



The Newsletter and  
“What’s On” Guide for  
Residents & Friends of  
Chelsfield Village

February 2009

## **COMMUNITY SHOP** **Would it work for Chelsfield?**

### **Community Shops within the Sustain- able Community**

Based on a talk given by Alan Wylie to the Bromley Friends of the Earth

Alan introduced the work of ViRSA (Village Retail Services Association) founded in 1992 in Dorset, following the successful start up of a community owned shop in the village of Halstock. ViRSA is now part of the Plunkett Foundation, a charity which aims to improve rural livelihoods through cooperation and social enterprise. His work is to persuade communities that they can save their local shop, or replace it after closure, by making it jointly owned by the residents themselves. There are now 180 such shops around the country, with another 80 on the

way. Most of these have been established with ViRSA’s support. The existence of a village shop brings many other benefits: The shop becomes a meeting place and information point for residents, it is a place to visit for mothers home all day with children, and it reduces road traffic out of the locality. It becomes the centre of the community. The shop does not always have to be purpose built, but can be part of an existing community building such as a village hall or meeting house. He claimed that the existence of a local shop, particularly in a village, added 15 per cent to property values. And there was less crime because there was more daytime activity in

### **Inside this issue:**

Albino Squirrel	3
Diary Dates	3
Tales from Chelsfield’s Past Monkey Business	4
Five Bells Valentine Day Menu	7
Contribute Please!	7
News From Your Safer Neighbour- hoods Team	8

### **Coming Soon!**

**Friday 6th February**  
Liam Coleman & Friends  
Live Irish Music - with a  
twist 9.00 pm at the 5  
Bells

**Saturday 28th Feb.**  
Phil Lane's One Man  
Show. 7.45pm Chels-  
field Village Hall

**Saturday 11th July**  
**Chelsfield Village Fair**

**Community Shops– continued from page 1**

the area rather than it being dormant while commuters were away.

His experience showed that by clubbing together to own a shop, residents were much more public spirited and enthusiastic about local life and in helping each other; 'there is much more to a local shop than selling goods'. This was particularly noticeable when older people or the disabled needed neighbourly help which was more forthcoming because people knew their neighbours through going to the shop.

Other examples included: Using a room behind the shop for community events, running a village Internet Café, giving computer lessons by volunteers, or for people to sell their allotment or garden produce to the shop for resale at lower than supermarket prices which he called a case of 'food yards not food miles'.

Alan added: 'And supermarkets don't do community – they say they do but they don't. Can you imag-

ine a supermarket responding to a phone call asking for a bottle of milk to be delivered after the shop had closed? Or to look after a schoolchild because a parent was late to pick him up?'

He pointed out that £8 of every £10 profit made by a supermarket goes straight back to head office rather than being spent in the locality. His slogan for community shops was: 'Save the planet and avoid Tesco!'

Among the many questions asked were: Why should a community shop succeed when other owners had failed? The difference, he said, was pride of ownership. Even a £10 share turned people's attitudes upside down; the shop was theirs so they made sure they used it. Profits were ploughed back into the shop or into local events.

Could a local shop replace a closed post office? Alan said that some community shops offered a partial service or arranged for a post office person to be present

at the shop at certain times.

How many people were needed to get together to form such a venture and what help was available? Alan said that a minimum of 200 to 300 was typical. On starting a shop from scratch rather than taking over an existing one, he said grants were often available because local authorities were worried about the decline in neighbourhood shopping facilities because of the knock-on effect caused by people moving out.

Local examples of community shops included those at Lewes, Headcorn and Limpsfield

More information can be found at: [www.virsa.org](http://www.virsa.org) and [www.plunkett.co.uk](http://www.plunkett.co.uk)

How relevant is this to Chelsfield Village? Although Chelsfield Village would not appear to be a large enough community to support a village shop, perhaps some of the additional community examples would be appropriate. What do residents think?

**Albino Squirrels - Have you seen this recent visitor to the village?**



Seen by several residents over the last few weeks, this dazzling white character has been visiting gardens from Bucks Cross to Orlestone Gardens.

According to the BBC nature site only 1 in 100,000 squirrels are albino, so he is a rarity indeed.

Let us know if you have seen him in your garden!



**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY**

**Every Tuesday Night Quiz at the 5 Bells**

**Friday 6th February**  
Liam Coleman & Friends  
Live Irish Music - with a twist 9.00 pm at the 5 Bells

**Saturday 28th Feb.**  
Phil Lane's One Man Show. 7.45pm cabaret style tables, bring food and drink as you wish. Raffle.

Tickets £7 from Jayne 01689 858303.

Proceeds to Stroke Association.

2 hours of Phil Lane with his music on piano and accordion. Grangewood School Flounders Day Concert (Headmistress Miss Gibson). The staff entertain you.

Five characters created and played by Phil. Music and mirth and madness.

**Left - Miss Gibson**

**Saturday 11th July**  
Chelsfield Village Fair

## **Tales from Chelsfield's past - Monkey Business**

Contributer Carol Margetts  
(Grand-Daughter of Bert &  
Gladys Parkes)

From 1932 until 1952 The Five Bells Public House in Chelsfield Village was run by Bert and Gladys Parkes who prior to that time ran The Rock and Fountain Pub on Well Hill, old rural Chelsfield. During that 20 year period until 1952 The Five Bells became a popular meeting place and was well known in the Orpington area as well as much further afield - even as far as Dartford.

There is one aspect of life and times at The Five Bells pub in this period that may well slip unremembered into history if not recorded. The central characters in this story are Bert Parkes' monkeys - that's right - monkeys!

It all started in 1934 - two years after Bert and Gladys took over the running of the Five Bells pub. A man called Mr. Lewis from Worlds End Lane asked Bert if he would like to

have a large monkey which was beginning to be a problem for Mr. Lewis to look after. The idea of a monkey living at the pub immediately seemed a good one to attract customers as well as appealing to Bert's interest in animals generally. A suitably large and robust cage was built and the monkey called Mickey started his new life at the Five Bells. My Mother, Vera, remembers Mickey as a very large monkey - more like an ape - and he certainly needed a well built, well anchored cage! Vera remembers that he had a greenish tinge to his coat as well as being an imposing size. Perhaps a knowledgeable reader can suggest what type of monkey he might have been. To begin with Mickey was quite a good tempered animal and not at all vicious - in no way a problem. However, at this time work was being undertaken at the pub by way of renovations etc. and unfortunately the workmen concerned found

it a cruel joke to tease Mickey and even toss lumps of cement into his cage. As a result Mickey became less friendly and at times ill-tempered.

On one memorable occasion Mickey escaped from his cage which led to a chase for miles and miles all over Chelsfield. The intrepid band of pursuers were led through gardens, along lanes and innumerable by-ways. On and on they went with Mickey no doubt having a wonderful time in trees and hedge-rows along the way. Any creatures in Mickey's path, notably several unfortunate dogs, had nasty shock when grabbed by the large and amorous monkey who was undoubtedly becoming more and more excited as the chase progressed. Eventually the intrepid band did catch up with Mickey and he was enveloped in a large blanket and conveyed by car back to the pub. Quite how this feat was eventually

### **Tales from Chelsfield's Past - Monkey Business**

achieved stretches the imagination a long way but he was indeed captured in the end - no doubt exhausted by his adventure? Mickey did escape on a second occasion but after the first experience another tactic was used by way of a car backed up to his cage, containing some enticing food lure. Mickey duly obliged by entering the car and after the door was closed on him he was somehow transferred back to his usual home in the cage.

Apart from his memorable escape one other aspect of Mickey's life at the Five Bells was as a charity fund-raiser. A box was fixed to the outside of Mickey's cage and customers would be intrigued by giving Mickey pennies (old pennies, of course) which Mickey put into the collection box. So popular was Mickey at the pub that a large sum was collected in the box over a period. This money was used to purchase several items of equipment for the Cray Valley Hospital, sadly not now in existence. The equipment was that of a

shadowless lamp and a Minute Instrument with a plaque unveiled at a presentation ceremony. Understandably, Mickey was not able to attend personally on that occasion! It would be interesting to know what eventually happened to the equipment after the hospital closed - perhaps somebody reading this article might remember. Incidentally, the only Doctor covering the Chelsfield area at that time was called Dr. Benyon; he married the Matron at Cray Valley Hospital when they were both getting on in years. Mickey lived at the Five Bells for many years and was eventually given to another owner who looked after him until the end of his days.

During the War years there was undoubtedly too much else to be dealt with in day to day life than to have any monkeys at the pub. However, at the end of the War a relative - Jimmy Richards - arrived home with two Rhesus Monkeys in a box. Whether he got the idea from seeing Mickey at the pub one can only guess at

but his Mother was not at all keen to keep them. As you might have guessed already they found a ready home with Bert and Gladys at the Five Bells!

The two Rhesus Monkeys were of a much smaller type than Mickey and were given the names Mickey and Mona. These new monkeys shared -a roomy, well-built cage at the pub and were a great attraction for the customers. They did not get involved in fund-raising but nevertheless gave much pleasure to visitors. One activity they did get involved in was helping themselves to customer's glasses, pens or anything else that came within reach. On innumerable occasions Bert Parkes had to vacate his beloved Saloon Bar and go outside with a customer to retrieve a pair of glasses etc. from one of the monkeys. He used to go into the cage and coax the monkey into handing over the item that had been "borrowed". Bert doted on those monkeys and could do anything with them. For a brief period they were allowed to go into the kitchen at the pub but this was not really ap-

### **Tales from Chelsfield's Past - Monkey Business**

preciated by Gladys as to put it mildly they ran amok and caused chaos! The situation came to a head when one of the monkeys bit Gladys either in anger or excitement. This event prompted Bert into offering the monkeys for sale via a local newspaper although they found their new home via the Editor's office even before the paper was published! Bert missed the monkeys terribly and telephoned the new owner every day to enquire about their well-being. This went on for quite a while and in the end the new owner said to Bert "I knew you did not really want to part with your monkeys - I think you had better have them back" Mickey and Mona duly returned to their old home at the Five Bells - but stayed in their cage from that time onwards.

On one memorable occasion after their return to the pub the monkeys did manage to escape from their

cage and were on the loose around the pub garden. Sid West, an intrepid Naval man said "I'll catch them" and managed to grab one of the monkeys. The captive monkey naturally started wriggling and screaming blue murder in trying to escape Sid's grasp. At the same time the other monkey came to rescue his mate - also screaming and ready to administer some murderous bites to Sid if necessary. I think pandemonium would be the best description of the whole sequence taking place.' Sid let the captive monkey go and the two continued to enjoy their freedom around the pub for quite a while that day. Once again the old ploy of putting the car up against the cage with a food lure came to the rescue. Somehow the two monkeys were duly enticed into the car - the doors shut on them - and then manoeuvred back into their home in the cage. The two monkeys lived at the pub for many years and

were a great attraction to the customers. Mickey and Mona originally came from a warm climate and at night they were kept warm in their cage by means of a heat lamp enclosed in a metal box. One night the monkeys' curiosity must have got the better of them and the heat lamp was extinguished as they pulled at the wires. The cage became cold and one of the two monkeys caught a bad chill as a result. Sadly, Mickey died following the incident and Mona became inconsolable. Enquiries about another replacement mate were made but the zoo personnel advised that matching up again would never be possible for Mona after such a long time with Mickey. In due course Mona died despite all efforts to give her a happy life. These Five Bells monkeys are remembered with affection by many folks still even though a great many years have passed by since those times.

**Keep in Touch-Visit Chelsfield on the Web**

**go to:**

**[chelsfieldevents.co.uk](http://chelsfieldevents.co.uk)**



## The Five Bells Valentine's Day Menu

The Five Bells has become established as one of the finest eating places in the area, and their Valentine Day Menu only goes to demonstrate this. If you cannot make it for Valentines Day, it would be well worth while booking and tasting their regular menus for another day.

Saturday 14th February 2009

### **Aperitif**

*A glass of sparkling Pink Champagne*

### **Starter**

*Crab & Lobster Spring Rolls with Angel Hair Pasta*

or

*Home Made Watercress Soup with poached Quail's egg*

### **Main Course**

*Rump of English Lamb served with Potato, Onion & Cheese gratin, French Beans  
with a rich red wine jus*

or

*Roast Salmon served with Seafood Risotto and Mussels & Clam Chowder*

or

*Wild Mushroom Tortellini with roasted root vegetables & Parmesan Crisp (V)*

### **Dessert**

*Rose Petal Sorbet served with Tuille biscuit*

or

*Passion Fruit Crème Brulee*

*Coffee & Mints*

Limited places please book early to avoid disappointment

Inclusive price for two £50.00 - £10.00 per head deposit required

Phone 01689 821044 to book

## Contributions Please!

If have an event, or know of an event coming up, let us know so we can publicize it for you, and more local people can enjoy the benefits.

Any contributions should be emailed to:

***villagevoice@chelsfield.org***

or posted to:

Chelsfield Village Voice  
2 Bucks Cross Cottages  
Chelsfield Village  
Kent  
BR6 7RN





## News from your local police Safer Neighbourhoods Team

### Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom SNT

We are your Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhoods team dedicated to your local area. We are here to listen to your concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour and find lasting solutions. A ward Panel, made up of members of the local community, meet regularly with us to set our priorities. The current ward priorities are: Youths engagement, reducing ASB Vehicle crime and combatting Graffiti.

#### STREET BRIEFINGS / SURGERIES

#### FEBRUARY

**Saturday 7th Feb 2009**  
16:00hrs

Crescent Way

**Sunday 8th Feb 2009**  
11:00 – 12:00hrs

Glentrammon Rec.  
Glentrammon Road /  
Highfield entrance.

**Monday 9th Feb 2009**  
Surgery, 18:00 – 20:00hrs

Highway School, Main  
entrance (class room)

**Thursday 12th Feb 2009**  
Surgery 11:00 – 14:00hrs

Main reception, Orpington  
Hospital

Street briefings are a chance for you to air your concerns

on local issues to your local community police team. On these dates we can also mark your

property for FREE, small items such as mobile phones, sat navs, laptops and

cameras can be marked at the briefing, other items, TVs and bikes can be marked at your home address by arranged visit. This is the ideal time to mark

your Christmas presents or those new goods you purchased in the Sales.

### Neighbourhood Watch

Many people have the wrong impression of Neighbourhood Watches as being

twitching curtains or idle gossip. That is far from the truth. Neighbourhood Watch is one of the biggest and most successful crime prevention initiatives ever. Behind it lies a simple idea, and a central value shared by millions of people around the country.

**Getting together with your Neighbours to take action can cut local crime.**

Your Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators are Peter and Mandy Lamond, June Cottage, Church Road.

Your Team

Sergeant Karen Johnson

PC Steve George

PCSO Kieran Cuffe

PCSO Alex Rowbottom  
PCSO Kelly Smith

PCSO David Lillywhite

We patrol and carry out initiatives across Chelsfield and Pratts Bottom ward. If you have any

concerns about crime or anti-social behaviour, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We are based at:

Orpington Police Station,  
The Walnuts, Orpington,  
BR6 0TW

Phone 0208 721 2605

[chelsfield.prattsbottom.snt@met.police.uk](mailto:chelsfield.prattsbottom.snt@met.police.uk)

**Your Safer Neighbourhoods team is not a 24-hour emergency response team.**

**In an emergency always dial 999.**

You can find a map of your ward and details of other Safer Neighbourhoods teams

by using our online postcode search facility on

[www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods](http://www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods).

Find crime prevention advice, report crime and learn more about the work of Safer

Neighbourhoods teams in your borough and across London by visiting

[www.met.police.uk](http://www.met.police.uk)

You can give information anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.