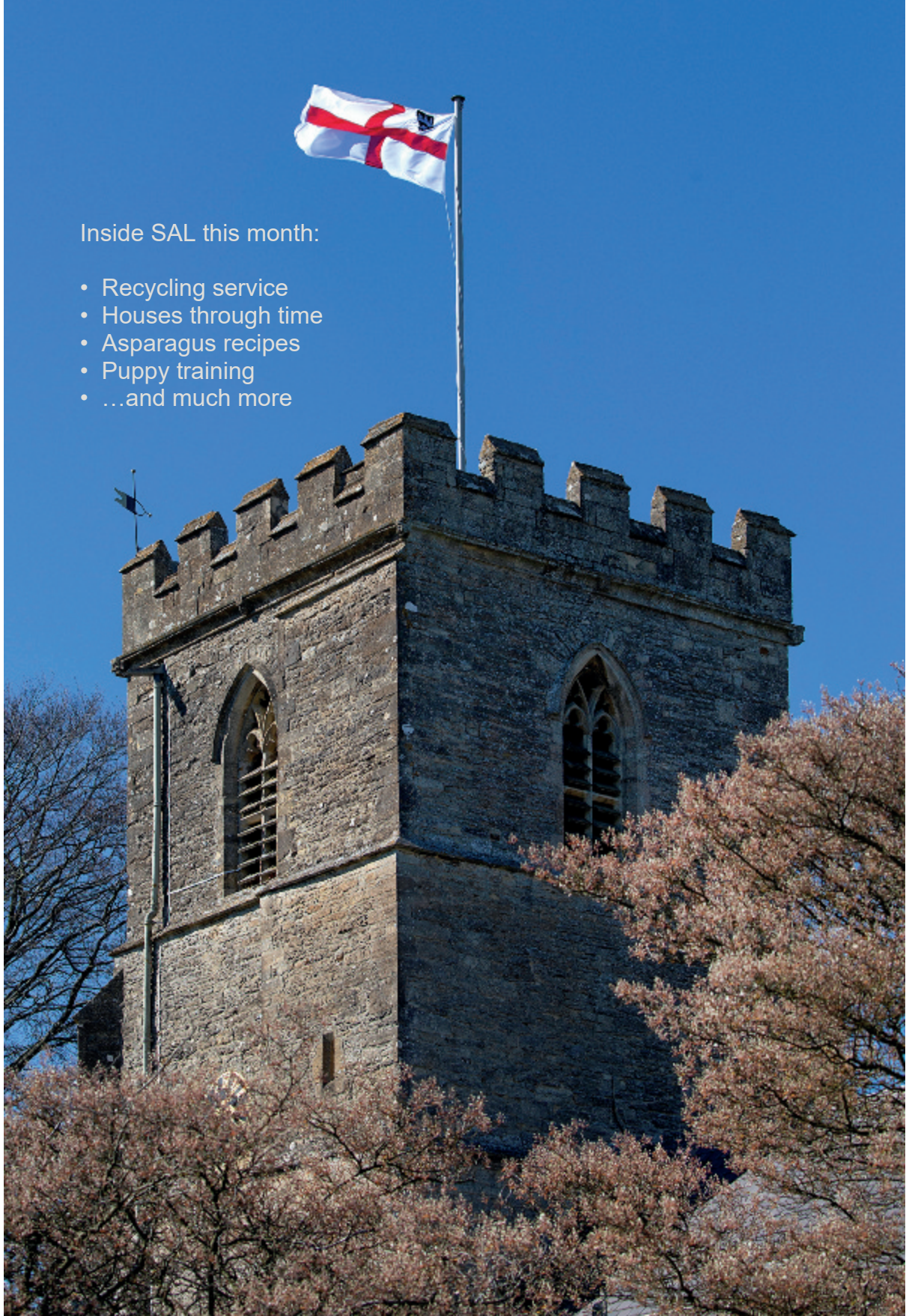


Steeple Aston *Life*

May 2021 Issue No. 573

Inside SAL this month:

- Recycling service
- Houses through time
- Asparagus recipes
- Puppy training
- ...and much more



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Cover photo: Nigel Francis.

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

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

COPY DEADLINES

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

The copy deadline for the June 2021 issue is therefore 15th May.

READ STEEPLE ASTON LIFE ONLINE
<https://www.steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine>

ADVERTS

All adverts, and all advertising queries (*availability, prices, dimensions, suitability of illustrations, etc.*) to **Charlotte Bartlett**
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1/2 page - £12, 1/4 page- £6.

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Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Lydia Powell	347746
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Hand-bell ringers		Sally Cooper	347173
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Deddington Health Centre	Appointments		338611
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Police	24hr Call Centre	(non emergency)	101
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Women's Institute	Joint Presidents	Merrill Bayley, Cathy Lawday	347802, 347209



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

Steeple Aston *Life*

May 2021
Issue No. 573

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Editorial

"Queer things happen in the garden in May. Little faces forgotten appear, and plants thought to be dead suddenly wave a green hand to confound you." (W. E. Johns, journalist, writer and creator of the Biggles series of air adventures, 1893 to 1968)

May is unique – at least as far as the calendar is concerned. In any year, no other month will start on the same day of the week as May. Which is quite amazing, given that there are only seven days in the week, but 12 months in the year. And no other month will finish on the same day of the week as May. Double amazing.

This May is also different as we begin cautiously to ease out of lockdown. You might already have had a much-needed haircut, liberated your pent-up passion for shopping or enjoyed an outdoor pub experience. However, face masks are still mandatory in shops and some other locations. Social distancing (or as I call it, anti-social distancing) is still advised when you meet anyone outside your household or social bubble. However, regulations can change on a daily basis, so keep a watch on the news.

Some people are nervous about the speed of some of these changes. But keep in mind that while it was important to follow Covid-19 restrictions, you can come out of lockdown at your own pace.

I have never seen Star Wars, but even I am aware of Star Wars Day. May the fourth be with you!

Robert

This issue of SAL is mostly printed in black-and-white. To see the photographs in glorious colour visit the digital edition at steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine

Photos:

Cover: The new Church flag flying high

Below: The Steeple Aston Churchyard working party tidying up for Easter. From the left: David, Nick, Roger, Shirley, Graham, Lawrence, Eileen and Andrew.

Both photos by Nigel Francis.



Steeple Aston Noticeboard



Christian Aid Week May 2021

The annual Christian Aid collection takes place from 10th to 16th May. Christian Aid aims to end poverty and injustice worldwide and their work has never been more important as Covid-19 ravages the world. Many of you have donated very generously in previous years and Christian Aid will be very grateful for whatever you can give.

This year volunteers will be delivering envelopes on or around 10th May. There are three ways in which you can donate:

- a) there will be an address on the envelope where you can return it to the volunteer.
- b) you can donate on line at **christianaid.org.uk**
- c) Pari and Raj have kindly offered to take in envelopes at the shop.

It would be a huge help if you can return the envelope by 16th May. If you are a UK taxpayer, please remember to fill in the Gift Aid slip. This increases your donation by 25%.

Thank you.

Caroline Parsons, Local Organiser

Dates for your diary



Open Gardens – Sunday 20th June

Under the National Garden Scheme (NGS), Steeple Aston will be opening six gardens between 2pm and 6pm on Sunday 20th June. Following over 12 months of restrictions and frustration, this will be a wonderful opportunity to get out in the village and support such a worthwhile charity that in turn supports many charities such as Cancer Research and Macmillan Nurses. This will be one day before the proposed lifting of all lockdown restrictions, so social distancing is requested and having the correct money of £6 per person ready to save handling of cash would be appreciated.

Steeple and Middle Aston Annual Flower Show and Fun Dog Show

Monday 30th August – Robinson's Close and Village Hall – 2pm

Subject to any changes in the 'Roadmap', we will be back with what could potentially be the biggest and best flower show yet. More details as we approach August, but in the meantime, a schedule of classes can be found on the village website.

These foolish things

Did you discover the April Fool buried deep in the April issue? Many did not. Take a look at the final paragraph on page 12, where I talk about the Zemmouri rabbit (true) which is native to Morocco (true) and lays its eggs in underground warrens (false). Like all the other species of rabbit, the Zemmouri is viviparous, which means it gives birth to live young. If you have children who read SAL, please make sure they know that this was an April Fool. I would hate to be responsible for egg-laying rabbits appearing as answers in future biology exams!

Incidentally, if you subscribe to the common belief that all mammals give birth to live young, you have been misled. There are five that lay eggs. No fooling. They are the Duck-billed Platypus, Western Long-beaked Echidna, Eastern Long-beaked Echidna, Short-beaked Echidna and Sir David's Long-beaked Echidna (named after naturalist Sir David Attenborough). All are indigenous to Australia and New Guinea.

Robert Scott



Domesday Book 2021

Village halls nationwide have been asked to write an entry for the 'Domesday Book 2021'. This is to provide a view of community halls before, during and recovering from the pandemic. The survey has been organised by ACRE – Action with Communities in Rural England. See acre.org.uk

Margaret Bulleyment, Secretary of the Village Hall Management Committee, has produced the following report.

Steeple Aston Village Hall, North Oxfordshire

In the early 1970s, village activities were largely held in out-of-hours school buildings, or sheds and ad hoc sites dotted around the village. When Dr. Radcliffe's, the village primary school, was moved across the road to a modern building, it allowed the Victorian school premises it left behind to be transformed into a hall suitable for the whole village.

Annual events like the Firework Evening – always on 5th

November – were quickly established to bring the whole community together and through the years the hall has become a meeting place and base for a whole variety of village organisations and events – the Valentine Club for those of 60 years and over, Oxfordshire's oldest WI, the Choral Society, the Badminton Group, the Garden Club, the Horticultural Society, the Village Archive, drama and dance classes for all age groups, weddings, parties, quizzes, plays and concerts – all of which flourished until March 2020.

We have used the lockdown time positively, bringing forward interior decorating and other maintenance work, for which the finance was already in place. The brief re-opening for the childrens' activities in the autumn tested our new Covid-safe procedures and showed us that normal activities could still work.

An online quiz, attracting a different group from our usual annual quiz groups in the hall, proved successful and also brought in some income, but we were grateful for the local council grant to replenish our coffers.

People are amazed at how the hall with its staging, lighting and high ceilings can transform itself overnight from a midsummer night's dream wedding to an exhibition hall, or the 'Allo, 'Allo café. However, the hall cannot transform into anything without people using it and as our 50th anniversary approaches next year, we are confident that as soon as it is possible our village groups and outside hirers will return, bringing the building back to life and restoring the hall to its place at the centre of the community.

www.steepleaston.org.uk/villagehall

SAL will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Village Hall next year. If you have any memories and/or photographs of the hall you would like to share, please send them to editorsalife@gmail.com

Locked Down Cookbook

Have you contributed to the Steeple Aston Locked Down Cookbook? (See SAL April 2021, page 5). The organisers are collecting 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. Collected together the recipes could make a record of what we were making in our kitchens during the pandemic.

Send your recipe to eileen@baglinjones.com as soon as possible. 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.

Once the collection has been printed, you will be able to buy your copy (in aid of church funds) and try out some of the dishes or treats your neighbours have been enjoying during Lockdown.

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Steeple People



Hannah Norbury-Meeajane

How long have you lived here? Middle Aston has been home for my whole life – 35 years – but with time at University and working in London.

What brought you here? My family lived in Steeple Aston and when my mum was pregnant with me they decided they wanted to move somewhere with a bigger garden and more space.

What do you like best about living in Middle Aston? Beautiful countryside, clean air, picturesque villages and the kind neighbours. When I was a child it felt like we lived in the middle of nowhere, but the area has changed a lot as I've grown up and rural Oxfordshire now feels much closer to London with more connections.

Give a potted history of yourself – in 40 words or less. Steeple Aston Playgroup, Dr Radcliffe's, then Oxford High School GDST. Worked for a year in publishing companies in Oxford, including OUP. Went to University in London to study music and manage bands. I've worked at the BBC for 13 years.



Early bird or night owl? Cat or dog? Optimist or pessimist? Most definitely a night owl, but I missed seeing early morning sunlight when I used to get up at 4am to produce the Breakfast show. I love all animals, we have a dog. I'm an optimist, but realistic.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Thanks to flying back and forth to Australia to see family when I was very young, I first wanted to be a pilot. Then when I was little I used to look at Middle Aston House and wanted to run a hotel there! By the time I was a teenager I wanted to become a music producer and for a while I contemplated starting up a residential recording studio at the end of the garden. I'm now glad I didn't as it would have been hell for my vegetable patch.

What do you do for a living now? I am a Producer at BBC Radio 4 in the digital team. I commission and work on podcasts and features for the website. I run 'Radio 4 in Four' and I work on lots of the books.

What is the worst job you've ever done? I've been lucky enough to have enjoyed everywhere I've worked, but perhaps the strangest job I did was my first role at the BBC in Maida Vale Studios. For 18 months I digitised part of the BBC archive – old disintegrating reel-to-reel recordings.

What's your favourite piece of music? Impossible to pick, I love all music, from hardcore gangster rap to classical, cheesy pop to heavy metal and everything around and in-between. At University I studied a lot of World Music and Ethnomusicology, so I love listening to some very different stuff.

What are you reading at the moment? 'We Are All Birds of Uganda' by Hafsa Zayyan from #Merky Books and Akala's book 'Native: Race and Class in the Ruins of Empire'.

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? My husband Nuur was born in Mauritius and we were hoping to go last year to visit family, so that will be our first trip when it is safe.

What do you do to relax? I love gardening, going for a walk, reading, driving, playing videogames, playing the piano, listening to music, cooking, cleaning, doing the Saturday prize crossword, watching all sorts of sports on TV.

Who would you most like to have dinner with – dead or alive? My mum and my nana, who both died when I was 17-18 years old. I have so many questions to ask them.

What do you get grumpy/mad about? Unkindness, bullies, manipulative behaviour and potholes.

Tell us something about you that most people don't know. My mum Wendy Norbury used to work on Steeple Aston Life when I was little and I used to test out her children's puzzles. My nana and grandad, Amy and David Cattermole, ran the Valentine Club for many years. I used to go and play the piano in the village hall when everybody was eating their lunch and I went on quite a few of the bus trips to the seaside.

The ARTS Page



Despite lockdown easing, the Arts picture is still sketchy. Some organisations are announcing their plans, others not. Here are a few, doubtless random selections, that have caught our eye.

Oxford Playhouse Plenty on offer, with Ralph Fiennes in a production of Eliot's 'Four Quartets' (June 14 to 26) especially interesting. oxfordplayhouse.com

Creation Theatre Enterprising as ever, with an 'online live' Romeo and Juliet (12 to 23 May). creationtheatre.co.uk

Chipping Norton Theatre Extensive programme, using other venues as well, notably Broughton Castle for open air cinema, including "Shakespeare in Love", partly filmed there (May 29) and an enticing looking "Jeeves and Wooster" in the main theatre (June 9 - 12) chippingnortontheatre.com

Mill Arts Centre Banbury As well as an extensive and eclectic programme, there are many exciting short courses from creative writing to life drawing, via jewellery making, etc. Also, a terrific online Student Arts exhibition. themillartscentre.co.uk

Oxfordshire Arts Weeks (May 1 to 23) has its North Oxfordshire openings between May 1 and 9. Go to artweeks.org and What's New, to download the brochure. Plenty of wonderful exhibitions in our area.

The Ashmolean Museum has plenty for adults and children and we eagerly await its opening. ashmolean.org

Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra (formerly known as Oxford Philomusica) has some some streamed concerts, notably with Nicola Benedetti on May 23. bit.ly/3e45Mws

Let's hope next month we'll have more on offer and subsequently move back to the normal lively, and live, arts scene, not least in our villages.

Nick and Heather

If you are still looking for home entertainment, here are a couple of items in keeping with the current month – and one that isn't.

Extremely enjoyable is 'The Lusty Month of May' from 'Camelot' at the BBC Proms 2012, sung with gusto by Sierra Boggess.

bit.ly/3mUT5bv

It is not too late to enjoy this lively performance of 'Spring' from Vivaldi's 'The Four Seasons' with Alana Youssefian (violin).

bit.ly/2RAdzus


And included here for no other reason than it will bring a smile to your face in these trying times, Simon Russell Beale and friends sing 'Everybody Ought to have a Maid' from 'A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum', by Stephen Sondheim. BBC Proms 2010.


bit.ly/3eh8A9Y


Robert




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The Gardening Spot

April showers bring forth May flowers

I am writing in the middle of April, so by time you read this it might well be out of date – but over the past six weeks we have had just 1½ inches of rain. So where are the April showers and for that matter, the warmth needed to make things grow? I planted my potatoes around Easter weekend and since then it has been cold with constant night-time frosts. I can hear you saying, “doesn’t he moan, it is simply the British weather acting normally”. Well, I think it is in the nature of gardeners and farmers to moan, and let’s face it, no-one takes any notice!

So, assuming the sun is shining, and some nice warm rains have fallen, here are a few jobs to keep you occupied whilst we wait for Boris to let us all loose again. Keep mowing the lawn, not forgetting to edge it as that will show off your grass to the best effect. Daffodils and tulips are now past their best or approaching that state, but don’t be tempted to remove the foliage just yet as the bulb is now taking in nourishment to provide a display next year. Leave the foliage for about six weeks after flowering before removing any dying leaves or simply let them disappear naturally and save a job.

For any tall perennials, it is a good idea to place some supports around them now before they get too tall. If you can, mulch around the plants to help retain moisture and suppress weeds. Bedding plants offer a superb way to give that splash of colour to any garden, but be patient as a late frost can kill them in one hit. In my working days I used to sell thousands of bedding plants, but would never deliver them until the third week in May. Keep that in mind before being tempted by all those wonderful plants to be found in garden centres.

In the vegetable garden, as the potatoes pop through the ground, earth them up to increase the crop and protect from the possibility of a late frost. Keep hoeing to reduce competition from all those weeds. My mother, who was a fantastic gardener, had a saying which I try not to forget. “Never let a weed see a Sunday.” In other words, stop the weeds before they get too big and if you hoe through what looks like clean soil, you will be removing seedlings that are just under the surface.

On to the greenhouse where plants have been taking shelter over the past weeks or months. Tomatoes are something I have been growing for over 60 years and still get them wrong. This year I decided to sow a few ‘special’ seeds in readiness for exhibition around the end of August. They all germinated really well and I was so pleased as I potted them into individual containers. Within a week they had all died and I haven’t a clue what happened. Hurriedly, I sowed some ‘ordinary’ seed and again, they all germinated so again I potted them up, but this time mixing my usual potting compost with some sand and grit. I now have tomato plants ready to be planted into my cold greenhouse as soon as the overnight temperature increases.

I have received some grafted cucumber plants through the post and am in the process of encouraging them to grow after what I guess was a traumatic experience with Royal Mail whilst travelling from sunny Devon.

May can be a month where you can ventilate your greenhouse – a good circulation of air is so important to the health and well-being of all plants. Remember to water, preferably early in the morning or later in the evening. Keep an eye on climbing roses as they will need tying in. Don’t forget to feed plants as, just like us, they enjoy a good meal and will reward you with bigger and better crops and flowers.

Finally, I will leave you with a bit of advice on the identification of plants or weeds. “The best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it is a valuable plant.”

Enjoy your garden or outdoor space. I look forward to seeing many of you at the open gardens in June.

Richard Preston

Houses through time

As with music, it is rare to find anyone who is not in possession of at least a passing interest in some aspect of history. The difference is in how we like it served up – in visiting historic homes, watching period dramas and so on. Currently, family history is increasingly popular and TV programmes such as ‘Who Do You Think You Are?’ and ‘Long Lost Family’ reflect this. There’s much to be enjoyed in speculating how physical features or personal qualities are passed on through the generations.

In my research into family history, I am drawn most towards finding out about my ancestors within the context of the place and time they lived. I find myself studying Census records not just for my own family, but the ones next door, the neighbours they lived amongst and the children they played with in the street. I discovered that my mother’s family, who lived in Halesowen, were ‘nailers’ (as in makers of nails) in a street almost entirely populated with other nailers because that was the Halesowen specialism, just as other Black Country towns produced chains or brass tubing or nuts and bolts. My ancestors went out to work with a streetful of others, suffered the same debilitating industrial diseases and drank at the local pub together (probably called ‘The Nailers’ Arms’!). This pattern was reproduced for millions of working people across the nation as the product of the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries in

which the Black Country features prominently. I find research of this kind far more attractive than discovering I was tenuously related to some minor aristocrat 20 generations ago.

So it will come as no surprise that the television history series I have most enjoyed is the ‘A House in Time’, where a single house is the subject of a study through its entire history, logging the different families who passed through and their various occupations, charting how the houses were altered to accommodate wealthy merchants in one era and student tenants in another, the effects of war and pandemics and, as all three studied were in major ports, the broad sweep of colonial and trade history.



Not all houses are able to be studied in this way, but here in Steeple and Middle Aston SAVA has made a good start over recent years, with the enthusiastic co-operation of the owners of 15 houses, so far. From humble dwellings to imposing houses, each one has slowly revealed its history, and those of its occupants, as we delve into Census information and painstakingly investigate the evidence of change that the buildings themselves contain. SAVA’s 2021

autumn exhibition in the Village Hall, COVID-restrictions willing, will feature our findings on some of the most interesting ‘houses through time’ in our two villages. We hope you will come and enjoy it.

continued

To give a flavour of what you might expect to see, here is a section of the research I have done on my own house. Whitestones or 'White Stones' on South Side is one of a pair of houses, with Clare Cottage, built together in around 1875. It appears that a farmer from Lower Heyford, Richard Coggins, bought neighbouring Orchard Lea in 1873 and soon afterwards had the two houses built on the adjacent roadside garden plot in what we would call today speculative building. There was a surge in demand for housing as the village grew quickly around this time. The houses were for rental and passed through the hands of Coggins's niece and other relatives before eventually being sold on, still as rentals. It was not until comparatively recently that they have been owner-occupied. In the nature of rented accommodation, there was a fairly regular turnover in tenants over the years, though with one exception. When we bought the house nearly forty years ago, it was impossible to ignore the crude engraving on a stone pillar outside which once carried iron railings. It has recently faded, but

reads: J. HAMBIDGE 24th June 1915 (see photo).

The Hambidges were tenants in Whitestones from about 1903 to 1941. The 1911 Census shows that John William Hambidge, the author of this early 20th century graffiti, was born in October 1898 and so would have been 16 at the time he made his mark. It was not the only one he made. June 1915 was a fine, dry month and John must have had time on his hands. More of his handiwork can be found in the alleyway between the two houses where his initials are joined with those of JB. Is this a clue to the assistance he was given in the supply of the necessary tools by 13-year-old John Barrett from the family of stone masons and engravers who lived just a short distance away in Compass Cottage?

There is much more to tell on this and other stories. SAVA's exhibition in November will reveal all.

Dave Jarratt, SAVA

Steeple Aston Village Archive (SAVA) is a charitable trust, established in 2001. Its management committee of eight local people runs the Village History Centre, adjacent to the Village Hall, which is normally open to the public every Saturday morning, from 10-12. As COVID rules are relaxed, we hope to re-open the Centre on May 22nd.

Members of SAVA can help you research your family history, your house, and many other aspects of the life of both Middle and Steeple Aston. SAVA usually receives much of its financial support each year at its annual exhibition in the Village Hall, and in book sales and donations. Last year, we had to cancel our exhibition because of COVID, but we still managed to produce a new book. In 2021, we're planning a new exhibition using material from the detailed studies of local houses that we have made over the years (see article above).

We have so far produced 12 books and several CDs and DVDs packed with information about topics such as the Church, the Schools, the development of the villages, Farming, Business and Trade, and Village Personalities.

We rely on the generosity of local residents to keep our charitable work going, with research and archive work which has continued despite the closure of the Centre. So please drop in and see us once we re-open, or take a look at our online shop at www.steepleastonarchive.org.uk. You can get in touch with SAVA at steepleastonarchive@gmail.com

Parish Council Meeting Notes



The April Parish Council meeting started with the sad news that Bob Bickley was retiring a week later. He is giving up looking after Play Area after about seven years of keeping it clean and tidy. He will be sorely missed. Thank you, Bob, from us all. An advert for a replacement for him is at the bottom of the next page. The Council will invite contractors (at huge expense) to take over the playground till a replacement can be found. The upkeep of the Play Area is substantial and the Councillors wondered if the users might be prepared to contribute to the costs, possibly via *gofundme*.

The theoretically raisable bollards protecting the back door of the Village Hall have seized up. Apparently, this does not mean they have to be dug out, but it does mean the locks will have to be cut off and replaced. It was proposed that the cleaning of the Play Area should include regular spraying of the bollard's locks with something like WD40.

A newish resident to the village, Peter Dammermann, has joined the Parish Council. He has been a Parish Councillor elsewhere and said he was expecting to make his biggest contribution on financial issues as he was an accountant. He moved to the village a year ago to be nearer to his daughter and her family. You can read about him in Steeple People in SAL December 2020. There is still one vacancy for a Parish Councillor and if you are interested why don't you come to the next Parish Council meeting and see what goes on. The Parish Clerk will send you an invitation if you contact her at

parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com

Our District Councillor was at the meeting and he reported that Cherwell were managing to keep up with their projected roll out of charging points for electric cars. He did tell us though that the charging points were in the towns and there was "little for the villages". Our County Councillor was also at the meeting and he explained that potentially he had some community grants to give out, but could not actually allocate any till after the local elections in May.

The next issue was the planning application for the redevelopment of the chicken sheds at Hatch End. You can see the plans for yourself on the village website at steepleaston.org.uk The existing buildings are run down and currently they are only partially utilised. The new owners of the site put in a planning application last year and withdrew it in the light of universal local disapproval, especially about the effects of the traffic likely to be generated by the proposed 28 units. The new application has a lower overall floor area than the current buildings, but the number of units have only been reduced from the initial 28 to 26. There are some positive changes though – the appearance of the units, the materials to be used, the height of the development and its impact on the countryside.

The biggest concern about the applications, both this time and last time, was the traffic likely to be generated. A new worry this time is that the application is for units under Class E. What this means is that for the latest application the units are not confined to offices or light industrial use. They could be anything from offices to shops, cafes, fitness centres, day nurseries or any other commercial use. This means there could be a huge increase in cars going to the site. It is assumed in

continued

Parish Council Meeting Notes



the plans that as a consequence of Covid, 80% of the users will arrive by car with the rest using buses, bikes or their feet. The Councillors thought 80% was unrealistically low and since many of the workers are likely to start between eight and nine in the morning the traffic by the school would get much worse. There were doubts about the estimates of the parking involved as it assumes the units are for typical business park use, but since the use could now be far wider the parking implications need to be reconsidered. Since the development is not for housing there is no requirement for it to include a pavement to join the one outside the school to the entrance to the site.

The concerns about the traffic were not confined to when the units are operating, but will also be an issue in the demolition and rebuilding phases as it is doubtful large low loaders will be able to make the turn by the shop onto Paines Hill and if a large lorry met the bus one or the other might have to back a long way. I wondered if the derelict house on Paines Hill needs a safety zone around it so that large lorries are unable to use that bit of the road. It looks as if the developers may be trying to get Steeple Aston and Middle Aston to vie with each other to avoid the extra traffic.

The Clerk was asked to request Cherwell planners to give us an extension of the time for comments till 21st May. The reason for this is to allow a **VILLAGE MEETING AT 7.30pm on 10th MAY on the Hatch End planning application.** This meeting will be on Zoom and to attend you need to ask for an invitation by emailing the Clerk on parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com or look for the meeting code on any of the noticeboards.

Someone suggested the village might have a party to celebrate the end of lockdown (if it ends, that is). The Councillors would be interested in ideas for this. Do come to the special meeting on 10th May on the Hatch End proposals and the usual monthly meeting on 17th May and don't forget Rousham Bridge will be closed from 17th May for up to four weeks.

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

Steeple Aston Parish Council invites quotations for providing daily cleaning, ideally in the early evening, of the playground and its toilet.

The work will comprise:

- inspection of the condition of the playground equipment
- sweeping up and tidying the area around the Village Hall and Sports and Recreation Centre
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- promptly reporting to the Parish Council any matters that need attention

The provider of the successful quotation will need to provide their own cleaning utensils and supplies; they should be eligible for self-employment status.

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In the Kitchen



May brings anticipation of a plentiful asparagus season. Fresh asparagus brings delight when simply steamed with butter, dipped in a boiled egg, sprinkled with shaved parmesan or dolloped with hollandaise. Here we offer additional asparagus recipes to make the most of the short season. All recipes serve four.

Asparagus Parmesan Risotto

2 tbsp olive oil	900ml vegetable stock, simmering hot
50g butter	20 asparagus spears, trimmed of woody ends
2 shallots, finely chopped	1 lemon, zested
400g carnaroli or arborio rice	75g Parmesan cheese, finely grated
300ml white wine	

Heat the oil and butter in a wide-bottomed pan over a low heat.

Add the shallots and gently fry for 5 minutes.

Increase the heat to medium, add the rice, coat with butter and cook for a few minutes.

Add the wine and stir until absorbed.

Gradually add ladles of hot stock, stirring and allowing each addition to absorb before adding the next.

Chop up the asparagus into 4 cm pieces.

Blanch the asparagus in a pan of boiling water until just tender, refresh under cold water. Separate and reserve the asparagus tips on a plate for topping the risotto at the serving stage

When the rice is almost 'al dente' add the asparagus, lemon zest, juice and cheese.

Season, remove from the heat. Cover for 5 minutes and scatter asparagus on each portion before serving.

Asparagus Spring Subzi

100g smoked back bacon cut into cubes
20g butter
20 asparagus spears, woody ends trimmed and sliced into 4cm pieces on the bias
1 large leek, thinly sliced crosswise (use white and pale green parts only)
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tsp lemon zest
1 tsp orange zest
50g toasted pine nuts
30g flat leaf parsley, chopped (or more to taste)
Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

In a large non-stick pan, sauté the cubed bacon, stirring frequently over medium heat until crisp and lightly golden.

Add butter to a separate pan.

Add asparagus pieces and chopped leeks. Sauté until asparagus is tender crisp, about 3 to 4 minutes.

Add crispened cubed bacon, garlic, lemon and orange zest, toasted pine nuts and parsley and sauté for about one minute, until fragrant.

Season to taste with freshly ground pepper and salt and serve immediately.

Panko Roasted Asparagus

20 asparagus spears trimmed of woody ends	2 tps lemon juice
200g good mayonnaise	150g panko bread crumbs
75g Dijon mustard	30ml sunflower oil

Preheat oven to 200C/390F, gas mark 6.

Snap off woody section from asparagus.

In a small bowl combine the mayonnaise, Dijon mustard and lemon juice.

Transfer half of the mayonnaise mixture to a small bowl, cover and chill until ready to serve.

Place panko bread crumbs in a large plate.

Spread asparagus with remaining mayonnaise mixture, then roll in panko bread crumbs to coat.

Place in a large baking tin and drizzle with sunflower oil.

Roast until asparagus is crisp-tender (approx. 12 minutes) and crumbs are golden.

Serve with reserved mayonnaise mixture.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

Ardnamurchan Point

Does an unfamiliar word or name sometimes get stuck in your mind so that it achieves a fizzing quality whenever you hear it? 'Ardnamurchan Point' had a special resonance for us. Neville and I would often listen to the Shipping Forecast on Radio 4 near midnight, always enjoying the 'Sailing By' waltz tune which preceded it (composed, I learn, by Ronald Binge in 1963).

This slow and gentle tune acted as a lullaby, so that it was difficult to keep awake to listen to any of the forecast which was giving details of wind direction, force of the wind and visibility for sailors around the coast of Britain. For some reason the name of Ardnamurchan Point struck a chord and, as we savoured the unfamiliar syllables, we wondered what manner of place it might be. We realised that it is one of the boundary points of Scottish inshore coastal areas, but knew no more.



Painting by Neville Jones

Then, one year while enjoying a holiday in the Scottish Highlands, we spotted it on the map and of course decided that we must go and explore, although it was clearly in a pretty remote situation on an isolated peninsula. It was exciting to realise that there was a lighthouse overlooking the sea towards the Inner Hebrides and various small islands. Our map-reading was correct. Ardnamurchan Point is a tremendously remote place, reached after driving many miles of narrow, single track and winding roads.

Because we visited early in the year the whole peninsula seemed deserted, so my memory is of the Ardnamurchan lighthouse standing sentinel, surrounded by crashing waves whipped up by fierce wind. It was a dramatic and atmospheric scene which (literally) took your breath away.

If you visit between April and October there is a café, a gift shop and toilets a few hundred yards below the lighthouse. When not in times of Covid you can visit the information centre and even book a guided tour of the lighthouse, but I think I'm rather glad that we were there alone when we could drink in the wild atmosphere of a place where information about the weather is collected to help keep ships and sailors safe.

When I'm listening to the Shipping Forecast now, if I manage to keep awake as far as Ardnamurchan Point, I'm transported back to that chilly day. Ardnamurchan is a real place! Go and see for yourself one day!

Eileen Baglin-Jones



My garden

I've got some plants been given to me
they're of the blue variety
and like both shade and sun
I've spaces they can fit into
with other flowers with hues of blue
a contrast to earth's dun
The focal point as you can see
a multi-shaded Hazel tree
above the plants does tower
the only thing I need in May
(to stimulate the blooms I pray)
some sun to make them flower

Peter Wild

The Weather Report

According to research, 94% of British people have talked about the weather in the past six hours and 38% of them have talked about it in the last hour. In other words, at any moment, at least a third of the British population is either talking about the weather, has already done so or is about to do so

*Rain, hail, sleet, drizzle
Grey, overcast, cloudy, mizzle
Downpour, showers, cats and dogs
Mist, haar, all kind of fogs
Snow, slush, hail, sleet
Frozen fingers, frozen feet
Wind from the east, rain from the west,
Put on your sunblock. Put on your vest.
Heavy rainfall, spits & spots
Pissing, pouring, raining lots
Rainfall that is truly biblical.
A sunny spell seems like a miracle
We Brits like to chat about weather.
Foreigners think that it's all we say
The endless English obsession with
What the weather will do today.
It's our unpredictable climate
That makes weather an interesting topic
And this is something not understood
By, say, those who live in the tropics.
In some places around the world
There's no rain for half of the year
Just warm, reliable sunshine
Where picnics don't need wet-weather gear.*

Elsewhere, they can always depend upon snow;
Can be certain of a winter that's white.
They can plan on skiing, skating and sledging
And all kinds of sporting delight.

But here in good old Blighty
Who knows what we can expect?
Bright sunshine on Easter Sunday
Then snow on the day that comes next!

Heat waves can happen at any time,
We can have snow and sleet in the spring
We really have not the faintest idea
What the weather will bring.

On this windswept island of ours
The weather is totally fickle
Rain makes the rivers overflow
Then drought dries them out to a trickle.

Sometimes it seems that every week
We've had weather for every season
So surely foreigners can see
That variety is the reason
Why weather is such talking point
It's not that we're obsessed,
But we need to know the forecast
Before we can even get dressed!

Cathy Lawday



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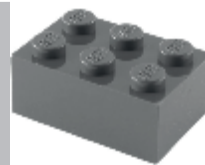
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Child's Play



Word Path Puzzles

slim								fear
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

Change the word at the start of the path to the word at the end, in five steps. Each step on the path must be a proper word, and must differ from the previous word by just one letter. There may be more than one way of doing this. Answers on page 27.

Cathy Lawday

Example:

slim		slam		scam		scar		sear		fear
------	--	------	--	------	--	------	--	------	--	------

1.

carp								live
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

2.

fork								push
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

3.

tint								fold
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

4.

bran								feed
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

5.

ship								soul
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

A Quiz for May

1. There was a special Bank Holiday on May 8th last year. Which important event did it celebrate?
2. There are two Bank Holidays this May. Which other months have two Bank Holidays?
3. On which tree or bush will you find May blossom ?
4. What sort of insect is a May bug?
5. What do you do with a maypole?
6. Turn May backwards and it's something to eat. What sort of food is it?
7. What is the name of the British Prime Minister who preceded Boris Johnson?
8. What sort of plant is a May blob?
9. What does "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday" mean?
10. May can be a girl's name. What other months are often used as a girl's name?
11. The Queen of the May is chosen to lead a Mayday procession. What does she wear?
12. Princess May of Teck married a king and became known as Queen Mary. She was the wife of one king, the mother of two more kings and the grandmother of a queen. Can you name them?

Answers on page 27

Jenny Bell

Fun Spring Show

It was not possible to have the usual Spring Show this year, so Steeple Aston and Middle Aston Horticultural Society introduced a fun alternative. There were classes for Paintings, drawing, poems, limericks and photographs. Here are the results (limericks and poems on page 24).

My best spring photo

First: Claire Hall
Second: John Coley
Third: Cathy Lawday

My best spring photo (children)

First: Ben Wade-Martins
Second: Jenny Marsden
Third: James Marsden

Under 8 painting

First: Ralphie Bailey

Under 5 painting

First: Lottie Baggallay
Second: Isobel Coysh
Third: Clemmie Baggallay



John Coley



Cathy Lawday



Claire Hall



Ben Wade-Martins



Jenny Marsden



James Marsden

Fun Spring Show



Ralphie Bailey



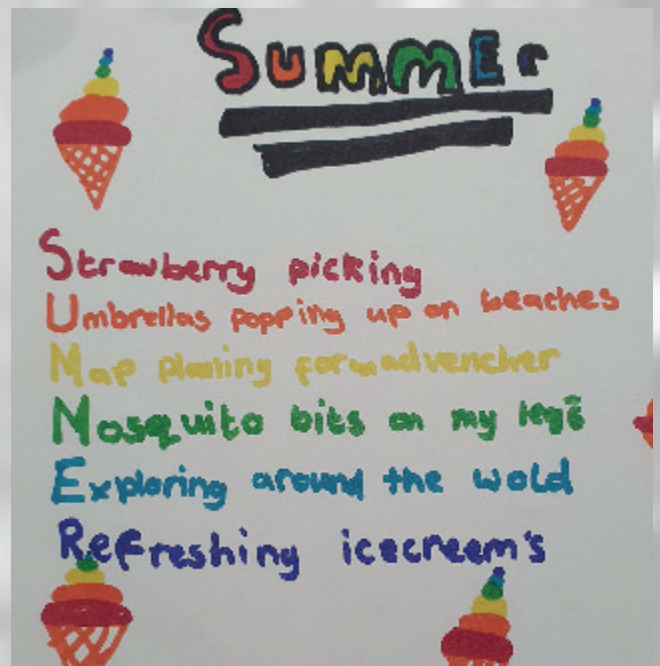
Clemmie Baggallay



Isobel Coysh



Lottie Baggallay



Amelia Bailey

Fun Spring Show

Limericks

The limericks were great fun and the judges said they found it difficult to decide on the winners. Their primary criterion was how much they were amused but they also took account of the wit, style and originality shown.

The first prize goes to Rebecca Lewin for:

There once was a shepherd called Bill
Whose voice was perplexingly shrill
Whenever he'd squeal
His dog wouldn't heel
And his sheep b*ggered off down the hill.

The second prize goes to Penny Cummins for:

There once was a shepherd called Bill
Who feared Jack the ram was so ill
So off to the vet
With his favourite pet
Says he 'not a Jack, it's a Jill'

Third prize goes to John Coley for:

There once was a shepherd called Bill
Who had sheep with a saleable skill
They often would star
When called to the Baa
And fleece all their clients with skill.



Children under 12 were invited to enter a poem about Summer

The first prize was won by Tamsin Thatcher, aged 10, for:

Summer is joyful and fun
It's a time of year
When spring is done
The long days are here.

You're on the beach
Walking along the shore
Groups having a picnic each
Building sandcastles galore.

Swimming is fun
Outdoors is the best
With games in the sun
Not letting mummy rest.

The second prize was won by Amelia Bailey, aged 9, for the coloured picture of a poem (see previous page).

The third prize was won by Gracie Preston, aged 9, for:

Roses and red,
Violets are blue,
You look so sweet,
I love you.

Summer is cool,
Summer is fun,
I wish I could stay out,
And enjoy the sun.

Swim in the sea,
Play in the sand,
I wish I had enough money,
To buy my sunny land.

Birds in the sky,
Butterflies fly,
When I walk outside,
I see a beautiful sky.

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Village Hall News



Monday 10th May AGM 8pm.

The Annual General Meeting of the Steeple Aston Village Hall Management Committee will still go ahead, but will be conducted by teleconferencing on the above date. The AGM lasts approximately 30 minutes and is followed by the monthly village hall committee meeting. Members of the public wishing to know more, or interested in joining the committee, please contact Barbara on 01869 340423 for further details.

The village hall has now reopened under Step 2 of the Government guidelines. This will be for those groups who are permitted to start again. Welcome back.

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

Child's Play Answers

Word Path Puzzles

1. carp, care, dare, dire, dive, live
2. fork, fort, port, post, posh, push
3. tint, tent, tend, fend, fond, fold
4. bran, bean, been, seen, seed, feed
5. ship, slip, slap, soap, soup, soul

A Quiz for May

1. VE Day – Victory in Europe at the end of the Second World War
2. December – Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Also March or April when Good Friday and Easter Monday fall in the same month
3. Hawthorn
4. A Maybug is a type of beetle called a cockchafer
5. You dance round a Maypole
6. A yam is a root vegetable, a bit like a sweet potato
7. Theresa May
8. A May blob is a small yellow flower, better known as a Marsh Marigold
9. Help me! Help me! Help me! It comes from the French m'aider and is an international distress signal, mainly used by boats and planes in trouble
10. April and June
11. A white dress and a crown or tiara, usually made of blossom or flowers.
12. Princess May of Teck was married to George V, was the mother of Edward VIII and George VI and the grandmother of Queen Elizabeth II



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Recycling Service

I am sure that we are not the only ones who have had a bit of a clear out during the various lockdowns! I am pleased to say that we have managed to sell, re-home or re-purpose a lot of items and very little, if anything, has gone in the rubbish or to the tip. However, there were a few things that have required a bit more thought and for which we are proposing to run a drop-off recycling service at Robinsons Close on Saturday 5th June from 10am to 12noon (Government guidance allowing).

Electronics & tech

We have amassed a large quantity of now redundant 'tech' over the years. I know we are not alone judging by the number of messages I get asking me if we can do anything with old phones, laptops, disk drives etc.

If the item is still working, but you simply no longer need it, the likes of Freecycle, Freegle, Facebook Marketplace, the village Facebook Group (inc. Steeple Aston Sales) or the village website are good options and some local charities, like Bicester Green will also take them.

If the item is no longer working, you might want to take it along to a Repair Café to get it fixed for a small charge. You can find details of local Repair Cafés at www.repaircafeoxfordshire.org

You can also put small electrical items (if they fit in a standard-sized carrier bag) out on top your bins (blue, green or brown) or take them to Ardley Fields who also accept a broader range of electronics & tech.

However, none of these solve the problems of data! No-one wants to take a risk that all the data, photos, contact details and personal files could fall into the wrong hands when recycling old tech devices. For this reason, we have been talking to several charities, including The Air Ambulance Service, who recondition and recycle technology as a means of raising funds and provide a certified data wiping function as part of their service. However, it does not feel like it makes sense for each of us to contact them to arrange the collection of a few items, so we thought we would arrange a collection day here in the village, where you can drop things to a central point and we will arrange the rest!

Plastic bags & bread bags

Most large supermarkets now recycle plastic bags and some bread bags and I was delighted to read earlier this year that Tesco are rolling out 'soft plastic' recycling across most of their larger stores this year to include things like crisp packets, cling film, pet/baby food pouches, salad bags and fruit & veg packaging – all of which we are not currently able to put in our recycling bins. However, if like me, you always forget to take the bags when you are passing, why not drop them off to us on 5th June – with, or without, your electronics.

Unused/lightly used toiletries & cosmetics

Whether it is an unopened gift box that you received from a well-meaning relative at Christmas, a bottle of something that you do not quite like the smell of, or an eye shadow that looked amazing in the shop but made you look like a clown when you used it at home, we all have those items of make-up/toiletries that sit at the back of the cupboard taking up space.

There are charities that will take these unwanted items and gift them to women's refuges, refugee centres and homeless charities where they will be very much appreciated. Most will take donations by post, but again, it makes more sense to us to send one large box rather than lots of small ones, so you can bring these along on 5th June too.

You can find more information about what we are able to collect in our advert on page 10 in this edition of SAL, on the village website, on the Sustainable Steeple website and on our Facebook page. You can also call Amanda on 07793 553150 or email amanda@sustainablesteeple.com

If this proves popular, we will run it several times a year – and if there are other items you think we might be able to include in future, please let us know.

Coming Up Next Month

In next month's article we will be looking at some of the upcycling projects we have been working on over the last couple of months, where we have used up fabric scraps (some as small as one inch square), old curtain linings, half an old sofa cushion cover and a venetian blind! Sometimes it is the donations that make us scratch our heads the most that lead to the most creative results!

We are also hoping that, by the time of writing next month's article, we will know when we can get back to running face to face upcycling events and will be able to announce a series of activities and initiatives that will start in the Autumn. Watch this space!



THE VALENTINE CLUB

Here we are on the approach to summer and that light at the end of the tunnel is looking brighter. The club plans to meet for the first time for about 16 months on Tuesday 20th July at Middle Aston House where we will be able to enjoy the wonderful setting, a high tea and most importantly, each other's company. Thanks to the generosity of the management at Middle Aston House and financial support from a 'Bring Joy' grant provided by Home Instead, there will be no charge for those members attending and any prospective member who might like to come along and see what The Valentine Club is all about.

We hope to follow that meeting with another outside event on the August 17th, but more about that next month.

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

Kind regards to everyone, keep smiling and keep safe.

Richard Preston – Group organiser

richard.preston5@btopenworld.com or 01869 340512



WI Report

It has now been two years since we have been able to have an Annual Meeting and this year's had to take the form of a Zoom meeting. Linda Needle welcomed the committee and members who had joined the meeting. The usual annual reports and financial statement had been forwarded to members for their approval so business was short.

The announcement of the new President then took place. For the following year it is to be a shared Presidency between Merrill Bayley and Cathy Lawday, with Liz Falconer as Vice President. The new committee will meet shortly to discuss the other positions.

Cathy Lawday then entertained us with her talk 'Mind your Language', teaching the elderly in Sweden and children in Malaysia using puzzles, songs and quizzes. Apparently, the other teachers wondered why her classes were so noisy. She made language and grammar fun by writing poems and songs which helped the children enjoy English language lessons. After having twins, she told us how colourful their language could be. She then moved on to writing text books and travelled to interesting places – Egypt, Greece, Poland and Spain. There were many questions and the talk was most appreciated. As we know from her poems in Steeple Aston Life, Cathy is excellent and it was suggested she write one about the AGM – which Cathy produced for us by the next morning.

I now hand over to the new committee and wish them well in their new roles. Hopefully onward and upward for Steeple Aston WI.

Linda Needle

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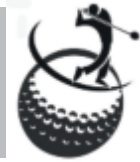
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Steeple Aston *Golf Society*



The Springs are still saying we are OK for June 11th so that will be our first meeting of the year. This course was designed by Brian Hugget. It is 133 acres of parkland bordered by the River Thames, within which lie three lakes and challenging wetland areas. The course has traditional features like a double green and sleepered bunker with sleepered lake edges of typical American design. Bring plenty of balls for these 18 holes, par 72, on a 6470 yds course.

For more information please contact Alan or Chris on 01869 340423 / 347173.

At the end of lockdown, if you could choose between a romantic trip away with the Mrs, or a round of golf followed by a few beers and a curry with the lads, what would you go for? Jalfrezi, Rogan Josh, Vindaloo, or the Tikka Masala?

Stay safe

Alan Brewer, chair

AD&D Photographic Society



After a second lockdown AGM, via Zoom, we welcomed a new Treasurer, Nick Hardwick and Colin Lamb as Programme Secretary. Huge thanks went out to the retiring officers, Diana Saville and Maureen Robinson who have done an excellent job during exceedingly difficult times. All voting on the resolutions was completed online and there was a 67% turnout which was remarkable so a huge thank you to the membership.

Sticking with tradition, we then had the 'What is it?' competition. Thirty-nine entries meant great concentration was required to try and decide what the close-up image depicted. Miggy Wild came out as a super sleuth correctly guessing twenty-two objects. If you want to see if you can beat that score, check the website for the slide show – some images are extremely tricky. Anyway, we had a good natter and catch-up discussing the results.

Our next presentation evening, on Zoom, will be on 5th May at 7.30pm when Tony Bramley (Light Academy) will be talking about 'Inspiration'. You are most welcome to join us. Do have a look at our website www.addphoto.co.uk

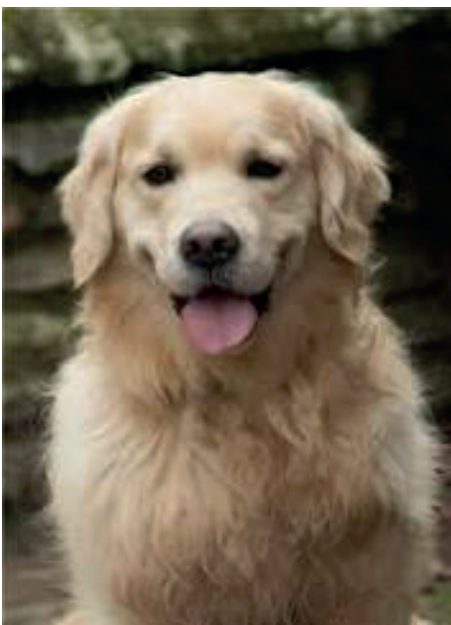
Anne Hunsley

From the Doghouse

Socialising a puppy is a hugely important part of its development as it will teach him or her to be confident and able to behave appropriately in everyday situations. The emphasis should be on rewarding calm behaviour and familiarising him with sights, sounds, people, things that move, and environments; it isn't just about allowing him to play with every dog he sees!

At home, even before your puppy can go out, let him see and hear plenty of new things such as the washing machine, lawnmower, wheelie bins, etc, and give him food rewards for being calm around them. Invite a friend round to meet him, but be careful not to allow him to become overwhelmed by too many people. If he is nervous of people, contrary to what is usually advised don't ask them to feed him because this can create a stressful conflict between him feeling scared of the person, but wanting to take the food. In this instance it is better for you to feed your puppy at a distance from the other person that he finds comfortable, and gradually get closer over several meetings.

Even before your puppy has finished his vaccinations you can take him out to see the world as long as you don't put him down on the ground. Short trips in the car are good, but don't leave him alone in the car for even a few minutes, unfortunately these days it just isn't safe. Let him see and hear children coming out of school or take him to the station car park when a train is due, always ensuring that you have plenty of tasty food to reward him with and keep him at a distance where he is happy.



When your puppy has been fully vaccinated, arrange to meet a sensible older dog who will play nicely without getting overexcited. Resist the temptation to allow your puppy to play with every dog he meets because this won't necessarily be desirable when he grows into an adult and thinks he can ask everybody to play with him. It is much better to allow him to play with other dogs which are well-matched in size and personality, but only when you allow him to. Also spend time chatting to other owners while both your dogs are on the lead, ignoring each other and quietly waiting for you to finish. If you take him to puppy parties, make sure that all play and greetings are controlled and not a free-for-all, as it is too easy for a small or nervous puppy to find the environment a bit worrying.

Resist the temptation to make your puppy meet everybody and see everything too quickly, especially if he seems fearful as this could actually make him sensitised and therefore worried about the very thing you wanted him to get used to. Whilst it is important for him to experience everyday sights and sounds, we need to ensure that he stays confident. If you feel that a situation isn't going well it is far better to leave it until another time rather than risk your puppy becoming scared. Suitable outings could be to a garden centre, pet shop, dog-friendly pub or Cotswold Wildlife Park.

Above all, enjoy your puppy, they grow up so quickly!

Snifferdog

The Cricket Report



Fixture List for 2021

Nothing new to report this month save that we have been beavering away to prepare the Barton Abbey pitch for our first game against Bicester & North Oxford. Many thanks to the highly efficient Phil Chesser for confirming our fixtures for the season, though please note that the Chairman's XI match has moved back by a week to 22nd May. Please do come and watch, but bring your own flask of tea!

Day	Date	Opponents	Venue	Time
Sunday	9 th May	Bicester & North Oxford	Home	2pm
Saturday	22 nd May	Peter Higgins XI	Home	11.30am
Sunday	30 th May	Middleton Stoney	Away	2pm
Sunday	6 th June	Sandford St Martin	Away	2pm
Sunday	20 th June	Oxford Downs	Away	2pm
Sunday	27 th June	Minster Lovell	Away	2pm
Sunday	4 th July	Philanderers	Home	2pm
Sunday	18 th July	Ascott-under-Wychwood	Away	2pm
Sunday	1 st August	Blenheim Palace	Away	2pm
Sunday	5 th September	Chairman's v Captain's	Home	1.30pm

Here's to hazy summer days of cricket at Barton Abbey, something for all of us to look forward to.

Peter Higgins
Chairman SACC

Football Focus




Under normal circumstances, SAFC would hold an open meeting for their AGM. However, circumstances are far from normal. This year the existing committee has agreed to continue as a fall-back position and will confirm that at a closed AGM via video conference.

Should anyone in the local community want to put themselves forward for a place on the committee, please contact the secretary directly and a means will be found to consider your request. We pride ourselves on being an open club, but current circumstances mean that we are being as pragmatic as possible in order to keep the show on the road.

Peter Wild – 07950 837773
Secretary, Steeple Aston FC

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2021

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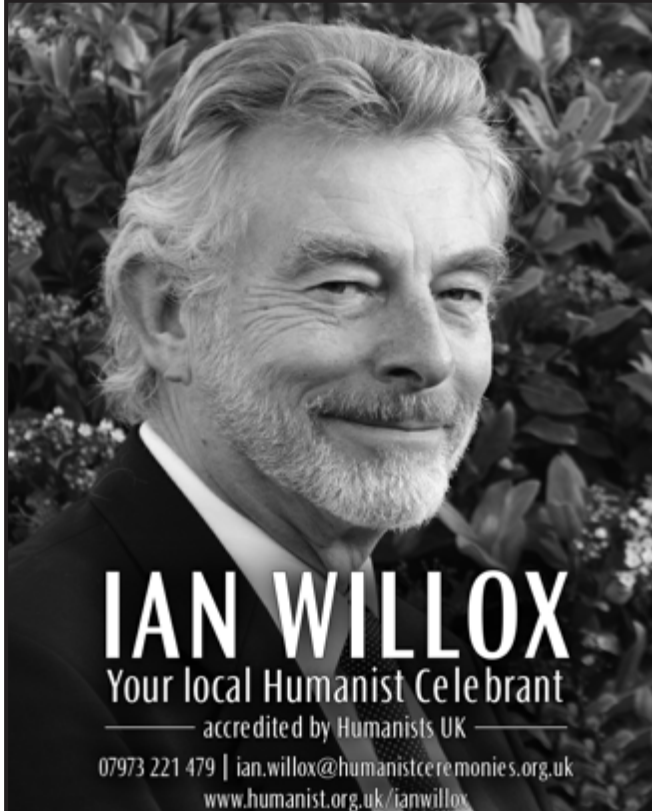
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Church Matters



Spring is upon us – and as I write it feels as if the current move to lifting the Lockdown may actually be for real. Certainly, things are changing in Church life.

Church Services

From the beginning of May we are back to 'in person' services every weekend. Not quite a full rota of services yet, but a service every Sunday somewhere in the Benefice. See the list on page 42 for details. We are aiming to hold open air Communion each week in our churchyards, starting on May 2nd in North Aston. Do bring your own chair and please wear a face covering. If the weather is bad – we go indoors and it's morning prayer instead (so that once we've sat down there's no moving about). Everyone welcome – no booking needed. Easter was a real joy – to see such a fantastic crowd gather and worship together on such a beautiful day. Here's to more such occasions in the weeks ahead

Church opening

All three of our churches are now open every day again. It's good to be getting back to normal! Yes, please do use the hand sanitiser when you go in and when you leave so that we do our best to keep the place clean and tidy for the next people in, and please wear a face covering, but we are open!

Church Flag



The old flag was up and flying for most of the last year, till a storm at the end of winter took it from us. I'm delighted to say that a wonderful new flag, a St George's Cross with a diocesan coat of arms on it, has been generously donated and was up and flying for the Easter weekend. We did put the Union flag up to mark the period of mourning following the Duke of Edinburgh's death, but normally it is our new flag that will fly. We are very grateful to have this new flag!

Photo: Nigel Francis

Church Bell

Speaking of donations – Graham Clifton has worked hard to get donations together so that we can have a new bell installed in our bell tower. This happened on the weekend of Prince Philip's funeral. The bell is the third (of eight) and comes from a church in Ledbury, where it was originally hung in 1929. Our oldest bells go back to 1674 and our newest to 1987, though our tenor bell was recast in 2012. This replacement bell will make a great addition to our peal and will be a real help, especially to younger ringers and learners. Thanks Graham – and everyone – for making this happen.

Church Fete

Mark the diary – we very much hope that the Church Fete is happening this year. The date we have it booked for is the afternoon of Saturday July 10th. The Fete is a great occasion for everyone to come and enjoy the sunshine and see each other. Robinsons Close means we can be well distanced and safe. We hope all our usual attractions (from teas to classic cars) will be present. To be honest, like many organisations, the church finances have really suffered in the last year. We do need to raise quite a bit on the day. But we also hope to be able to give away funds to other local groups as we always try to do as well.

Our online services **Worship at Home** continue through May, as will the *Rector's Ramblings* emails. Keep checking our website www.sntchurch.com for news and details.

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May 2nd

10.30am North Aston Church Yard

Benefice Open Air Communion

May 9th

10.30am Tackley Church Yard

Benefice Open Air Communion

May 16th

10.30am Steeple Aston Church Yard

Benefice Open Air Communion

May 23rd: Pentecost

10.30am North Aston Church Yard

Benefice Open Air Communion

May 30th: Trinity Sunday

10.30am Tackley Church Yard

Benefice Open Air Communion

*In case of bad weather,
services will be replaced by indoor Morning Prayer.
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Please bring your own seat to outdoor services.*

Worship at Home continues online at www.sntchurch.com
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Everyone welcome!

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Others.....	£53	
All Facilities (social occasion)		
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Represented Clubs.....	£65	£200
Others - up to 6 hours	£110	£300
Others - over 6 hours.....	£160	£300
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May

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 13th green
 20th blue & brown
 27th green



June

3rd blue & brown
 10th green
 17th blue & brown
 24th 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

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 E&OE

OURBUS BARTONS

OurBus Bartons has now returned to their 'Pandemic Timetables'. It offers services through Steeple Aston to Chipping Norton (Wednesdays) and Bicester (Fridays). See ourbusbartons.btck.co.uk/ for details and times

Steeple Aston Calendar

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

May			
Saturday 15th	SAL June issue copy and advert deadline		
Sunday 16 th	Benefice Open Air Communion		10.30am
Monday 17 th	Parish Council meeting	Zoom	7.30pm
Saturday 22 nd	Deddington Farmers' Market		
June			
Tuesday 15th	SAL July issue copy and advert deadline		
Sunday 20 th	Steeple Aston Open Gardens		2pm to 6pm
Monday 21 st	Parish Council meeting	Zoom	7.30pm
Saturday 28 th	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

Steeple Aston Life is published by Steeple Aston Life Committee

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We are continuing to deliver our Delicious Home-Made Meal Package to Steeple Aston every Wednesday afternoon- £15.00 per Pack 3 Main Courses and 3 Desserts



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Call Sally on 07786131667 Or Jasmin on 07801975210



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