

ED VAIZEY WRITES...

I was very sorry to read about the local Post Office closing this month. Without wishing to go into the detail, this does not appear to have been because of the national closure programme, but because of local difficulties. I do hope a solution can be found, and I am very happy to work with the parish council to help this to happen.

The other big news this month has been the decision by Thames Water to put back its plans for a reservoir by five years until 2014, and also to scale back the size of any proposed reservoir by a third. I have always been a reservoir sceptic. I have never said "never" to a reservoir, but I have always said that Thames Water should have to prove its case overwhelmingly before such a huge change was made to our local area. I have to say the case for a reservoir looks weaker than ever. If it was essential, I cannot see how Thames Water could afford to delay their plans. Given that they seem to have easily postponed them, it is hard to see how they can now argue that a reservoir is essential for our future water supply. While the project is delayed, planning blight still affects a number of people, and I am keen to ensure that they do not suffer in the next few years.

I have been concentrating my mind on two other important community services – the local pub and the local library. I was chastened to learn that 17 pubs have closed in the constituency in the last two years, leaving just 141. The reasons are many and complex. Fewer people will drink and drive, a good thing. The ban on smoking in pubs. Cheaper alcohol from supermarkets. One issue that a lot of people have contacted me about is the tax on beer, which is too high. We have a fine tradition of local brewing in this area, and I am keen to support a reduction in the tax on beer, paid for by increasing the tax on alcopops. While this will not save every pub, it could at least provide some help to a very put-upon industry. I am the Conservative party's spokesman on libraries. We have a pretty good service in Oxfordshire, but that is not true in other parts of the country. People often predict the death of the library, but it is still a £billion a year service with more than 4000 libraries up and down the country. I regard the local library as a vital service for people of all ages, to access books, information, newspapers, the internet. But libraries could and should be much better, with council information points, and perhaps even GP surgeries and other useful local services co-located with them. They need to be loved and cherished more by local councils, which should see them as a real asset rather than a burden that they have to provide.

ED VAIZEY, MP Wantage (Con)

MP'S SURGERY WITH ED VAIZEY

5.30-7.00pm, unless stated otherwise

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|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 3 Apr | Faringdon , Corn Exchange |
| 24 Apr | Shrivenham , Memorial Hall |
| Contact Ed Vaizey by | |
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April 2009

MARCHAM MOLDOVA LIFELINE

Marcham Moldova Lifeline is being launched in Marcham to raise funding and provide practical support to help communities in Moldova, the poorest country in Europe. An open meeting will be held at:

Marcham School

7.30pm Wednesday 1 April

to outline plans to help with this project and to seek ideas from individuals, village clubs and organisations for how we may best support this village-wide effort.

For information, contact: Denise Asher 391727

MARCHAM SOCIETY ARCHIVE

This month's mystery picture on the cover, is only a mystery as to the surname of Robert, the young man on the left of the picture. If you know, please contact Sheila Dunford on 01865 391439.



MARCHAM PLAYERS
With Great Pleasure: 27 Feb.

The Marcham Players invited members and friends to an evening of humorous readings in the Boardroom at Manor Farm. With a continuing inability to be able to stage plays for public enjoyment, the group maintains the active interest of its members and friends alike by arranging both theatre outings and evening entertainments; this little event was well attended and a very pleasant interlude from the cold winter evenings. Members had volunteered to chose and read small pieces of their own choice.



Richard Hobbs set the ball rolling with a piece by Spike Milligan. He went on to provide other small, pithy, "interjections" by Spike and a piece by Bill Bryson. Deirdre Maton read two bits of gentle humour one being "Mice" from Julie Walters' autobiography. Janet Frere gave us a typically stirring offering by Joyce Grenfell. Jane and Andrew Packford both chose readings from autobiographies - David Niven and Piers Morgan respectively. Donald and Jean Creasy each gave a couple of readings; one of Jean's being from Gervaise Phinn's "Auntie Betty" and Donald gave us an excellent example of Edward Lear's poems. Noreen McCrystal read from Thomas Hardy and Hilaire Belloc. Doris Dowling read her own poem - "The End of the Trail". Sheila Dunford selected a piece from Edward Lear's "Two Old Bachelors". The Chairman - Dave Hutchinson read a nostalgic piece - "Kids from the 20's, 30's, 40's....." and the Secretary and organiser - Joey Maclean chose a poem by the beloved John Betjemain.

All in all a very pleasant way to spend an evening and our thanks to all the readers, and the Cumbers for the loan of the venue.

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Wednesday 15th April at 7:30 in the Board Room at Manor Farm, A PLAY READING (for pleasure)

We will be reading 'A Small Hotel' and if the title seems vaguely familiar, Marcham Players did perform this play, we think, in about 1975! Copies have been dusted off, and refreshments ordered in, so come along and take part.

Any enquiries about us will be willingly answered either by our Secretary, Joey, on 01865 391242 or, Dave Hutchinson on 01865 391964.

www.marchamplayers.co.uk