall, was the guest speaker at the February meeting of the Chalfont Common WI.

His engrossing talk on being a dwarf from birth to approaching his 60th birthday was spiced with humour and witty observations tempered by some of the unthinking comments of the public. He said that despite bullying at school because of his size, he had a very enjoyable life, thanks in no small way to a very loving and understanding mother. In his younger years she made all his clothes and was source of comfort whenever thoughtless remarks were made about him. “Why,” a child would ask, “is that man so short?” Instead of explaining the parent might respond “because he doesn’t eat his greens.” As his friends grew and he did not it took time for him to realize he was different but he took music lessons, joined the Scouts and played in the band.” But marching in time was tricky,” he quipped. As a teenager he was bullied unmercifully and on one occasion was thrown into the sea, leaving him with a dread of water.

On the plus side dwarves are in great demand in show business and Rusty has enjoyed a successful career in films including Stars Wars and Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory. The rogue gene responsible for the deformity had been discovered by the son of a dwarf who was a consultant. He had wanted to be a brain surgeon but wasn’t tall enough. Another dwarf of his acquaintance was an American girl who could speak 17 languages. In three-quarters of cases where the rogue was present the parents were of normal height. Sadly, many dwarfs suffered special ailments including ear and nasal problems because of their narrow sinuses. Spinal problems were also a major handicap. Rusty, whose wife is 5ft 7ins, has two teenage sons who are both dwarves. His inspiration throughout his life had been his mother who had always encouraged him and now, at 92, had bought herself a computer to keep her mind active and to communicate with the family by email. They meet on the first Thursday of the month in the Tony Graham room at the community centre, 7.30 for 7.45pm. **Their annual ATTIC SALE is Saturday 8th March at 9.30am at the Community Centre in Chalfont St Peter. Tables are available for £10, please apply to Mrs Brenda Aldworth 01753 885293.**

ST PATRICK'S Dance and Social evening is on Friday, March 14 from 8pm till late in St Joseph's Hall and Parish Centre, Austenwood. Music, bar facilities and traditional Irish Stew. Tickets £10 available from the parish office on 01753 886581. All welcome.

THE women's section of the British Legion - Chalfont St Peter Branch - is holding the three-yearly election of its National Chairman, on Saturday, March 15th and will have a fund raising sale with stalls etc. from 10am-noon in the Church Hall, Church Lane. This is to raise urgently needed funds to help dependants of the armed forces, so do try and support the Women's Section Benevolent Fund's work

VOPAG is concerned to put forward a positive image of older residents, and used their last meeting not only to identify problems of concern to members, but to put forward possible solutions, in order to identify VOPAG's objectives for 2008. This was a lively meeting and threw up a number of ideas. At the meeting on **18th March** there will be feedback from the District on these. Members are reminded that meetings start earlier this year - 10am for coffee, with business at 10.30am, held in the Parish Council office and new members are always warmly welcomed.

CHILTERN FUCHSIA SOCIETY has invited its Chairman Stan Hildreth to give a talk and demonstration at the next meeting on **Thursday 20th March.**

Stan's talk, called “Wake-up to the Fuchsia year” will demonstrate ways to get the best from your Fuchsias. These could be new young plants, old favourites or hardy plants out in the garden. Pruning, re-potting, “pinching out” to improve flowers, feeding, pests and diseases will all be covered. Questions are always welcome during the demonstration.

Stan is a keen gardener who also keeps and shows Chrysanthemums and vegetables as well. His knowledge and experience has also led him into judging. His talks are based on the belief that most people want to improve the quality of their plants, but not to the dedication required for showing.

Meetings are held in the Chalfont St Peter Community Centre, starting at 8pm. Visitors are always welcome to attend and join in. **For further information please contact Sylvia or Peter Anderson on 01753 882873.**

FRIENDS of Chiltern Open Cairn Museum meet in the Mary Smithells Room of the CSP Community centre on **Wednesday 26 March at 8pm** for “**Talk About Turning**” when Colin Turney talks about, and demonstrates wood turning. He shows examples of exotic woods and the tools he uses, and makes something before our very eyes. He also brings a display of the sort of things he makes, which are for sale. All are welcome to attend – a small charge of £2.50 per person is made - £2.00 for Friends of COAM. Light refreshments are available. No pre-booking required – just turn up on the evening. However, any enquiries may be made to Jenny Ogden on 01494 793017.

AT the Village Appraisal Group AGM on 12th February, Linda Smith Chairman talked of the advances made since first meeting approx. 4 years ago., thanked all the volunteers and said some people are working on two, or maybe even three groups. Local councils had acknowledged the importance of our groups as forerunners of this initiative. Her first theme was the transformation of the Tithe Barn youth Club, then the formation of VOPAG the official voice of for the over 55's in CSP. They about to get a crossing over the A413. County Council as agreed it should be in place by the end of March. Positioned just behind the island at Gravel Hill. The provision is linked to the 'walk to school' scheme for children at the Middle School.

A main focus at the moment is the 'health check' that is intended to highlight strengths and weaknesses , transport and traffic, environment and economy and said that one of our weaknesses is that we don't promote our strengths.

Sandy Warren of the Environment and Heritage Group discussed a lottery grant to help develop the riverside walk and to clear out the river of rubbish and re-site the recycling centre. They want to naturalise the area and plant bluebells, daffodils and snowdrops. There were plans for extra signage at Mill Meadow for sports and recreation facilities and our interest in the Misbourne could be a catalyst for a project.

Megan Wall Safety and Youth Club said that the Youth Club was a lovely, vibrant organisation where attendance over the past two and a half years was 100 attendees a week and in January this year the attendance was 130 per week . There are 38 volunteers spread over 3 days a week to help out in the Youth Centre.

The subway project has been a great success. The young people have learnt a lot from it. They had to apply for grants and got them and some money is still there for further projects.

During the year a number of their members spent a weekend away and others spent a day at Thorpe Park. Rotary Clubs of Misbourne Matins, Chalfont St Peter and Gerrards Cross all made donations.

Corrinne Jeffrey said that VOPAG deals with the interests of over 55's in CSP. Things have to be planned ahead of time and by encouraging the younger members of the 'Older Person's' group, we are building an active base for this section of the community. She wants to encourage everyone to come to the monthly meetings , 10am for 10.30 in the Parish Council Offices.

VOPAG also initiated the Budgen's Police Surgery which is of benefit to both local people and to the Police, who get useful information. They are associated with many initiatives. Speakers on subjects of interest have been well received by the meetings and subjects covered were: the making of a Youth Club video, connections of the generations., Roads and Potholes, travel tokens, eye testing for drivers, Dial a Ride and the meetings also provide the chance to seek opinions of those present about various issues of concern to the over 55's.

Ian Corbett Group leader for transport and traffic said that shortage of funding only enabled spending on emergencies. He said that he had written to object to on-street parking. Shopkeepers really don't want this either. There was a possibility that one of our buses, the 353, is under threat. Bucks County Council will leave things for a few months to see how they go, then they will review the situation. The 305 is had its route redirected and it takes 20 minutes longer to go round by Flackwell Heath, but it is hoped to return to its regular route in the near future..

Heathrow extensions caused a lot of discussion and leaflets are now in the community centre and other places giving more detail. It was reported that planes coming in to Heathrow 7am – 11pm half the height than at present.

Street lighting – Bucks County Council want to extend street lighting switch off which will cover Denham roundabout to GX and Beaconsfield. Beyond Tatling End to GX and Missenden. - 25 miles. There was annoyance that we have not been included in the consultation for this.

Tony Shinner representing Village Action and Think Tank Groups indicates that they seek to use good offices with the police to facilitate discussion to work in partnership with groups in Chafont St Peter where they run Neighbourhood Watch schemes. Their job is to increase neighbourhood watch by canvassing You are 75% less likely to be burgled if you live in a neighbourhood watch scheme area. The groups are also involved with the local Police Surgery. The Safety group was very pleased with the information exchange that was facilitated by this . Also the group is involved with schools and school governors.

Heritage Group was influenced by visiting local museums such as Chesham and Amersham to get information as to how to set out our Chalfont St Peter heritage display. County Councillor, Pam Bacon, who leads the group. wasn't able to attend, but reports were made on her behalf. Help came from Denny Robbins of the Amersham Museum and Denis Skinner of CDC who showed enthusiasm for the project. More permanent premises are needed eventually and also they are looking for local people to come forward to do research into links between time and trends. We need some objectives and also a home in the village where we can exhibit it as an ancient village and show the developing heritage through the talents of current villagers. A website is planned and Tony Shinner would like to do something regarding village recollections.

Treasurer Mike Miller presented the accounts for the year and mentioned the £10,000 grant which we are about to start using as the work in the village gets under way.

The meeting ended with a power point presentation of the painting of the walls in the passage under the A413 and we saw the young people in action, showing how talented they are. Working as a team to create the project and get the funding, meant that they were transformed by their own involvement and giving, which was the theme of the film. The Youth Centre aims to be a transformation of young people's lives through guidance and opportunities. Volunteers add to this and as the youth members grow up they want to contribute to the younger members and many of them become volunteers themselves. The artwork in the subway was another example of this. The young people applied for the funding and did so very professionally. There are now other communities visiting the site to learn from what they have done.

CHALFONT ST PETER YOUTH CLUB SEES THE LIGHT THANKS TO MISBOURNE MATINS!

Misbourne Matins – the area’s only breakfast Rotary Club – has just given the Chalfont St Peter Youth Club a cheque for £2250 to fund new lighting. At the Club’s breakfast meeting on 13th February, Youth Opportunities Chairman Carin Eilerts de Haan presented the cheque to the Youth Club chairman Martyn Groves, who said:



gift to

“We now cater for up to 170 young people every week in our modernised premises in Tithe Barn, and this very generous will make a big difference to us. We are enormously grateful Misbourne Matins.”

Rotary future.

Misbourne Matins funded the gift with the support of the District 1090 under a ‘matching grants’ scheme and has promised to give further support to the Youth Clubs in the

week

The Youth Club is open for young people three evenings a (Monday, Wednesday, Thursday), offering a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities in the 17th century Tithe Barn which was bought by local businessmen and given to the Club in 1944. In the last two years, under the present Management Committee, the club has enjoyed considerable improvements including the modernisation of the Tithe Barn facilities.”

Youth

For more information about the Youth Club, contact Shirley Bengougam on 01753 883712

FRANCES CHIDELL reports on **Ann Widdecombe's** visit to the luncheon at Beaconsfield Golf Club. She says: After some political speakers have sat down, one can be left wondering exactly what they said. Not so with Ann Widdecombe, MP for Maidstone and Weald. With her as speaker the lunch of the Conservative Women's Organisation, Beaconsfield Constituency, on February 8, was a sell-out.

Her talk was amusing and down to earth and she gave ample time for questions. As her message rang a bell with the audience, there were not only questions afterwards, but several members added their personal experiences to reinforce her argument.

This was that Political Correctness and our compensation culture were having an oppressive effect on the British way of life. ³We must not accept this state oppression as the norm,² she said. Getting this message to non-voters and encouraging them to vote would ensure Conservatives won the next election.

The government should tell the truth. For example, it was dishonest about the NHS which was inevitably underfunded because. compared to the forties when it was established, current procedures were like rocket science. In answer to complaints about the state of hospitals, she said the role of hospital Sisters should be reinstated.

As to whether David Cameron or William Hague would make the better Prime Minister she said David Cameron would be Prime Minister soon, and Hague later. She said she would like David Cameron to use television more. An audience in the House of Commons amounts to a few dozen but on television you can get an audience of millions. She was not in favour of all-women candidate lists, or of disestablishing the Church of England, or of a set retirement age. The possibility of Tony Blair as President of Europe was ³horrifying.²

Before the lunch Miss Widdecombe signed copies of her five novels, donating proceeds to the lunch, and said she was resigning her seat at the next election and couldn't wait to settle in her Devon cottage and write more books. Mrs Maureen Royston, in thanking her, said her common sense was what we understand and what we want to hear. Mrs Maureen Worrall, Chairman, CWO, presented her with a picture of Beaconsfield.

CHILTERN Open Air Museum has Hands On History over the Easter weekend, 21-24 March, when you can join the re-enactment groups for two separate 2 day events. And on March 29 and 30, you can Meet Soldiers from the 1940s. The Museum, in Gorelands Lane, is open from 10am until 5pm. (last admission 3.30pm)

THE R.N.L.I has a Flag Day in the village on Saturday 5th April and there will be a house-to-house collection between Tuesday 25th March and Saturday, 5th April.

THE Guide Hut in Lansdown Road on the 1st Wed. each month at 2pm is where the Trefoil Group welcomes visitors, whether a Guide or Brownie in the past or not. They have a varied programme for the coming year. Talks, a ploughman,s lunch, a summer lunch, craft afternoons, an outing in the summer, a Christmas Party, you name it!

THE Gerrards Cross Methodist Church is one hundred years old. it was started on the same plot of land, where the church now stands in Oak End Way, in 1907. To mark this milestone, a Centenary Souvenir Booklet, is going to be delivered to all households in Gerrards Cross and Chalfont St Peter during this month. 9000 copies are being sent out, so look out for one popping through your letterbox.

WORD is that all the Speed Cameras in the Variable Speed Limit section of the M25 near Heathrow Airport (JCT 10-15) are going Digital and the activation limit is being lowered.

They are currently the older film type cameras and Set at 90mph when the Variable Limit Signs are not in operation. The new digital cameras are going to be set at the normal national speed limit +10% + 2mph (at 80mph you are taking a risk) when the signs are not in use. I can't confirm the activation limit when the signs are set (variable limits showing) but believe that it would be the same 10% + 2mph of the speed shown by the sign at that time."

Most modern car speedometers are about right at 30mph but do get progressively inaccurate as the speed increases but you cant rely on this. Sticking to the limit as shown is the safest option. If you read the motoring section of the Telegraph you may have seen the number of complaints from drivers done for speeding at just 33mph when caught on a digital trap. Motoring fines are now a huge source of income for our wonderful government / councils. Only this week it was reported that Westminster council raised £33m from just parking fines last year. Trouble is none of it goes toward making the roads better.

CAREERS Springboard is a self-help group and regular participation in the Monday evening meetings should help to stimulate your job search skills. The meetings also provide the opportunity for you to share your views and problems with others. Volunteers are available to give personal advice. The Monday meetings take place 7.15 for 7.30pm at St Andrews United Reformed Church Hall, Packhorse Road, Gerrards Cross. See their comprehensive website www.careersspringboard.info for more information.

POP-IN meets every Thursday morning during term time from 10-11.30am in the Gold Hill Baptist Church and there is a crèche for babies and activities for pre-school children. This is a non-denominational group and all ladies are welcome to join the meetings. A warm welcome awaits mums with young children who can enjoy a coffee, home-made cake and chat, or simply chill out with a paper / magazine in the **Jugglers' Café**. For further information call GHBC on 01753 887173, or Joyce Gledhill on 01753 880268

THE LONDON & SLOUGH Run takes food to the homeless, is struggling to get enough donations of sandwiches, fruit, biscuits and soft drinks, as many of the regular givers are away. Help would be much appreciated if you can take donations of these items, sandwiches labelled please, to St Joseph's Priory in Austenwood by 4pm on Mondays.

FRIENDS OF CHILTERN OPEN AIR MUSEUM programme: Wednesday 27 February – The Ffestiniog Railway; Richard Ogden relates the amazing story of the birth, growth, decline, death and rebirth of “The Little Railway the Whole World Talks About”. Meetings take place in the Mary Smithells Room, Chalfont St Peter Community Centre, commencing at 8 pm and lasting no more than two hours. All are welcome to attend – a small charge of £2.50 per person is made - £2.00 for Friends of COAM. Light refreshments are available. No pre-booking required – just turn up on the evening. However, any enquiries may be made to Jenny Ogden on 01494 793017.

ONE Hundred Years of Tennis - The Gerrards Cross Lawn Tennis Club celebrates its centenary. Frances Chidell reports on this club which sits on the borders of Chalfont St Peter and Gerrards Cross and she says: It's strange but true that people can live in Gerrards Cross for years and not know of the Gerrards Cross Lawn Tennis Club in Bull Lane, which celebrates its centenary this year. The new chairman, Graham Marsh, and his talented team are hatching plans thick and fast to mark this achievement by improving the club's facilities and extending its activities. With around 800 members - and they would like more - the club has no less than 17 courts: seven grass, five artificial grass and five hard. There's a mini-tennis area for children. This makes it the biggest tennis club in Bucks.

How did it start? The Rev. J.M. Glubb, Vicar of St James's Church, took the chair at the club's inception in November 1908 when he and his associates looked into the cost of three courts. It was soon up and running, but only six years later with the arrival of the first World War, times were hard. Many tennis clubs closed. But Bull Lane kept going and by 1932 there were 13 grass courts and three hard courts. Again war starting in 1939 slowed everything down, and again persistent members managed to keep the club going through the war years and eventually it became one of the leading clubs in the county.

Tennis buffs know that such Wimbledon stars as Butch Buckholtz, Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall, Lew Hoad and Bjorn Borg have all given demonstrations there on the carefully maintained grass courts. Nowadays the club has an extensive coaching scheme for members, and for local schools, from seven qualified coaches directed by the Head Pro Andy Scholfield. As well as Premier League Men's and Women's teams plus other adult teams, there are over 20 Junior teams. Their successes are frequently recorded in the local newspapers. See website: www.tennace.com.

Open Days, when non-members and prospective members may come and sample the facilities, are on the weekends of April 12 and 13 and May 17 and 18. An updated website is being prepared. Membership enquiries to: Mrs June

THE Misbourne Art Society meets next on April 5th will be an illustrated talk – In search of the Tiger, by Chris Christoforou. The society's aim is to further the interest of artists in the locality by arranging programmes of regular meetings for discussion, lectures, outdoor sketching and painting and to promote exhibitions of members' work and visits to art centres. Meetings are held at Chalfont St Peter Community Centre at 2.15pm on the first Saturday of the month. Workshops and Tutorials start at 10am.

CHALFONT St Peter Library has activities for young children that mums will find worthwhile. **Bounce and Rhyme** is on the first Friday of every month from 2.15-2.45pm. It is free and there's no need to book. Just turn up. **Sign and Rhyme** is on every Monday from 10.30 - 11.30am, where children learn to sign and sing nursery rhymes. Free - Fun and All welcome.

THE Probus Club is for retired men of all occupations and meets at Colston Hall, The Memorial Centre, Gerrards Cross, on the first and third Wednesdays of the month, 10am for 10.30, finishing at noon. Enquiries to Guy on 01753 886514, or just turn up and say 'hello' to the host at the door.

CHALFONT ST PETER GARDEN CLUB OUTINGS

1 APRIL - Wed 23rd - Benley's East Sussex - House and Gardens/motor museum/park/wildfowl/craftworkers/shop etc.

2 MAY - Wed. 21st - Penshurst Place - House & Gardens?toy museum/13 acre walled garden.

It's well worth joining this very friendly club. The Secretary is Susan Mills - Telephone 01753 885496 The Garden Club email is info@gardenclub.org

TITHE BARN, on the other side of the bridge across the A413, has rooms to let, if you are looking for a venue for Parties, group meetings or one-off bookings for activities etc. It is very competitive price-wise, for example weekdays and weekends are £8 per hour or £10 per hour after 6pm. Telephone 01753 883712 to book or for more information.

THE Tithe Barn Youth Club opens Monday 14th. January. The times, evenings and age groups are the same and they would welcome any new members.

THE Anchor Staying Put scheme is part of Southern Buckinghamshire Safer Homes. They will undertake small household repairs etc. for disabled adults; anyone over the age of 60 and vulnerable householders at risk of accidents, falls, fire or living in fear of crime who are living in Chiltern. The service is supported by local District Councils, Fire and Rescue, Police, our Primary Care Trust, the Housing Association and Bucks County Council. It is a valuable service, charging only £10 per hour + VAT and materials and the people carrying out the work are all carefully checked before being employed. The number to obtain help is 01628 526367.**CHALFONT** Leisure Centre has a comprehensive range of facilities on your doorstep and invites you all to use them: To find out more please call: 01753 887812 or visit www.wll.co.uk Sessions have been created to encourage men and women in the 50+ age group to take up sport and recreational activities in a sociable environment. If you are in the 50+ category or know of people who are and would like to attend the aerobic sessions, it is advisable to book in advance by contacting the Leisure Centre reception (details above). Other activities offered for the 50+ age group are Table Tennis, Badminton, Short Tennis, Stretches, Conditioning and Swimming, so there's plenty to give you healthy exercise and enjoyment.

CONTACT the elderly is a charity founded about 30 years ago. It aims to give frail, isolated, elderly people companionship. On the third Sunday of the month, volunteers collect one or two elderly people from their homes and drive them to the home of that month's hostess. About eight elderly folk and their drivers gather at the home of a volunteer host or hostess. A welcoming cup of tea at 3pm is followed by a quiz and chat, then an afternoon tea with savouries, cakes and a cuppa. At about 5pm the drivers take their guest home. The hope is that the elderly have enjoyed the companionship of people their own age and also of the younger drivers. For those who cannot get out much, or whose family lives too far away to visit often, or don't have family, it provides a chance for a relaxed chat in a homely setting. The charity is a national organisation. There are now seven groups in Bucks, but still lots of potential guests who would benefit from a group in their area. If you think you could host a tea party, drive or support, please contact the Buckinghamshire Development Officer, Terry Gibson, on 01276 502611 or email terry.gibson@contact-the-elderly.org.uk. If you think that you'd like to be a guest at such a tea party, contact your doctor in the first instance. All the guests are referred to contact the Elderly by their GP or Age Concern.

THE St Joseph's Furniture Market is open every Saturday morning from 9.30 to 12.30. It is situated in Priory Road, the first building past St Joseph's church car park. All proceeds are donated to charity. If you have furniture in good condition that you would like to donate, please contact 01494 872207.

WORK is now underway to produce the 2008/09 Village Guide, a free copy of which will be distributed to every household in Chalfont St Peter. They are in the process of collating information which they try and ensure is as accurate as possible and would like to receive details from any village businesses, organisations, clubs, societies etc. who either have amendments to their details as published in the 2006/07 guide or who would like to be added to the 2008/09 guide. When providing contact details please bear in mind that this guide will be in use until early 2010. Please e-mail to idarby@chalfontstpeter-pc.gov.uk

TEA IN THE POT is a new venture in St Joseph's refurbished committee room that is now a smart cafe and it is open on Tuesday and Friday mornings for anyone who would like to enjoy a cup of tea and a chat, from 8.50am onwards. The mothers and fathers who drop their children off at St Joseph's and other schools in the mornings, will be most welcome Please to support this and make this an opportunity for friendly relaxation, before starting your busy day.