



Inside SAL this month:

- Make some festive Christmas crafts
- Read all about a year on the allotments
- A tribute to Joan Fonge
- And much more...

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Cover photos: Nigel Francis

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

All articles and letters to
the Editors
editorsalife@gmail.com

COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline for SAL has now
changed to the 15th of each month.

The copy deadline for the January 2021
issue is therefore 15th December.

ADVERTS

All adverts, and all advertising queries
(*availability, prices, dimensions, suitability of
illustrations, etc.*) to **Charlotte Bartlett**
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Please note: there is a new deadline for
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ADVERTISING RATES

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½ page - £12, ¼ page- £6.
Commercial adverts:
½ page- £15, ¼ page- £8

Steeple Aston Directory

Age UK		Richard Preston	340512
Allotments (Church)	SACAA Clerk	Nigel Grugeon sacaaclerk@btinternet.com	
Angling Club		Antony Morley	tonyriver_83@hotmail.com
Archive (SAVA)	Chairman	Martin Lipson	347046
Badminton (Tuesday mornings)		Barbara Brewer	340423
Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Lydia Powell	347746
Beekeepers (Swarm collection, advice)		Paul Honigmann	340665
Bell ringers		Graham & Dorothy Clifton	347273
Hand-bell ringers		Sally Cooper	347173
Brownies		Fiona McLoone	340132
Catholic Church - St Teresa's (Charlbury)		Father Tony Joyce	01608 642703
Cherwell District Council	Bodicote House		01295 227001
Choral Society	Chair	Ann Livings	233518
Church of England (St Peter & St Paul)	Rector	Rev Marcus Green	340903
Church Wardens		Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton	340099 , 347273
Methodist Church – Tackley		Rev Paul Carter	01865 243216
	Steward	Tim Bailey	01869 331516
Councillors - Cherwell District Council		Cllr Mike Kerford-Byrnes	07805 665393
		Cllr Bryn Williams	07836 271998
		Cllr Hugo Brown	
Cricket Club	Chairman	Peter Higgins	347493
Crimestoppers			0800 555111
Deddington Guides		Marian Trinder	340806, 07786001641
Deddington Health Centre	Appointments		338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	338847
	Out of Hours		111
Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Head Teacher	Frances Brown	340204
Football Club	Secretary	Peter Wild	07950 837773
Garden Club	Chairman	Richard Preston	340512
Golf Society	Chairman	Alan Brewer	340423
Horticultural Society	Show Secretary	Vicky Clifton	07817 025948
Parish Council	Chairman / Clerk	Richard MacAndrew/ Cathy Fleet	347209, 347000
Police	24hr Call Centre	(non emergency)	101
Post Office & Harris Stores		Raj	340201
Pre-school			340863
Public House	Red Lion	Aidan & Kegan Madden	340225
Robinson's Close	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Scouts Group		Colin Cassford	243038
Sports & Recreation Centre	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Steeple Aston Walking Group		Penny, Stuart, Sue and Graham	sawgox25@gmail.com
Toddler Group		Charlotte Clarke	07799 030490
Valentine Club		Richard & Daphne Preston	340512
Village Hall (see advertisement)	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Village Website	www.steepleaston.org.uk	Editor: Jenny Bell	347714
Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme			0300 3030125
Women's Institute	President	Linda Needle	340028



“...folly is not always folly.”
Jane Austen

Steeple Aston *Life*

December 2020
Issue No. 568

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Editorial

Merry Christmas everyone! I really do hope it will be a merry Christmas this year. As I write the exact restrictions we will be under over the festive period remain to be seen, but I hope, whatever they may be, that you can all celebrate in some way and enjoy some much-needed holiday cheer.

To get us all in the festive spirit, Sustainable Steeple's Amanda Rodgers has suggested a few Christmassy crafts that you can make at home – find them on pages 12 and 13. For more Christmas entertainment, have a go at our holiday-themed family word search on page 27.

Further festive fun will take place on 15th December, when S&J Cuisine will be delivering Christmas meals for members of the Valentine Club to enjoy at home. I was particularly impressed to hear that S&J Cuisine have delivered around 3,000 meals to the village since lockdown first started – what a fantastic achievement! If you'd like to get in on the action, take a look at page 17, where you'll find their Christmas meal menu, as well as a list of mouth-watering festive treats that you can order in time for the big day.

Finally, Paul Rodgers has certainly found a good use of his time on lockdown – have a read of his account of his first year on the allotment on pages 20 and 21.

That leaves me to wish you all the very best for Christmas and New Year, and let's hope that 2021 will be a great one!

Best wishes

Angela

Photo: Nigel Francis





Tony Clifton

Sadly just three months after losing Jean, his wife of 66 years, Tony Clifton, father of Graham and Daphne, passed away on 22nd October. He was admitted to the Horton Hospital at the end of September and tested positive for Covid-19. This cruel disease meant that no one was allowed to visit him for the last three weeks of his life. The family would like to thank everyone for their kind messages and cards of sympathy. Although the death certificate stated he died of Covid and chest problems, the family feel he died of a broken heart.

January's Steeple Aston Life

Please note that the January edition of Steeple Aston Life will not be delivered until the second week of January due to the printer being closed over the festive period.

Take part in NHS Covid-19 Vaccine Studies

Could you join more than 900 people in Cherwell district who have signed up to be contacted about NHS COVID-19 vaccine studies they could take part in? Anyone aged 18 and over can sign up to the NHS COVID-19 vaccine research registry at nhs.uk/researchcontact. Researchers then contact those who sign up to ask if they wish to take part in vaccine studies that are due to open in their area. There is no obligation to take part and people can withdraw at any time. Patient facing-healthcare workers and people from ethnic minorities are particularly needed to sign up, to ensure vaccines work for everyone.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Graham Porcas has announced his resignation from the Parish Council. The Parish Council would like to thank Graham for the hard work he has put in as a councillor. He has liaised tirelessly with the Highways Department, effecting significant improvements along The Beeches and Northside. He has kept a watchful eye on the playground, maintaining the equipment in good working order and sorting out many minor repairs. The great improvement in the speed of pothole repairs in the village is entirely due to Graham's efforts as a FixMyStreet Super User; and we are hopeful that he will continue in that role even though he is stepping down from the council. We are extremely appreciative of his contribution to the work of the Parish Council, and wish him well as he leaves to devote time to his other activities.

As a result of Graham's departure, the Parish Council is seeking to fill the vacancy. If you are interested, please contact the Parish Clerk, Cathy Fleet, on 01869 347000 or 07989 398838, or at parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com.

Steeple Aston Parish Council



CORONAVIRUS

MESSAGE FROM DEDDINGTON HEALTH CENTRE

If you are concerned that you might have Coronavirus, or have been in contact with someone who has it, please do not come to the surgery. Stay at home, avoid close contact with other people and use the NHS online Coronavirus service <https://111.nhs.uk/covid-19> to find out what to do next. Masks are now required for all visits to the Centre, including the Pharmacy.

Age UK

Age UK Oxfordshire are providing advice & information for anyone worried about Coronavirus on their website here <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/about-us/news/coronavirus/> and have set up a new, free telephone support service including a friendly, regular weekly call to see how people are and offer advice if needed. The number is **01865 411288** - leave a message and an advisor will call you back ASAP. Please note this is not an emergency medical service; please ring 111 for medical advice and 999 in a medical emergency.



Photo: Edward Dowler



Editor's Letterbox



Dear Editors

What is the etiquette for observing social distance when walking a narrow footpath? Should men give way to ladies? Should those going downhill give way to those walking uphill? Should the young give way to the old? (And how old is old?) And what about those places without a path? Do the same rules apply when a car is parked on the pavement? I worry about these things.

Dorothy Clifton

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Phyliss “Joan” Fonge – May 1932 – October 11th 2020

Not everyone will have known Joan, who had lived in the village from the early 1960's, but for me, she leaves some personal memories, which I would like to share with you. I first knew of Joan when she, along with her husband Ralph, took over the butcher's shop situated on Heyford Road, just at the top end of The Dickredge. I didn't get to know her properly until the late 1990's when I would be delivering fruit and vegetables, although the challenge of “selling” vegetables to Joan was rather daunting as she was capable of producing vast quantities from her allotment. In fact, she often ended up selling me some surplus produce. She was a familiar sight, pushing her wheelbarrow from the allotments by Nizewell Head back home, piled high with vegetables.

It was during the early part of the 2000's when our friendship grew thanks to a “cut” in government spending when the assisted transport taking people from the surrounding villages to the health centre was removed. At that time, I served on the parish council and there was talk of a new, voluntary scheme to help with such matters. This was the birth of Volunteer Connect, based in Banbury where volunteers could take clients from their doorstep to health-related appointments and essential journeys. Joan, at that time was making regular trips to the health centre and not being able to use the public transport service due to her poor mobility, had to spend much of her savings on taxis to access these appointments. Steeple Aston was one of the first to sign up with the new scheme and about six volunteers were found in our village. Joan and I made the first ever journey with this new scheme by visiting Deddington Health Centre. As they say, the rest is history as we made numerous journeys to health centres and hospitals until early this year. I remember early on as her “driver” when, waiting patiently for her name to be called for her appointment, over the tannoy came the words, “Phyliss Fonge”. Joan looked at me and said, “Did they call my name?” to which I replied, “No, that was for Phyliss”. Then I discovered that Joan as she was known to everyone, was in fact Phyliss, so at least I was ready for the next time!

Joan had many skills ranging from handicraft of which she would enter regularly at the flower shows to her gardening skills. Being a passion of mine, we would often discuss gardening subjects and many times I have been invited into her back garden to view a prime example of a shrub or plant that not only looked comfortable in its position but had a history. Joan would be able to tell you where the plant came from and how she acquired it. For anyone who had been fortunate to see her back garden you would know it was like entering something resembling a miniature jungle. It was almost like finding the nearest machete to hack your way through but magical at the same time. About two years ago Joan gave me two of her prized Azaleas to look after as he felt she could no longer tend them, and I will treasure them for as long as they survive.

Joan was a special lady in as much as she enjoyed the simple pleasures of life and always had time for others but did not suffer fools gladly. She had a good sense of humour and you could often see that twinkle in her eye. Being one of the oldest serving members of The Valentine Club she will be missed by many of her friends and it was through the club that she met a young lady who befriended her. I finish with a sentence from a message received from that young lady's parents who wrote; *“They did build up a lovely friendship and it allowed Claudia to have a confidante outside the family that also gave her context and perspective to all aspects of life. This was invaluable in Claudia concluding that a career in care and supporting others would be a vocation she aspired to join. There is no doubt she will always fondly remember her days with Joan.”*

That young lady is now studying at university with aspirations of becoming a doctor. Thank-you Joan for being a friend and it was my privilege to have known such a wonderful lady.

Richard Preston



Peter Dammermann



How long have you lived in Steeple Aston?

8 months

Where did you move from?

Ironbridge in Shropshire (11yrs) before that Kenilworth (42yrs)

What brought you here?

To be nearer my daughter and 2 grandsons

What do you like best about living in Steeple Aston?

Rural but central – about 10 miles from everywhere - Bicester, Oxford, Banbury and Chipping Norton.

Is there anything you don't like about living here?

Being locked down since I arrived and unable to meet local people.

Where do you think of as 'home'?

Wherever I lay my hat.

Give a potted history of yourself – in 40 words or less.

Born in Toronto, grew up in South Africa and moved to the UK as a teenager in time to witness the swinging 60s. Got married, raised 2 sons and a daughter, educated up to Oxford, Durham and Cambridge – then it was down to them.

How do you see yourself, in 5 words or less?

Empathetic

How do others see you, in 5 words or less?

Mad – for doing a Covid vaccine trial

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A doctor but ended up a CA – would have made a terrible doctor but loved my career as an accountant.

What was your first job?

Newspaper round before school. First real job Article Clerk on £500/yr

What is the best job you've ever done?

Counting the number of elephants at Boswell Wilkie Circus as part of their audit. Easier than counting sheep!

Tell us about any interesting hobbies you have

Maintaining a farmhouse in the Dordogne for 33 years - ready for family and renter's Summer holidays. On average visit France 4 times a year.

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?

Indonesia, where my father was born to Dutch parents.

What do you do to relax?

Ironically – going to the gym but they're closed at the moment – so now remodelling the garden.

What's your favourite saying or piece of advice?

"C'est la vie" or "Seek and ye shall find"

If you were on a desert island, what would you miss most?

Being part of my grandchildren's growing up.

Tell us a something about you that most people don't know.

Qualified as PPL pilot when I was 18 (RAF scholarship), exactly a year after passing my driving test.

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Remembrance Sunday

On Remembrance Sunday, some sixty villagers gathered in a socially distanced and Covid-safe fashion at the Steeple Aston war memorial to remember those who have fallen in the service of their country. Enormous thanks go to Eileen Baglin-Jones, Laurence Wright, and Jenny Marsden for their parts in the proceedings, and to Hannah Hedges for playing the Last Post and the Reveille. Major Tom Coker RDG led the proceedings, and gave an abridged version of the address below, which has been printed in full for those who weren't able to attend on Sunday.

The Royal British Legion is in particular need of support this year, so please consider donating if you are able to.

"I would like to thank everyone for taking the time to be here today despite all of the extra trials this year has brought. There is a Chinese curse that wishes the victim to live in interesting times, I think that we can safely say that we do, but that should not make us withdraw, that should make us reach out more.

To those of us in the Armed Forces, our families, and our friends, today holds a special poignance. We join the rest of the country in commemorating those who went before us in both world wars and the conflicts since. For many of us it is more personal because of the times we have been through in hot and sandy climes over the last decade or so.

But it is far more than simply a day to reflect on the past. The oath of allegiance we swear today is the same as those young men did in times past, and the desire to help is just as strong today as it was then. That is not limited to the Armed Forces. Remembrance is not solely a military sport – we are but one part of the great fabric of this nation, and we are far from the only ones who can draw strength and knowledge from those who went before. Today is not just about remembering the past, it is about looking to the future. There is still ill in the world, there is still a need for people to stand up and be counted in the fight against it. Those of you here last year will remember Marcus asking us all - "Children, what have you done with the peace?"

Ladies and gentlemen, I ask you, what have we done with the peace? How do we all, today, honour those who laid down their lives that we should be free? For those of us in the military, today is a time to remember the family, the friends, the comrades we will not see again until the final muster, but it is also a time to reflect and to learn.

But we do not own Remembrance Sunday. We are not the sole custodians of the nation's conscience, and we must all draw our own lessons from the past. The lessons of what happens when we don't stand up for the downtrodden. When we don't speak out when they come for our neighbours. If each and every one of us does not stand up for what they believe is right - if we as individuals, as a community, as a nation, elect to walk on by, rather than calling out prejudice, or discrimination, or unacceptable behaviour at personal, group, or national level, then we are failing those who have gone before us. The moral courage to do that which is right, rather than that which is easy, is hard to come by. Treasure it, nurture it, and practice it.

Those who made the ultimate sacrifice, who gave of their freedom willingly so that we might enjoy ours, how would they view us if we did not stand together to call out the bully, or those in our community who make things harder for all, or at a national level, the nation state that is attacking our allies or victimising its people? It is incumbent on all of us to learn from the past so that we can build a better world, the foundations of which are here, and they are strengthened in all of us by being and working together.

When we are all called to account, I hope we can all stand tall and say proudly that which we have each done with the peace, and what we have each done for the peace."

Becca Coker

Christmas Crafts that Do Not Cost the Earth

I will confess that I adore Christmas and initially I felt pretty glum that Christmas is likely to be a bit different this year, however, it got me thinking about creative ways to ensure we get into the festive spirit and fill the long, dark evenings.

So, put on the festive tunes, make a mug of hot chocolate, and get making (it does not matter how old you are)!

Salt Dough Decorations

- 250g plain flour
 - 125g table salt
 - 125ml water
 - Paper straw
 - Ground ginger, cinnamon, clove, nutmeg
 - Old ribbon, string
1. Preheat oven to its lowest setting and line a baking sheet with baking parchment.
 2. Mix the flour and salt in a large bowl. Add the water and stir until it comes together into a ball.
 3. Transfer dough to a floured work surface, roll it out and cut out shapes using cookie cutters.
 4. Make a hole for the string using the end of the straw.
 5. To decorate, use leaves, scraps of lace, or anything else textured to imprint into your dough.
 6. If you are feeling adventurous, why not add a spicy scented twist and add 2 tsp each of ground ginger, cinnamon, ground clove and nutmeg to your mix.
 7. Place shapes onto the baking tray and place in oven for 3 hours. Leave to cool on a baking tray, then thread.
 8. Hang them on your tree, thread into a garland or give them as a gift to friends & family.

Hanging Stars

- Scrap paper, newspaper, old magazines, junk mail, left over pieces of wrapping paper
- Scissors
- Glue
- Cotton (white)/embroidery thread/ fishing line
- Sticky tape (zero plastic tapes are now available)

You can find printable star templates here: <https://www.firstpalette.com/printable/stars.html>. I used the 5- and 4-inch templates. Or you can draw your own.

1. Print/draw template (1 of each size) and cut out.
2. Draw round your templates on the wrong side of your chosen paper. To make a string of 5, you will need 10 stars (you can do them all the same size or mix the sizes).
3. Cut out all the stars.
4. Lay a star wrong side up and with one of the points at the top. Tape your cotton the full length of the star, keeping just inside the bottom edge and making sure that it 'leaves' the star at the centre of the point at the top.
5. Place your next star under the cotton (wrong side up). Measure a gap between the top of the previous star and the bottom of this one (e.g. 5cms) and repeat the taping process.
6. Repeat this until you have all 5 stars in place and taped to the cotton.
7. Unwind a further 20cm of cotton, then cut off (this will be used for hanging the stars).
8. Take one of your remaining stars, apply glue to the wrong side, position on top of the wrong side of a star of the same size, sandwiching the cotton between them. Press down firmly to ensure the two sides are stuck together. Pay particular attention to the points.
9. Repeat this process until you have a string of 5 double-sided stars. Leave to dry (you may find it helps to put a large book or equivalent on the string during the drying process, to make sure the stars are firmly stuck).
10. You may find that the two sides do not quite match. If this is the case, carefully trim round the stars to tidy them up.
11. Hang in window reveals - or wherever you fancy!

Cookie Cutter Bird Feeder

- *Bird seed (wild bird variety)*
 - *2 sachets of unflavoured gelatine (or vegetarian/vegan equivalent)*
 - *Boiling water*
 - *Large cookie cutters*
 - *Paper drinking straws, cut into 5cm lengths*
 - *Large bowl*
 - *Spoon*
 - *Baking sheet*
 - *Baking parchment*
 - *String or ribbon*
1. Dissolve the gelatine in boiling water and add 2 cups (c. 250g) of bird seed.
 2. Stir for 2-3 minutes to allow the bird seed to soak up the gelatine mixture. Do not worry if all the gelatine is not absorbed.
 3. Line your baking sheet with baking parchment.
 4. Place your cookie cutters on the lined baking sheet and carefully fill them with the seed mix. Over-fill them slightly, as you want the seeds to be nice and tight inside the cookie cutters.
 5. Cover the filled cookie cutters with another sheet of parchment paper and press the seeds down firmly.
 6. Gently push a straw segment into each shape to create a hole for the string you are going to be adding later.
 7. Allow the bird seed shapes to dry for 3-4 hours (turn them over halfway through the drying time).
 8. Gently push them out of the cookie cutters, then allow them to dry completely overnight.
 9. Remove the straw segments, add a loop of string or ribbon, and hang your bird feeder outside.

We would love to see pictures of your makes. Please post them on the village Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/310402826031668> (Steeple Aston Village Group) and @ Sustainable Steeple.





In and out of the kitchen

You might wonder why I like the title to be as it is. It is essential to keep in mind that raw ingredients mostly start off in the fresh-ish air. The best grow outside for as long as possible.

I love eating outside, even in cold drizzle, taking a backpack, a wrapped parcel, and perhaps a flask, a chunk of bread, an apple and walking till I'm hungry, and stopping to eat. Somehow the flavours are more intense, you don't have to sit up at a table, and the washing up is all done beforehand. Here, in the village, we are so lucky to be surrounded by beautiful countryside, and you don't have to go far for stunning views.

Today I'm trying to please you all with food you can move, one vegan, one fishy and one hearty and meaty.

Mushroom and walnut pate.

For 4

125g walnuts

1tbsp olive oil

1 onion – finely chopped

3 cloves of garlic

225g chestnut mushrooms – any size

A handful of chopped parsley

2 sprigs of fresh chopped rosemary

Salt and pepper

Roast the walnuts on a medium heat, till brown. They catch quickly, so watch them. Let them cool a little. To skin them a little, take out small handfuls at a time. Roll them around between your clean palms, over the sink. The skins will sprinkle down, and you can wash them away. Place them in a food processor. Warm the oil, and cook the onions till translucent, then add the garlic for 3 minutes, then add the roughly sliced mushrooms. The mushrooms will release their own moisture as they cook. Cook together for 15 mins, then add the parsley and the rosemary for 3 more minutes. Blitz with the walnuts in the food processor to a fine texture, then pack tightly into a container, cool, then refrigerate.





Smoked mackerel pate

For 4 – as long as you've got something else too!

- 2 skinned fillets of smoked mackerel
- 1 tbsp hot horseradish sauce
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- Pepper
- 2 tbsp full fat crème fraiche
- Juice of half a lemon
- 100g unsalted butter at room temperature

Blitz together the mackerel, horseradish, mustard, crème fraiche and butter. Add the pepper and lemon juice to perk up and loosen. Pack tightly into a box with a lid, ready to take on your picnic with chunks of brown bread. Great with spring onions, as long as your companion likes them too!



Boston Baked Beans

For 8 as a light meal – bulk up with bread, baked potatoes and veg for a feast!

- 400g piece of salt pork, pancetta or smoked streaky bacon
- 500g dried white haricot beans, soaked in plenty of water overnight
- 50g soft brown sugar
- 3 tbsp black treacle
- 1 tbsp English mustard
- 4 cloves
- 2 or 3 small onions cut into quarters or 10 very small onions
- Salt and pepper

Drain and rinse the beans, then put them in a flameproof casserole submerged in water by 5cm. Bring them to the boil and boil hard for 10mins, lower the heat and cover and cook for about an hour until the beans are tender but not completely soft. Remove from the heat. Do not drain.

Cut the bacon into 5cm cubes, leaving the rind on and add to the beans, stir in the brown sugar, black treacle and mustard. Press each clove into an onion and add with the extra onions to the pot. Season with pepper, but no salt. The bacon will do this. If necessary add a little hot water so the beans are covered.

Replace the lid of the casserole, and cook in a low oven (140 C / Gas mark 1) and bake for 3 hours. Then remove the lid, drag some bacon to the top, rind side up and return, uncovered for 1 hour. The sauce will thicken and the bacon brown.

This will keep for up to 2 weeks in a sealed container in the fridge. Heat it up and put it in a flask and it will be good to take for daily walks, or share with a friend!

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Merry Christmas!

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

Embort

Well here we are again in lockdown, so there aren't too many interesting places I can recommend to you for December – maybe most of us in any case will have things other than making expeditions on our minds. So I thought you might be entertained and amused to hear about someone Neville and I met during one of our holidays in the extremely beautiful and fascinating area of the Auvergne in France.

It was our first visit to the Auvergne. We began to appreciate its wonderful landscape of rugged mountains, volcanoes, lakes and springs as we found our way to the gite we'd booked in the tiny village of Embort, a few miles from Bort-les-



Orgues. We spent three happy weeks exploring the Auvergne – the heart of France – but I think we always remembered especially meeting Gerard, a retired primary school teacher. Hardly had we arrived and begun to investigate our holiday home which had been converted from an ancient farmhouse (kitchen, bathroom and bedrooms opening out of a large central room one end of which was a huge fireplace – certainly not short of character!) before there was a knock at the large oak front door. We were confronted by a rotund gentleman dressed only in very short shorts and flip-flops accompanied by a small terrier. In heavily accented English he declared 'I am a retired primary teacher. Welcome! I have come to speak English!' Slightly surprised we invited him in, found glasses and a bottle of wine and for the rest of the afternoon found ourselves giving an odd English lesson as we sat around the large farmhouse table. The 'conversation' was halting but Gerard was entertaining and fun. Much of the vocabulary he wanted to know was linked to football! He had been a lifelong supporter of Paris St Germain and said that while working in Paris had regularly taken pupils to watch matches with him. I'm not sure that education interested Gerard very much and I did wonder what progress his pupils made but his enthusiasm and energy were infectious.

As the wine in the bottle reduced, we found ourselves accepting an invitation to go to watch the next Paris St Germain match on Gerard's television with 'my mother' and Dick (the dog). Crazy! We had come away to escape TV!

However a couple of days later we duly found Gerard's house, met mother (so ancient!) and reacquainted ourselves with Dick, still scratching away at his fleas. (All conversations were punctuated by Gerard asking Dick 'A tu un puce?' which phrase we soon adopted!). So then we learnt some French football vocabulary as we watched with our glasses being topped up so frequently that I was relieved at half time when 'mother' tottered in with cake, which I hoped would soak up some of the alcohol! Thank goodness, 'our' team won which elevated Gerard's enthusiasm to extravagant levels.

That was the first of three bizarre evenings we spent during our holiday, meeting some friends of Gerard – we were quite a party eventually which was very noisy because we were not all supporters of Paris St Germain – and enjoying more of mother's cake. She insisted on giving me the recipe. They were warm and rather innocent hosts in their little home with a big TV (I think it was the biggest one in the village) and we bid fond farewells to each other when we left for home.

For a long time after that we kept an eye on the fortunes of PSG. From time to time we received a phone call from Embort. 'It is Gerard. Phone me!' Thinking it was an emergency I'd return the call immediately asking, 'What's wrong?' 'What do you want?' Gerard would say 'Mother says it is too expensive to phone England!' I think he had the last laugh but it was fun to catch up with Embort and be reminded of those odd and happy evenings – oh yes and to be taken back to our explorations of a magnificent and marvellous part of France. Try visiting the Auvergne sometime!



The Gardening Spot

Do we really need to garden in December?

I am composing this on a very wet Saturday in November and think to myself, whatever do I write about that will encourage anyone to go out into the garden let alone, enjoy the experience? To be honest, although there are a few jobs I might do in December, they will basically be tidying up once all the leaves have fallen and, as I have done in past years, mow the lawn. No-one has told the grass it is winter, and it keeps growing. No matter, a great excuse to get outside, on what I hope will be a reasonably sunny day this month and jump on my ride-on mower if only to sweep up the last few leaves!

So, what do I write about? Well, I don't know about you but back in the day, the late 50's and into the early 60's, I was fortunate enough to attend a great educational establishment, namely Dr Radcliffe's Secondary Modern School. Yes, for all of you who didn't know, Steeple Aston had a secondary modern school attracting pupils from all around such as The Bartons, Tackley, The Heyfords, Fritwell and even Tusmore. There were up to 400 pupils at its peak ranging from infants age 5 years to 15-year olds who then left school to start work or maybe to extend their education at a local college.

During my years at Dr Radcliffe's once I had reached senior school, 11 years old, one of our subjects for the boys was gardening. I seem to remember the girls would have been segregated off to do needlework or something whilst us boys would be taught by Mr "Tudor" Jones the skills of gardening. In those days I had little interest in gardening although my Dad was growing vast quantities of vegetables to sell on his mobile greengrocery round from Primrose Cottage. Maybe it was because my duties as an only child, if not at school, were to work in the garden doing all the exciting jobs like hoeing a thousand cabbage plants or hand-weeding the lettuce that was buried in the chickweed that thrives in our garden. Maybe, if I was really lucky, I would be allowed into the large greenhouses to "pinch-out" the tomatoes and possibly even pick some of them once they had ripened. I should point out here, that I am talking of one thousand tomato plants, not a dozen or so that one normally grows in a normal greenhouse.

However, going back to gardening at school – some of the skills instilled into me by Mr Jones stuck. I usually manage to put my tools back in the potting shed where I found them, in a clean state ready for use next time as we had to at school. As us boys reached a more mature level, not quite sure when that was, we were allocated a plot of ground within the school grounds where we grew crops that we could take home or maybe take to the school kitchen where Miss Calver, the chief cook, would create superb school meals for all those who had school lunches. I rarely had school meals as I lived only 5 minutes from school so came home for my lunch every day. Don't think that could happen today! I remember on one occasion, that my gardening mate and I had an inventive idea for composting. Rather than barrow the debris from our patch to the compost heap, which must have been at least 50 yards away, we dug a deep hole at the bottom of our patch and buried the waste material but we did not take into account Mr Jones's ability to see through the back of his head. For this we got into some sort of trouble and never tried this practice again!

Some of the boys could prune the roses around the school grounds and tend to the grass tennis court but not me! I don't think I was considered suitable for such tasks. During the winter months or wet days when we could not work on our plot, we would be taught the practicalities of gardening and compositions of soil structure which I have not forgotten. In desperation by our teacher, as that is all I can think it was, we were instructed in the use of logarithms. I have yet to find, in my 70 odd years, the need for logarithms but I suppose someone must have used them. What I should say here, is that although I might not have been a model gardening student, I did learn a lot about the growing of plants and all the joy that it brings and maybe the educating authorities are missing a trick here as it is a skill that has enormous potential in today's bustling life.

My apologies for not instructing you on any gardening task this month but life is bad enough without me going on about cabbages or double digging. I do hope you all have a wonderful Christmas, no matter what Covid or government restrictions throw at you. Just remember that, just like your garden, things will return to normal soon and we can all get back to doing things we enjoy and being with friends and family.

Happy Christmas to everyone.

Richard Preston – Ex Dr Radcliffe's pupil and amateur gardener

A Year on the Allotment

It's been exactly a year since I decided to take on an allotment in the village and what a year it has been! I would encourage everyone to take a fresh look at allotmenting and I hope the experiences I've shared below will spark some interest.

The plot, or to be totally accurate, half plot, was completely overgrown when I looked at it this time last year. Thankfully, the wonderful team at Steeple Aston Church Allotment Association (SACAA) had strimmed it so that the waist-high vegetation had been tamed before I set about tackling what lay beneath the surface.

As I've decided that I'm in for the long term, the first main task was to remove seven years of vigorous, invasive weeds such as couch grass, bindweed and ground elder as well as larger stones, shards of pottery, decades of metal and over a wheelbarrow full of plastic and other non-biodegradable waste. It was certainly very satisfying to feel that we were cleansing the site and giving it the very best chance to be productive in the years to come. It soon became clear that this was going to be more than a year-long task, so I set about bringing one third of the plot into use for the 2020 growing season.



Given my obsession with order, and with a crop rotation plan in mind, a very precise layout of boundary fence-posts, carefully measured, levelled beds, straight paths and a seating area soon emerged to maximise the use of the space.



Having the allotment also allowed me to reuse a lot of things that might otherwise have been thrown out – not just by our household but by the many generous people who have donated surplus tools and useful items like water butts and compost bins. A donation of hundreds of beautiful natural green slate roof tiles provided the ideal edging for the beds and gave me an excuse to wield my spirit level, builder's line and long tape measure!



Doing all of this has helped me keep fit and, as it offers a full range of cardio and strength-building activities, I've actually been able to give up my gym membership! Another benefit which took on a whole new significance in 2020 was the social side of allotment life. SACAA is well known for its social gatherings and we were looking forward to getting fully involved until Covid struck. Even in lockdown we could still use the allotment – with some restrictions – and it provided a welcome opportunity for socially distanced interactions with other villagers and we have made many new friends.

The year has seen a bumper crop on the plot. I had always had half an eye on the village Horticultural Society's Summer Show. Sadly, my aspirations in this area were somewhat dashed – not by the absence of the show, but by the rather poor showing of most of what I'd hoped to enter! My 'F1' carrots would have needed a 'malformed miniatures' category all of their own to have been awarded any prize! This also extended to my complete failure in the Association's potato growing competition where, despite my Irish heritage, my carefully cultivated *Swift* potatoes teased me with a month of swift growth and then swiftly withered to nothing - both above and below ground! Thankfully, my attempts to grow my main crop of potatoes was very successful – even managing to avoid the now legendary frosts of the 11th and 13th May! Onions, sweet potatoes, curly kale, sweetcorn, show-class beetroot, leeks, strawberries and raspberries fed us through the summer and there is an abundant surplus of root crops for a few more months. I am also the proud trophy holder for this year's largest sunflower; since you ask: 10'9"!

The abiding memory of the early summer was the clear, unpolluted skies and looking up once a day to see that day's plane going overhead!

Unfortunately, the allotments are off limits to non-allotment holders at the moment due to Covid restrictions but I'm happy to speak to anyone who wants to hear more of my wonderful experiences of the past year.

You can also find out more at:

<https://www.steepleaston.org.uk/clubs-societies/gardening/#allotments>



Paul Rodgers
07785 502605

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



Two Councillors were not at the November meeting of the Parish Council. One because she was rounding up a flock of sheep that had escaped and the other, Graham Porcas, because he had resigned from the Council. Graham is very practical and has mended lots of broken fencing, doors, seating and play equipment and he has been the mastermind behind getting the potholes filled quickly. He has tried to respond to the opinions and concerns of everyone. So a huge THANK YOU to Graham from all of us.

The resignation means that the Parish Council are looking for another Councillor. If you are interested you should contact the Clerk, Cathy Fleet. Her number is 01869 347000 or you can email her at parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com.

Despite teasing the Council occasionally, I find their discussions both interesting and informative. So if you want to help the community and never be bored do think about applying to join them.

There was a suggestion from the last meeting that some villagers might be encouraged to put stickers on their wheelie bins exhorting us all to drive more slowly through the village. This had been considered and there were fears that stickers would be both an eyesore and ineffective. It was decided instead that our speed recording machine should be moved around between the places in the village where speeding is a concern. The machine's next location will be on Heyford Road. This way the Council would know the extent of the problem at different sites. However 30mph is the legal limit currently and this may still be too fast in some places, such as down Paines Hill or the roads coming into the village, especially at the dangerous corner on Fenway.

There was a brief discussion of possible traffic calming measures, though it was emphasised that Oxfordshire's Highways Department, rather than our Parish Council, would have to approve any physical changes. Since budgets are extremely tight at present it is highly unlikely Highways would approve any alterations in the near future. Nevertheless the Councillors considered the pros and cons of some alternatives. Speed bumps or humps are generally unpopular and, as far as Southside and Heyford Road

are concerned, any bumps would have to allow for the length and width of the bus. Rumble strips were thought to be too noisy in a village and chicanes have to be wide enough for buses and so are easy for cars to avoid reducing speed. Speed restrictions would have to be enforced as well as requiring police approval initially and this is unlikely to be forthcoming. In North Aston and Lower Heyford there are '20 is plenty' speed signs and it was agreed the traffic calming results of the signs would be investigated.

The application for ten houses to be built at The Beeches has been rejected again, though our District Councillor thought that the matter may not be closed as he believed an appeal was likely to come back in some form later on. The other current planning application which could affect us is from Great Wolf, who appear to have a name appropriate to their activities. They would like to develop a vast water park at Chesterton, which if approved allegedly could be on the same sort of scale as Alton Towers. Great Wolf's planning application has been turned down, though it is busy appealing the decision.

We were told that there has been unanimous opposition from surrounding villages to the idea of a 'bus-gate' on the B4030 to Bicester just before Middleton Stoney. A bus-gate in this position would entail a long detour for traffic from surrounding areas and would be unlikely to influence those in Heyford Park anyway, as they will have an easy alternative route to Bicester.

The next discussion was about the duty of farmers to warn walkers about cows or bulls in a field with a footpath. This is not a Parish Council issue and is dealt with by Cherwell District Council (01295 227001). For those interested I looked this up on Google after the meeting and apparently farmers are allowed to keep cows in a field with a footpath through it. The rules on bulls and young cattle are more complicated but very roughly are that any bulls in a field with a footpath have to be under 10 months old or not of a recognised dairy breed. I am certain I could not recognise a bull of this sort so the simplest solution for the timid like me is to turn back just in case.

Parish Council Meeting Notes



The residents of one road would like signs warning of children playing. We were told that any signs had to be approved by Highways and would be at the cost of the residents. One of the Councillors said Highways are notoriously hesitant about approving new signage.

There was a brief discussion about checking on the state of the playground. It was noted that the tunnel could easily have become dangerous if not spotted and that the fencing around the BMX track is rotting in places and might give way if kids clamber on it. Also the fence separating the toddler play area from the disabled parking bays has been badly damaged and its replacement is urgent. The door on the lavatory at the playground will be replaced and, as one Councillor put it, he 'hoped he would never have to talk about that lavatory again'.

The next discussion was about the possible changes to the constitution of the Dr Radcliffe Trust. The Councillors talked about whether their two people on the Trust should be asked to report back to the Parish Council once or possibly twice a year. Another issue was whether the Trustees suggested by the Council are representatives or nominees ie whether the Parish Council should be directing their activities or that they should be trusted to get on with it by themselves. At present the Council has two Trustees out of twelve and it is being suggested this should be reduced to one out of ten.

The chairman of the Council told us that the village's Emergency Plan had 'slipped into a black hole in his desk and he sighed when he saw it'. Another Councillor generously offered to look at it and to work out practical issues such as a list, with phone numbers of those who have four-wheel drive vehicles. Apparently something similar was done in 1942 in case of a German invasion and the village has a rare surviving example from this time. You can see it in the History Centre, which will be open again when Covid rules permit.

Charlotte Bartlett, the Councillor organising the meals with S and J Catering, told us that almost 3,000 meals had already been delivered during the

pandemic. Apparently they will be doing Christmas meals, which will be delivered on Christmas Eve.

Someone asked whether the Parish Council should make small donations to memorials for village 'characters'. Finally they decided against it on the basis that as we are all going to die some time there would be far too many memorials all around the village.

Martin Lipson explained that the development at Heyford Park would be too small initially to warrant having a health centre of its own. The Alchester Group Practice in Bicester has applied for approval for a pharmacy in Heyford Park with a couple of consulting rooms attached so that medical staff from Bicester could hold some appointments locally. In the longer term a Health Centre specifically for Heyford Park may be feasible. From Steeple Aston's point of view it will not affect us getting our prescriptions from Deddington or Woodstock, though it might be convenient sometimes to have a closer chemist.

There will not be a Parish Council meeting in December but the Councillors will be getting together, though probably on Zoom rather than with the usual wine and nibbles, to work out the budget for next year. If your organisation is hoping for a grant from the Parish Council next year you must apply for it, on a form obtainable from the Parish Clerk (parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com) and return it to her before the closing date of 18 December.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on 18 January and all are always welcome.

Steeplejack

This report is the personal view of the SAL reporter, and is not intended to be a complete record of the Council meeting. The official record - once approved - will be available at www.steepleaston.org.uk



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Christmas Word Search

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L D C V C A Z K B P I E K C V R O U N D R O B I N S E E
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(Compiled by Iona Bower for Simple Things)

Answers on page 43





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One of our members, Janice Kinory, has had an article printed in the Current Archaeology Magazine entitled Heir to the Past – Exploring the Historic Environment. I remember Janice after she had retired studying for her degree in Archaeology and how hard she worked as an active WI member all the way through her studies. Janice now gives very interesting talks to other WI's.

Another of our members, Veronica Wilson, who has continued her membership with Steeple Aston WI even though she now lives in Oxford, has been co-opted onto the Oxfordshire Board of Trustees.

During November, as there wasn't any door-to-door selling of poppies, several members made poppies and others did pictures to display in their windows. This resulted in the donation we give for our annual poppy wreath, which is placed on the War Memorial. The donation from the window display was a total of £110.00. Thanks go to those members who participated.

Yet again we are unable to meet, so we are trying to get Zoom meetings organised for those members who wish to participate if the speakers are able to give us our talks via Zoom. Hopefully after this lockdown we will be able to meet again in the very near future.

Keep safe and well.

Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2021 from all the members of Steeple Aston WI.

Linda Needle (President)



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Rosemary
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THE VALENTINE CLUB

Well, here we are in December with Christmas looming and the uncertainty of knowing what we might be doing or who we will be meeting over the festive season. As mentioned in last month's SAL, S & J Cuisine have very kindly offered to cook a two-course Christmas meal for all the club's members and to date, it looks like around 80 of our members are going to take up this very kind offer. As the club has received a grant from our district councillor and a club member has very generously donated a significant sum of money, we are not going to charge for these meals. I guess you could say it is a small way of saying, "We haven't forgotten all our members whilst isolating from this horrible virus". We also intend to distribute a few additional meals to non-members, again at no cost to them.

We couldn't provide these meals without the financial assistance of The Cherwell Lottery where for every £1 ticket purchased in favour of The Valentine Club, 50 pence comes directly to the club, which in turn enables us to ensure we have good quality speakers and entertainers for our monthly meetings. It also helps subsidise all those coach trips which get members out of their home and takes them to see things and places that would otherwise be impossible.

You don't have to be a member to support our club and you can purchase lottery tickets by visiting www.cherwelllottery.co.uk and search for The Valentine Club. Believe me, your help is invaluable to our club and its members and with your help, The Valentine Club can provide that special, "something to look forward to" moment for the more senior members of our society.

With the news of a vaccine on the way it is hoped that the club can recommence monthly meetings by spring next year and we will evaluate the situation as things progress but at least there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

For more information about the club go to www.steepleaston.org.uk, visit our own website www.valentineclub.wixsite/aston or simply call me on 01869 340512.

Kind regards to everyone and A Very Happy Christmas to you all.

Richard Preston – Group organiser – Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com or 01869 340512

Steeple Aston Golf Society



As there wasn't any golf played in November due to lockdown two, I thought I should let you know what has been happening in the past 6 months that I have managed to play.

My Fitbit says I walked approx. 450 miles and I drank 11 gallons of beer, which means, on average I was getting about 41 miles to the gallon. This kind of makes me feel proud; I almost feel like a hybrid.

No doubt some of you want to know what happened to Maisie (the one in the white dress) in the October issue, well a lovely chap called Bertie turned up for the ceremony. He was not only wealthy but he had a helicopter and a yacht. Sadly our trip as described in November's Life had to be cancelled.

From all of us in SAGS may we wish you a very Happy Christmas and a safe New Year.

Keep safe and look after each other, stay positive and test negative.

Alan Brewer, SAGS chair



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Winter cheer

The grip of winter weather is well nigh
As days grow short and darkness starts to grow
It makes no difference if you heave a sigh
For winter neither cares nor does it know
It hails, but not in greeting foul or fair
It snows and never seeks to cast a light
But falls where now the land is lying bare
Reflecting starlight when day turns to night
Yet there is comfort in its fearsome grip
In fireside warmth we bask and hunker down
Our spirits grasp the heat to stop the nip
A fiery spirit's downed to ease our frown
Then Christmas comes to show the reason why
In spreading joy our hopes can rise up high

Peter Wild

Round two...

Things are never quite so good
The second time around.
Less novelty, less excitement,
Our feet more firmly on the ground.

Second fiddle, second chance,
Second hand, second place, second guess,
Second degree, second rate, second gear,
All of these feel second best.

Now we're in a second lockdown,
A second go at beating the bug,
A second wave of restrictions.
Keep your distance, don't kiss, don't hug.

It all feels worse the second time round.
Remembering masks and all that stuff
We know we have to stick to the rules,
But sticking to them is tough.

Christmas will soon be with us,
And it won't be the same this year,
We'll have to Zoom and Skype
Our message of seasonal cheer.

We could have Christmas lunch in the garden,
But what shall we do if it snows?
How many people or bubbles can come?
Do babies count? No-one knows.

There had to be a second lockdown,
We couldn't waste another minute
But like a second mortgage,
It's stretching us to the limit.

I know that it is tricky,
But as frustration mounts,
Remember to follow the rules,
Because every second counts.

Cathy Lawday

Poetry Corner




Back In The Days Of Tanners And Bobs

Back in the days of tanners and bobs, When Mothers had patience and Fathers had jobs.
When football team families wore hand-me-down shoes, And T.V gave only two channels to choose.
Back in the days of three penny bits, when schools employed nurses to search for your nits.
When snowballs were harmless; ice slides were permitted and all of your jumpers were warm and hand-knitted.
Back in the days of hot ginger beers, when children remained so for more than six years.
When children respected what older folks said, and pot was a thing you kept under your bed.
Back in the days of Listen with Mother, when neighbours were friendly and talked to each other.
When cars were so rare you could play in the street. When Doctors made house calls and Police walked the beat.
Back in the days of Milligan's Goons, when butter was butter and songs all had tunes.
It was dumplings for dinner and trifle for tea, and your annual break was a day by the sea.
Back in the days of Dixon's Dock Green, Crackerjack pens and Lyons ice cream.
When children could freely wear National Health glasses, and teachers all stood at the FRONT of their classes.
Back in the days of rocking and reeling, when mobiles were things that you hung from the ceiling.
When woodwork and pottery got taught in schools, and everyone dreamed of a win on the pools.
Back in the days when I was a lad, I can't help but smile for the fun that I had.
Hopscotch and roller skates; snowballs to lob. Back in the days of tanners and bobs.
Author unknown, sent in by **Alan Brewer**



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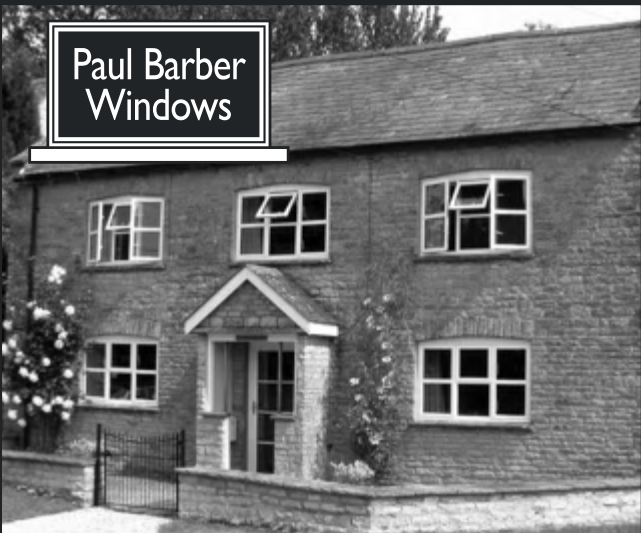
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Church Matters



So last month's attempt at saying what we were doing was very quickly made nonsense as *Lockdown:2* pushed us all back indoors... And as we reach December, the question we all have is - **what will happen at Christmas?**

1. Services in Church

If we are allowed to hold services, this is the plan. We are holding Christmas Services in **North Aston on Sunday Dec 20th** at 4pm and 6pm; in **Tackley on Thursday Dec 24th** at 2.30pm and 4.30pm; and in **Steeple Aston on Christmas Day** we have Christmas Family Communion at 9am and 10.30am.

Sadly, we're still not allowed to have congregational singing, but we are hoping to have a small choir at each service, which will sing some carols for us. There will be readings and we will have the Crib and a tree and lights, and we will do our very best to celebrate together.

As ever with our services just now - it would be really helpful if you could book if you are coming. We will do our best to get you in if you come, but when we are full we will have to apologise and close the door. I am really sorry! So book early! Julian for Tackley (331252), Clive for North Aston (340470), and Eileen for Steeple Aston (340099).

There are other services on other Sundays, but these are our special Christmas services. See the rota for full details.

2. Online Services

We will have two special Worship at Home services on our www.sntchurch.com website over the Christmas period, in addition to the usual weekly services.

From Dec 20th, we will have a **Carol Service**, with readings and carols, and a super choir leading us. You can watch at home and sing along as much as you like! We hope this will be a really lovely way to celebrate Christmas, and it will be filmed inside our benefice churches. We will also make this available via the phone line service, so people without internet will be able to ring 929021 and listen in.

From Dec 24th we will also have available a **Christmas Communion Service**. This too will be filmed inside our benefice churches, and will also include some Christmas music, as well as being a full communion service. I shall be thinking of you all as I record this, so why not take a moment and keep a little bread and wine, and join in in your family or by yourself at some point over Christmas?

3. Steeple Compact Concerts

Although November's concert had to be postponed we are still planning to have Nick Cleobury's Aston Singers performing a concert of Christmas choral music at 6pm & 8pm on December 12th at Steeple Aston Church. Given that full 'live' carol services are a bit beyond us this year, do book up for this. Tickets are limited (and going fast), and are £12. The choir is singing the same programme at both 6pm and 8pm, and each concert lasts just under the hour.

We are very much hoping to re-arrange the November concert for early in the New Year.

And then...

From January we are looking to go back to weekly services in all our churches. The upside is that from January there is no more need to book to come to church (please still book for any December service); but the pattern will be weekly Morning Prayer in North Aston, Evensong in Tackley (apart from the last Sunday, when there will be Morning Prayer), and Holy Communion will be at Steeple Aston. So do feel free to go to whichever service you like - even if it isn't your own village!

Revd Marcus Green



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Village Hall *News*



With continuing lockdowns and Government guidelines changing, we have decided to close the village hall until the 2nd December when we will review the situation.

Sunday 13th December Wassail Evening. CANCELLED

We very much regret that the decision was made to cancel the Wassail evening.

Saturday 23rd January 2021 Annual Quiz Evening.

Sadly we've had to take the decision not to go ahead with the Annual Quiz in January due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. However, we're planning to do an online quiz via Zoom instead. Same date, same time, just a different format. Hopefully we'll be back to at least 'the rule of 6' by then and people can form teams at home but it will work just as well in households. It's a great opportunity to come together (virtually) for a bit of fun on a winter's evening. We'll share more details in January's SAL, but for now, if you'd be interested to take part, please email steepleastonquiz@gmail.com There may be a small charge which will go towards the Village Hall funds; this will be confirmed in the January Life.

The Village Hall Committee wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas.

Please note our letting agent is Mrs. Katie Rushworth – 01869 340196.

Email steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com

Collect keys from "Touchstones" The Dickredge, Steeple Aston. OX25 4RS.

Always remember, clean hands, social distancing and don't forget your mask.

Barbara Brewer, Chair

1st Deddington Guides *Report*



We have greatly missed meeting together and particularly missed all our outdoor summer activities - stream walking, hiking, cookouts, camping and so on.

We managed to meet twice in September, and had a great time. We had a super time cooking a variety of tasty foods, backwoodsman style, with no pots and pans, over open fires! Then we spent a lovely sunny afternoon hiking from Adderbury to Bodicote and the circular route back.

It's time for another break again now. Due to greater work commitments during the pandemic, the leaders have not been able to sustain much contact online...but we're here ready and keen as ever looking forward to when we can meet again!

If you are interested in joining us when we can return to meetings please contact us:

Maggie Rampley – 07957 600755

Marian Trinder – 07786 001641

Tilly Neal – 07557 095681



Ordinarily, I would have been pointing you in the direction of our annual exhibition held at the Adderbury Institute and Deddington Church. Instead I thoroughly recommend you visit our website to view an impressive selection of images selected by our members to show the range and depth of photography that they enjoy and excel at. Do take the time to have a virtual visit.

This month our visual treat was delivered by Vince Harris ARPS. ‘A nostalgic journey to Ghana’ was an evening of images, all taken in 2004 on Vince’s return to his previous home where he had taught in the 60’s. All the photographs were taken using film and had a soft quality that added to the atmosphere and clarity of the observations. Vince gave us a glimpse of a simpler way of life showing the housing, work, and youth of many villages he visited. He explained he always approached the chief of the village first, giving him a ‘magical’ Polaroid image of himself, before exploring the area further. The composition of many of the images was pleasing but thought-provoking because of the cultural differences within the villages. Vince’s nugget of advice was ‘get close, then get closer still’. Do seek out, on www.vinceharris.me.uk, his image of Abosomfie at Boduase, Ashanti Region which was the runner-up in a 2006 National Geographic competition. As a country of contrast Vince also illustrated the many castles along the Gold Coast of Ghana where wealth had been previously established through the gold mines and slavery.

Our next ‘Zoom’ meeting will be on 2nd December at 7.30pm presented by Kieran Metcalfe – ‘Chasing the light’. If you would like to join us, please visit our website to find contacts and details. We can’t wait until we can all meet again but, in the meantime, ‘Zoom’ keeps us going.

Anne Hunsley

www.addphoto.co.uk

Child’s Play Answers

Anticipation	Giving	Feasting	Mince pies
Carols from Kings	Ribbons	Pigs in blankets	Hope
Round robins	Leftovers	Eggnog	Roaring fires
Chestnuts	Sentimentality	Greenery	Dark evenings
Fairylights	Sprouts	Presents	Magic
Stockings	Satsumas	Television	New books
Christmas jumpers	Delia Smith	Mulled wine	Home



Congratulations to Pete Kerwin!

We at Steeple Aston Football Club are proud to announce that our manager for last season, Pete Kerwin, has recently been awarded Grassroots Football Coach of the Year for the Oxfordshire Football Association.

The Oxfordshire Football Association said "Pete has shown leadership and nurtured the team, transforming it into a positive, fit, skilful side. In 2019/20 Pete oversaw a full league season without the team losing a single league game, amassing a vastly superior goal difference in the process. In addition, Steeple Aston was in contention for cup glory against teams in higher divisions."

We had a terrific season and Pete played a massive role in training and motivating the players. As a long established village football side, we are both proud and pleased to get this recognition from our county Football Association.

Peter Wild

To let you know, we have taken the step to the Banbury District and Lord Jersey Football Association Division 2 - a little different to the not losing a league game all season of 2019/20. These were our results before the cessation of grassroots football:

September 26th: Away to Graven Hill in Bicester, lost 2-0. Our goalkeeper was man of the match for us and without him it would have been considerably more.

October 3rd: Away to Brill Utd. Lost 3-2, were 3-0 down at one stage so not too bad.

October 10th: Away to Longford Park from Banbury who confusingly play at Croughton. Drew 3-3 though we were ahead twice in the match.

October 17th: Home to Arncott. Won 6-0, 4-0 up at half time. Squad rotation?

October 24th: Home to Bishops Itchington Reserves. Bishops played Graven Hill last Saturday and during the week one of the Graven Hill players tested positive for Covid-19. So quarantine and common sense measures ensured that the BD&LJFA postponed this fixture.

October 31st: Away to Deddington Town Reserves. Drew 2-2. Again we were ahead twice in this match, perhaps we need to park a bus.

Now that we are unsure when grassroots football will resume we can proudly lay claim to a 100% winning home record. Oh for that to be the case come the end of the Season, whenever that may be in these uncertain times.

One thing for sure there will be Christmas, though somewhat different this year. So please allow us to wish you all a very Safe, Healthy and Happy one, from all at SAFC.

Alan Peckham - Chairman S.A.F.C.

Funny Signs

*The other day we were in a supermarket
and noticed some very dangerous vegetables...*

Labels said:

“Carrot Bites” (be careful!)

“Apple slices” (pretty sharp!)

Orange drinks (how?)

*We saw the following at the RHS gardens.. “Bear left for cafe”.
That was really worrying.!*

Sent in by Martin Dale



Middle Aston

Photo: Nigel Francis

Church Services

Online services available every week at www.sntchurch.com

	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley
Sunday 6th December			5.30pm Benefice Evensong for St Nicholas' Day Revd Marcus Green and Canon Robin Gibbons
			<i>Call 331252 to book</i>
Sunday 13th December		11am Benefice Holy Communion Revd Marcus Green	
		<i>Call 340099 to book</i>	
Sunday 20th December	4pm Christmas Service Revd Marcus Green 6pm Christmas Service Revd Marcus Green		
	<i>Call 340470 to book</i>		
Thursday 24th December Christmas Eve	 6pm Carols on Zoom		2.30pm Christmas Service Revd Marcus Green 4.30pm Christmas Service Revd Marcus Green
			<i>Call 331252 to book</i>
Friday 25th December Christmas Day		9am Christmas Family Communion Revd Marcus Green 10.30am Christmas Family Communion Revd Marcus Green	
		<i>Call 340099 to book</i>	
Sunday 27th December	<i>Online Service Only</i>	<i>Online Service Only</i>	<i>Online Service Only</i>

Local Info

Steeple Aston Village Hall

Hiring Fee Caution

Hall (meeting night)	
Represented Clubs.....	£9
Non-Represented Clubs.....	£17
Hall Only (social occasion)	
Represented Clubs.....	£32
Others.....	£53
All Facilities (social occasion)	
Village Residents	£65 £200
Represented Clubs.....	£65 £200
Others - up to 6 hours.....	£110 £300
Others - over 6 hours.....	£160 £300

All Facilities (off peak - 4 hours)	
Village Residents	£30 £75
Represented Clubs.....	£30 £75

Committee Room	
Represented Clubs.....	£6
Non-Represented Clubs.....	£12

Discount for represented clubs – 15% for six block bookings

Letting Agent : **Katie Rushworth (340196)**
Chairman: **Barbara Brewer (340423)**
Secretary: **Margaret Bulleyment (347346)**

A represented club must send a representative to the Village Hall Committee meetings.

Rubbish bin collection day = Thursday

December	January
3rd blue & brown	7 th blue & brown
10 th green	14 th green
Collection dates over Christmas may change. A bin tag will notify you of any changes to your usual collection days.	21 st blue & brown
	28 th green

Steeple Aston Sports and Recreation Centre Letting Charges

Social Function peak times (up to 6 hours) £55

Social Function off-peak (up to 5 hours) £27.50

Meeting of represented club: £11 per session

Caution Money for Private Lettings: £100

Letting agent: Katie Rushworth - Tel: 340196

Mail to: rec.trust@googlemail.com

Chairman - Torquil McLusky - Tel: 347914

Treasurer - Chris Cooper - Tel: 347173

Bus times

This timetable is a guide only - please consult local listings for up-to-date information and weekend times.

S4 BUS SERVICE (Mon - Fri)

Buses from Steeple Aston (outside post office) to Oxford

06.24 07.02 07.46 08.20 then...20 past the hour until 15.20 16.21 17.21
 18.21 19.32 20.47 22.17

Arrives Oxford

07.02 08.00 08.44 10.03 then..03 past the hour until 16.03 17.02 18.02
 19.02 20.10 21.25 22.55

Buses from Steeple Aston (outside post office) to Banbury

07.52 08.55 09.57 then ...57 past the hour until 14.57 16.00 17.00 18.00 19.00
 19.55 21.10 22.25 23.55

Arrives Banbury

08.35 09.35 10.36 then.. 35 past the hour until 15.35 16.38 17.38 18.38 19.29
 20.24 21.39 22.54 00.24

MIDDLE BARTON BUS

The OurBus Bartons timetable is subject to change and alteration. For the most up to date information please call Martin Roberts on 01869 347188

Steeple Aston Calendar

All events are subject to possible last-minute changes and cancellations due to Coronavirus. Do check village notices, www.steepleaston.org.uk or contact the organisers for up-to-date information before you set out.

December			
Saturday 12 th	A Choral Christmas	Steeple Aston Church	6pm and 8pm
Sunday 13 th	Wassail Evening - CANCELLED	Village Hall	
Tuesday 15 th	The Valentine Christmas Dinner	For home delivery	Around 1pm
Tuesday 15th	SAL January issue copy and advert deadline		
Saturday 19 th	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am – 12.30pm
January			
Friday 15th	SAL December issue copy and advert deadline		
Saturday 23 rd	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am – 12.30pm
Saturday 23 rd	Annual Quiz Evening	On Zoom	To be confirmed

Choral Society Rehearsals. Village Hall - 7.45pm - Mondays

Badminton. Village Hall - 10am -12.30pm - Tuesdays

Bell Ringing practice. Church Tower - 7.30pm - Tuesdays

Scouts. Sport & Rec Centre - 7.30pm - Tuesdays

Baby and Toddler Group. Sport & Rec Centre - 9am -11am - Thursdays

Cricket Nets. Robinson's Close - 6pm - Thursdays

Badminton. Village Hall - 8pm - Thursdays

Village History Centre (SAVA) open 10am-12pm - Saturdays

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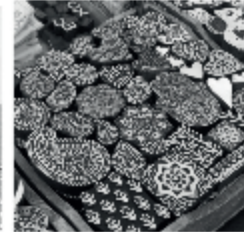
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