

**MARCHAM PLAYERS**  
**Oxford Waits concert**  
**in aid of Moldova**



Although in competition with bonfire parties throughout the village, an audience of over a hundred was treated to fireworks of another kind in All Saints' Church at the beginning of November.

We were transported back to the time of Guy Fawkes and the 17th century generally by a performance of the Oxford Waits.

The Oxford Waits take their name from a real-life band of city musicians, known as 'waits', who flourished in Oxford during the 17th century, the tumultuous era of the English Civil War and Restoration. They treated us to a rollicking musical tour of the period, combining story telling and song that at times was hilarious, often bawdy (in the best possible taste) and always entertaining.

The musicians, Edward Fitzgibbon, Charles Spicer, Caroline Butler, Ian Giles and led by the incomparable Tim Healy displayed an extraordinary range of talent not only playing period musical instruments - fiddle, bagpipes, lute, cittern, pipe and tabor, shawm, flute and percussion - but offering a well selected variety of ballads and ditties scored and arranged by the players themselves.

We were led through the seasons of the year and given an insight into life in Oxford in the 17th century, both that of the gentry and also the more humble folk. Tim Healy's narration was a masterpiece of story telling and brilliantly opened our minds to the goings on in our local area three hundred and fifty years ago.

To add to the evening's pleasures, Joey Maclean and her helpers provided a delicious spread of refreshments and, to top it all, once all the book keeping is complete, a goodly donation will be finding its way to the Moldova Link appeal in due course.

Thanks are due to all who played a part in organizing the evening, most notably Dave Hutchinson for his expert co-ordination and planning, Tina Hill for the idea in the first place, and Joey being her wonderful efficient self.

**Forth coming events**

Such was the success and popularity of the last 'With Great Pleasure' where we shared readings from our favourite childhood books, we will be having a repeat performance on Friday 5th February, at Manor Farm. This will give us a chance to listen to the stories we missed due to lack of time. Please join us!

We would really appreciate people's thoughts about the future of Marcham Players. It has been quite a challenge working without a regular venue and this, together with the increasingly busy lives we all seem to lead, has constrained some of our activities. A social evening has been fixed for Friday 15th January to which all who have an interest in the society, friends and members alike, are invited. Please come along and join us for a glass of wine and to offer your thoughts on how we can ensure the future vitality of the Players.

Finally, advance notice of our AGM on Friday 19th February. We hope as many members as possible will join us on this occasion.

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

**www.marchamplayers.co.uk**

**UNUSUAL VEGETABLES**

Just as I was struggling for inspiration for the next subject to cover in these articles, I've just had one of those "Aha" moments!



Just finished talking to a fellow gardener that has lost her enthusiasm for vegetable gardening as she has cultivated the same crops year in, year out, for the last 2 decades.

"Try growing some unusual vegetables you've never grown before" was my response, "Tried 'em all" she responded with a deep murmuring of resignation in her voice.

Sure enough, I did find some she'd never thought of, and off she went, happy once more. We could all try these old vegetables, not  
*December 2009*

just to boost our enthusiasm, but to put more variety on our dinner plates and in our diet.

I suggested Corn Salad or Lambs Lettuce, which are harvested between October and February, when home grown salad is hard to come by. Sown in September, it will grow freely in most soils. When harvesting, you remove only a few leaves from each plant at a time, as they don't like being stripped naked, who would in winter! New leaves will regenerate shortly after, allowing you to pick again. In the kitchen you can use the leaves just as you would traditional lettuce leaves and enjoy their distinctly bitter taste.

Good King Henry or Poor Man's Asparagus as I have heard it called is another good cropper, as I have mentioned in these articles a number of years ago. It is only an unusual vegetable because fashions in gardening and cooking have altered over the years. Even so, this is a vegetable that should be brought back in my opinion. It comes up each year, so once you have planted it initially, you've got it for life. It grows to 2 ½ feet tall and really needs a sunny site and extremely fertile soil. The seeds are initially sown in April or May, but don't expect a huge harvest in the first season. Like Rhubarb, it needs a year to settle in before it takes off and rewards you with a scrumptious harvest. When you do pick, again, only pick a few leaves from each plant and then cook as you would traditional spinach. In the Autumn, cut down all the foliage to 3 inches above ground level and spread a six inch layer of rotted leaves over the top. The following April/May and June, you can harvest the new shoots as you would Asparagus, and cook them likewise. From July onwards, allow the shoots to mature into leaves and then continue cooking as you would Spinach until you cut them down again in the Autumn.

How can these 2 vegetables fail to inspire anyone into a new found horticultural vigour?

**Happy Gardening,**  
**STUART MABBUTT**



**Could you do something amazing in 2010?**

It was a warm weekend in May, the weather was kind as 40 people started their challenge event and climbed into the minibuses. These were 40 people, some who had never met before, who were about to take on a very challenging task. Yes they were about to attempt to climb the 3 highest mountains in the UK. That's one in Wales, then one in England and finally one in Scotland. They only had 24 hours to complete this feat, but amazingly through hardwork, teamwork and determination they all JUST did it. This was a team of people raising money for their favourite charity. So far this team alone have raised nearly £30,000. The 3 Peaks challenge is one of the hardest but most rewarding challenge events you can take part in and during 2009, over 100 people took part in the challenge to support local Oxfordshire charities. Teams came from Helen & Douglas House, Sobell House Hospice, Age Concern, SpecialEffect and Rosy to name a few.



If you would like to get a team together or maybe do it on your own and join in with another team, then please get in contact. Maybe get a group of friends together, your family or mates from work.

You will be fully supported with training walks, guides, insurance and full support from the Event Aid team.

If the 3 Peaks is not for you, maybe running a marathon in Rome? Maybe a Karting endurance event? Or one of the many challenge walks we organise for local Oxfordshire charities may be your thing! Whatever you do in 2010, do something amazing for your local community and join in a challenge event.



**Contact Teresa@eventaid.org**  
**or see our website www.eventaid.org**