

Wargrave Local History Society

Latest News - June 2008

The Wargrave News

The Wargrave News celebrates its 30th birthday this year, and to mark that milestone, Tony Barker, who was been an editor of the Wargrave News for 14 years, and is now on the management committee, gave a well-informed talk about the history and production of our 'village newspaper'. He had brought with him a number of "significant" back numbers to illustrate his talk, and some of these are reproduced below.

WARGRAVE NEWS

FOR THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

No.1 1st OCTOBER 1978 Price five pence

COMMENT

John Weatherlake

This is the first issue of Wargrave News. It will be published monthly and it is intended to be a newsletter for the village, letting the people of Wargrave know what is happening within their village. For some years now members of committees and others have spoken of the need for some such publication and recently Rev. John Ratings put forward the suggestion that somehow the Parish Magazine should be expanded to do just that. He tells me nothing has come of it so now I have decided to go ahead on my own. HIGH STREET STORES (Wargrave) - many of you still call it "The International" - is backing the venture.

As a means of introducing the paper, the first two issues will be distributed free, and after that it will be on sale at 5p a copy. This issue, being the first is of course mostly written by the Editorial staff, but it is Wargrave's own paper that we are launching, and we are looking to Wargrave residents to produce the copy which we will put together and make available in this way. We hope you will contribute to it any article or comment which you believe is newsworthy and of interest to the Wargrave community.

There will be a Comment column every month, and we want it to be written by a different person each time. Many people have news they would like to air - some we know, but very many we don't. Stewart Stacey, who uncharacteristically stood as candidate for the recent District Council By-election has agreed to write this column next month, so who is for the November issue. Please come forward and have your say, it will be of interest to every one.

We also want to know about local events - when and where they are to be held, and what happened. We particularly want to report the sport in the village, and urge secretaries of sports clubs to supply us with news, and the results of their matches.

A lot goes on at our Wargrave schools, which only parents with children there know about. How then, is the chance to tell the rest of Wargrave what you are doing. We invite the pupils to organise their own reporting, and we hope teachers will encourage this. Perhaps teachers themselves will write about the broader aspects of policy and trends in modern education as it affects Wargrave.

There will be a report of the Parish Council meetings which are held in the Recreation Ground Pavilion each month. This group of seven locally elected residents has to deliberate on many aspects of village life, and the decisions they reach do not always please everyone. (See "Bollards Placed in Ferry Lane" elsewhere in this issue). If there is something you don't agree with, write us a letter that we can publish. The rest of Wargrave will be interested.

YOUTH CLUB TO MOVE TO CRICKET PAVILION

Wargrave Youth Club is to have a new look for the winter of 1978/79. Not only is it moving to the Cricket Pavilion in the Recreation Ground, but it is to admit 11-14 year olds. The Club opens at 7pm, every Wednesday, 8.15 to "Discos" for the 11-14s, and the older ones can stay on till 10. But don't go to the one on October 4th. The Disco, already arranged for that date is still to be held in the Wargrave Hall, when "Spirit of Sound" will entertain you from 7.30 to 10.30. Mrs. Sylvia Carter is Youth leader, and male helpers are very badly needed. Also anyone with special skills who can give a demonstration would be made most welcome. Mrs. Kathryn Allport, at Wargrave 3478 is the secretary.

WARGRAVE THEATRE WORKSHOP

The Wargrave Theatre Workshop have chosen "Humpty Dumpty" to be their next production. Ewan Clark and Mike Wyatt are joint producers and have been busy holding auditions for the large cast. Rehearsals will begin in earnest as soon as the casting is completed.

Preparations are also in hand for a Revue to be held in November for the British Legion, an evening of entertainment, which is becoming a popular annual event.

The Theatre Workshop are always keen to welcome new members both on stage and backstage work. Anyone interested in joining should contact the secretary, Chris Bennett, 100 Highland Farm, Tel: 3694.

Tony began by noting that there had been three newsletters pre-dating the Wargrave News distributed to houses in the village - the Parish Council newsletters of March 1973, Autumn 1974 and May 1978.

The purpose of the Wargrave News, Tony told us, was to "provide news and inform about the parish, events taking place, and to be a forum for issues affecting the community". It had been started by John Weatherlake, who then owned and ran the High Street Stores, and issue number 1, priced 5p, came out in October 1978. It had coverage of many village activities - the Wargrave Theatre Workshop, the Youth Club, the Wargrave Residents Association, 'bollards' in Ferry Lane and the Wargrave Wine Circle - as well as advertising (not surprisingly, several for High Street Stores!). John tried to distribute it to the whole village, although this was difficult, as he had little help in producing or distributing the paper (or collecting the '5p's).



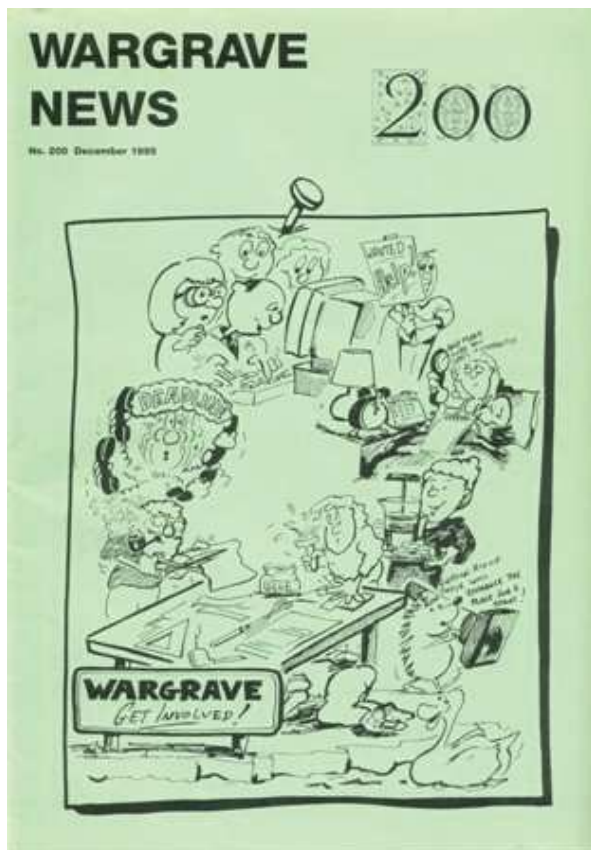
Issues 1 (above) and 100 (right)

In issue 29, February 1981, the paper announced 'Wargrave News, the village takes over', the Henley Standard reporting that the Wargrave News would merge with the Parish news - although that did not in the event take place. John wrote the front page of issue 30 that the following issue would be edited by the 'Wargrave News Committee, which happened from issue 31, with Douglas Goddard writing an introductory article. From that early stage, several 'regular columns' started to appear - Douglas's (district) 'Councillor's Column', 'Riverbank Musings', and 'Garden Hints (at that stage written by Yvonne Free).

Tony then explained the way the paper is managed and produced. The management committee of a chairman, vice-chairman, secretary and treasurer, together with the editors, advertising and distribution managers and others (including a representative of the parish



council) supervise the finances and set the general policy. The revenue comes from advertising, be it the classifieds, the inserted 'flyers', or the 'set' advertising (which is pre-printed for a whole year). For many years, the parish council contributed to the Wargrave News's expenses, but the paper is now self-sufficient, with an annual budget of about £14000 - which pays not only for the printing, but also to the young people who distribute it. The paper is of course now-a-days distributed totally free to all houses in the parish of Wargrave.

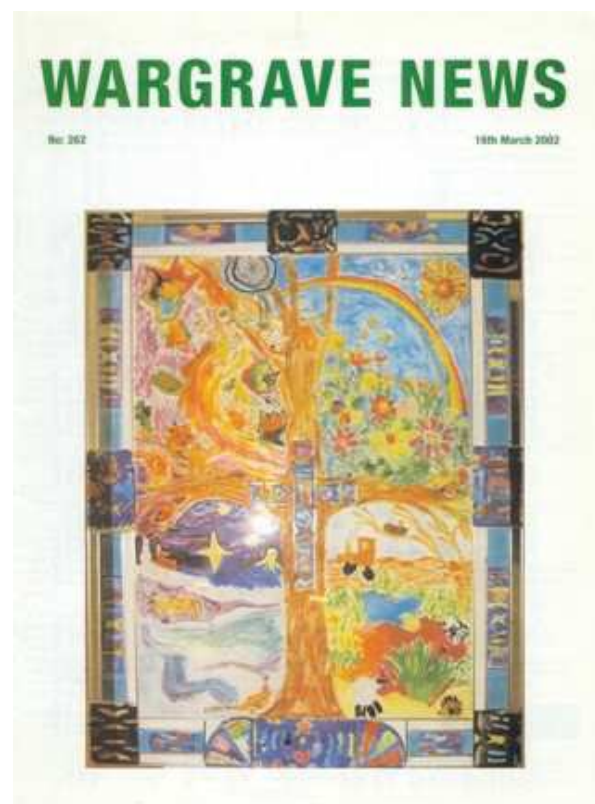


Issues 200 (above) and 300 (below)



There are about 5 editors - currently all ladies. The policy is to not include 'party politics', but to present a balanced view of any non-party issues affecting the village. The first editorial meeting each month considers all the submitted articles, and decides, for example, what should be on the front page, so that the artist (currently Jim Waldron) can draw the illustrations. The following week, with the advertising managers, the pages are pasted up ready for the printers. Normally, the editorial team do not themselves create any 'copy' - the content is generated by people, events or organisations in the village.

The printers have been - from issue 1 - Vallis Press in Henley. The 1900 copies per issue are 'pre-counted' at the printers ready for distribution to the team of 55 delivery-people, so that every house, flat or shop in the parish receives a copy, with further copies in the library, post office and Sheplands Farm shop.



Issue 262 (above) had a special colour cover designed by pupils from Crazies Hill school.

There have been a number of 'special editions' - to mark the 100th, 200th and 300th issues, or when Sue Griffiths and Rosemary Gray retired from long periods as editor. There have been controversial issues - such as the Millennium

Bridge - or even (on April 1st 1998 !) a Millennium Tunnel and a special full colour front cover 6 years ago to show the artwork designed by Crazies Hill school pupils for a stained glass window. The Wargrave News also looks after the Wargrave Information Directory, (virtually paid for by the advertising it contains) compiled every 4 years, and distributed free with the Wargrave News. Looking forwards, the trend is for articles to be submitted electronically, and so it is hoped to compile the entire paper in that format for the printers.

As Tony concluded, the Wargrave News continues to thrive and is a valuable community asset. There are many who the village should thank who are, or have been, involved in its production and distribution over the last 30 years - far too many to name individually!
