



THE LEAVE-TAKING

*Summer gathers up her golden cloak,
Late scarlet poppies it's hem adorn,
Her harvest now is gathered in,
Her flowers are fading, gone is the corn.*

*She leaves in the hedgerows the ripening fruits
Nurtured for us during her reign,
About to depart, warmly she smiles —
Next year, we know we will see her again.*

*And birds which must leave for warmer climes
Have heard a mysterious, magical call,
An enticing note, insistent, compelling —
They must obey, it holds them in thrall.*

*The signal is clear, it's time to prepare,
Pinion feathers must be clean and strong,
Summer is going, and swifts and swallows
To distant shores must fly ere long.*

*And earthbound mortals in other lands
When they see the birds will marvel again
At the powerful force which guided them there,
Through storm and tempest, wind and rain.*



Alice Dowling

BEST KEPT VILLAGE COMPETITION 2006

Judges' Report – Large Village Class

Marcham has a mixture of old and newer residential properties, mainly well cared for, with tidy frontages or gardens, although there are exceptions. The school frontage seemed tidy and the playing area was well mown. The near by tennis courts were also in good order, as were the sports and cricket fields.

The children's play area is having new equipment, but the existing site and equipment had safe under surfaces but there was some litter and graffiti in the youth shelter.

The churchyard is the subject of a conservation project and is well looked after, while the cemetery nearby is reasonably tidy, with some naturally flowering areas. Both the Church itself and the Baptist Church on the main road appeared tidy and well kept.

There are allotments in Cow Lane, Parkside and off North Street, quite large areas and in good condition, most of the plots being under cultivation.

All the other public amenities seemed in good order, the bus shelter being free of litter, while the seats on the village green and elsewhere were in good condition. The green itself was well mown.

Post Office and shop in North Street looked attractive and well used. Its window serves as an informative notice board since the one outside the now closed Village Hall is in poor condition.

Garage forecourt appeared tidy while the Crown Public House opposite had a welcoming aspect. The War Memorial had been well set out, but was now in need of care and maintenance. In spite of traffic problems due to the extremely busy A415, Marcham retains its integrity as an attractive village and a caring community.

WAR MEMORIAL

A stone cross on a plinth surrounded by shrubs and some flowers in gravel. In rather poor condition with stone work needing maintenance. Weeds in the garden and superannuated wreaths littered around.

If you'd like to see your writing in MADNews, contact the Editor on 01865 391725
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A bird's life... or it was



The Blackbird said to the robin;
"You can push off for free.
Me and the Missus live around here,
And we have already booked this tree!"



The Robin said "Don't be silly
Robins seldom nest in trees.
We choose upmarket sites,
And then we line them out with leaves."

At that time a Thrush flew in.
He said "I've come to inspect this tree.
I reckon it would make a splendid site
For the Missus, the kids and me



With that the Blackbird went beserk!
He said, "I got here first,
Push off unless you want a fight
And be carried away in a Hurst!"

The Thrush flew away; no fighting bird was he
The Blackbird said to the Robin "I told him to push off,
You get this trouble with Thrushes
They think they're up-market, you know, posh."

The hit squad was next on the scene.
A right bunch of little darlings.
Every one looking for a fight,
But that's the trouble with Starlings.



A Woodpecker said "I'll sort you lot out.
I'm going to chop the whole tree down,
And we will soon find out how you birds
Like roosting that close to the ground."

The Blackbird buried his head beneath his wing,
The noise it was so deafening.
So many birds ganging upon him,
It was all so very threatening.

The Blackbird said he could take no more,
No matter how he tried.
He simply flew down in front of the Cat,
Who opened his mouth - wide!

Maurice Shepherd

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