



The Garden Group has had an interesting programme of talks through the autumn and winter, including an evening with John Tucker of Prior Park Garden Centre. The remaining meetings in April are shown below. Please book for the outing to the Malvern RHS Spring Gardening Show on Saturday 12th May.

Meetings are held at the Menzies Waterside Hotel, Rossiter Road, Widcombe, starting at 7.30 pm. Cost for Widcombe Association members £2.50, non-members £3.00

#### 30 April

##### Perennial and Foliage Plants

Anthea Fawssett of Attractive Foliage Plants, Combe Down will show how to use foliage and perennial plants in your garden

#### Saturday 12 May

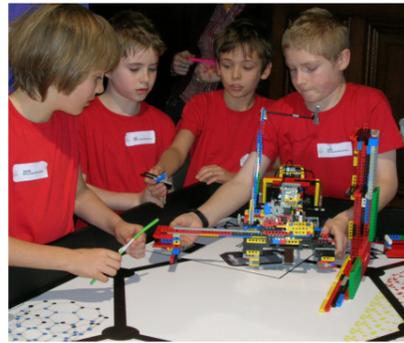
##### Coach Outing to Malvern Spring Gardening Show, Malvern Worcs. Dep 9.30 am, return about 6.00 pm. Cost for coach and entry to show £26.50 each.

For details of the outing or meetings, phone Ainley Wade (462807), preferably before 20th April.

There are interesting plants for sale at most meetings. We look forward to seeing you. Bring a friend.

The Prior Park Garden and Pet Centre has been extended and refurbished. For its official reopening it joined the charity GardenAfrica for a weekend of talks by experts, demonstrations, displays, music and food on 31 March and 1 April. 20% of every £ spent at the centre over the weekend went to GardenAfrica, a UK-based charity working in southern Africa training HIV+ people to grow nutritious food and medicinal plants. Thanks to the generosity of the centre, £7100 was raised over the weekend.

If you can't make the trip to Malvern you might like to attend a plant sale to be held by GardenAfrica at the Holburne Museum on 12th May from 11—2pm. There will be a wide selection of plants and shrubs provided by 8 commercial growers and friends of the museum.



The WA has contributed £100 to help the Robotics team at Widcombe Junior School go to the European champions in Norway in May. The team (pictured) have surpassed all expectations by getting through the regional and national heats to earn a place at Bodo (near the Arctic Circle) but need help to get all the children and two teachers there. The WA has decided to help with a small contribution to support their effort, which can only bring credit to themselves and in a small way to Widcombe. If any member of the Association would like to make an additional contribution that would be welcomed. A cheque (payable to Widcombe Robotics) delivered to the school will reach them.



**Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April 7.30pm**  
**St Mark's Community Centre**  
**The Mystery of the Odd Down Windmill at the Fuller's Earth Site.** An illustrated talk by Stuart Burroughs, Curator of the Bath at Work Museum

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May Meet at the main Library 7.30pm**

**Ann Buchanan, Local Studies Librarian** will talk to us about interesting and valuable old books in the Library and show us the collection in the stores.

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> July 7.30pm St Mark's Community Centre**

**Our Own Archives** A look at interesting items from the Widcombe collection with **Jenny and Tim McGrath**, our archivists.

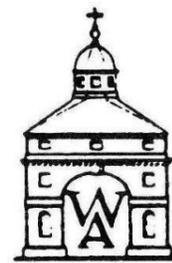
Widcombe mummers sadly report the death in February of Tim Sebastian, who many will remember for the remarkable energy he brought to the role of King of the Beggars in the first Mummers' performance last year. As Ian Gilchrist says: "Tim invented the role for himself, and brought many fine ideas to the production. He also enjoyed a wider reputation in Bath as an instigator of Bardic practices, so his passing will be a general loss to the character and personality of Widcombe."

#### The Natural Theatre Company



The Natural Theatre Company has outgrown its present base at the Widcombe Institute and is asking everyone to look out for suitable new premises (or even a building site) preferably in Bath or nearby. Their basic requirements are 6000 square feet, preferably on one level or with mezzanine possibilities, with parking. The Institute has a rehearsal room, wardrobe, workshop and office space. The new premises would have additional storage area and space dedicated to educational projects. We would very much regret moving out of the Widcombe area, but there seems little opportunity for expansion in the neighbourhood. This is an essential part of our five-year business plan and should not effect our plans for Widcombe Rising 2008. Should suitable premises turn up in the next couple of years, Widcombe Institute would be put on the market. If anyone would like to come and see the inside, which is labyrinthine, please call Ralph on 469131.

**Ralph Oswick**



# Widcombe Association

## April 2007 Newsletter



[www.widcombeassociation.org.uk](http://www.widcombeassociation.org.uk)

**The Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held at**

**7.30 pm on**

**Monday April 30 at Widcombe Baptist Church**

**After the formal AGM there will be an opportunity for members to put questions to the prospective councillors for the Widcombe Wards in the elections on May 3**

*Only current members (who should bring their membership cards) are entitled to vote*

#### Chairman's Report

As always there is much to report to members on how the committee has been busy since the last newsletter.

Members have said they found the various presentations at our autumn meeting both interesting and informative. There has been some follow up - South Quays, the Dyson Academy site, has been rethought and displayed for public comment and generally found more favour than its previous incarnation. The appeal against the Council's decision to refuse planning permission for a wireless mast in Lyncombe Vale has been dismissed by the Planning Inspectorate's Inspector but uncertainty still hangs over the lower field on Beechen Cliff with local residents understandably concerned at the tactics being used by the proposed developers. The green lungs of Widcombe area need to be watched zealously (perhaps members have concerns over the two tunnels cycle track proposal in Lyncombe Vale, for example) - even before the increased demands for housing density which Councillor Metcalfe warned the autumn meeting about!

The Chairman spoke at the Western Riverside meeting (within the tight timescale!) when an agreement in principle was carried with a majority of one for redevelopment. We shall need to study carefully the next proposal for our western boundary (part of the view for many

residents) and see if a tower block is slipped in - as with the 'busometer' to replace Churchill House. The Association has been promised a meeting by the Southgate developer and we look forward to this to hear their intentions on, for example, the rear of Bath Spa Station (or the transport interchange, perhaps we should now say) which certainly cries out for some sympathetic treatment being a prominent pedestrian entry to our area. We can report, however, that the Council have said repainting of Halfpenny Bridge will be 'considered for inclusion in the next budget'

The scheduled meeting on our longest running issue, Rossiter Road, was cancelled as the Council officials felt they had no new information to share with us. We believed it would have been useful to hear about the traffic modelling undertaken and how the new scheme will work - especially in the rush hour traffic - and in case there are observations we can offer before the next stage of public consultation. Not a committee meeting passes without Rossiter Road getting a good deal of attention and we are reforming our sub-committee on this topic so we can keep alert to developments

We have contributed to the Council's consultation on saturation policy (re licensing). The Council will decide in July whether or not to establish a saturation zone and we will watch to see if this could have implications for our area.

We were asked by FedBRA (Federation of Bath Residents' Associations) to contact our members about the future of Bath Rugby. A letter to over 600 people brought 200 responses: The majority did not want Rugby to move out of Bath and, on the basis of the questions suggested by FedBRA, wanted limited expansion at the Rec though there was quite a lot of concern about the impact of increased attendances, perhaps up to 15,000, both on the Rec and the rest of Bath. Such comments were duly submitted. We have also sent responses to the consultation on *The Statement of Community Involvement* (saying we would like to be consulted in the same way as parish councils) and to *The Green Spaces Strategy* document.

Throughout the months we have continued to raise more local issues with Council officers where it has been felt the Association's voice could be helpful. In Widcombe Hill alone we have chased up bad road sign siting and the finish to resurfacing which left the grass verge (currently with its host of golden daffodils) below Prospect Road being eroded through lack of a proper road edging. The much discussed traffic calming has been held up for a long period by delays in legal formalities and this in turn has delayed a revision to the parking arrangements. At the time of writing the top half of the hill should at least be receiving a new surface.

As a substantial number of people replied to the rugby questionnaire by email we are collecting email addresses so that we can contact people more quickly and easily when their views are needed or there is information to convey. We shall, of course, continue to send letters to members without email. If you are unsure if we have your email, please contact our secretary at [roemsley@hotmail.com](mailto:roemsley@hotmail.com)



## Summer Festival 2007

All of this activity calls for an active committee and the chairman would be delighted to hear from anyone who feels they would like to play a part in making Widcombe a better place to visit, live or work in. It need not be onerous and can be very rewarding.

Please do come to the AGM on April 30 if you possibly can - where else can you quiz an election candidate in public these days? Looking ahead after our AGM there is an exciting programme of summer events organised by Sarah Lewis. We shall look forward to seeing you at many of them.

### Mayveen Blackwell

Editor Note: Mayveen has written her report despite the pain and discomfort of recovery from a serious knee operation. I am sure I voice the views of all Widcombe residents when I express our thanks for her tireless efforts on our behalf, and our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

### Foundation Governors needed for Widcombe Junior School

Widcombe V A Junior School has 220 children aged 7 to 11 housed in the modern building opposite Caroline Buildings. Our Church of England school is run by a Governing Body which must have a majority of Foundation ( church ) governors. We currently have two vacancies and would be delighted to hear from people who could support us in this role.

We have six Full Governing Body meetings a year and also invite governors to join sub committees appropriate to their skills and time available.

If you would be interested in finding out more please contact Fran Bryden, Chair of Governors on 442538.



The 2007 Summer Festival programme is enclosed. You will find that there are two completely new ventures included. One is the Widcombe Art Trail which concludes our festivities. Widcombe artists are taking part at a variety of venues, and we hope that you will be impressed by the local talent shown..

The other event is Beating the Bounds of Widcombe, which takes its inspiration from 1865 when it was last done. We believe that there are many possibilities here for the making of a modern ritual, and a happy day out involving all the community. The 1865 Perambulation is well recorded (and this and many historical details will be discussed by Margaret Burrows in her talk), but to quote from Tye's History of Widcombe and Lyncombe concerning Beating the bounds:

'It was, in fact, a semi-religious festival, generally observed during Rogation Days, when the minister, accompanied by the churchwardens and parishioners, was wont to walk round the parish, to deprecate the vengeance of heaven, implore a blessing on the fruits of the earth, and to see that the parochial landmarks were intact. In later times it lost its sacredness, and its usefulness is likewise gone, plans and maps, particularly those of the Ordnance Survey, having furnished ocular proof of the boundaries of each Parish. There have been three perambulations of Lyncombe and Widcombe in the present century - in 1817, 1844 and 1865 ....As the ceremony is never likely to be revived, a brief description of its last observance may not be unacceptable'....

The phrase: 'Never likely to be revived..' is enough to raise one's interest!... In the Guildhall there is an album of newspaper cuttings collected by a church gentleman, amongst which is a report of a 'Perambulation of Widcombe and Lyncombe' which took place on June 20 1865:

"Perambulating, or ascertaining by actual inspection the bounds of parishes, must have been, up to a comparatively late period, a very important annual work....To impress the memory of the perambulation on the minds of the parish scholars, it was usual to distribute to such a willow wand...Whipping seems also to have been resorted to, to make the recollection of the youngster still more lively. Bumping persons against the boundary stones has been continued up to the present time.' The article also notes that in 1865, 21 years had elapsed since the last ceremony of the kind, so the occasion 'had all the charm of novelty'.

The Procession started shortly before 10am, and comprised (in order):

- 'Assistant Overseer, and Persons chosen to go round the Boundary
- Man bearing a Map of the Parish
- Blue Banner, with the Name of the Parish inscribed, and Supporters
- Boys from the Blue Coat School
- Boys from the Parochial School of Lyncombe and of Widcombe
- Overseers of the Parish
- Band
- The Churchwardens
- Gentlemen of the Town Council
- Parishioners
- Visitors
- Vehicles containing Parishioners'

The perambulation started from Ferry Lane, Dolemeads, crossed the Pulteney Road by Bartlett's garden, went up the Razor Mill field, over the stile, skirted round Mr Burningham's property (Widcombe Hill House), and came into the road at the end of the wall opposite Crowe Hall. They then went towards Macaulay buildings and passed part of the way over Claverton down, walking on the wall

and gates of Prior Park to the top of the Carriage road. Here the boundary passes down Pope's Arch Lane for about 200 yards...'

Which is where it is proposed that our 2007 Perambulation parts company with the earlier route, because the then parish was much larger, and continued almost to the Park and Ride at Odd Down, and thence to the river beyond Homebase. Instead we propose to follow the Widcombe Parish boundary as drawn following the closure of St Mark's in 1972. We will continue from Pope's Walk via Perrymead, picking up the footpath near Honeysuckle Farm and round the back of the Paragon School., which has nobly agreed to be the site of our Big Picnic, so we hope many non-walkers will join us here, along with visiting Morris dancers, stalls and games .

After picnicking we shall head to Watery Bottom, crossing Greenway Lane, Beechen Cliff school playing fields, through Alexandra Park and along the edge of Beechen Cliff, down the steps to Magdalen Road and down the footpath from Magdalen Avenue to The Wellsway. Across and down the steps to Oak Street and down to the Lower Bristol Road and the river. From the other side of Churchill Bridge the towpath can be followed back to the start, though a contingent will go by boat ('duly decorated with flags') along the centre of the river as tradition dictates . A final celebratory party will be held at the Junior School, where again we shall have partying with the school band playing.

As you will see from the programme our re-enactment has become quite an extravaganza with involvement from Lady Margaret and actors from the Natural Theatre Company, a Pramophone, Widcombe Wobblers, school bands, boats and buses and Picnic and Party places where the non-walkers may join in.

**This is an expensive event to run and we would really appreciate help in funding both the day's entertainments and also a quality leaflet about the walk, which will include the other footpaths in Widcombe, so will be a useful long term document.**

Many thanks to those who have already contributed to this. There are more details on the back page of the Festival programme.

### Sarah Lewis



The Widcombe Association has made a contribution of £50 to the Acorns Nursery School to aid their improvements to the gardens in St Marks church yard. 'Mighty oaks.....'



### The Widcombe Mummers

The Widcombe Mummers rode again on New Year's Day with another scintillating display of bravura tradition combined with incisive political humour. The musicians weren't bad either! The sun came out, the audience came out, and a jolly good time was had by all. We even raised £182 for the Friends of Widcombe Surgery to help buy equipment. What more could anyone ask?

### Abbey Cemetery



### Have You....



### ...logged on yet?

Jamie has done a wonderful job on the website. You'll be impressed. Among recent items of interest is news of a new book about Jane Austen in Bath: "In the Footsteps of Jane Austen - through Bath to Lyncombe and Widcombe" by Janet Aylmer, available through Rosemary Emsley 337865.

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At the Cemetery the primroses and daffodils are out and the long grass, brambles and weeds have not yet grown up! Much has been happening : There have been two meetings with Council and Abbey representatives. The first concerned the plans for the development of the land in the south west corner of the Cemetery and subsequent renovation of the Chapel for use by the Orthodox Church.

The second concerned the current maintenance of the Cemetery. We look forward with interest to see if the suggestions mooted at the latter change anything for the better. A new colourful Tombstone trail has been written and designed. This will be launched at the Widcombe Summer Celebrations. The Association has decided to contribute (from designated funds) two stone benches but this needs a *faculty* to be granted to the Abbey before the seats can be purchased and sited near the Chapel. If this formality can be achieved at least the volunteer work force will have somewhere to sit after their labours! Which leads us to announce:

**the next working party will be on April 14<sup>th</sup> 2.00 - 4.00.**

We hope to start recording the inscriptions on the monuments in Section Two.

**Brenda Beeton**