

**Dear Editor**

What a splendid day we had on Dec 6th! Not only was there the 100th birthday party for the Institute, but also the official opening of the Jubilee Paths round the village.

Hearty thanks are due to Jack Spicer for having had the foresight to book the Institute well in advance, to Denise Asher for organizing the many willing helpers and to the Dunfords who have worked so hard with their team over many months to get the paths in good order.

How fortunate we are to live in a village which is so well endowed with folks who are prepared to give their time and energy in order to give pleasure to their neighbours. Thank you all.

**JEAN M CREASY**



Jack Spicer and Michael Steptoe (who came all the way from Steventon!) signing the Birthday Book

**A HAPPY 100TH BIRTHDAY!**

Saturday 6 December was the centenary of Marcham Institute. We would like to thank everyone who came to the 100th birthday celebrations and signed the special centenary book. We were overwhelmed with gifts of cakes and biscuits – thanks to all who contributed. We are very grateful to all the local organisations who helped, with special thanks to Marcham Ex-Servicemen’s Club for the wonderful selection of wines and cheeses they provided. Thanks go also to Ken Page for being a wonderful St Nicholas, and to everyone who lent photographs for the displays.

We hope that you all enjoyed the day as much as we did. It was wonderful to talk to so many fellow-villagers and visitors. For those who missed the chance on the day, please call 391727 and arrange to sign the book before 31 December.

A happy and healthy 2004 to all.

**DENISE ASHER AND JACK SPICER**

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY INSTITUTE**

At a time when most of the talk is about a new village hall, it would have been easy to have overlooked a very important date in our village history - the 100th anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone for the Institute. But two people decided something should be done to commemorate such an auspicious occasion, Jack Spicer and Denise Asher, who were the guiding lights behind the very special day at the Institute on the 6th December.

The foundation stone being laid on the 6th December gave the Institute its official name, the Saint Nicholas Hall, a name now lost in the fog of time. It was therefore fitting that the day started with a visit from Saint Nicholas, who in keeping with tradition, distributed sweets to the children. Later in the morning was the throwing of buns, a local tradition! A wreath was placed on the plaque commemorating the laying of the foundation stone on 6th December 1903.



The Institute has been at the centre of village life for 100 years as was shown by the wonderful collection of photographs and other memorabilia on display at the Institute. The display covered every decade from the 1950s. It showed the very varied events which have taken place there over the years. There were photographs of wedding receptions, a Mediaeval banquet, (I remember it well!) several Marcham Player’s productions, exhibitions by the Marcham Society and the recent Jubilee celebrations, to name but a few. All examples of the role played by the Institute in village life.



A team of volunteers served tea and cakes throughout the day. From mid-day the Ex-Servicemen’s Club, very generously provided cheese and wine for the occasion. At 5pm the Birthday cake was cut, after the candles were blown out (but not 100, or we could have seen the beautiful building go up in smoke on its anniversary!) and everyone sang a rousing chorus of ‘Happy Birthday’.



Bun throwing – a local tradition!



I personally hope, as I am sure others do, that the building will still be standing to celebrate it’s 200th anniversary, with another generation of village people still using the building for some purpose and still very much part of village life.

**CFS**