

# Steeple Aston *Life*

April 2021 Issue No. 572

Inside SAL this month:

- Visiting Bletchington
- Gardening jobs for April
- Eggs: cooking and dyeing
- Easter maze and word play
- And much more



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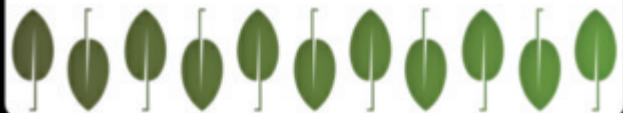
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Cover photo: Nigel Francis. Steeple Aston's Maisie and Ted at the Easter Bunnies table.

## Steeple Aston *Life*

### COPY

All articles and letters to the Editors  
[editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)

### COPY DEADLINES

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

The copy deadline for the May 2021 issue is therefore 15<sup>th</sup> April.

READ STEEPLE ASTON LIFE ONLINE  
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Archive (SAVA)	Chairman	Martin Lipson	347046
Badminton (Tuesday mornings)		Barbara Brewer	340423
Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Lydia Powell	347746
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		ClIr Bryn Williams	07836 271998
		ClIr Hugo Brown	
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Deddington Health Centre	Appointments		338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	338847
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Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme			0300 3030125
Women's Institute	President	Linda Needle	340028





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

## Steeple Aston *Life*

April 2021  
Issue No. 572

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# Editorial

“Here cometh April again, and as far as I can see the world hath more fools in it than ever.” (Charles Lamb, essayist and poet, 1775 to 1834).

It is a convention that an editor, in their April edition, includes an item of fake news, otherwise known as an April Fool. In a break with this tradition, I have decided not to include any such nonsense in this issue. And if you believe that, I have fooled you already!

As I write, stage one of lockdown easing is already underway. Two people from different households can now meet outside for iced coffee (the drink might have started hot, but the cold weather will soon change that!). Stage two, in mid-April, will see the opening of all shops, hairdressers and beauty salons. Stage three, in mid-May, allows pubs and restaurants to serve customers indoors; theatres and cinemas will also be able to open. Stage four, from mid-June, removes all remaining restrictions. All this, of course, is dependent on a continuing fall in Covid-19 cases. Life should slowly return to normal, with services inside the Church and a programme of activities and events in the village hall. Steeple Aston Life will bring you all the details as and when they become available.

In the meantime, we continue to suggest online music and theatre to keep you entertained. There is also a crossword to tax the little grey cells, plus a maze to solve and a seasonal word game. Enjoy.

This issue of SAL is, like many others, printed in black-and-white. To see the photographs in glorious colour visit the digital edition at: [steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine/](http://steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine/)

Stay safe.  
**Robert**

*Photo: A Comma butterfly photographed by Ben Wade-Martins in April 2020. Once a rare sight in Britain, the Comma has made a successful comeback in the last 40 years.*





## CORONAVIRUS

### MESSAGE FROM DEDDINGTON HEALTH CENTRE

**Coronavirus Vaccine:** Please do not contact Deddington Health Centre regarding the vaccine. The NHS will let you know when it is your turn. It is important not to contact the NHS or your practice for a vaccination before then. Thank you.

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.

### Over 50? Had a positive COVID test with symptoms? Researchers need your help.

People aged over 50 who have had a positive COVID test and are showing symptoms of the virus are being sought for research into helping them get better quickly. Over 50s with certain underlying health conditions and all over-65s with suspected COVID-19 can apply to take part in the University of Oxford study at participating GP practices (which include the Deddington Health Centre) or [www.principletrial.org](http://www.principletrial.org). Participants are randomly allocated to receive usual care or usual care and an existing medication. It is hoped the trial can prevent people in these groups needing to go to hospital. Contact [principle@phc.ox.ac.uk](mailto:principle@phc.ox.ac.uk) / 0800 138 0880.

### Baby girl for Angela Smith

Congratulations to Angela Smith, co-editor of Steeple Aston Life, and her husband David on the birth of their baby daughter.

“Elodie Poppy Smith was born at 1.28pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021 weighing 9lbs exactly,” writes Angela. “She certainly kept us waiting, as she was 18 days late! Elodie is already bright and alert and has been treated to many cuddles and kisses from her big brother James. She’s looking forward to meeting everyone when lockdown lifts.”

Angela moved to Steeple Aston five years ago, and took over as co-editor of SAL early in 2020, but is currently on maternity leave.





# Editor's Letterbox

## What have you cooked during Lockdown?

We thought it might be fun to collect some of the recipes people in the village have used while we were following the rules and staying at home!

They might be tried and much tested old favourites, or perhaps experiments tried out to relieve the tedium of some of those boring days when there were few highlights and we had to find excitement indoors. Collected together the recipes could make a record of what we were making in our kitchens during the pandemic and in the future when life has become normal again, act as a reminder of this year which has been like no other.

Please will you make a contribution to what we hope will become the **Steeple Aston Locked Down Cookbook**? Just send your recipe to us at Hill House, either by email to [eileen@baglinjones.com](mailto:eileen@baglinjones.com) or written out – drop it in to any one of us by the end of April please. We will credit each one – unless you prefer to remain anonymous! It will add to the fun if you can include a few brief comments about your recipe – how it was received by those tasting it, why you've chosen it, where you found it or who gave it to you for example.

We will assemble the recipes and attempt some kind of order. Then, once the collection has been printed, you will be able to buy your copy (in aid of church funds), try out some of the dishes or treats your neighbours have been enjoying during Lockdown and acquire memories of the year in which we were all locked down. Here's an example of the format we'd like you to follow please:

### **Mary's chicken**

An easy recipe for someone with little time – or inclination to cook!

**Ingredients** for four. Cook on the hob.

15g butter  
4 skinless chicken breasts  
1 chicken stock sachet  
100ml apple juice  
1 medium onion, chopped  
15g cornflour  
300ml milk  
10g chopped mixed herbs of choice (use dried herbs if that's easiest)  
100g seedless black grapes

### **Method**

1. Melt the butter in a large frying pan and fry onion and chicken for about 3 minutes.
2. Blend cornflour with milk and add to chicken with herbs and chicken stock sachet.
3. Bring to the boil, stirring, then add apple juice.
4. Cover and simmer for about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally and turning chicken over about half way. Check that the chicken is cooked through.
5. Add grapes just before serving.

*Bev Davies, Alison Woodrow and Eileen Baglin-Jones from Hill House*



# VICTORIA PRENTIS MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

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Victoria holds regular surgeries for constituents in supermarkets and her office, and visits pubs across North Oxfordshire as part of her Pub Tour. Please check the website or call Victoria's office for more information about upcoming dates.



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Deddington  
OX15 0TD

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## Diana Gardner



**How long have you lived in Steeple Aston?**

57 years.

**What brought you here?**

My mum had a house built on Southside.

**What do you like best about living in Steeple Aston?**

Steeple people friendliness. The countryside.

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

My only complaints are that it's too far from the sea and that Paines Hill is too steep.

**How has the village changed in the time you've been here?**

The growth in population. It's sad not knowing such a high percentage of the people who one's likely to pass in the street.

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

I lived on the Herts/Essex border in my early years, moved to the Norfolk coast when I was nine, completed my schooling there while my parents were in Northern Nigeria.

**What do your family or friends find most annoying about you?**

I dread to think. Multiple options!

**Early bird or night owl? Cat or dog**

I'm certainly not an early bird. I'm very fond of cats.

**Technology: friend or foe**

Although I'm computer illiterate I've so enjoyed using Zoom to keep in touch with family and friends.

**What was your first job?**

I did a Christmas holiday job sorting parcels at the Becket Street office in Oxford.

**What do you do for a living now?**

I'm enjoying retirement. Most of my teaching was in Oxfordshire, although I had a wonderful two years relief teaching in different schools all over New Zealand.

**What is the best job you've ever done?**

This must be my 19 years at Dr Radcliffe's primary school in Steeple Aston!! Such camaraderie and fun, which continues whenever we meet up.

**What is the worst job you've ever done?**

Working in a fruit cannery in Australia because of the appalling lack of hygiene, long hours and the continual din of cans rattling along overhead wire tracks. On my return I saw the familiar labelling in our Wavy Line shop, but don't worry, the factory has been closed down now!

**Tell us about any interesting hobbies you have.**

Bell ringing has had a huge influence in my life. I started ringing in Salisbury while I was at training college. Back home in Steeple I've continued with this hobby, including handbell ringing, making so many good friends and finding a husband. I've been made welcome in so many bell towers over England, Wales, Australia and New Zealand. I've rung the Southernmost bell in the world.

**What's your favourite piece of music?**

Impossible question, every day I'd come up with a different answer. Today it's Handel's Silent Worship.

**What is your all-time favourite book?** Tess of the d'Urbervilles.

**What do you do to relax?** I've done a lot of this during lockdown. Jigsaws, books, lacework, painting, puzzles, playing simple tunes on the piano, etc.

**What do you get grumpy/mad about?** I abhor cruelty to any living creature and cannot forget some dreadful things I've witnessed.

**What makes you happiest in the world?** Obviously my grandchildren. I'm so lucky to have them close enough to share in their fun and development. Also, it's so heart-warming when past pupils say hello, as they've changed too much for me to recognise many of them.

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

I scored my first and only goal from the back of an elephant during a game of polo. The other team levelled the score when an elephant got tired of its rider's incompetence and nonchalantly kicked the ball into the goal mouth herself.

# The ARTS Page



This month we are featuring what has entertained or uplifted a few of you during lockdown. Please write in for next and subsequent months with your suggestions.

We'll start with one simple, beautiful poem by W B Yeats 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree', performed by Anthony Hopkins. [bit.ly/3cDhYUd](https://bit.ly/3cDhYUd)

## **Margaret Bulleyment**

I swear by Dvorak for all occasions. The two sets of Slavonic Dances are only short, but they cover a variety of moods. The 8th Symphony is another gem! Most people know 'The Lark Ascending' by Vaughan Williams, but his symphonies make wonderful listening. 'Sinfonia Antartica' conjures up vast open spaces and his 'London Symphony' the bustle of the city. I thoroughly enjoyed the NT's 'Jane Eyre' production which is circulating still on Sky Arts, a memorable and lively production.

## **Martin and Ruth Dale**

On Netflix: 'The Dig' about the discoveries at Sutton Hoo and the unsung hero of it.

On iPlayer: 'A United Kingdom' tells the inspiring true story of Seretse Khama, the King of Bechuanaland (modern Botswana), and Ruth Williams, the London office worker he married in 1948 in the face of fierce opposition from their families and the British and South African governments.

Royal Opera House: The 2015 performance of 'Marriage of Figaro'. For £3 who can resist this? But only available to April 4<sup>th</sup> 2021. [bit.ly/3rUngkH](https://bit.ly/3rUngkH)

## **Lynn Dowler**

'The Museum of Broken Promises' by Elizabeth Buchan. I have very much enjoyed reading this.

## **Peter Higgins**

The best film I have seen over the last year is 'The Peanut Butter Falcon', which made me both laugh and cry in equal measure. It's a story about a boy with Down's Syndrome who wants to be a professional wrestler and escapes from his Care Home to pursue his dream. Many might be put off by the title or even the subject matter, but stick with it, as it is a truly uplifting film. It stars Zack Gottsagen, Shia LaBeouf and Dakota Johnson. [bit.ly/3vxT01d](https://bit.ly/3vxT01d)

## **Robert Scott**

I can recommend Sky Arts. Originally a subscription service, it is now available on Freeview channel 11. It only publishes a schedule for seven days ahead, but recent programmes have included 'Twelfth Night' (the National Theatre production with Tamsin Greig), 'Jane Eyre' (a National Theatre and Bristol Old Vic production), and the musicals 'Miss Saigon', 'Cats' and 'Les Misérables'. A current schedule is at:

[freeview.co.uk/tv-guide](https://freeview.co.uk/tv-guide)

## **Carl Tomlinson**

I've had more time to read during lockdown, and found delight and insight in 'English Pastoral: An Inheritance' by James Rebanks. This explores one family's relationship with the land they have farmed for several generations and asks us to consider our own engagement with our habitat. I'm currently enjoying 'Light Perpetual' by Francis Spufford which imagines the – sometimes banal, sometimes dramatic – lives which five young victims of the Blitz might have led, had they lived.

Thank you to all our contributors.

## **Nick and Heather**








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**Make It at Home** – we've recently taken donation of lots of craft materials and have been busy putting together some new 'Make It at Home' packs just perfect for a spot of Easter holiday fun!

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## The Gardening Spot

You have a choice! We can talk about The Pandemic, That Interview, Brexit, or Gardening. I think I could fill a page on any of these subjects, but would probably end up like Piers Morgan and anyhow, gardening is a much more pleasant subject. So apologies if you are disappointed, but gardening it is!

Have you noticed how light the evenings have become, especially now the clocks have moved forward? Breaking news! So have the plants, both invited and those uninvited into our garden. I mentioned last time that March was an exciting month where the garden suddenly breaks into life, April is possibly one of the busiest times of the year for the gardener. So, what should we be doing now that we have so much time on our hands with the lighter evenings and the kids back to school? For a start, and I apologise for banging on about this, but keep the weeds at bay as they are competing for space and nutrients in your personal space.

Mow the lawn regularly, lowering the cutting blades after a couple of cuts to an acceptable height where the grass can flourish without feeling it has been shaved off. Give the lawn a feed either using one of the numerous brands available in the shops or, as I often do, being careful with the money, feed it some blood, fish and bone meal. The latter will feed your lawn, but not kill any weeds or moss so your choice should be dependent on the state of your grass.

Cut back any early flowering shrubs once they have finished flowering to encourage new growth in readiness for next year. Protect fruit blossom if possible from late frosts. Not always easy, but worthwhile as I have discovered over the past two years when a late frost removed any chance of me picking my favourite fruit, the apricot. I have now created a frame over most of the wall-trained tree and draped some heavy-duty fleece over it in the hope that I have a crop of those delicious apricots.

Tie in climbing roses to form a framework that will show off the wonderful blooms in the months to come. You can now sow hardy annuals and herbs directly to the soil outdoors once the ground warms a little and is not water-logged. As I often tell you, feed shrubs and roses this month as they need a meal just like us. If you haven't already done so, cut back any old growth from perennials and grasses to allow new growth and if you grow clematis or honeysuckle, tie them in regularly to provide a framework for this year's flowering season.

In the greenhouse, if you haven't already done so, and you really should have completed this task by now, clean the glass and everything in it to reduce the possibility of infection from all the horrible little pests and diseases that are out to get you if they can. Plant tomato plants towards the middle of this month, but keep an eye on the weather and protect from frosts should they be forecast. Do not plant cucumbers until May at the earliest as they can't stand cold, dull conditions, but will thrive given plenty of natural warmth and light. Sow such crops as carrots and beetroot direct into the ground making sure you have raked the soil down to a fine tilth and don't forget to mark the rows with a stick and a label.

Potatoes will start to appear from the end of the month and once through the soil, earth them up to encourage a better crop and reduce the possibility of frost damage should we get a frost in late April or May. This is a great time to prepare for runner beans, my favourite vegetable, by creating a trench one spit deep and digging in organic matter at the bottom. This in turn will help to feed the plants as they develop and retain moisture during the hot summer months.

I will leave you with one thought. "Gardening adds years to your life and life to your years." Enjoy your garden and keep safe. Light is at the end of the tunnel and our gardens will help you get there in a safe and enjoyable manner.

**Richard Preston**



## Do rabbits lay chocolate eggs?



*Photo: Nigel Francis*

Easter is a moveable feast. Since the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the date of Easter is set for the first Sunday following the Paschal full moon. This is the first full moon of spring occurring on or shortly after the spring equinox. If the first spring full moon is on a Sunday, Easter is set for the following Sunday. Confused? You should be, because while astronomers can predict the precise date and time of a full moon, the Church uses its own calculations which do not always follow the science. Most people just check a diary or calendar for the end result.

March 22<sup>nd</sup> is the earliest day of the year on which Easter can fall. April 25<sup>th</sup> is the latest day. So this year, April 4<sup>th</sup> is neither early nor late. The last time Easter fell on March 22<sup>nd</sup> was in 1818; the next will be 2285. The last time Easter fell on April 25<sup>th</sup> was 1983; the next will be 2078.

You might think it would be easier to have a fixed date for Easter. You are not alone. The UK Easter Act 1928 set out that Easter Day should be the first Sunday after the second Saturday in April. The Act received Royal Assent on August 3 1928, but although discussed in Parliament over the years has never been implemented.

Where do rabbits and eggs fit into all this? Well, the egg came first. In early Christianity it was a symbol associated with rebirth. The Easter bunny originates in German folklore. Children were told about the 'Osterhase' which distributed eggs those who had been good. 'Hase' means hare, not rabbit, but the original meaning appears to have been lost when German immigrants settled in America in the 1700s. The children made nests in which the coloured eggs could be laid. Carrots would be left out for the rabbit, in much the same way we leave a sherry and a mince pie for Santa Claus. Originally, the eggs were of the hen-laid variety. Chocolate Easter eggs were introduced in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The answer to the question at the top of this page is no, rabbits do not lay chocolate eggs. A rabbit is viviparous, which means it gives birth to live young. At least, most do. There are over 300 species of rabbit, one of which is oviparous. The Zemmouri is native to Morocco and lays its eggs in underground warrens, incubating them until the young hatch out. Baby rabbits are called kittens. A group of young rabbits is called a nest. A group of adult rabbits is called a herd.

**Robert Scott**

**“A society thrives when elders plant trees  
in whose shade they know they will never sit”**

This lovely sentiment came through our door recently on an envelope advertising ‘Friends of the Earth’. The more I look at it the more beautiful it becomes.

Do you remember ‘Plant a Tree in 73’? Yes? It means like me you’re getting on a bit! It was a Government-sponsored national campaign which encouraged the population to plant trees during the 1973 ‘National Tree Planting Year’ to help mitigate the loss of so many trees to Dutch Elm disease. This brilliant initiative continues with ‘National Tree Week’ which has seen the planting of thousands of trees every year since 1975.

However, we all know that it’s not just trees that cleanse the air. The oceans and the algae are just as good, if not better, though they’re struggling as we all know. But planting is all about what we ourselves can do.

Here in the villages there are so many trees and everyone is so careful of them that planting more seems an anomaly. Anyone here with a reasonably sized garden has trees in it. If we were to count the trees in Steeple and Middle Aston it would probably run into many thousands. One day I might even make a shot at estimating the number!

Middle Aston has planted 103 trees this year. Brilliant! Fantastic! (See SAL January 2021, page 13). Wouldn’t it be wonderful to echo that somehow in Steeple Aston? We would not be planting them for ourselves, but for our children. And here’s the thing – also for all those folk who live in flats and have no garden. They can’t plant, we can. Perhaps we could even ‘twin’ with a tower block somewhere and invite people from it to come and plant trees with us when we’re allowed to move about more freely?

However, the problem with Steeple Aston is ‘Where’? I’m sure as a village we’d love to plant more, but our open spaces are either very much used – for example, Robinsons Field – or small – for example on South Side where there are already birch trees, etc. And anyway, I’m never sure whether that’s public or private land. Years ago the avenue of trees from the main road along ‘60 Foot’ was planted and as they mature they make a lovely entrance to the village, plus they must now be gathering CO<sub>2</sub> quite well.

We used to live in Rochester where there were many small streets with long terraces of houses – Victorian ‘villas’. I always assumed that they were barren from the point of view of nature. However, when we all started to view lots of pictures from the air of our localities I was stunned to see that their gardens looked like a large inner courtyard and woodland. Of course, there were areas of concrete, but any self-respecting bird would find somewhere to nest there.

So it’s always possible to have trees even in what might be an unprepossessing space. Please may we put our thinking caps on and consider planting more?

**Martin Dale**

# Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



The last Parish Council meeting started chaotically. Until the most recent meeting the Clerk had been sending us invitations on Zoom, but this time she was expecting a bit more from us; it was at least a quarter of an hour before we were all safely logged into the meeting.

Wincote is the last house on the left in Cow Lane as you head out of the village. Its owner came to the meeting bringing his proposed development plans for the house to show to the Councillors. I can clearly remember the unpleasantness at a village meeting ten or so years ago when the same owner presented development proposals then. Clearly the owner remembered as well because he started the presentation by explaining that his current plans were “significantly different, were more sensitive and more in keeping with the surroundings”.

The current plans would involve retaining the old house on the left side as you approach and pulling down the rest. The footprint of the new building on the rest of the site would be about double the existing footprint, but would be much more in keeping with the old house. We were shown pictures of what the development would be like and the new build is intended to be similar in feel to the old house, for example with similar sized windows. The new parts would be built in a mixture of ironstone and limestone “to brighten its appearance”. The plans include a large and tall barn-like room at the far end from the entrance which would be kitchen, dining room and sitting room. This would be connected to the house by a largely glass and modern-looking walkway. The house would be as sustainable as possible with solar panels and air source heat pumps. The old orchard, which was below the house, will be replanted where necessary and a swimming pool and changing rooms incorporated.

The owner was asked whether he would use the house or whether it was a commercial venture or some variety of property development. The owner said this was not the case and he and his family would be the users. He said he had talked to the immediate neighbours and no one had objected to the plans, but there were worries about parking and traffic while the building works were happening. He

explained there would be a temporary new drive so large lorries would not have to make the sharp turning involved with the existing drive. One of the Councillors said he hoped the owner “would have better luck with Cherwell’s planners than others who have tried to get modern bits in the conservation area”.

Our District Councillor was at the meeting and he claimed that a recent haircut made sure he no longer looked like Barbara Cartland. Someone pointed out that he thought she was dead and therefore probably not a pretty sight. Then, leaving his looks on one side, he explained what had been going on at Cherwell District Council. He said there is a nationwide decision that food waste should be collected every week. The result for us will be that garden waste will continue to be collected every fortnight and food waste every week. In order to recoup some of the extra costs there will be a charge for emptying our garden waste bins, though he did not know how much this would be. All I could find out about this after the meeting was that in another part of Oxfordshire there is a charge of £35 a year per garden waste bin. It seems counterintuitive to me to charge for garden waste, which I assume is composted, instead of charging for refuse that goes to landfill.

We were told that one person had shown interest in joining the Council, but there is still another vacancy. The Councillors discussed what attributes they hoped the applicant for the other vacancy might possess. There were all sorts of suggestions and one Councillor pointed out that physical strength and a DIY toolkit were not a condition of being a Councillor. If you are interested you can come to the next meeting or contact the Clerk, Cathy Fleet on 01869 347000 or at [parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com](mailto:parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com)

The Councillors have decided they should have a base for the speed sign on Fenway so it can slow down vehicles as they come towards the dangerous corner. It will be sited by the telegraph pole opposite the entrance to the stables. There was a long discussion about whether the Councillors should ask for a large white SLOW sign on the road, in addition



# Parish Council Meeting Notes



to a proposed sign warning 'Horses'. It was finally agreed that a sign on the road surface was not in keeping with the rural nature of the village and the Councillors would keep this possibility 'up their sleeve' at present.

The Play Area has been hugely successful, but the result is that it is now looking a bit the worse for wear. The Councillors have decided to get everything that has been damaged either repaired or replaced. As far as I can see from the list of jobs, the only change to the original design is to see if there is a way to keep more of the sand in the 'toddler prison'. The work is expected to take two to three weeks and will start on 19 April. While the work is being done the playground will have to be closed and signs will be put up warning the users about the closure.

A broken coping stone needs to be removed from the Village Hall roof and there was a discussion about who should go up the ladder to get it down. Fortunately, the husband of one of the Councillors was encouraged to 'volunteer'.

I was asked to mention two issues. First, a request that we should keep down the volume of any music from our gardens in case it might disturb the neighbours. The other request was that wheelie bins should not block pavements on collection days. Those with buggies are sometimes being forced into the road. It was bad luck that the high winds and the Thursday collection coincided in the previous week which meant a few bins had moved. But some bins are a nuisance every collection day irrespective of the weather.

The next discussion was the sort I particularly enjoy. It was about how soon the wreath from the previous year should be removed from the War Memorial. When the village had entered for the Best Kept Village someone said wreaths should be removed in February. The British Legion, a lot more sensibly, say they should go when they get tatty. No one knew exactly when our wreath is usually removed, but they thought it was probably when the War Memorial is tidied each November. After a long discussion they decided the wreath should stay for six months with the hope that people would then notice the new one when it appeared.

Once a year the Councillors check all the Parish Council paperwork and bring it up to date. The Chairman asked the Councillors to each volunteer to check one of the documents. It took quite a lot of perseverance, but he finally succeeded.

The Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan committee has asked its eleven Parish Councils about their response to the proposed introduction of a bus gate near Middleton Stoney. Our Councillors noted that there has been no suggestion that it would be sensible to see how the pandemic has altered the need for the bus, for example because more people may be working from home. No one knew whether those living in Heyford Park would actually oblige and use the proposed quarter-hourly bus. Some people are likely to use the bus, but will there be enough of them to compensate for the extra journey time for those outside Heyford Park? A survey of the views of the residents in all eleven Parishes may be held in the early summer. But this seems a bit pointless as we can all guess what it would show; villages affected would disagree and those not affected would be indifferent. On the other hand, it could well make sense to ask the Heyford Park residents about their expected bus use.

I got a Council Tax demand the day after the meeting and it showed an increase in the precept, our Parish Council part, of 3.8%. At a previous Parish Council meeting I was told our Councillors had asked for an extra 2.2% this year. It looks as if Cherwell have made a simple arithmetical error somewhere. A very public way of showing their incompetence?

The next meeting is on 19 April. Do come and join the Zoom meeting and see what is happening.

*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](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk)*

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## Falling from Grace – a Fool's Tale

(Grace is very forgiving ..... up to a point)

I've fallen from Grace and it's not very nice  
when I was with Grace it was sugar and spice  
she gave me a piggy-back, down to the sea  
dipped down her shoulder and shook herself free

Grace is the cause of my discomfort now  
I'm very unsettled but don't ask me how  
I loved every minute whilst riding her back  
but now that I've fallen I'm under attack

She looked pleased to carry a burden like me  
gave no indication she wished to be free  
so when the drop came it was with some surprise  
the tumble exposed all my terrible lies

for I had been playing a dangerous game  
riding my luck and disguising my shame  
'twas Grace who then granted a portion of time  
to put right the wrongs and make everything fine

the time I did squander I used it instead  
to line all my pockets and feather my bed  
being carried around by this wonderful girl  
and that's when my problems began to unfurl

'cause Grace only carries a limited time  
she cannot support you once you commit crime  
so please learn the lesson and don't copy me  
or you will soon join me here under the sea

**Peter Wild**

## The problematic limerick

*Since the pandemic means that Steeple Aston Spring  
Show cannot take place this year, the Horticultural Society  
has run a limerick competition and a photo contest instead.*

I've been scratching my head for weeks  
The house resounds to my shrieks  
The cause of my plight –  
I'm trying to write  
A limerick.

It's much harder than I had thought,  
I'm tempted to simply abort  
My attempts to compose  
One of those  
Bloomin' limericks.

Everyone knows how limericks sound  
The way that the rhyme comes around  
The format is easy  
But it's making me queasy.  
This limerick.

Why am I struggling so?  
It's for Steeple Horticultural show  
They've sent out a call  
Asking us all  
To write limericks.

The topic's a shepherd called Bill,  
The only rhyme I can think of is 'frill'  
I'm tired. I'm stressed.  
I'm getting depressed  
With this limerick.

Julia Whybrew picked the name Bill  
In a fit of generous goodwill  
Because it's easy to rhyme,  
Well, despite that, I'm  
Cursing this limerick.

This shepherd and his flock of sheep  
Are depriving me of my sleep.  
Bill's ewes and his rams  
His sweet little lambs  
Won't make a limerick.

I can't get Bill out of my head  
He even joins me in bed.  
Well, enough is enough.  
I don't give a stuff!  
I'll enter a photo instead.

**Cathy Lawday**





Forgive me for repeating myself, but collecting freshly laid eggs from my hens' nesting box, never fails to lift my spirits. It is always a treat, especially if they are still slightly warm. I can't help but marvel at the nutrition inside that smooth shell, taking so little effort to release into a pan, and combined with so little, or a lot, to rustle up a quick meal. Buy the best you can afford, free-range, or find a local 'farm gate' seller. They are always freshest.

Apart from breakfast favourites, special fried rice, Spanish omelette, Shakshuka (look it up – it's fantastic) and those delicious egg-based sauces, mayonnaise, hollandaise, bearnaise – all so well worth cooking at home, rather than buying the approximation. Eggs appear in very many recipes, disguised, so people who don't like the yolk, or 'the white gives me the shivers', consume their goodness. And don't forget egg custard!

Here are a few of my eggy favourites. Fritters of all sorts are good food and good fun. Try these.

### **Cheese and Leek Fritters**

400g leeks, trimmed, washed and finely sliced  
25g butter  
200g plain flour  
2 eggs  
225ml milk  
200g mature farmhouse cheese, Gouda is good and tasty  
Salt and pepper / Chilli pepper / Freshly grated nutmeg

Melt the butter in a large pan, add the leeks, cover and sweat on a gentle heat until soft but not coloured. This should take about 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Sieve the flour into a bowl, make a well in the centre, add the eggs and break up with a whisk, add the milk gradually, whisking and knocking in a little flour at a time. Add the cooled leeks and grated cheese, season with salt, pepper, chilli pepper and nutmeg to taste.

Heat a frying pan on a medium heat, preferably non-stick. Drop a small spoonful of batter onto the pan, allow to cook and slightly bubble, before flipping and cook for another one or two minutes. Serve with a tomato salad and lightly dressed salad leaves.

Wild garlic is now ready to harvest. Find a shady area, legally just off a footpath, to gather it. Try it shredded into fritters (modify the recipe above) with peas, or make pancakes or omelettes with some buttery mushrooms.

### **Weight of Eggs Seasonal Cake**

Blood oranges and forced rhubarb (now a little cheaper than at the beginning of the season) are still around in shops. Their flavours combine to make a delicious cake, which makes a scrumptious pudding too. Poach the rhubarb in sweetened blood orange juice. Weigh out three eggs. Use that weight of sugar and butter, cream together as you would for a sponge cake. Take the weight of the eggs, and use half that in self-raising flour, half of ground almonds, and a teaspoon of baking powder. Whisk all together with grated rind of blood orange. Line a loaf tin with baking paper. With a slotted spoon make a layer of poached rhubarb, then cover with cake mixture. Bake in a medium oven until the mixture is firm the touch. Cool in the tin. Serve with crème fraiche and the remaining poached rhubarb.

*continued*



### **Greek Coddled Eggs** (not authentic!) – serves 2 to 4

Preheat the oven to 180C / gas mark 4 and boil a kettle. Lightly grease four ovenproof ramekins, shallow cups or jars.

A little butter or olive oil for greasing  
4 very fresh eggs  
120g full fat Greek yoghurt  
Small bunch of dill, or chives  
3 spring onions, trimmed and finely sliced  
100g feta crumbled  
Freshly ground black pepper  
Buttered bread or toast to serve

Separate the eggs, putting the whites in a mixing bowl, and very carefully the yolks on a plate (easier still – if you have a four spare little bowls, one in each).

Beat the Greek yoghurt, all but a tablespoon of the chopped dill, two of the sliced spring onions, all but 1 tbsp of the crumbled feta, and plenty of ground black pepper. The mixture will look grainy.

Divide this between the cups, then drop a yolk into the middle of each. Season lightly and cover each with a square of buttered foil. Put them into a small roasting tin.

Pour enough boiling water into the tin to reach halfway up the sides of the cups. Bake for 12 minutes, allowing a minute either side if your eggs are bigger or smaller.

Meanwhile, prepare your bread or toast. When done, take the foil off the cups, and scatter with remaining dill, spring onion and feta. Serve on a warmed plate, big enough to take your bread or toast on the side.

***Caroline Edwards***

### **Food for thought**

You may have a heart of gold, but so does a hard-boiled egg. (Maya Angelou)

Although I cannot lay an egg, I am a very good judge of omelettes. (George Bernard Shaw)

A Royal Commission is a broody hen sitting on a china egg. (Michael Foot)

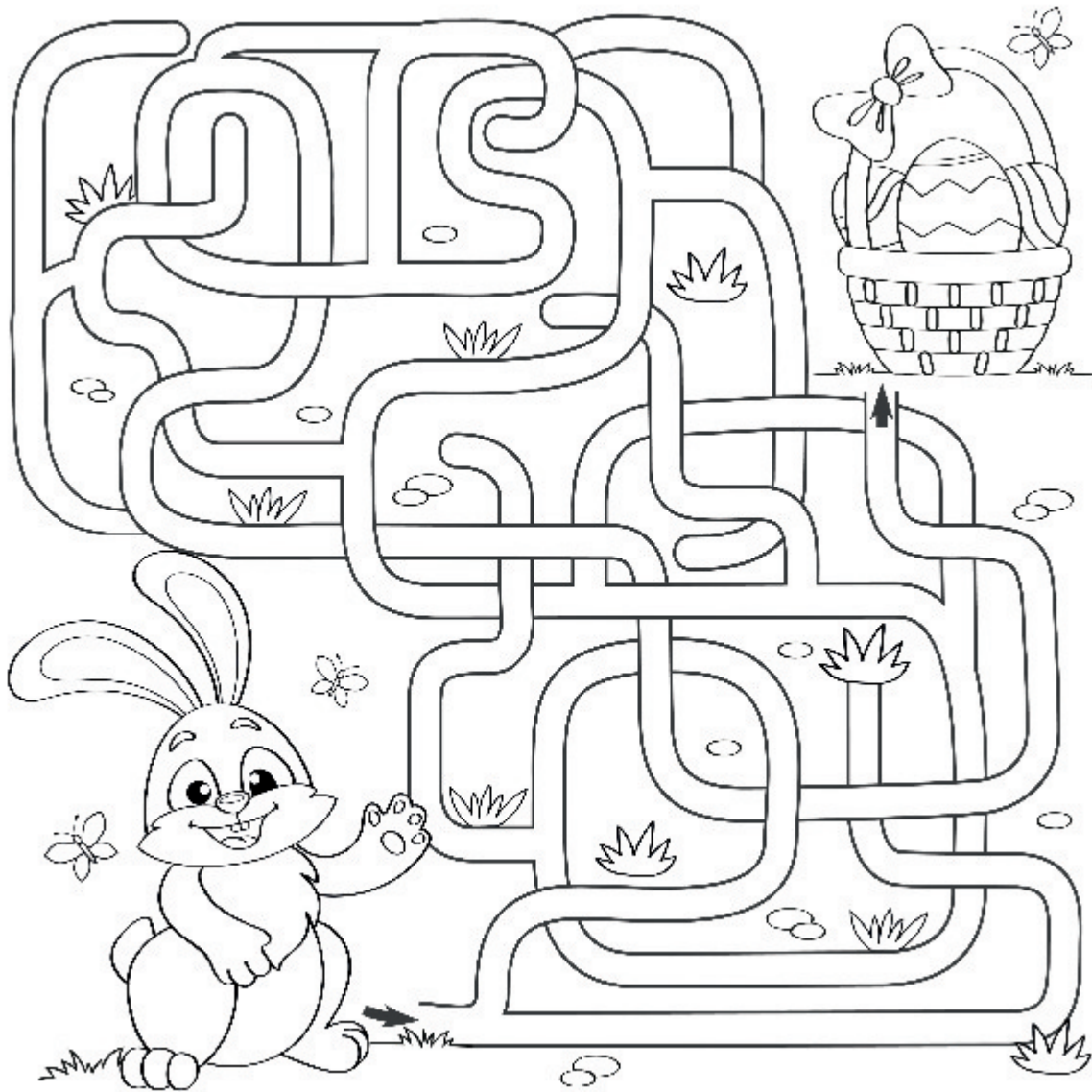
Don't put all your eggs in one basket. (Miguel de Cervantes)

It may be the cock that crows, but it is the hen that lays the eggs. (Margaret Thatcher)

You can't just go on being a good egg. You must either hatch or go bad! (C. S. Lewis)



Help the bunny find a path to the basket of Easter eggs. Then colour the drawing with crayons to make it bright and cheerful.



## Easter word play

How many new words can you make from some or all of the letters in **EASTER**?

Each word must have three or more letters. You can only use each letter once (except for E which, as it appears twice, can be used twice). All words must appear in an English dictionary (we used the Oxford Compact English Dictionary). Plurals are allowed. There are several six-letter words (apart from Easter).

Challenge your parents to a competition to see who can find the most words.

*Turn to page 26 to compare your list with ours.*



# ???? Mind Games

1		2		3				4		5		
						6						7
8								9				
10						11						
	12	13						14				
15												16
17				18				19		20		
21						22						
		23						24				

## ACROSS

- thigh bone (5)
- the portion of a circle represented by the symbol  $\cap$  (3)
- a purple colour between red and violet (7)
- the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the USA (5)
- a male relative (5)
- a chemical irritant used in riot control (4, 3)
- a white root used as a condiment (11)
- the adopted surname of a French actor famous for mime (7)
- a story with a moral, often featuring animals (5)
- moist, muggy (5)
- a type of energy, or family (7)
- in the present moment (3)
- a levy or tax (5)

## DOWN

- renowned, well-known (6)
- power that seems to come from a supernatural source (5)
- imposters, often used in sport, to win financial gain (7)
- a distinctive smell (5)
- money demanded for services (7)
- the animal who delivers the eggs at this time of year (6, 5)
- the Persian language (5)
- a male rower (7)
- an amount of money which is less than needed (7)
- the largest city in Nebraska, USA (5)
- the last of Prince Charles' four Christian names (6)
- to bequeath property or income (5)
- the noise made by a sheep or goat (5)

Compiled by Cathy Lawday. Answers on page 26.

# HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?



## Bletchingdon

*Photo: Keith Daulby.  
St. Giles Church, Bletchingdon*

Perhaps like me your heart sank when the government's 'Road Map' dates were announced and we realised that our hopes of freedom from Covid-led restrictions had to be put on hold again. There's some delight to be had, of course, in meeting or passing the same neighbours and their gardens if you regularly take your permitted walk around Steeple Aston. Lovely as our village is however, after all these months of Lockdown I'm suggesting that exploring just a little further afield (without breaking the rules of Lockdown) can enrich our spirits as we see how life is progressing in different places. Unless you have friends or family who live in nearby villages they are probably places you rarely explore, but there is an interest in looking at other peoples' houses, at how villages are configured and in peeping over walls and hedges to get a better look at gardens and perhaps compare them with those which have become so familiar during your daily walk!

With this in mind and at the suggestion of a neighbour, I took myself to Bletchingdon (or Bletchington, depending on which signpost you believe!). Usually I'm just likely to be driving through on the main road on my way to Wood Eaton or Wheatley, but on a crisp and sunny February day I parked alongside the big triangular green and walked along the footpath next to the wall which I think must border the Bletchingdon Estate, towards Weston-on-the-Green.

There was hardly any traffic so I could look at some interesting houses on the opposite side of the road. I was particularly intrigued by a little cottage called The Bothy which is tucked into the long wall I was tracking and enjoyed some especially lovely houses as the road bent towards Weston. You can drive that way to find the church car park, but I took the wide footpath which led me to the church.

The gated footpath is bordered by a high hedge on the left, but soon opens out onto wide open ground on your right and then you reach what I found to be a delightful open area with the church (St Giles) on my left and the extension churchyard on my right. Walking around this part of the churchyard you discover a charming little close of pretty stone houses. Returning to explore St Giles Church set in what seemed an oasis of calm and peace – and snowdrops – I found it was open for private prayer. Let me now warn you that the pews felt even less comfortable than ours, but I looked enviously at evidence of tasteful re-ordering: lovely smooth floor, beautiful engraved glass door into the tower area and a light wood screen shutting off the area through one arch. All this had been done without disturbing the ancient atmosphere of the village church.

The snowdrops will have died I fear before SAL is printed, but there should be a good display of daffodils in the churchyard, I think, and if you walk on just a little farther a surprise awaits as you come to the horseshoe-shaped and very grand building, now divided into apartments, but which looks as if it used to be the stable block for the Manor house – and nearby its underground car park.

Good walkers can continue to explore, but I was content to retrace my steps and return to the car taking with me memories of a pleasant morning, a change from my usual perambulations and a determination to spend a little time looking more closely at places near to home – places which it is so easy to overlook.

**Eileen Baglin-Jones**



## The Joy of Eggs!

Eggs are brilliant! – apart from tasting great and packing a serious nutritional punch, the carbon footprint of free-range eggs is significantly less than of other animal-based proteins, particularly when you either 'grow your own' or buy from a local supplier – and they come in their own biodegradable packaging too!

With Easter fast approaching, why not celebrate the humble egg and create some seasonal cheer by decorating a branch or filling a bowl with naturally dyed, blown eggs.

### Blowing

You need:

Eggs (lighter brown or white eggs are best)

Safety pin/needle

Cocktail stick (or similar)

Straw (not essential)

Jug/Bowl

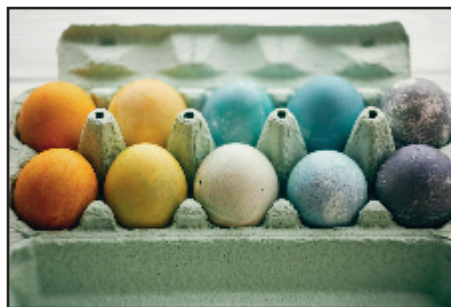
- With the egg in the egg box, gently hold it steady, then use the safety pin to make a small hole in the top (tap the pin onto the shell first, then gently push through).
  - Gently insert the cocktail stick into the hole and stir the egg (this will help to break up the yoke).
  - Turn the egg over and repeat the above process, this time making the hole a little larger if you can.
  - With the small hole at the top, hold the egg over your jug/bowl, place your mouth/the straw over the small hole and blow gently. It can take a while to get going, so be patient.
  - You will know the egg is empty when the shell feels light, and you are just getting bubbles of egg white coming out of the hole at the bottom.
  - Run your eggs under the hot water tap to wash out any remaining egg, wipe and leave to dry.
- Don't waste your egg! – why not do some seasonal baking and make hot cross buns or a simnel cake?

### Dyeing

There are lots of options for natural dyes, but here are a few to try:

- Turmeric - yellow/gold - 1 tbsp per cup of water
- White/Red Onion skins – red/brown – skins from 3 or 4 onions
- Red Cabbage – blues – roughly one-quarter
- Beetroot – pinks – 3 medium

For the onions, red cabbage and beetroot, place in a pan and cover with about an inch of water, bring to



the boil and then simmer for about 30 minutes (you can adjust the timing to give you a lighter/stronger colour). Strain and add one tablespoon of vinegar per cup of dye. Leave to cool.

For the turmeric, use 1 tbsp per cup of water and then boil and simmer as above.

Jam jars are great to use for this as you can put one or two eggs in each and top with dye, then pop the lid on and leave them to soak – three or four hours for a lighter shade, overnight or longer for a richer colour. Ideally, turn the eggs about halfway through to ensure an even colour. Once you are happy with your colour, take your eggs out of the jam jar and leave to dry on a cooling rack.

### Stringing your eggs

Slightly fiddly, but using a long needle and a strong thread, poke the needle through the small hole at the top and feed in until it comes out of the bottom. Tie a large knot, small bead or a short piece of cocktail stick to the bottom of the thread and gently pull it back up into the egg to anchor the thread. Tie a loop in the thread at the top of the egg and hang.

### Afterwards

When you have finished with your eggs, you could:

- Pack them away in a box for next year
- Pop them in the compost bin
- Crush them and use around seedlings/plants as a natural slug/snail barrier or feed them to your chickens.

When you have finished with the egg box, you could:

- Return it or give to someone who keeps chickens
- Tear it up and put onto your compost heap
- Use it for crafting
- Fill it with compost and plant a seed in each compartment (great for sunflowers, peas and more);
- Put it in the recycling bin

Happy Easter!

**Amanda Rodgers**

[amanda@sustainablesteeple.com](mailto:amanda@sustainablesteeple.com)





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# Answers

## Crossword - from page 21

1 F	E	2 M	U	3 R				4 A	R	5 C		
A		A		I		6 E		R		H		7 F
8 M	A	G	E	N	T	A		9 O	B	A	M	A
O		I		G		S		M		R		R
10 U	N	C	L	E		11 T	E	A	R	G	A	S
S				R		E				E		I
	12 H	13 O	R	S	E	R	A	14 D	I	S	H	
15 O		A				B		E				16 G
17 M	A	R	C	18 E	A	U		19 F	A	20 B	L	E
A		S		N		N		I		L		O
21 H	U	M	I	D		22 N	U	C	L	E	A	R
A		A		O		Y		I		A		G
		23 N	O	W				24 T	I	T	H	E

## Easter word play - from page 21

Here is our list of words made from letters in EASTER – 62 in total. Have you done better? (We have omitted the rude word and hope you have done the same!)

**Three-letter words:** are, art, ate, ear, eat, era, ere, eta, rat, ret, sat, sea, see, set, tar, tea, tee

**Four-letter words:** arts, ears, ease, east, eats, erst, raise, rate, rats, rest, sate, sear, seat, seer, sera, sere, star, tare, tars, tear, teas, tees, tree, tsar

**Five-letter words:** arete, aster, eater, erase, ester, rates, resat, reset, saree, stare, steer, tares, taser, tears, tease, terse, trees

**Six-letter words:** aretes, eaters, resear, teaser



# Village Hall News



We appreciate that these have been difficult and uncertain times for all our regular users over the last twelve months. As you may well be aware we are out of Tier 4 lockdown and in Step 1 of the government's guidelines and sadly have no choice but to keep the hall closed for the time being. Not exactly the way we would like to have started the year, but sadly we have no choice. People's health, safety and well-being must come first. We will continue to monitor the government guidelines and announcements and will re-open just as soon as we can and let you know.

Please note our letting agent is Mrs. Katie Rushworth  
01869 340196. Email [steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com](mailto: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**

---

## Bee-friendly gardening

There are lots of ways that you can make your garden friendly for bees. Roselle Chapman from Wild Oxfordshire shares some of her top tips. Also see [bit.ly/30QRBF3](https://bit.ly/30QRBF3)

### Bee facts

250 species of bees in the UK  
224 wild solitary bees  
25 wild bumble bees  
One domesticated honey bee

### Trees you can plant this winter to help pollinators

Male grey willow (sallow) *Salix cinerea*  
Goat willow *Salix caprea*  
Small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*  
Service trees: *Sorbus torminalis*, *Sorbus domestica*  
Apple *Malus* sp – any, fruit bearing, or ornamental  
Cherry Plum – *Prunus cerasifera*  
Wild Hawthorn – *Crataegus monogyna/laevigata*



### Gardening tips

- Leave dead plant stems over winter. Hollow stems may be used by bees for overwintering.
- Provide flowers throughout the year – some bees emerge as early as February.
- Buy organic to ensure bulbs and plants haven't been treated with neonicotinoids (poisonous to bees).
- Have a flowering lawn.
- Provide a source of water for bees.
- Leave a patch of bare earth – mason bees gather mud to build egg cells.
- Include a variety of flower shapes – different species have different tongue lengths.



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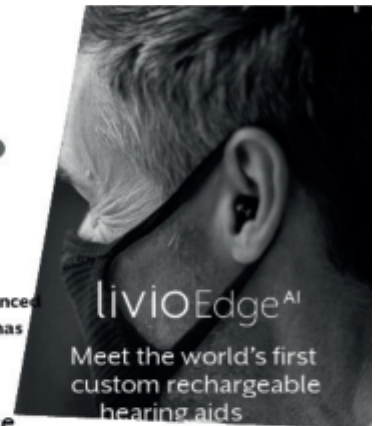
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Our last members' meeting was a year ago for our 102<sup>nd</sup> Birthday Night. Now, due to the need for compliance with Covid-19 rules, a dilemma existed – what could we do for this year's 103<sup>rd</sup> Birthday Night. The solution I offered, which was agreed by the committee, was for me to make and ice cakes which were delivered to every member in individual cake boxes. Fortunately, it was a beautiful sunny day for the committee to deliver to our members who were pleased to receive their little surprise. Hopefully next year we will be back to normal.

As April is our Annual Meeting month we are having to conduct our election for the committee differently. Members will have to vote via email or post. Pauline Brock, who has been a committee member for many years, is standing down and also myself as President. Pauline and I have received considerable thanks for our many years of work on the committee.

I have been a member of Steeple Aston WI now for over 40 years and in that time have served for many years on the WI committee. I have been Programme Secretary, Secretary, Treasurer and several times President. Being a WI member has taught me many things and I have made many friends throughout these years, especially when I became a member of the Oxfordshire Board of Trustees for the WI and then becoming County Treasurer for seven years. This position gave me the level of confidence I needed to stand up in front of 600 ladies to present the report of the Federation.

In total I served 15 years on the Board, chairing several committees. On many occasions at these meetings I met some very interesting people. The highlight was being invited to two Queen's Garden Parties, one in Henley where I found Richard Preston and his wife also present, and one at Buckingham Palace. I was introduced to the Duchess of Cornwall on the occasion of her visit to the WI college at Marcham, where she remarked that she would not enjoy the job of Treasurer dealing with accounts. I was most impressed that she spoke to everyone in the room.

Pauline and I will still remain members and give a hand whenever needed. Like other WI members I will join in the many activities and talks which the National Federation and Oxfordshire Federation put on for us – for example craft, cooking, art, and history lectures and many other topics – and all that Steeple Aston WI has to offer.

It has been a great honour and privilege and I am proud to have been a member and served the Steeple Aston WI with all the opportunities it has given me. Why not come and join us? You do not know what you may be missing and where it might lead.

**Linda Needle (President)**

### All about s'mores

In the 'Brownies in Lockdown' article last month, Seren mentioned making chocolate s'mores treats. This was not, as some suggested, a spelling error, but an abbreviation for 'some more'.

S'mores are a campfire treat popular in North America. They are made from toasted marshmallows and a layer of chocolate sandwiched between two pieces of graham cracker. These crackers are not available in the UK – digestive biscuits are said to be an acceptable substitute.

The treat appears to have been a favourite with Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts in the 1920s and a recipe is published in 'Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts' (1927).



## THE VALENTINE CLUB

Spring is here and according to government guidelines, or should I say ‘roadmap’, we can see a beaming light at the end of this exceptionally long tunnel we have all been travelling down over the past 14 months.

I think I can say that all our members have had their first ‘jab’ and given a few more weeks will have received their second. With this in mind, The Valentine Club committee has come up with a cunning plan to open up again after the longest break in our 69-year history. With the kind assistance of Middle Aston House, we are going to meet on the 20<sup>th</sup> July at this wonderful setting for a sumptuous tea and an opportunity to enjoy the company of all our members.

More details will be revealed over the next few weeks, but this is hopefully something to look forward to as we all start to be released from what has felt like a lifetime of confinement in our homes. In the meantime, keep safe, watch out for others and enjoy the longer days that are upon us now.

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

Kind regards to everyone, keep smiling and keep an eye out for your neighbours and friends.

**Richard Preston – Group organiser**  
*Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com*

### **Are you fed-up with doing the same old walks?**

Take a look at [walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire/](http://walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire/)

With hundreds of walks to freely download and print, it also has books of walks, contact details for walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group, all the information is here in one place.

John Harris says “There is so much walking information on the web, but it is difficult to find. Walking in Oxfordshire (part of the [www.walkinginengland.co.uk](http://www.walkinginengland.co.uk) suite of websites, one for each county in England) has brought it together in one place. Whether you are walking from home, or away on holiday, you will be able to find a suitable walk.”

With walks from half-a-mile to more than twelve, and a note of suitability for pushchairs and wheelchairs, everyone will be able find a walk to enjoy. Note that lockdown restrictions might still be affecting how far you can travel from home and whether walking in groups is allowed, but you will be able to plan walks for when restrictions are lifted.



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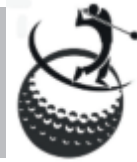
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Our road map to playing golf seems to be sort of getting on track, The Wychwood, unfortunately, is not possible on 7<sup>th</sup> May, however The Springs say we are OK for 11<sup>th</sup> June so that will be our first meeting of the year. For more information please contact Alan or Chris on 01869 340423 / 347173.

## **Marital Understanding**

How men and women record things in their diaries.....

### **Wife's Diary:**

Tonight, I thought my husband was acting weird. We had made plans to meet at a nice restaurant for dinner. I was shopping with my friends all day long, so I thought he was upset at the fact that I was a bit late, but he made no comment on it. Conversation wasn't flowing, so I suggested that we go somewhere quiet so we could talk. He agreed, but he didn't say much. I asked him what was wrong. He said, "Nothing..." I asked him if it was my fault that he was upset. He said he wasn't upset, that it had nothing to do with me and not to worry about it. On the way home, I told him that I loved him. He smiled slightly and kept driving. I can't explain his behaviour. I don't know why he didn't say, "I love you, too." When we got home, I felt as if I had lost him completely, as if he wanted nothing to do with me anymore. He just sat there quietly and watched TV. He continued to seem distant and absent. Finally, with silence all around us, I decided to go to bed. About 15 minutes later, he came to bed. But I still felt that he was distracted and his thoughts were somewhere else. He fell asleep. I cried. I don't know what to do. I'm almost sure that his thoughts are with someone else. My life is a disaster.

### **Husband's Diary:**

A two-foot putt.....who the hell misses a two-foot putt!

*Alan Brewer*





*Photo: © Miggy Wild*

### **Achieving natural results with Adobe Lightroom**

March saw a return visit from Nathan Barry to speak to us about achieving a natural result with Lightroom. Nathan is primarily a landscape photographer who aims to achieve a natural effect when in post-production with an image.

During the interactive evening Nathan explained his thought process, by demonstrating within Lightroom the variety of changes he might make to a photograph. The possibilities he suggested were making the sky brighter in a reflection, using a graduated filter to make the sky darker or a crop to focus the eye to move through the image. It was interesting how a little movement of the adjustment sliders made a difference to the results.

Nathan emphasised the importance of the tone curve and how effective tweaking the curve could be. Members bravely submitted a selection of their images for a makeover by Nathan with the subtle changes improving the photograph even more. Regardless of the members' expertise everyone found the evening interesting, including the use of the lens correction button for a subtle vignette.

Nathan Barry's images can be seen at [www.theimageproject.xyz](http://www.theimageproject.xyz)

Clever software can enhance an image. Everyone was encouraged to build on the skills workshops previously delivered, pre-pandemic, by Jim Muller. So, more tweaking of the sliders will be the order of the day from now on.

Our next meeting will be the AGM on 7<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30pm followed by the 'What is it?' slideshow. You are welcome to join us by Zoom – go to the website to find the links. Who knows – it might not be too long before we can meet in person.

**Anne Hunsley**  
[www.addphoto.co.uk](http://www.addphoto.co.uk)

## Lifetime Averages...Bowling

Nobody has claimed their £10 prize for calculating the Batting Averages for the 2021 Season, so I think I am safe to print the Lifetime Bowling Averages. It is worth pointing out that averages do not tell the whole story (after all that would make Dom Bess our third best batsman in India!), but it's pouring with rain as I write, so at least it gives us all something to study. Paul Longman and Tom Chesser have been our best bowlers over the last few seasons. You can often see Paul wandering across our wicket during the off season, wearing extra baggy trousers dropping "red dirt" on the pitch, as if in a scene from the Great Escape! However, the Barton Abbey strip will never match Chennai for spin, although we are trying to improve both the speed and bounce with constant rolling. Greg Renk has taken over the role of "Beastmaster" from the much missed Jock Shepherd and we will start flattening the molehills again in April....once it stops raining! Here are the stats.

Players	Overs	Runs	Wkts	Average	Runs/ Over	5 Wickets/ Innings
Jack Higgins	9.2	33	4	8.25	3.6	
Charlie Scotchbrook	43.2	190	17	11.18	4.4	
Tom Chesser	127.1	366	28	13.07	2.9	1
Arthur Higgins	34	184	13	14.15	5.4	
Peter Higgins	494.7	1852	124	14.94	3.7	2
Paul Longman	376.7	1554	97	16.02	4.1	3
Jamie Longman	107.6	385	24	16.04	3.6	
Toby Parker	19	75	4	18.75	3.9	
Rob Wilson-Fry	235.4	706	37	19.08	3.0	
Greg Renk	244.5	1131	59	19.17	4.6	
Paul Nicholaides	21	120	6	20.00	5.7	
Hugo Rittson-T	27.5	150	7	21.43	5.5	
Chris Watson	21	140	6	23.33	6.7	
Nigel Doggett	73	400	17	23.53	5.5	
Hector Higgins	8	48	2	24.00	6.0	
Jonty Renk	210	864	35	24.69	4.1	
Mark Parker	46.2	286	11	26.00	6.2	
Ben Parker	48	179	6	29.83	3.7	
Stan Owen	114	627	21	29.86	5.5	
Harry Startin	17	103	3	34.33	6.1	
Will Doggett	12.4	69	2	34.50	5.6	
Sam Hatzigeorgiou	43.1	343	8	42.88	8.0	
Olly Doggett	44	176	4	44.00	4.0	
Phil Chesser	37	253	5	50.60	6.8	
Jon Scotchbrook	20.3	162	3	54.00	8.0	
James Liebrecht	37	204	3	68.00	5.5	
Jeremy Farrar	8	69	1	69.00	8.6	
Charlie Simmons-J	10	92	1	92.00	9.2	
Jock Shepherd	13	94	1	94.00	7.2	
Jeremy Lowe	12	96	1	96.00	8.0	

Our first fixture is on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May at home against Bicester & North Oxford – please do come along and support, though you will need to bring your own flask of tea and cakes! Best wishes to all.

**Peter Higgins, Chairman**



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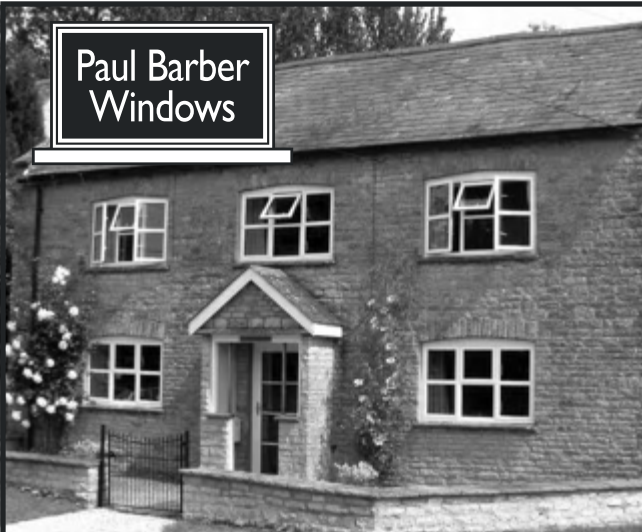
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# Church Matters



Christ is Risen! I would like to begin by wishing everyone a very happy Easter.

Every time I take my dog out for a walk it seems as if someone else has had the vaccine and I hear the same mix of stories – a bit of a sore arm and surprising welling up of hope. By the time this is published, I very much hope I've experienced both for myself.

Honestly, like everyone else there have been moments over the past few months when hope has run a bit low in the Rectory. But when it has...I have been reminded again and again just how amazing God's love is, and just how amazingly that love works.

For, as on Good Friday we see Jesus' hands outstretched in love on the cross, through the whole long painful year behind us I have seen so many hands outstretched in love across our village. Hands to share, to care, to help, to reach out and simply to love. Hands that have been prevented from touching other hands have yet touched hearts. Our care, our love, is a wonderful reflection of God's care and love at work around us, for as St Teresa of Avila said:

“Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which he blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.”

I have been asked many times over these hard months, where is God? As I have seen constant kindnesses between neighbours and strangers all around, even when hope has run low my eyes have been lifted up and my answer has been: here. Right here. And so thank you, because though my hope has run low, you have made sure it never ran dry.

## Easter Church

This year we will do our very best to hold in-person services on Easter Sunday, so that we can see that hope, that love, that presence of Jesus in each others' eyes, face-to-face.

We are planning to run three services on Easter Sunday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. In North Aston and Tackley churchyards we will hold very short events at 9am (North Aston) and 10am (Tackley) which will see a bell rung, the Easter Gospel read, a shout of praise and a prayer together. In Steeple Aston churchyard at 11am we will hold an open air Communion for anyone and everyone in the Benefice to attend. No need to book. Come, wear a face covering/mask, use hand sanitiser, bring your own chair and make sure you keep good distance away from anyone you don't live with! If the weather is bad, it will just be a brief event as at the other two churches; otherwise we will have a full outdoor communion service to celebrate Easter together. Everyone welcome.

And our online services Worship at Home will carry on through April (including at Easter), available on our website [www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com) or the special phone number 929021 until (hopefully) we begin regular in-person worship again with a new series of outdoor communions around our churchyards from the beginning of May. North Aston on May 2<sup>nd</sup> is scheduled as the first of those. Put it in your diary!

Keep watching the website and church noticeboards for further news. Here's to an Easter full of hope and to some of that hope being fulfilled soon.

**Revd Marcus Green**





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# April 2021

## Easter Sunday April 4th

### A Reading of the Easter Gospel:

9am North Aston Church Yard

10am Tackley Church Yard

*these short services include a reading, a prayer,  
and a bell being rung to celebrate the day*

### Easter Open Air Benefice Communion

11am Steeple Aston Church Yard

*Please bring your own seat to Steeple Aston,  
and face coverings/masks are required at all services.*

*In case of bad weather,  
the Benefice Communion will be replaced by  
a third short reading of the Easter Gospel.  
There is no need to book for Easter services*

### The remaining Sunday Services in April

can be found week by week online at:

**Worship at Home**

**[www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com)**

*or listen to the service on the phone:  
ring 929021 if you don't have internet*

# Everyone welcome!

# Local Info

## Steeple Aston Village Hall

	Hiring Fee	Caution
<b>Hall (meeting night)</b>		
Represented Clubs.....	£9	
Non-Represented Clubs.....	£17	
<b>Hall Only (social occasion)</b>		
Represented Clubs.....	£32	
Others.....	£53	
<b>All Facilities (social occasion)</b>		
Village Residents .....	£65	£200
Represented Clubs.....	£65	£200
Others - up to 6 hours.....	£110	£300
Others - over 6 hours.....	£160	£300
<b>All Facilities (off peak - 4 hours)</b>		
Village Residents .....	£30	£75
Represented Clubs.....	£30	£75
<b>Committee Room</b>		
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 is Thursday

April	May
1 <sup>st</sup> green	6 <sup>th</sup> blue & brown
8 <sup>th</sup> blue & brown	13 <sup>th</sup> green
15 <sup>th</sup> green	20 <sup>th</sup> blue & brown
22 <sup>nd</sup> blue & brown	27 <sup>th</sup> green
29 <sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:rec.trust@googlemail.com)

Chairman - Torquil McLusky - Tel: 347914

Treasurer - Chris Cooper - Tel: 347173

## BUS TIMES

### STAGECOACH S4 BUS SERVICE

Bus services are slowly returning to normal. This timetable is effective from 7 March 2021.

#### From Steeple Aston (outside Post Office) to Oxford (arrival time in italics)

##### Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)

0624 0702 0746 0920 then hourly to 1520 1621 1721 1821 1932 2047 2217  
 0702 0800 0844 1003 1603 1702 1802 1902 2010 2125 2255

##### Saturdays

0704 0804 0919 then hourly to 1819 1932 2004 2217  
 0746 0846 1002 1902 2010 2125 2255

##### Sundays and most public holidays

0903 1033 1203 1333 1503 1633 1803  
 0944 1114 1244 1414 1544 1714 1844

#### From Steeple Aston (outside Post Office) to Banbury (arrival time in italics)

##### Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)

0752 0855 0957 then hourly to 1457 1600 1700 1800 1900 1955 2107 2222 2352  
 0835 0935 1035 1535 1638 1738 1838 1929 2024 2135 2250 0020

##### Saturdays

0759 0857 0957 then hourly to 1557 1657 1757 1855 1955 2107 2222 2352  
 0835 0935 1035 1635 1731 1831 1924 2024 2135 2250 0020

##### Sundays and most public holidays

0917 1037 1207 1337 1507 1637 1807 1937  
 0953 1113 1243 1413 1543 1713 1843 2005

Times subject to change. Before starting your journey please check the timetables at [www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables](http://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables) E&OE

### OURBUS BARTONS

OurBus Bartons suspended services during the pandemic, but hopes to start a revised timetable from April 12th. It is also offering, where possible, transport to Covid-19 vaccination centres, hospitals and health centres. See [ourbusbartons.btck.co.uk/](http://ourbusbartons.btck.co.uk/)



# Steeple Aston Calendar

Few village events are taking place during lockdown. Check the village website at [www.steepleaston.org.uk](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk) (Home > Calendar) for the latest information.

<b>April</b>			
Sunday April 4th	Easter Sunday. See page 42 for Church services		
Thursday 15th	SAL May issue copy and advert deadline		
Monday 19th	Parish Council meeting	Zoom	7.30pm
Saturday 24th	Deddington Farmers' Market		
<b>May</b>			
Thursday 15th	SAL June issue copy and advert deadline		
Monday 17th	Parish Council meeting	Zoom	7.30pm
Saturday 22th	Deddington Farmers' Market		

Due to coronavirus many clubs and societies are unable to meet in person but may still meet online. Please contact the organisers for the most up to date information. Contact details can be found on page 2.

**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) closed at present**

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