

Steeple Aston *Life*

July 2021 Issue No. 575



Inside SAL this month:

- Steeple Aston Open Gardens. • Vanbrugh's Grand Bridge • Light, refreshing salads
- The Arts Page • Oxford Bus Museum • Child's Play quizzes • ...and much more

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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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Bell ringers		Graham & Dorothy Clifton	347273
Hand-bell ringers		Sally Cooper	347173
Brownies		Fiona McLoone	340132
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Choral Society	Chair	Ann Livings	233518
Church of England (St Peter & St Paul)	Rector	Rev Marcus Green	340903
Church Wardens		Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton	340099 , 347273
Methodist Church – Tackley		Rev Paul Carter	01865 243216
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Steeple Aston Walking Group		Penny, Stuart, Sue and Graham	sawgox25@gmail.com
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“...folly is not always folly.”
Jane Austen

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July 2021
Issue No. 575

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Editorial

“Let a man walk ten miles steadily on a hot summer’s day along a dusty English road, and he will soon discover why beer was invented.” (G. K. Chesterton, 1874 to 1936, English writer and philosopher probably best known for his ‘Father Brown’ stories.)

How hot is a summer’s day? The highest recorded temperature in the UK was 38.7 °C on 25th July 2019 at Cambridge University Botanic Garden. Last month, the 14th June was the hottest day of this year so far, with a temperature of 28.6 °C recorded at Heathrow Airport. July and August are usually the warmest months of the year. Some pundits are predicting a heatwave. Others are more cautious. As always, we will have to wait and see.

°C is short for ‘degrees centigrade’, a temperature scale so called because there are 100 divisions between the freezing point of water (0 °C) and the boiling point of water (100 °C). The scale is also known as ‘Celsius’ after the Swedish astronomer Anders Celsius.

Older readers might be familiar with the Fahrenheit temperature scale, proposed in 1724 by physicist Daniel Fahrenheit. For reasons we will not go into here, this scale sets the freezing point of water at 32 °F and the boiling point at 212 °F. In the UK, the switch from Fahrenheit to Celsius/centigrade began in the 1960s. However, in hot weather you might still see some newspapers refer to 90 °F in their ‘what a scorcher’ headlines as it sounds more impressive than the equivalent 32 °C.

If you enjoy pub quizzes, here is an item for your memory bank. At what point do the centigrade and Fahrenheit scales meet? The chilly answer is that -40 °C = -40 °F. And yes, it is correct to have a space between the number and the unit.

Warm regards.

Robert

*Below: a group from the SAPC litter picking day –
Peter Dammermann, Richard Dammermann, Isaac Christianson (age 4),
Jeannie Dammermann, Angus Christianson (age 9).*

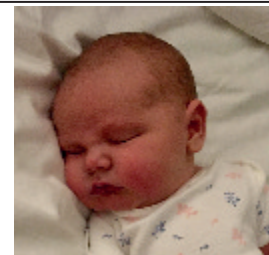


Steeple Aston Noticeboard



Magnus Coker

Tom and Becca Coker are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Magnus Dominic Titus, born on 8th June at the John Radcliffe. Imogen is a very happy big sister!



Let the Bells Ring Out

If the Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed as planned on 19th July, we hope to resume church bell-ringing. We will commence with Sunday morning ringing for services. Tuesday evening practices will resume on Tuesday 27th July from 7.30pm to 9.00pm.

It will be good to welcome back our members. I am sure we will all be a bit rusty and our muscles might need a gentle break in, unlike the bells themselves which have been maintained to good working order in readiness and optimism.

We would also like to encourage anyone who would be interested to see what goes on to call by and maybe have a go. For others, we hope you will find the sound of the bells ringing out from the tower to be another celebration of village life returning to a tradition that has continued with few interruptions for hundreds of years.

Graham Clifton

Specs Box results

A huge thank you to everybody who put their old glasses into the 'Specs Box' on our drive over the previous months. I can report that they are now packed and ready to go – 129 pairs of specs (let's call it 130 – sounds better!). That's brilliant and a real re-cycling/re-using service from us all. The charity doesn't accept individual items so a village package like this is ideal.

The charity in Chichester had to shut down during the whole of lockdown and I will admit that I was a bit worried they might not start again, but they have just reopened! Hooray! That's why I'm only now able to pack and send the specs.

The collection here rather dried up in recent weeks, so I assume that most people have now given me their old specs, which is fine. What I need to do now is try to spread this idea to our neighbouring villages. Imagine if one went to North Aston, Tackley, Middle Barton and Duns Tew – that could possibly be 520 pairs! If anyone has an idea whom I might contact about that I'd be glad to know.

A big thank you again and onwards and upwards.

Martin Dale

SAL June 2021 errata

It is a truth universally acknowledged that the author of 'Pride and Prejudice' wrote her surname with an 'e'. Apologies for the specious spelling on page 8.

J. J. Cale was an American guitarist, singer and songwriter. The poem on page 19 suggested that he is still with us. Sadly, he knocked on heaven's door in July 2013. However, he did reach the age of 74.

Steeple Aston Noticeboard



Save the date!



30th August – Bank Holiday Monday

The Annual Flower Show and Fun Dog Show will be back after an enforced holiday and, hopefully, will be bigger and better than ever. Schedules are available online by visiting steepleaston.org.uk, or give me a call for a hard copy. By the end of the month they should also be in the village shop.

There are classes for just about everyone from the youngest of competitors (zero to five years old), to budding photographers and all those wonderful and upcoming Mary Berrys that bake the most amazing cakes. And not forgetting the ladies and gentlemen who grow those superb flowers or ridiculously large marrows.

There will be refreshments in the village hall, ice creams outside, games for all ages and stalls galore, plus a large display of vintage cars. If anyone would like to have a stall at the show, please get in touch with me to book a space. Don't forget, this is Bank Holiday Monday so the roads will be packed, but here you can enjoy the freedom of your own village space and the company of others that you might well not have seen for many months.

If you own a dog or can kidnap one for an hour or so, maybe you will want to enter the fun dog show, the emphasis being on fun, where you can win a rosette that your dog will cherish forever and possibly the 'Dog of the Day' trophy.

More details will appear in next month's edition of SAL or look on the village website.

For more information or to reserve a stall please contact Richard Preston on 01869 340512 or email Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com

Bob the Dog's bench

Robert Craig Wilson passed away in September 2020. He was a popular character, known locally as 'Bob the Dog' as he was rarely seen without at least one of his dogs.

Shortly after his funeral Amanda Tosh set up an appeal to raise funds to buy a memorial bench. This was very generously supported by his many local friends. The sum required was actually achieved in a couple of days, but everyone kindly went on donating so that in the end over £1400 was raised for Bob's favourite charities – for dogs, of course!

Thank you to everyone who donated and especially Tim and Jenny who provided the location above The Folly where we finally installed the bench in June. Although arrangements for the grand unveiling were only made at the last minute there was a good number of friends there to see Debs remove the official temporary railing and declare the seat open for use, which it duly was with several glasses of Bob's other favourite – Hookie!

Everyone agreed that the location is perfect. It's a great spot to sit and enjoy the wonderful views across our valley. Please use it.



A plaque at the front of the seat reads, 'Take a seat and paws a while'.
(Photo: Nigel Francis)

Graham Porcas

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Steeple People



Janne Pilbeam

How long have you lived in Middle Aston?

We moved to Middle Aston 11 years ago this August.

Where did you move from?

King's Sutton, and before that Bath.

What brought you here?

We wanted a nice quiet village location surrounded by countryside which also had a great primary school and facilities not too far away. Then it was a matter of the right house at the right time. We were very lucky.

What do you like best about living in Middle Aston?

The beautiful walks right on our doorstep, the lovely people and that our children can enjoy the freedom to meet up with friends in a safe neighbourhood.

Where do you think of as 'home'?

Well, even after 25 years in England, marrying a lovely Englishman and our two children being born here, I still 'travel *home* to Norway'. I think I would say I'm incredibly privileged and grateful to call both Tønsberg (Norway) *and* Middle Aston home.

What was the best thing about being a child?

Innocence, unconditional love, hope, and an inherent belief that anything is possible.

What is the best thing about being an adult?

'Wisdom', life experience, confidence to be true to yourself. The opportunity to make choices that feel right rather than because you are 'told' they are right, and the honesty to acknowledge and forgive yourself when they're not always the right ones after all.

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

An anthropologist. I've always been fascinated by ancient cultures. Possibly fuelled by growing up in the oldest town in Norway where our best-preserved Viking ship 'Oseberg' was discovered and learning about the fabulous expeditions of Thor Heyerdahl from a young age.

What do you do for a living now?

I work for a small local charity, Rafiki Thabo Foundation. We enable access to education for disadvantaged young people in Kenya, Uganda and Lesotho who otherwise could not pay their school fees. With an education they are empowered to fulfil their potential, pursue their dreams, and lift themselves and their families out of poverty.

What's your secret/guilty pleasure?

It has to be 80s music, to my husband's despair! We're talking Wham, Depeche Mode, Rick Astley, Billy Idol, proper chart music (ha ha)!

What's your favourite piece of music?

So, this will make many cringe I'm sure, but 'Last Christmas' and 'Careless Whisper' get me every time!

What are you reading at the moment?

I've just started our latest Middle Aston book club read 'Agent Sonya' by Ben Macintyre. 'The true story of WW2's most extraordinary spy', who lived in Great Rollright!

What would you save from your house if it was on fire?

My children, my husband, and our dog Elsa.

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

I spent a year in Tanzania in my teens and I would love to return, but this time with my husband and our children. I know it sounds a cliché, but Africa gets in your blood and it is my dream for us to experience it together, making it 'our memory', rather than just mine.

What do you do to relax?

Long walks. It's my lifeline, none more so than during the challenging times we've all been through this last year and a half.

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

Here's a real confession and I reckon I am about to make myself a target of a fair amount of (justifiable) ridicule – I don't like buttons! I was delighted when I realised the school uniform didn't require button down shirts until the children were old enough to do them up themselves! I'd been secretly fretting about it for years! What can I say, great way to get out of any family ironing!!



The ARTS Page



There is still a mixed picture for live performances, but Steeple Aston has its own concert on Saturday 17th July at 7pm in the church. The Aston Singers, of December fame, and two brilliant young Australians who I worked with at the Queensland Conservatorium, now at the Royal Academy of Music, soprano Cassandra Wright and pianist Elli Welsh, will present 'Music for a Summer Evening'. Tickets (£10) from (01869) 340099.

The Oxford Piano Festival takes place at St. Hilda's College from 25th July to 1st August with a varied programme of masterclasses and concerts. With Alfred Brendel President and Andras Schiff Patron, this is a truly prestigious event. oxfordphil.com/

Nearer home musicinadderbury.com has some enticing chamber music streams.

Viagogo.co.uk is the go-to website for Summer Rock Festivals. Those near us include:

Truck, Hill Farm, Oxfordshire, 23rd to 25th July

Reading, 26th to 29th August

Big Feastival, Kingham, 27th to 29th August.

Not my area of expertise, so it would be great to have input from experts and enthusiasts.

Our local theatres are being very enterprising with a mixture of live, online and educational/workshop events.

At Oxford Playhouse, 'Under the Mask' (12th to 15th July) is an installation piece about a Covid doctor that caught my eye. oxfordplayhouse.com

Pegasustheatre.org.uk has some interesting online projects, such as Creative Movement, Puppet Making and Singing Music Theatre.

The Oxford Shakespeare Festival has three productions between 12th July and 21st August – 'Twelfth Night', 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' and 'Much Ado about Nothing'. oxfordcastleandprison.co.uk

A little further afield, try the Malvern Theatre. Do have a look at their website, they have a terrific programme and it makes a wonderful day out in the shadow of the Malvern Hills. Malvern-theatres.co.uk

The Royal Shakespeare Company presents 'The Comedy of Errors' at Stratford from 13th July to 26th September and an online Summer School from 22nd to 27th August. rsc.org.uk

'Expressions of Nature', in the new Stables Café at Blenheim Palace, features the work of four local artists and runs until 12th September. The 'Gilded Cage' by Ai Weiwei, an interactive piece exploring themes of migration and refugees, has gone on long-term display in the Palace Gardens. blenheimpalace.com

Modern Art Oxford has a strong and thought-provoking exhibition by Samson Kambula, Associate Professor of Fine Art at The Ruskin School of Art. 'New Liberia' is about Malawi emerging from colonial rule when Nyasaland. You can book an exhibition visit or take a virtual tour. It runs to 5th September. modernartoxford.org.uk

Almost next-door in Pembroke Street, the brilliant storymuseum.org.uk has a wide range of events during the school holidays.


Braving the dreadful 'muzak' of the Banbury Castle Quay Shopping Centre (go to pipedown.org.uk, part with £15 pa and help stop this awful aural intrusion into our lives everywhere), I entered the wonderful calm of the banburymuseum.org and the 'Portrayals' exhibition from the Arts Council collection – early David Hockney, Lucien Freud, Henry Moore etc. – totally brilliant, but only on till 4th July. Catch it if you can. Their 'I grew up in the 80s' (17th July to 3rd October) looks terrific too. What a gem!


Spare a thought for all in the arts. The combination of Covid and Brexit has been disastrous. (Elton John: "the UK could lose a generation of talent because of touring restrictions"). Our arts are a huge national asset, enriching our lives and admired across the world. Keep supporting them!


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Difficult to recycle items – following the success of our 'tech' and VHS recycling event, we would love to hear if there are other items you would like to be able to recycle, but struggle to.

Please do keep donating! – fabric (including sheets), craft materials, wood, furniture, if you are not sure whether we would want a particular item, please drop us an email and ask.

Please keep buying things from our online shop! – freshly updated with new ranges, including napkins, table runners, produce bags, bird scarers and more - all made from the items donated to us. We are also hoping to be back at St. Peter & St. Paul's in Deddington for the monthly craft market (same date/time as the Farmer's Market) – please do come and see us!

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The Gardening Spot

My home and garden at Primrose Garden

When visitors come to our garden there are two questions that always pop up. The first is “how many gardeners work here?” The second is “what is the history of the garden?”

The answer to the first question is the easiest. There are two gardeners – Daphne my wife, who is best described as the ‘head gardener’, and myself who is simply the labourer.

The answer to the next question is a bit more complicated. The garden, about one acre in total, is the former kitchen garden to The Grange, possibly best described as ‘the big house’ until it was sold in 1951 and the estate was split into various lots. My father, Charlie Preston, was fortunate enough to be able to purchase Primrose Cottage and the kitchen garden at the point of sale and we moved from Heyford Road to North Side where my gardening interest started.

My father was a greengrocer so to suddenly have an acre of ground presented a challenge as he was not a gardener. We found the garden in a rather abandoned state as most of the staff to The Grange had retired or been lost to the war effort. There were the old Victorian greenhouses and cold frames used for the best part of a century to supply the ‘big house’ with their daily requirements and some fruit trees which were not of any commercial value. An exceptionally large asparagus bed was near the bottom of the garden area near to some nut bushes that would have provided supports for various crops and climbing plants throughout the estate. Couch grass was to be found in abundance along with isolated areas of ground elder which had to be removed by hand digging and weeding.

For the first few years after moving to Primrose Cottage my father learnt to grow tomatoes in the old greenhouses along with cucumbers on what was called ‘the pit’, a purpose built, sunken frame style construction which was perfect for plants that enjoyed humid conditions. Along with this collection of greenhouses, cold frames, fruit trees and plants were vast numbers of snakes. As a boy I can remember walking up the garden and seeing as many as ten grass snakes coiled up, enjoying the warm and sunny conditions that a walled garden provided. By the late 1950s we had constructed two very large greenhouses, each 100 feet by 30 feet and heated with a massive coal fired boiler. Lorry-loads of

Welsh steam coal would be delivered in the autumn in readiness to heat the greenhouses, enabling us to produce early tomatoes that would enable a higher retail price.

Gradually the fruit trees disappeared and more vegetables were grown. We purchased our first rotovator to reduce the need for hand digging. My childhood memories of hoeing as many as five thousand brassicas and who knows how many leeks still stay with me. It is a wonder I ever took up gardening as part of my career!

By the mid-80s the old greenhouses that had served so well had to be removed as they were no longer suitable for repair and we acquired an aluminium greenhouse – 100 feet by 30 feet, but clear span. This meant that we did not have to work around support posts and I could get the rotavator in without fear of damaging the structure.

Life continued to allow us to grow vegetables and supply the local villages until the autumn of 2000 when I decided it was time to retire. We were suddenly left with an acre of garden that had only produced vegetables for the past 150 years or thereabouts, so the question was, “what do we do with it now?” The answer could be seen by those of you who came around on June 20th as part of the NGS Open Gardens, but for those of you who didn’t, we now have an oasis that we can call our own and enjoy. We have some grass, never even considered when earning a living from the garden, a pond, which is quite something when you consider we are on a sandy loam with no natural water, and lots and lots of flowers.

As with any garden, it is always changing and that is possibly the joy of gardening as you are never stuck with the same old design. We produce almost enough vegetables to last the year and I still get a buzz out of growing tomatoes, but with only sixteen plants rather than over a thousand. I am waiting with bated breath for those wonderful words from Daphne of “I have had an idea”. This usually means digging up part of the lawn and forming yet another feature, but there again, life would be boring without the odd challenge.

Richard and Daphne Preston – Primrose Garden, once part of The Grange Estate.

Vanbrugh's Grand Bridge

Spanning the centuries

The Grand Bridge with Blenheim Palace in the background.
(Photo: Carol Neville)

We are fortunate to live in such close proximity to Blenheim Palace, home to the 12th Duke of Marlborough, with its 'finest view in England'. Central to this view is John Vanbrugh's Grand Bridge, together with Capability Brown's spectacular backdrop of glorious beechwoods. Our village has links with the Duke as prior to inheriting his dukedom, the former Marquess of Blandford once lived in Steeple Aston, at Wincote in Cow Lane.

The bridge is currently undergoing major restoration with the aid of a £547,200 grant from the Heritage Stimulus Fund administered by Historic England – part of the Government's Culture Recovery Fund. Although the bridge is in a remarkably stable condition despite standing for over 300 years, it is now in need of repair and restoration to alleviate water ingress and general decay.

The work will take place over a number of phases, initially concentrating on replacing the deck and paved areas, roadway repairs, a new footpath and installing a waterproof membrane to prevent water percolating through to the stonework. Work on the masonry and dredging of the lake is planned later, which may shed yet more light on previously inaccessible spaces within the bridge.

As is often the case during conservation work, the project has already uncovered some interesting archaeology, social history and ecology. In-depth surveys using 3-D and laser technology have revealed over 30 internal chambers, finished to a high degree of workmanship. Evidence of fireplaces, chimneys and window openings (albeit at ground level) all point to the intention of habitation of some kind. During the summer months, the First Duke of Marlborough and his family enjoyed a spot of al fresco dining in this cool, sheltered spot with waterside views.

A series of tunnels with long corridors connect the rooms. Access today is only possible via a manhole on one side or by boat on the other, although it was once accessible via steps near the side of the River Glyme prior to Brown's creation of the lake in 1764, which considerably raised the water level flooding some of the lower rooms.

The interior of the rooms has revealed some fascinating elements of social history. Graffiti in the form of signatures from times gone by remains as clear as the day it was etched, with one from 1756, others from 1870 and some made by troops during the interwar period, as well as the less desirable spray can graffiti of more recent decades. Two signatures in pencil one above the other match those discovered behind a panel in the palace and are believed to be those of carpenters working there centuries ago. Researchers and archaeologists are recording all of this data and images as part of the social history of the bridge.

The bridge also plays host to various species of bat including the Pipistrelle and a maternity roost of at least 100 rare Daubenton's bats or 'water bats', that raise their young between May and August each year. The constant temperature and position over water provides the ideal habitat with their diet of midges, caddisflies and mayflies. They are small to medium-sized, with fluffy brownish fur, pale silver-grey belly and a pinkish face. As a protected species, ecologists constantly monitor them using thermal imaging cameras to ensure they are not disturbed during the works. The sheer size of the bridge means it is possible to maintain their need for peace and quiet even though lorries may be thundering overhead!

The logistics of moving such heavy materials safely and gently has called for detailed engineering and architectural solutions every step of the way. Staying true to the heritage of the structure, traditional lime-based mortars and local stone aggregates are used for consistency and longevity, in varying quantities depending on the requirements of each section. It is very specialised work, enhanced by lessons learned from recent work on the estate's Bladon bridge and other ventures nationwide.

This first phase of the project has already thrown up some little gems and whetted the appetite for more, with a series of tunnels and spaces yet to be explored. After all this time, the Grand Bridge richly deserves its careful restoration.

Carol Neville



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Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



The June Parish Council meeting was held in the Sports and Recreation Centre and we were all suitably distanced from each other. But the defect of that was we were so far apart that bits of the meeting were inaudible, made worse by masks and mumbling. So apologies for what I failed to hear properly.

The Parish Council is still looking for another Councillor. It was suggested that some people might be wary about putting themselves forward as Councillors because they thought, wrongly, that specific skills or knowledge were required. This is not the case; the wider the background of the individuals the better. Anyone is welcome to have an informal chat with any of the Councillors or the Clerk about what is required and all their contact details are on the website (steepleaston.org.uk). I have been writing about the meetings for nearly 20 years and I have not got bored yet, so do think about this interesting activity which also helps our community.

The other person the Parish Councillors would like to find is someone to pick up any litter left on the playground and to clean the lavatory at the play area. The job needs to be done every day, but the timing is flexible and the terms and conditions are negotiable. You will probably need to be self-employed, but you could fit this job around other activities. See the advert opposite.

The paperwork of the Parish Council was discussed next. The Clerk always puts on the agenda the length of time she expects each item to be discussed. She decided all the discussion of the Council's paperwork would be completed in five minutes; she was unduly optimistic. The first item was the Standing Orders which cover the rules for much of the Council's activities. The discussion of this was long and unexciting and most of the time seemed to be spent on deciding whether the Standing Orders should include anything about finance or whether this was better covered under Financial Regulations. The village used to have a Welcome Pack for those newly arrived here. The old pack seems to have been mislaid and an updated version is being prepared.

The litter pick had been successful as usual and we were told that Steeple Aston had picked up more rubbish than other local villages. But it was not clear to me if this meant we had more rubbish initially or we were more effective at clearing it up.

Our County Councillor, Arash Fatemian, has regularly provided some funds each year for community facilities. He said these funds would still be available this year, but he had no idea whether this would continue now that Oxfordshire County Council does not have any party in overall control. The Councillors considered what they might like funded and two projects were discussed, but no decisions were taken. The alternatives tentatively considered were for solar panels for the speed monitor and for a rainproof cabinet for the defibrillator at the Red Lion. The defibrillator has had its batteries changed and is working again. At the moment it is being kept inside the pub, but it was thought it might be advantageous if it was in a rainproof cabinet outside. This would cost about £560. It is onerous to recharge the batteries in the speed monitor and someone asked whether the batteries could at the least be topped up by solar panels. Apparently solar panels can work well for most of the year, but equally are not always effective. The Councillors will look into the alternatives and make sure they do not fall foul of the requirements for the warranty on the monitor. Either of these projects might be suitable for the Oxfordshire funding disbursed by Arash.

Some trees and hedges seem to have got too big. Arash offered to see what Oxfordshire County Council could do about getting the hedge and trees cut back between the entrances to Coneygar Fields and Shepherds Hill and the trees on Heyford Road in front of Lawrence Fields.

Apparently someone has carefully unscrewed the hooks by the lavatory on the Play Area and a Councillor said she had something similar and offered to replace them. What an odd thing to steal! The new door of the lavatory was working well, but one four-year-old had managed to shut herself inside and it had taken her mother a quarter-of-an-hour to

Parish Council Meeting Notes



get the child to press the button that would release her from her loo prison.

We were told the website committee is in the process of an update of the website and would appreciate any suggestions for improvements while keeping to the general style of the existing design of the site.

It was at this point that the meeting turned to planning applications and suddenly got a lot more interesting and concerning. There was no news on the planning appeal on The Beeches or on the negotiations about the Rectory Homes site opposite the Red Lion. But there was news of a potential development between Ardley and Middleton Stoney. What is being proposed is a massive series of warehouses to be connected to a reopened railway station at Ardley. The idea is that trains would bring in freight to the warehouses and it would then be moved by lorries all around Oxfordshire. The proposal is being treated as a National Infrastructure project which means that the decision will be taken

by Government rather than local planners. (Do you trust this government on planning decisions? Or any other decisions for that matter?) If it was to get approval this proposal would have a huge effect on the local roads and would entail a bypass for Ardley and for Middleton Stoney. The warehouses would stretch from the station at Ardley to the outskirts of Heyford Park. The additional lorry movements would be vast and combined with the expected additional 1,800 car trips a day from the Great Wolf development at Chesterton must mean an appalling amount of extra traffic on the main roads. If this is combined with an oversized development at Hatch End the traffic implications are fearful.

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 of the playground and its toilet. This will involve

- inspection of the playground equipment
- sweeping, tidying, collecting litter and emptying the litter bins around the Village Hall and Sports and Recreation Centre
- cleaning the toilet and keeping it stocked with toilet paper etc.
- the cleaner will be expected to bring their own cleaning equipment and cleaning materials

The Parish Council would prefer someone self-employed but the terms and conditions of the job are negotiable. Please can you contact the Clerk, Cathy Fleet on 01869 347000 if you are interested

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In the Kitchen



What better to add a taste of summer to sunny July days and warm balmy summer evenings than light, refreshing, piquant salads. The recipes serve six, either as an accompaniment or a starter.

Peppery Strawberry Salad

Large punnet of strawberries

300g rocket leaves

Medium-sized red onion

60g pine nuts

Dressing

30ml balsamic vinegar

50ml good olive oil

Pinch English mustard powder

1/2 tsp brown sugar

Pinch of salt and pepper

Mix dressing ingredients in a screw-top jar and shake well.

Put pine nuts into a dry frying pan and toast until golden. Keep a watch over the toasting process as the nuts will burn quickly. Remove and reserve the pine nuts on a plate.

Wash and dry rocket leaves. Hull and halve the strawberries.

Assemble strawberries, red onion rings, and rocket leaves in a large bowl.

Dress salad just before serving and sprinkle with toasted pine nuts.

Zesty Watermelon Mint Salad

600g watermelon (de-seeded and chopped into cubes)

30g fresh mint leaves chopped

60g red onion diced

1-2 tsp red chilli flakes

30g fresh coriander leaves chopped

1 lime zested and juiced

Toss all ingredients together until combined.

Serve immediately, or cover and refrigerate for up to two days.

Papaya Salad

1 good-sized papaya

1/4 tsp chilli flakes

200g beansprouts

Salted peanuts

200g mangetout

30g basil leaves

1 lime

30g fresh mint leaves

Place a large frying pan over a high heat for 3 minutes. Add the mangetout, beansprouts and a splash of cold water and cook for 2-3 mins.

Add chilli flakes to the lime juice.

Remove from the heat and toss the mangetout and beansprouts in the papaya, lime, chilli flakes and juice.

Sprinkle with the peanuts and shredded basil and serve immediately.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

The Oxford Bus Museum and the Morris Motors Museum

Sometimes there are places of interest which are under your nose, but which you never think to visit. The Oxford Bus Museum has been one such place for me. I confess to having whisked by the modest A-board advertising the museum on the A4095 on the outskirts of Long Hanborough whenever I was going to Witney. One bright morning as we began to be released from the strictest Covid-19 restrictions I decided to investigate. Despite some limitations because of the virus when I was there (a one-way system, masks to be worn, some areas not accessible, only basic café facilities) I greatly enjoyed my first foray into a public museum after having been confined at home for a long time.

Visitors learn a great deal about the history of bus travel in and around Oxford during the last hundred years from the numerous (really numerous!) photographs and tremendous numbers of artefacts, helpful information sheets and actual examples of vintage buses and coaches. Sadly, during my visit, one could not clamber on and off buses to experience the changes there have been over the years, but in the summer months, if life has returned to normal, visitors can not only climb aboard some of the lovingly restored vehicles, but take a ride in one of the museum's valued buses.



Having spent time in the bus museum I spied an unremarkable entrance which led me into the Morris Motors Museum. This proved to be another feast of transport. It describes the working life of William Morris, Lord Nuffield, from his early beginnings repairing and manufacturing bicycles through the range of cars produced by the Morris and Austin motor companies until he retired in 1952. This part of the museum was unexpected in the amount of information it gave the visitor and the number of Morris cars there was to be seen. The Morris Minor police cars are rather amusing when compared to today's sophisticated and speedy police vehicles – both they and the dear little basic original Mini (how proud I was of mine, never mind its ghastly purple paint!) are a reminder of how quickly motor technology has developed since Lord Nuffield's day.

I know little about engineering for buses or cars, but I was pleasantly surprised at how interesting this little local museum is and enjoyed my morning. Perhaps you'll try it and see what you think?

The museum opens Wednesdays and Sundays throughout the year; also Saturdays in July and August and Bank Holidays. Information can be found on the website: oxfordbusmuseum.org
Admission: Adults £7, Concessions £6, Child £4, Family £15. Free parking, Opening Hours 10.30am to 4.30pm. Sat. Nav. OX29 8LA.

Eileen Baglin-Jones



eyes forward

we look to the past when creating our future
the past is a mem'ry when looking ahead
we cling to the past when the future grows cold

the past is a patchwork an intricate suture
it knits all together, those things that were said
the things that were said when we thought we were bold

the past cannot make us it only can tutor
but takes on new life if our future looks dead
the past gets much closer as people grow old

look out behind, but look out for the future
lift up your spirits and conquer your dread
live in the present and let it unfold

Peter Wild

The Drawing Class

I've started an online drawing course
Not because I have any skill,
But during the months of lockdown
I've got plenty of time to kill.

Well, this drawing and sketching course
Seemed a good idea when I enrolled
It was suitable for even
Complete beginners, I was told.

Altogether on the course
There are seven students, i.e.
Six people with real talent
And one with none – that's me.

The other students on the course
Have been drawing and sketching for ages
You can tell because *their* sketchbooks
Have very few empty pages.

'Sketching Lambs and Hands'
Is the theme of the first week's class
We watch a couple of videos
Of lambs gambolling in the grass.

The lambs leap and jump about
Up and down the hill
I know they're very cute,
But I do wish they'd keep still!

And so we draw and sketch
Working in silent concentration
And I begin to feel a rising
Sense of trepidation.

Now comes the dreaded moment
My heart begins to sink
"Let's all hold up our work
And I'll tell you what I think".

Colin's work is done in pencil
Demonstrating the art of cross-hatching
He draws to a standard that
I cannot dream of matching.

Sarah's drawn a beautiful sketch
Of a lamb with a mother sheep
I wonder if I can just pretend
To have fallen fast asleep.

Phil's produced a drawing
Of a hand with fingers clicking
I look in vain for any faults,
Enviously nit-picking.

Nigel has sketched his hands
Beautifully detailed in pen and ink
It's really very accomplished
A bit like Dürer, I think.

It's coming round to my turn
I feel a sense of doom
I consider pressing the red button
And simply vanishing from Zoom.

I'm sure I won't be coming back
To the course again next week.
My legs begin to quake
As the tutor starts to speak.

I've drawn my hand, held in a fist
It looks like a cauliflower
The tutor says it's very good
Conveying "strength and power".

I begin to sit up straight
"Well done, you've really tried.
You've captured a feeling of tension"
I feel a flush of pride.

Oh! Maybe I have some talent!
Although it's 'latent', I admit.
I'm still the worst of all the class
But it would be feeble to just quit.

I'll definitely come next week
I'll give this thing a chance
(Besides, I have already paid
For the whole course in advance.)

Cathy Lawday



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Child's Play



Word builder

I	B	T
A	E	R
R	C	F

Answer the clues, using only letters from the grid. ALL answers must include the letter in the shaded central square. Answers on page 37.

1. to rip (4)
2. a bistro, small restaurant (4)
3. a coffin stand (4)
4. to sack from employment (4)
5. unclothed (4)
6. a running contest (4)
7. to worry, be anxious (4)
8. payment for a journey (4)
9. summit of a volcano (5)
10. a brief moment (5)
11. pair of game birds (5)
12. a clan (5)
13. track and (5)
14. a ludicrous situation (5)
15. a packing case (5)
16. someone who looks after another person (5)
17. relating to iron (6)
18. to bargain for goods (6)
19. scold (6)
20. more cunning (8)

Alphabet soup

Find the next letter in each of the following sequences. (Hint: write out the alphabet in full before you start.) Answers on page 37.

1. A C E G I _
2. C E H L Q _
3. T Q N K H _
4. U X V Y W _
5. D F G H J _

Steeple Aston Open Gardens



Jane and David at Acacia Cottage



Chris and Sally at Combe Pyne



Peter and Harriet at Canterbury House

20th June 2021



Hanny and Roderick at Kralingen



Daphne and Richard at Primrose Garden



Lorraine and Vaughan at The Longbyre

All photos by Nigel Francis

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It's now over a year since WI members were able to meet together, but finally it looks as though we can get together once more. Weather permitting, our first event is a garden party on 13th July. All members are invited and if you have a friend who might like to join the WI bring them along too as your guest.

On 8th June, Merrill represented Steeple Aston at the National WI AGM, which was attended by over 2,000 members on Zoom. HRH The Countess of Wessex was the first speaker. She talked about her many charities and focused on issues of equal pay, violence against women and gender equality. Dame Cressida Dick of the Metropolitan Police spoke next, talking about domestic abuse, the rising proportion of female police officers, the murder of Sarah Everard and attempts to make London a safer city for women. She gave examples of progress made during her time with the Met.



WI members Miranda, Merrill and Cathy relaxing with well-earned coffee and cake after their stint as village litter pickers

The meeting also included discussion of this year's WI Resolution on raising awareness of ovarian cancer. This form of cancer is often not found through screening and depends on women recognising symptoms and consulting their doctor early. The UK is far behind other countries in this respect and the resulting delayed treatment is often ineffective. GPs need more training to identify ovarian cancer and offer treatment early enough to save lives.

The AGM finished with a talk by Baroness Brenda Hale, the first woman Law Lord. A High Court judge and a specialist in family law, she spoke about justice, fairness and equality. As a woman in a man's world she believed that she had made a difference and gave examples where men had failed to take note of women's needs and their rights. The AGM concluded with a standing ovation for departing members of the WI team and the national anthem.

On Sunday 13th June, several WI members took part in the village Litter Pick, organised by the Parish Council. Taking place later in the year than usual because of Covid restrictions, the pickers along Sixtyfoot were hampered by the dense, high grass growing on the verges. Janice Kinory joked that the grass was taller than she was and wondered if she might disappear in it. Afterwards the litter pickers were rewarded for their efforts with coffee and cake (see photo).

The next event on the calendar is the Church Fete on 10th July. The WI has a stall and is planning a display of 'What we did in lockdown'. Members supported the NHS by making bags so that Covid nurses could launder their uniforms without contaminating the family wash. We also made masks and occupied ourselves with a wide variety of craft enterprises. Come to the WI stall at the fete and see what members got up to during the long months of lockdown.

For more information about WI events or to become a member, please contact me.

Cathy Lawday

01869 347209

Village Hall News



The village hall is now open under Step 3 of the Government guidelines. This will be for those groups who are permitted to continue/start back again. We will continue to monitor the guidelines and latest announcements as of 14th June and review the situation after the 19th July.

Please note our letting agent is Mrs. Katie Rushworth.

01869 340196. Email steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com

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

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

Barbara Brewer, Chair

1st Deddington Guides Report



Our outdoor programme continues!!

Dollar Market was hugely popular. Each patrol is given an amount of currency to purchase equipment required to fulfil set challenges. The aim is then to see who uses their resources wisely and earns the most! These challenges included filling a container from the bridge, first aid, making a mini stretcher, hunting for plants and mini-beasts, building a tower and balancing an egg on top, and so on.

Ready Steady Cook produced some lovely suppers, prepared over an open fire. Well done guides!

Knotting and lashing are useful skills and the guides quickly learnt and proved talented and inventive.

Finally, we spent a lovely evening at The Manor campsite at Barford (thank you very much) learning how to put up tents. The Guides went about this with great enthusiasm and loved the old faithful canvas tents and hoped we might be able to camp this year. Maybe we'll just sleep under the stars! Younger guides learnt new skills with the senior guides demonstrating putting up more modern light-weight tents. Well done all round.

What great outdoor plans await? Girls of 10 years or above can come along and see what we get up to. Call Maggie on 07957 600755 or email mariantrinder@gmail.com

Steeple Aston Walking Group



On 28th May the group had its first long-awaited walk since the beginning of the pandemic. It was led by Penny and Stuart and eight of us started from the Market Place in Deddington. The walk took us through the beautiful rolling countryside surrounding Deddington and on to Clifton and back to Deddington for a much-earned pub lunch at The Unicorn.

It was great to welcome a new member, Catherine, who has recently moved to the village. We look forward to more new people joining us for our monthly walks around the Oxfordshire countryside. Please email us on sawgox25@gmail.com for details of our next walk.



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June's Recycling Service – a resounding success!

Recycling is not something that is usually regarded as a particularly sociable activity; however, this was not the case at our recycling session on 5th June at Robinson Close. On what was a beautifully sunny morning, we had a steady stream of visitors dropping off items and all stopping for a chat – probably the most people I have seen since lockdown began!

We had a brilliant response to the session and across the morning we collected a wide range of items, all of which would either have continued to languish in boxes in lofts/cupboards or which would have ended up at the tip. Our haul across the morning included:

- 286 VHS tapes
- 49 DVDs
- 90 CDs

These have now been sent for recycling to a company who will separate the metals from the plastics. The metals are smelted ready for reuse and the plastics undergo extrusion and pelletisation to be moulded into new recycled plastic products.

- 9 monitors/TVs
- 14 hard drives
- 2 PCs
- 32 mobile phones
- 3 keyboards
- 3 large bags of assorted cables/chargers
- 13 laptops (with another 6 on their way)

The majority of these will be picked up by the Air Ambulance next week, securely wiped, then re-conditioned ready to be sold to raise vital funds. The remainder, where they cannot to be re-used, will be collected by a specialist recycling company who will strip them back to core components, all of which will be recycled with nothing going to landfill.

- Hundreds (literally) of plastic bags/bread bags/pet food pouches

These have now been safely delivered to Tesco who are gradually rolling out a scheme which will, over time, see them able to recycle all soft plastic at all their stores. The soft plastics collected as part of their scheme will then be turned into packaging for food, household, and beauty products.

- a giant box of lightly/unused cosmetics and toiletries

These have been used to make up 15 care packs for use in women's refuges. The packs are given to women who have fled with very little and provide some comfort and a little luxury as they start to rebuild their lives.

- a box of books

Whilst not something we usually collect; we are going to be helping at the Church Fete this month by running a book stall alongside our Sustainable Steeple stall and so these will be added to our collection and all proceeds of their sale will go towards church funds.

- 2 large bags of fabric

Fabric is probably our single most donated item, and we were delighted to receive an assortment of decorative cottons which will make great sustainable gift wrapping. We have since also received a giant box of white cotton bedlinen which is in the process of being turned into tea towels ready for sale at summer markets.

- ... and a wheelbarrow!

This has been donated to the Steeple Aston Church Allotment Association for general use around the allotments.

Thank you to everyone who made use of the service on 5th June, it is great to know that so many resources are now going to be re-used.

We have been asked by a number of people if we will be doing any further collections and the answer is a resounding 'yes'. We are currently looking at a possible next date, as well as whether we make it a regular, quarterly (for example) activity, collecting different things, all of which would otherwise be difficult for people to recycle.

If you do have 'difficult to recycle' items [recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with](https://www.recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with) is a great resource, but also please do email amanda@sustainablesteeple.com and let us know what you are struggling with and we can potentially add this to the mix for future collections. It was someone's enquiry about what to do with several boxes of VHS tapes that led us to investigate recycling options and then add them to June's collection.

www.sustainablesteeple.com



THE VALENTINE CLUB

After 17 months of 'isolation' for the club, it looks like our timing is perfect for us to meet up again on Tuesday 20th July at Middle Aston House for a 'high tea' and a chance to catch up with old friends and hopefully some new ones.

This is a chance for all our existing members and anyone over the age of 60 years young to meet up and enjoy the company of others. All you need to do is arrive for 2.30pm at Middle Aston House where there is ample car parking and either take a seat and relax or have a walk around the beautiful grounds of this fine old house. Tea will be served at 3.30pm and if you would prefer something different to drink, the bar will be open. There will not be a raffle and the tea will be completely free, so all you need to bring with you is some cash or a card if you want a drink from the bar and, of course, a smile. All I would ask is that anyone who is planning on coming, please let me know so that we can ensure there is enough food to go round. Thanks to the 'Bring Joy Foundation' and 'Finders Keepers' for sponsoring this event.

For our August meeting we will be going to Rousham House on Tuesday 17th where we can enjoy the wonderful gardens and tea in the grounds.

If you are new to the village and have reached that magical age of 60 then why not give our club a try? We are a friendly bunch and meet monthly, usually on the third Tuesday of each month where we invite speakers or entertainers and, in a normal year, arrange about eight coach trips to various places of interest. Life begins at 60, so don't miss out!

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. Summer is here and things are about to return to some sort of normal so keep safe and enjoy life.

Richard Preston

Group organiser – Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com



THURSDAY NIGHT BADMINTON

2000hrs – 2200 hrs

£2.00 a session

in Steeple Aston Village Hall

A potentially vibrant social hub of Thursday night badminton is seeking new people of all abilities from keen non-players to seasoned players

We are hoping in **September 2021** to enable the restart post-Covid of Thursday night badminton, but a minimum number of participating players is required to support future sessions.

- Due to the size of the Village Hall we offer a fun sport on a semi-serious basis, therefore sessions are very informal
 - We normally play doubles and mix the pairings during the session
- No previous experience is required as we are all of differing standards and tend to learn as we play
- Age is no barrier, apart from being over 18 for legal reasons, however teenagers are welcome to attend with a parent/guardian
- There is no membership fee – just turn up and play wearing suitable footwear and clothing and bring a racquet if you have one.

If you would be interested in coming along on a Thursday evening please contact Lydia on 01869 347746 by Saturday 31st July 2021

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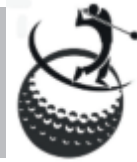
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Steeple Aston Golf Society



The first SAGS meeting of the year took place on 11th June at The Springs Resort and Golf Club near Wallingford, with 15 players enjoying the ideal golfing weather. After a splendid two-course meal served outside on the clubhouse balcony, came the prize-giving. The nearest the pin on the 8th was won by Tony Giles and nearest the pin in two at the 17th by Alan Brewer. The guest prize was won by Richard Watkins with a fine 36 points – he also won first prize in the raffle (£30). George Kay, playing off a handicap of 1, yes one, scored 34 points. However, the star of the show was our Chairman, the baby-faced assassin Alan Brewer, with 38 points, playing off of a 12 handicap – well done Alan!

The next meeting is at Wrag Barn in Highworth near Swindon on 2nd July.

Mike Brown, Secretary

In 1923, who was: 1. *President of the largest steel company?* 2. *President of the largest gas company?* 3. *President of the New York Stock Exchange?* 4. *Greatest wheat speculator?* 5. *President of the Bank of International Settlement?* 6. *Great Bear of Wall Street?*

These men were considered some of the world's most successful of their days. Now, 80 years later, the history book asks us if we know what ultimately became of them.

The Answers: 1. The president of the largest steel company. Charles M. Schwab, *died a pauper*. 2. The president of the largest gas company, Edward Hopson, *went insane*. 3. The president of the NYSE, Richard Whitney, *was released from prison to die at home*. 4. The greatest wheat speculator, Arthur Cooger, *died abroad, penniless*. 5. The president of the Bank of International Settlement *shot himself*. 6. The Great Bear of Wall Street, Cosabee Livermore, *also committed suicide*. However: in that same year, 1923, the PGA Champion and the winner of the US Open Golf Championship, was Gene Sarazen, and what became of him? *He played golf until he was 92, died in 1999 at the age of 95 and was financially secure at the time of his death*. The Moral: Forget work. Play golf.

Stay safe.

Alan Brewer (Chair)

AD&D Photographic Society



'Greenland – a land of icebergs and Inuits' presented by Richard and Janet Burden, was a travelogue of a 2017 trip to Greenland; a place they knew extraordinarily little about, but were keen to know more. They were fond of bleak areas and found a land-based trip organised by Wild Photography Holidays. The three-hour flight from Iceland introduced them to the colourful highlights of Greenland. The breathtaking views were tempered by the -30° C temperatures, where everything soon began to freeze up. Equipment, whether it be a tripod or the camera, suffered in the biting cold, but 'warm hands' were invaluable to keep equipment comfortable in camera bags. It would be an expensive trip if camera bodies died due to the cold.

The skyline of the 'modern' town of Ilulissat gave opportunities to show the colourful timber properties positioned in small groups. When the land is covered in snow and ice there is little need for conventional roads. The traditional sled dogs created lots of photo opportunities. Sunsets produced amazing light for images of skyscraper-sized icebergs, but the best prospects proved to be the Aurora Borealis which Richard decided would include one of the local houses in the foreground if the Aurora appeared. Stunningly it did and the images were amazing in their intensity. The key to the capture, in the dark, was setting up the camera before the appearance to ensure that the focus would be on infinity and a manual exposure of 15 seconds at f2.8. There was nothing bleak about the Greenland landscape because the light was so special.

Our next presentation evening is by Peter Greenway about National Trust photography on 7th July at 7.30pm. Please check our website for details if you wish to join us as we still cannot confirm we will be meeting in person. Everyone is most welcome.

Anne Hunsley

www.addphoto.co.uk

Steeple Aston WI needs YOU!



We are actively seeking new members

If you are new to the village, if you would like to make new friends, or if any of the events on our programme take your fancy, then come along.

You will be made very welcome!

We meet at **7.30** on the second Tuesday of every month (once restrictions end)

Come along – on your own or with a friend.

Look out for details of WI events in the SAL calendar, or for more information contact: Cathy Lawday (President) 01869 347209

cathy@lawdaymacandrew.co.uk

The Cricket Report



Chairman's XI...

This was the 17th fixture in the ongoing saga of tight finishes, torn hamstrings and tired bodies. It was 10-6 to Steeple Aston, but the Chairman's XI were undefeated for three years. Okay, so we did not actually play last year, but for us 'Oldies' at least we did not lose! The Chairman's team was significantly weakened by the loss of Rich Sciver, now in Japan, so we tried to get his daughter Nat Sciver (currently the second best all-rounder in the world of women's cricket) to replace him. Sadly, the ECB ignored my protestations that what Nat needed before playing India was some time in the middle on a slow turner at Barton Abbey.

SACC pile on the runs...

Having won the toss, the Oldies put the village into bat and Greg Renk (26) and Alex Ramos (22) put on an opening stand that Messrs Burns and Sibley could only dream of – 38 runs! This set a platform for Nige Doggett (52*) and Jon Scotchbrook (55*) to dominate the bowling taking the SACC to 93-2 off 18 overs. There then followed what can only be described as a cataclysmic three overs as Jon and Nige smashed 56 runs. I blame the skipper for the bowling change! Both then retired only for Jeremy Farrar to hit a quickfire 15 before holing out in the deep to give the Chairman (1-11) a prized wicket. Charlie Simmonds-Jones nurdled another 12 precious runs and the village finished on 204-3 from 32 overs.

Never in doubt...

Jonty Renk was soon on the money bowling his five overs for a measly 13 runs, ably supported by Alex Ramos, returning to the Steeple Aston fold after university. He was even more abstemious taking 1-7 in his spell. Charlie Simmonds-Jones (2-9) then took two important wickets with his wily seamers; he says they move a lot, but I never noticed! Nige Doggett heaped on the pressure with a tight spell of 1-12 from three overs and all looked lost for the Chairman's XI at 82-4 off 22 overs, requiring 123 from 10 overs. There then followed some surprisingly generous bowling, which even the Chairman (37*) managed to nurdle to the boundary. However, in the end SACC triumphed by 26 runs, which when you consider that one of our bowlers went for 52 in two overs meant it really was quite close! That's how the Oldies saw it in the Pub, anyway.

Life affirming...

Most importantly, the whole game had been played in a wonderful spirit and as we whiled away the evening in the White Horse, it almost seemed as though life was back to normal. We had our own socially-distanced marquee, some cracking buffet food and entertaining banter. The thrum of chatter and laughter is immensely cathartic, as is the sound of cheering, when bumpers were drained by the seven members of the Chairman's XI who dropped catches; frankly I am surprised they even saw the ball. In fact, Snej did not and sported a large purple bruise on his chest at breakfast the next morning. So it's now 11-6 to the SACC and in 10 years will probably be 20-7, but none of us really cares. It is the joy of playing cricket with friends in beautiful surroundings that matters.

Middleton Stoney...

After a tremendous start from Jeremy Farrar (23) and Alex Ramos (20) we were 47-0 on a bright sunny day perfect for batting. Somehow, we collapsed to 110 all out. "What on earth happened," I hear you say? Well, cricket is a funny old game and sometimes the cricketing gods do not shine on you. Thank goodness though that Tim Jones was on form, as he hit a battling 28 to at least give us some semblance of respectability and a chance of winning.

Incredibly we took that chance and Middleton Stoney were panicking at 72-6. All the bowlers contributed: Paul Longman took 2-38 off ten overs with his well-flighted off-breaks, helped by a smart catch from Jonty Renk; Alex Ramos was again on form with 1-24 off six overs, including a stunning Ben Stokes-like catch from Nige Doggett; Nige then chipped in with 1-12 and Peter Higgins 2-18 off eight overs. Sadly, their number six, who has played schoolboy County cricket managed to guide Middleton Stoney home with only a few overs remaining. We had needed another 20 runs, but still a fine game of cricket.


Next up Sandford St Martin and Oxford Downs.

Best wishes.

Peter Higgins, Chairman SACC

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Middle Aston House Open Day

SAVE THE DATE for the Middle Aston House Open Day
on Saturday 24 July from 2.00pm until 'late'.
Details will be posted on our Social Media.

Staying In Touch

Keep connected with us through our Social Media and website
posts or join our local Whatsapp Group by sending your name and
mobile phone number to 'events@middleastonhouse.com' so we
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Child's Play answers (see page 21)

Word builder

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1 tear, | 11 brace, |
| 2 cafe, | 12 tribe, |
| 3 bier, | 13 trace, |
| 4 fire, | 14 farce, |
| 5 bare, | 15 crate, |
| 6 race, | 16 carer, |
| 7 fret, | 17 ferric, |
| 8 fare, | 18 barter, |
| 9 crater, | 19 berate, |
| 10 trice, | 20 craftier |

Alphabet soup

1. K (every second letter)
2. W (advance by 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 letters)
3. E (go back by 3 letters each time)
4. Z (advance 3 letters and back 2)
5. K (advance omitting vowels)



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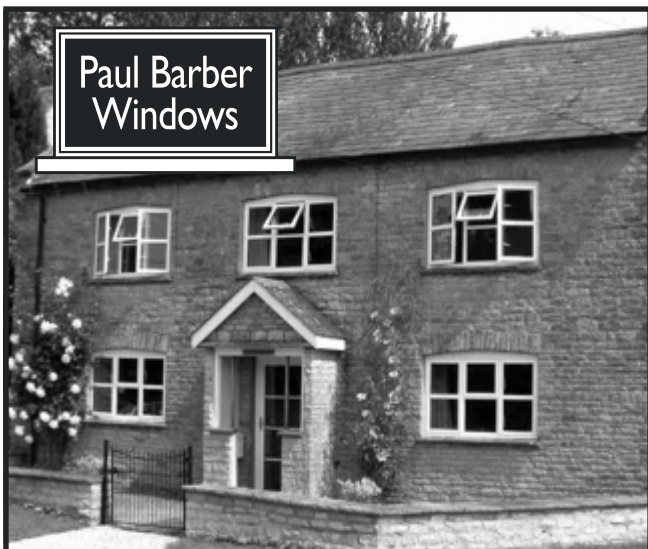
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Church Matters



As I write this in mid-June, I have no idea whether '21st June' will have happened by the time the July SAL gets published. That God is good and loves us all is at the heart of every day I get to live and walk in this beautiful part of the earth we inhabit; but that there are mysteries beyond our knowing is something we all have got used to this last year, and right now the exact date of '21st June', the long hoped-for final end of Lockdown, is one of them. What I do know is this: barring some unforeseen event, we have four things planned for July and all of them are going to happen.

Church Services in Steeple Aston Every Sunday

From now on we are back to a rota of weekly church services in each of the villages in our Benefice. This means 11am services every Sunday in Steeple Aston. However, there will be exceptions. Once in July (and twice in the five weeks of August) there will be United Benefice services and these will be at 10.30am just to catch folk out, but these are exceptions. We are getting back to normal.

What does normal mean? Well – we are still waiting to see! We don't know if we can sing, and we don't know if we still have to wear masks, but we do know that we will be inside the church rather than outside in the churchyard, and that services will be here every week. Check for details at the back of SAL, or on the church notice board, or on the 'What's on' page of our website www.sntchurch.com.

We are so looking forward to welcoming you back to join with us – it's going to be wonderful.

The Church Fete, 10th July

Village Fetes have been legal since 12th April so we are fine to roll with this even if '21st June' gets put back a whole month or more. We are very much looking forward to gathering on Robinson Close with classic cars, big band jazz, and stalls and games and teas and raffle and tombola and all sorts. Entry £1 – do bring cash with you – and come ready to have fun.

If the weather is set to be awful, it won't happen. Otherwise – we will be there. Everything will be in the open air and we have a great space to help us be safe. Feel free to wear a mask if you would like, and do use hand gel too. It's all from 2 to 4pm on Saturday 10th July. Come along and join us!

Annual Parochial Congregation Meeting, 12th July

The 'Easter Vestry', as it's called in some circles, is happening in church on Monday 12th July at 7.30pm. It's been a strange year, but we still have to receive accounts, review the year, vote for wardens and PCC members and try to plan ahead together. All welcome.

Music for a Summer Evening, July 17th

At the end of last year we managed a Christmas Concert with Nick Cleobury directing the Aston Singers. Good news – they're back!

On 17th July at 7pm Nick brings the Aston Singers back to Steeple Church for a concert of 'Music for a Summer Evening'. And as a special treat we have young Australian soprano Cassandra Wright and accompanist Elli Welsh joining us too. The concert will last around an hour, with tickets available at £10 each from Eileen Baglin-Jones on 340099 in advance. All proceeds in aid of church funds. Afterwards, we will have refreshments in the churchyard – no charge for these, but please do feel free to make further generous donations to the funds as you enjoy the refreshments!!!

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Sunday 11th July	9.30am Family Service Rev'd Marcus Green	11am Family Service Rev'd Marcus Green	5.30pm Holy Communion <i>followed by APCM</i> Rev'd Marcus Green and Canon Robin Gibbons
Sunday 18th July		10.30am United Benefice Open Air Communion Rev'd Marcus Green	
Sunday 25th July	9.30am Morning Prayer Canon Robin Gibbons	11am Morning Prayer Rev'd Marcus Green	9.30am Family Communion Rev'd Marcus Green
Sunday 1st August	9.30am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Rev'd Marcus Green	11am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Rev'd Marcus Green	5.30pm Evensong Rev'd Marcus Green
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Hall Only (social occasion)		
Represented Clubs.....	£32	
Others.....	£53	
All Facilities (social occasion)		
Village Residents	£65	£200
Represented Clubs.....	£65	£200
Others - up to 6 hours.....	£110	£300
Others - over 6 hours.....	£160	£300
All Facilities (off peak - 4 hours)		
Village Residents	£30	£75
Represented Clubs.....	£30	£75
Committee Room		
Represented Clubs.....	£6	
Non-Represented Clubs.....	£12	
Discount for represented clubs – 15% for six block bookings		

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

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

Rubbish bin collection day is Thursday

July

1st blue & brown
 8th green
 15th blue & brown
 22nd green
 29th blue & brown



August

5th green
 12th blue & brown
 19th green
 26th blue & brown

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 2047 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

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

July			
Saturday 10 th	Church Fete (p25 & p39)	Robinson Close	2 to 4pm
Tuesday 13 th	WI Garden Party (p26)	tbc	4pm
Thursday 15th	SAL August issue copy and advert deadline		
Saturday 17 th	Music for a Summer Evening (p13 & p39)	Steeple Aston Church	7pm
Monday 12 th	Annual Parochial Congregation Meeting (p39)	Steeple Aston Church	7.30pm
Monday 19 th	Parish Council meeting	Village Hall	7.30pm
Tuesday 20 th	Valentine Club at (p31)	Middle Aston House	2.30pm
Saturday 24 th	Farmers' Market (p09)	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
August			
Sunday 15th	SAL September copy and advert deadline		
Tuesday 17 th	Valentine Club (p31)	Rousham House	2.30pm
Saturday 28 th	Farmers' Market (p09)	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Monday 30 th	Annual Flower Show (p05)	Robinson Close	from 2pm

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

Printed by: **Joshua Horgan Print & Design**

Unit 2 Glenmore Business Centre, Range Road, Witney, OX29 0AA Tel: 01865 246762

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