

The Wallops Ministry Team

Peter Matthews	Priest-in-Charge	781345
Colin Stevenson	Reader	781513
Colin Gillespie	Reader	781167
Tony Hope	Lay Minister	781489
Jean Hicks	Sunday School Leader	781000

St Peter's, Over Wallop

St Andrew's, Nether Wallop

Churchwardens	Terry King	781441	Charles Rogers	781053
	Daphne Waive	782064	Colin Stevenson	781513
P.C.C. Secretary	Chris Lovett	781974	Gillian Puddy	781582
Treasurer/Covenants	Michael Hicks	781000	Robert Crispe	781945

The Wallop Parish News

<p>Deadline for Copy: 6.00 p.m. on 19th of each month - earlier if possible please. NB. Late copy will NOT be accepted</p>	<p>Editor: Judy Maynard 781932 The Old Farmhouse Bent Street Nether Wallop SO20 8EJ</p>
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Editorial Notice:

All copy **MUST** be submitted to the Editor, who reserves the right to accept or reject proposed copy. This also applies to **ALL** advertisements.

ADVERTISEMENT COSTS

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|------------|--------|
| 1. Typed advertisements: ¼ page | £2.00 | Commercial | £3.50 |
| ½ page | £4.00 | Commercial | £7.00 |
| Full page | £10.00 | Commercial | £20.00 |
- Copy must be black and white.
2. Insertion only (610 ready-printed copies provided by the advertiser) £2.00, commercial £5.00. These must be black and white only.
 3. Please note that the **ONLY** free advertisements are those whose profits are donated to the Church. NB. Charities are not exempt.
 4. Printed business advertisements on front/back covers for one year (January - December) contact: Pep Keightley 01264 781418.
 5. Flyers are **NOT ACCEPTED**.

PAYMENT FOR ALL ADVERTISEMENTS MUST ACCOMPANY THE COPY and be sent to the Editor by the copy deadline noted above.
Please make cheques payable to: - "St Peter's PCC". Cash is also accepted.

Hall Booking Clerks

Over Wallop Church Hall		Wallops Parish Hall		Nether Wallop Village Hall	
Pat Campbell	781050	Maija Liepins	781291	Jo Maw	782144

Website Addresses

The new combined web sites of Nether Wallop and Over Wallop can be found at:

www.thewallops.net

Dear Neighbours,

Have you seen Christmas? That may seem like a silly question! All the major stores seem to have found it; their shelves have been full of things for Christmas for weeks already. Adverts on TV and in the newspapers cry, "book now for Christmas", or "order before...to ensure Christmas delivery". Today, Christmas is big business. The market is flooded with every new gadget and toy imaginable, and we are lured into buying one of everything so that our families can have a big Christmas. We magnify a mystical sleigh ride and a Santa who is always watching and is coming to town. Can you imagine what a Christmas without a tree, without decorations, without lights, without presents, and without parties would be like? We tend to pity those who cannot afford such luxuries, but that is the way it was on that first Christmas.

On that first Christmas, the heavenly host of angels singing praises to God announced the birth of Jesus. That first Christmas was celebrated by a group of shepherds whose hearts were filled with joy as they praised God for all they had seen and heard. We still sing "*Joy to the world.*" But Christmas has become a threat to many people. For some, it is a time of annual bankruptcy. For others, it is a time of desperate loneliness. There are more suicides committed during the Christmas season than at any other time of the year. As we look around us, we have to wonder where is the joy and peace the angels sang about? We have made Christmas a Holiday not a Holy Day, we have taken Christmas out of the hands of God and placed it in the hands of men. Christmas has become just another holiday that we look forward to because it means a day off work or school. As we celebrate Christmas, we need to take time to sit down and reflect upon this holy day, and thank God for all it means. We have placed the things of Christmas before the Person of Christmas.

Ask any child who is about to have a birthday, and he will tell you that his birthday is a special day. It is a day unlike all the rest of the year. Christmas is a holy day because it marks the greatest birth this world will ever know. It is a special day when we celebrate the fact that God did something special for us many years ago. How will you celebrate Christmas? It is tragic that we readily associate Christmas with presents, parties, reunions, and delicious dinners; but we usually fail to make room in our day for worship. That first Christmas was observed in the form of worship as the shepherds shared the message of the angel, and the heavenly choir sang. Mary meditated, and the service was concluded with a time of glorifying and praising God.

So, where does Jesus fit into our Christmas? We become so concerned about the presents we put under the tree, but are we as concerned about bringing Christ into our homes and into our Christmas celebration? Let us determine that we will have a Christ-centred Christmas this year. Remember, it is His birthday we are celebrating; so, let us treat Him like the honoured guest. We must not allow Christmas sentiment or tradition to detract from the real meaning of Christmas. We have placed more emphasis on Getting than Giving. We rarely hear anyone ask, "*What did you give for Christmas?*" We always want to know what you got. Now, we always enjoy opening presents but we must remember that we only have Christmas because of an act of giving. Getting is an exciting, vital part of Christmas. But the question is, "*What are you giving to God for Christmas?*" What will your gift be? A song says it well: "*What can I give Him, poor as I am? If I were a shepherd, I would give Him a lamb; If I were a wise man, I would do my part. But what can I give Him? Give Him my heart!*"

God gave his Son to unite the world, to make us one. Nether Wallop or Over Wallop, St Peter's or St Andrew's, it doesn't matter, Jesus Christ was born for us all. Go to the other Church for one of the services, share in the worship and make new friends. Human barriers do not restrict God. The message of the angels is just as real today as it was on that first Christmas. God gave us the gift of Jesus, his only son. Jesus was born in a town called Bethlehem and all through his life he showed us what God was like. That is God's Christmas gift to us, His only son sent to save us. May you find the real joy of Christmas this year and let us together build His Kingdom here in The Wallops.

Yours in Christ,
Colin Gillespie, Reader

NOTES FOR DECEMBER

As you read this we pray that our vicar, Peter, is recovering well from the first of his major operations. Remember Peter, Brontë and the rest of his family in your prayers. Revd Roger Bennett will be taking his last regular service for us at Midnight Mass. We thank him for the fine service (no pun intended) he has given to us over the past few months. Revd Guy Chapman is returning to us for a while starting on Christmas Day.

It has been 'all hands to the pumps' during Peter's absence and many people have been involved in keeping both Churches running. On a personal note I would like to thank Frederick and Jocelyn Gumn for taking the produce of the Harvest Festivals and the huge number of toys from the Toy Service to the relevant places.

See the Services for December page for full details of all our services over the Christmas period. Please remember Sunday 4 December and the **Candlelit Advent Service of Hymns and Readings** at St Andrew's.

There are services as usual on New Year's Day; bring your hangovers and I will see you there!

Colin Gillespie

From the Registers - Baptisms

At St Peter's

30 October **Alexander Finn Dimitri Zvegintzov** 6 November **Annabel Lucy Boulter
Elizabeth Jane Boulter**

May they grow in the faith into which they have been baptised.

ST ANDREW'S CHURCH CAROL SERVICE

The Bishop of Winchester, the Rt. Revd Michael Scott-Joynt, is to visit the Benefice for the Carol Service on Sunday 18 December. It is hoped that as many parishioners as possible, from both Nether and Over Wallop, will attend this service.

COLLECTIONS AT ST PETER'S

Congregations have always been generous in their donations put in the collection bag. However, not everyone seems to be aware that they can be still more generous, without giving a penny more than they already do, through Gift Aid. Through Gift Aid, we the PCC, can claim back from the Inland Revenue the tax paid on the donation i.e. 28 pence in every pound. So a £5 note put in the bag produces £6.40 of income for the Church.

The only limitations are that the donor must pay sufficient tax to at least equal the tax deducted from the donation and the donations must be placed in the special yellow/buff envelopes provided in each pew, before going into the bag.

Michael Hicks
Treasurer

THANK YOU AND GOOD WISHES

This is a time of remembrance and thanksgiving. Firstly I would like to thank all those kind friends who sent me cards and gifts on my 90th birthday. I was quite overwhelmed. This is also to wish you all a Very Happy Christmastide. Regretfully I am unable to send Christmas cards this year.

Eileen Wilmott

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE WALLOP PARISH NEWS 2006

Subscribers to the Parish News are reminded that the annual subscription for 2006 for the magazine, **which remains at £5**, is due on 1 January 2006. Your magazine distributor will be calling from December onwards to collect annual subscriptions. It would be very helpful if you could be prepared to pay them your subscription promptly. Cheques should be made out to "St Peter's PCC".

Thank you Bob Pike (781170)

We felt that as Peter, our Parish Priest and friend, is absent from our midst at present, we should update you on his progress. We know that so many of you care about Peter and Brontë's well-being.

It is good to be able to tell you that Peter has successfully undergone abdominal surgery and will now be needing a long period of convalescence. This will take him into the new year. Hopefully Peter will then be strong enough to face the heart surgery at St Luke's Hospital. On the bright side, throughout this lengthy ordeal Peter has managed to remain cheerful whenever he has been in contact with us despite so many setbacks; enough disappointments to make the most placid of vicars despair!

Meanwhile we are extremely grateful to so many people who have kept our spiritual and community life together at St Peter's with virtually no mishaps. We are most fortunate to have ex-Naval Chaplain, Revd Roger Bennett living in our benefice as he has been so willing and able to help fill the breach, taking all the Communion services until Christmas, at both St Peter's and St Andrew's. We have also had numerous baptisms at which Roger has kindly officiated despite having his own family worries.

We are truly blessed in having experienced Lay Readers. We could not have managed this difficult period without the sterling commitment of Colin Gillespie who has led all the Family Services, planned services, music and hymns, as well as managing the hymnal in the absence of our organist Dawn Williams. He does much that is unseen and plays a big supporting role so that our pattern of services continues as usual.

Tony Hope has been the stalwart of early morning Communions at which he has prepared and ministered for countless years as well as taking Evensong and Matins, not to mention the Remembrance Day Services. Jean Hicks and her team deserve special mention for the dedication in setting tasks for their Challengers.

We thank everyone concerned that there is so much good-will and determination to work together. What better tribute to Peter than to keep our church running as usual. Many go about their regular duties with flowers, coffee, cleaning, as sacristan, choir, vergers, bell-ringers and sidesmen. Forgive us if you have been forgotten and please ACCEPT OUR APPRECIATION AND THANKS.

In the future as we contemplate Shared Ministry between not only St Peter's and St Andrew's but more widely with other benefices, we are already beginning to experience what the future holds, a time when we shall no longer be our own little island in the Wallops but part of a wider congregation.

This letter must include a mention of the festivities we have enjoyed: Harvest Festival held on 7 October saw our church again prettily decorated, with plenty of fruit and vegetables. There was a full congregation in the morning and many farmers were present to read lessons and sing the favourite harvest hymns in the evening. Produce was taken to the Crisis Centre in Andover where it was well received. We were glad to have Brontë back with us for the organisation of the Love-in-a-Box Appeal in October managing to fill 143 boxes which are to be sent to Eastern Europe. The support of so many helpers from both villages was greatly appreciated. More recently, on 6 November, The Toy Service gave our children opportunity to bring toys to be given to deprived children in Southampton. Our next major highlight will be the Christingle Service on 27 November, to which everyone is welcome.

We have one request to make in this letter which is to ask if there is any person out there in Over Wallop who has the time, expertise, and inclination to run our Church Fête on 24 June 2006. If you feel you are that person please contact either Terry King or Daphne Waine. Lastly, let us all remember Peter and Brontë and their family in our prayers.

Terry King and Daphne Waine
Churchwardens, St Peter's Church

NETHER WALLOP PARISH COUNCIL
Extracts from the November meeting

Attendance: The full council and seven members of the public.

New Council Member: The Chairman welcomed Cllr. Edwards who has recently been co-opted onto the council.

Apologies: HCC Cllr. Woodhall and TVBC Cllr. Boulton.

Planning: a) 05/00573 and 00567 TREEN, removal of line of leylandii, remove willow and coppice hazel, Rose Cottage, The Square, no objection.

b) 05/00637 LBWN, internal alterations to Folly, Broadgate House, support.

c) 05/00598, FULL N, single storey side extension to provide study, bathroom, dining room and porch, Hurstlea, Salisbury Lane, no objection.

d) 05/00498/FULLN, retention of wendy house at The Old Thatch, no objection.

e) 05/00399/LBWN, internal alterations, The Trout, Heathman Street. Cllr.

Whitaker left the meeting declaring a pecuniary interest. The application was presented by Cllr. Souter, no objection.

Points from the floor: Parking in The Square – Mrs E. Gutteridge was concerned about the emergency services who would find it difficult to gain access due to the number of badly parked cars. This was echoed by both councillors and parishioners in attendance. A letter will be written to residents, a notice will be inserted into the Parish Magazine, a notice posted on the hall door and notes places on offending cars (**Action: Parish Clerk**). Mr Duckworth drew the council's attention to a notice Mr Osmond had received referring to the Trail Riders Association's request for the upgrading of a current RUPP on his land to a BOAT. A letter will be written to HCC in support of the landowner (**Action: Parish Clerk**). Mrs Mongor said that the ditches in Wallop Drove needed digging out as water was flooding across the road (**Action: Cllr. Beeley**). Mrs Gumn asked about a mesh bin for the lay-by on the Romsey road; the Chairman would give this some thought.

Neighbourhood Watch: Cllr. Souter has talked to the co-ordinator of Over Wallop NHW and will supply Mr Gillespie with some joint material for the proposed joint website. There have been several local break-ins and parishioners are urged to be especially vigilant and to check security lights.

Highways: Cllr. Beeley reported that there is some progress and he has received confirmation that the outstanding issues apart from the sign on the A30 are being scheduled into a forthcoming Highways programme. The cutting of vegetation and hedges will be done shortly.

Playing Fields: Cllr. Rogers reported that a cheque from the Andover Football Club has been received. More white lining has been purchased. LAPPSET has agreed to replace the damaged part of the climbing frame free of charge. The hedges have yet to be cut.

New Village Hall Trust: Cllr. Rogers reported that a letter from the trustees had been sent to the council asking it to continue to underwrite the financial outgoings of the present hall. It was unanimously agreed that the council consents to this.

Wallops Parish Hall: The Chairman reported that the next meeting will be held on 21 November and he encouraged residents to attend. Volunteers will be requested from those who would like to be involved in the investigation of cost process of a new hall.

Village Green: Cllr. Roach reported that a working party of local residents had cleared The Rill, and the Chairman asked that a record of thanks be noted. A Christmas tree will be situated on the green and carol singing will take place on Saturday 17 December. Mrs A. and Mrs S. Moulard will switch on the lights. The state of the neighbouring beech trees was mentioned and a letter will be drafted to voice concern (**Action: Parish Clerk**).

Date of next meeting: Monday 12 December at 7.30 p.m.

THESE ARE DRAFT MINUTES PRODUCED FOR REVIEW BY THE PARISH COUNCILLORS
PRIOR TO BEING APPROVED AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

Mrs. B. M. Grob
Clerk to the Parish Council (tel: 01264 781645)

ST ANDREW'S ORGAN RESTORATION FUND

First our very heartfelt thanks for your generous response to our appeal for sponsorship of the organ pipes. There are, however, still many more pipes looking for sponsors!

Our gratitude also goes to the very kind people who offered most exciting promises for our auction, Unfortunately the Cheese and Wine Evening with the Auction of Promises had to be postponed but it will take place in 2006. Our apologies go to all who had purchased tickets and were looking forward to what, I am sure, will eventually be a splendid evening.

TEDDIES

If you missed the sale of soft toys after the Benefice Service on 27 November but are still looking for a delightful Christmas gift any remaining toys will be available after St Andrew's Church services in December. Please ask me if they are not on display. We are most grateful to Mrs Di Ling for so generously donating most of the toys to be sold for St Andrew's Church.

Jackie Fenn

SHELTER BOXES

Elsewhere in the magazine you will see our advertisement for our Coffee Morning on 3 December. Coffee and cakes are free as usual. However we welcome donations to a charity which varies from month to month. As we sit in our comfortable Over and Nether Wallop homes can we spare a thought for the thousands of people in Kashmir and Pakistan who have not even a roof over their heads, living in freezing conditions?

We know that there are approximately 1600 inhabitants in Over Wallop. If every one of you comes to our coffee morning bringing a gift of £1, we will be able to send 3 Shelter boxes to Islamabad via the Rotary Club who have already sent 490 of these boxes to the most needy.

A shelter box contains:

A dry shelter

A warm bed

Light and heat

Clean water

Cooking aids

Tools

For a total of ten people

There will be posters and information and photographs for you to see and take away. We hope you will want to help these people as the weather is becoming increasingly cold and bitter for them, while we have the luxury of Christmas Joy to look forward to, so any donations will be much appreciated.

Daphne Waine, on behalf of the Wallops Fellowship. For more information please phone 782064 or Margaret Bowes 781657

PANTOMIME NEWS

Any person who would like to be involved with the forthcoming pantomime in February 2006 is welcome to come at 2.00 p.m. to the Village Hall in Nether Wallop on 18 December. Auditions for principal parts will be decided at this time.

Jackie Walker

OVER WALLOP PARISH COUNCIL - EXTRACTS FROM NOVEMBER MEETING

Present: Cllrs. Burden, Cleife, Macey, Quick and Taylor-Firth. There were 6 members of the public present and PC Beecroft

Urgent Items: Cllr. Burden reported on the meeting held 28 October at Grateley Station.

Neighbourhood Watch Update: In the absence of Ruth Cartwright, PC Beecroft advised that although it has been fairly quiet, the number of burglaries has increased in the area.

Planning: 05/00476/FULLN. Sunny Dale, Mount Carmel Road, Palestine. Erection of replacement 3 bed dwelling. Supported by the planning committee and returned to TVBC 03/11/05.

Playground and sports field: Cllr Macey advised that two more people were interested in the allotments, and the council are now in possession of a copy of the deeds that clearly show the donation to the village in 1885. The pavilion has been broken into and one of the windows is smashed. The finance committee will meet on site to discuss this in greater detail.

Cllr. Macey reported that the playground at Evans Close has been closed due to vandalism. The park is dangerous and is now in need of further repairs to make it safe. The area has litter over the field and is a hazard. The fence is so damaged that nails are sticking out, the seat has been burnt and the surface has been kicked up and has large holes in it. The clerk advised the council that she had been in discussion with a contractor who had visited the site and that a plan of action needed to be implemented immediately. It was therefore agreed that a meeting would be arranged with the councillors and Mr John Newman of Wiltshire Contractors to discuss the best way forward. Cllr. Macey then opened the meeting up to the public to comment on this point in the agenda.

Among the public were two mothers whose children had used the play park and it was commented on that the vandalism is mainly done at night when the perpetrators cannot be seen due to lack of street lighting. It was agreed that the possibility of putting a new street light into the area would be looked into. PC Beecroft also advised that if anyone sees anything at all, they should report it so something can be done. Cllr. Glover asked if it would be worthwhile talking to the local schools, and the clerk agreed to write a letter. With regard to the motorcycles driving on the grass, if either a name of the person driving or the registration number can be given to the police they have the power to issue a notice against the person or the motorcycle. If they are reported again, the vehicle can be seized. PC Beecroft urged the public to keep their eyes open and report incidents immediately to Stockbridge Police Station.

Footpaths: There was a complaint from the public that horses are using footpaths as bridlepaths. The clerk will look into which footpaths are bridlepaths so that it can be made clear to all riders.

Wallops Hall: Cllr. Macey advised that the hall had had a leak recently.

Correspondence: The clerk read out various pieces of correspondence. The clerk will write a letter to TVBC advising that the general consensus of the public would be that alternate bin collections are not acceptable.

Public points from floor: The clerk advised the public that she had spoken to Wallop Defence regarding the helicopters and that after discussing the matter with the chairman she would invite the school of Army Flying to attend the January meeting so that there was time to notify the public. They will therefore be invited to give a talk at the next meeting scheduled for 9 January.

The question was asked as to the purpose of the mobile Police Unit. PC Beecroft advised that it is there as a police presence. People can feel free to come and talk to them and report things at these mobile units. They are gathering a lot of knowledge of the areas that they park in, which will be useful.

A parishioner reported that one of the new trees has died and another looks as if it needs re-staking. The clerk agreed to contact the contractor who planted the trees.

Sandra Holloway - Clerk

**NEXT MEETING- 9 January at 8.00 p.m.
Planning committee to meet at 7.45 p.m. to view plans**

WALLOP VALLEY FIELD CLUB OCTOBER MEETING

On one of the warmest days in October, the Wallop Valley Field Club was privileged to welcome Phil Read as the speaker, for a talk entitled 'Taking a cool look at weather and wildlife in Antarctica'.

Phil, who is currently senior meteorologist at Boscombe Down, spent a summer in Antarctica between October 1998 and April 1999. Each year, one aviation meteorologist is seconded to the British Antarctic Survey station at Rothera to provide weather guidance to aircraft in the area. As Phil was interested in the Antarctic wildlife, he was able to spend his spare time assisting with some of the research projects and observing and photographing the wildlife.

Phil's talk included a number of slides of the British station and areas of Antarctica visited. He explained that the visibility and clear light in the Antarctic is deceptive, and glaciers that appeared to be just across the bay were 9-12,000ft mountain ranges as much as 40km away.

During his secondment there, Phil studied the local seal and bird populations, including a colony of Adelie penguins located nearby. Named after the wife of a French explorer, they are the smallest of the 17 penguin species, recognisable by their completely black head and white ring around the eye. They build their nests from small pebbles and would take pebbles from human hands. Whilst there, three chinstrap penguins also visited, this being the largest number seen as they breed further north.

Other birds included the south polar skua and snow petrel. The skua is the first bird to arrive in the spring and approximately 15 pairs nested near the station. They build their nests from lichen in the rocks and the chicks have speckled black and grey feathers which camouflage them perfectly against the rocks, making them less vulnerable to predators.

Phil was also able to observe the local seals including Weddell, leopard and crabeater seals. Leopard seals have a muscular, reptilian head and a white throat marked with black spots. These distinctive spots are what give the Leopard seal its name. They are considered one of the most ferocious seals in the Antarctic. Not surprisingly, Phil did not get too close.

Weddell seals, however, are relatively placid animals and can be easily approached by humans. They have 'smiling', whiskered faces and relatively small heads and are quite appealing in appearance. Phil explained that Weddells are able to dive to impressive depths in pursuit of fish and krill. By collapsing their lungs and lowering their breathing rates, they are able to stay underwater for up to an hour at a time.

Finally, at the end of his stay, Phil returned to the Falklands by boat accompanied by humpback whales and albatrosses. He described this trip by ship as some of the best days of his life. The whole evening was full of interesting anecdotes and facts giving the audience a fascinating insight into living in Antarctica and the wildlife to be found there

Nicola Lee

HELP NEEDED

Is there a kind, considerate person who would be willing to take an elderly gentleman for short outings from time to time in his own car, as he is no longer able to drive? The car has recently had its MOT and has been serviced. Please contact 01264 781348.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Wallop Parish News editor and our extended band of helpers would like to wish all its readers and contributors a Very Special Happy Christmas and New Year. Please note the deadline for the January issue will be 19 December. LATE COPY WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

A.G.M. OF THE WALLOPS W.I. HELD ON WEDNESDAY 9 NOVEMBER

Birthdays were much to the fore at this year's AGM. The National Federation of Women's Institutes celebrates its ninetieth birthday this year and so does Mrs Eileen Wilmott, senior member of our own Institute who received her ninetieth birthday posy at the start of our business meeting. Best wishes for the future to them both!

The President reported that the Wallops W.I. Skittles team came joint second in the recent Danebury Group match. This was our best result to date, although it is the outright winners only who proceed to the next round. Eileen Wilmott reminded us that two of our members (Pam Quick and Jenny Young) now also serve as Parish Councillors. She stressed the importance of W.I. involvement with local affairs. Sue King then expressed the thanks of the organisers of the Love in a Box Christmas gift project to the W.I. for their financial and practical contribution. One hundred and forty-three boxes had been sent to children in eastern Europe.

The President then commenced the AGM by announcing that all members of the present committee were willing to serve for a further year. They were accordingly re-elected *en bloc*. Mrs June Kingsnorth, W.I. Adviser, who attended our AGM to advise where necessary, supervised the election of President. Pam Quick was duly elected for a third year. Shirley Mongor will continue as Secretary and Mandy Grinter and Sarah Day as Treasurer and Minutes Secretary respectively. Pam, in her report, thanked everyone for the support she had received and looked forward to the stimulating programme arranged for the coming year.

June Kingsnorth then addressed the meeting on the new W.I. database of members, stressing the importance that all Institutes should participate.

Refreshments, including a birthday cake and a glass of wine, were provided by Pat Brown and Ruth Taylor, enabling us to drink the health of both the W.I. and Eileen Wilmott. The evening concluded with a reminder that our Christmas Party is on Wednesday 14 December 7.00 for 7.30 p.m.

Maureen Hill

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

May I take this opportunity to remind you of an important date for your diary in the run-up to Christmas. There will be a very special candle-lit Advent service of lessons, carols and seasonal music at St Andrew's, Nether Wallop on Sunday 4 December at 6.00 p.m. The choir has been working very hard over the past month to prepare a delightful selection of music to complement the readings which will tell the Advent story. We look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to this occasion.

Peter Barrie

FIELD SOCIETY TALK ON POMPEII AND HERCULANEUM ON 29 SEPTEMBER

Denise Allen, a specialist in Roman glass manufacture came to give a talk on Pompeii and Herculaneum in September. Apart from being the most famous Roman site in the world, it is also the longest -running archaeological dig, having been excavated for more than 250 years.

Pompeii is located on the southern side of the Bay of Naples and was a bustling harbour town. Further north, closer to the cone of Vesuvius was Herculaneum, but the whole bay was lined with wealthy seaside second homes. Vesuvius hadn't erupted since the Bronze Age, and although some people observed the volcanic shape of the mountain, it was not considered any sort of threat. In AD62, a severe earthquake took place in the region and Pompeii was at its epicentre. It caused terrible damage destroying aqueducts and swallowing up flocks of sheep. Pompeii was still undergoing major reconstruction 17 years later.

On the 24 August AD79 at 1.00p.m., with no warning at all, Vesuvius exploded and the resultant ash and volcanic debris was blown 30km into the atmosphere. Initially, it was just tufa that rained down on Pompeii which fell until it was 2 metres thick, and caused roofs to collapse. Twelve hours later, a huge pyroclastic flow, which has the power of an atomic bomb, hit Herculaneum killing everyone left there instantly. Meanwhile, in Pompeii, ash fell to the level of the 1st storey, but at dawn the next day, it too was hit by several pyroclastic flows that killed the remaining people who were trying to escape. The detailed observations come from letters left by Pliny the older who was in charge of the Naval fleet based at Misenum, a natural harbour across the bay.

Herculaneum was the first site to be discovered by monks digging a well in the early 18th Century. They ended up in the theatre and retrieved many artefacts, which became very fashionable with the various Bourbon rulers of the time. As the material from the pyroclastic flow was very hard, the only way to excavate was by sinking shafts and digging tunnels radiating out from them, which you can still see today. Pompeii, on the other hand, was much easier to excavate as it was mostly covered by soft tufa. William Hamilton, the British envoy at Naples, collected a lot of artefacts (mostly vases) in the late 18th century that forms the core of the British museum collection. Sadly, he's not really remembered for this contribution to history, but rather for his wife, Emma Hamilton who used to like copying poses of Roman statues and entertained people with her famous "attitudes". In 1860, Giuseppe Fiorelli, the first Director of Excavations brought in a long overdue systematic process which recorded where artefacts were found. He also discovered that by pouring plaster into the cavities previously occupied by organic matter such as wood or soft animal tissue, he could get a copy of the form that had been on the cavity. Today, resin is used to do this, which means that in the case of humans, bones can sometimes still be seen. Today, two thirds of Pompeii has now been excavated and modern digs concentrate on very small areas so that an in-depth study can be made of the house history, its occupants and their lifestyle.

Denise concluded the evening by reminding us that what happened at Pompeii wasn't really so unusual, as natural disasters sadly happen all too often. What makes it so extraordinary is that due to the nature of the volcanic explosion, a 2000-year-old community was forever frozen in time for subsequent generations to discover and learn from.

Tamsin Varley

THANK YOU AND GOOD WISHES

This is a time of remembrance and thanksgiving. Firstly I would like to thank all those kind friends who sent me cards and gifts on my 90th birthday. I was quite overwhelmed. This is also to wish you all a Very Happy Christmastide. Regretfully I am unable to send Christmas cards this year.

Eileen Wilmott