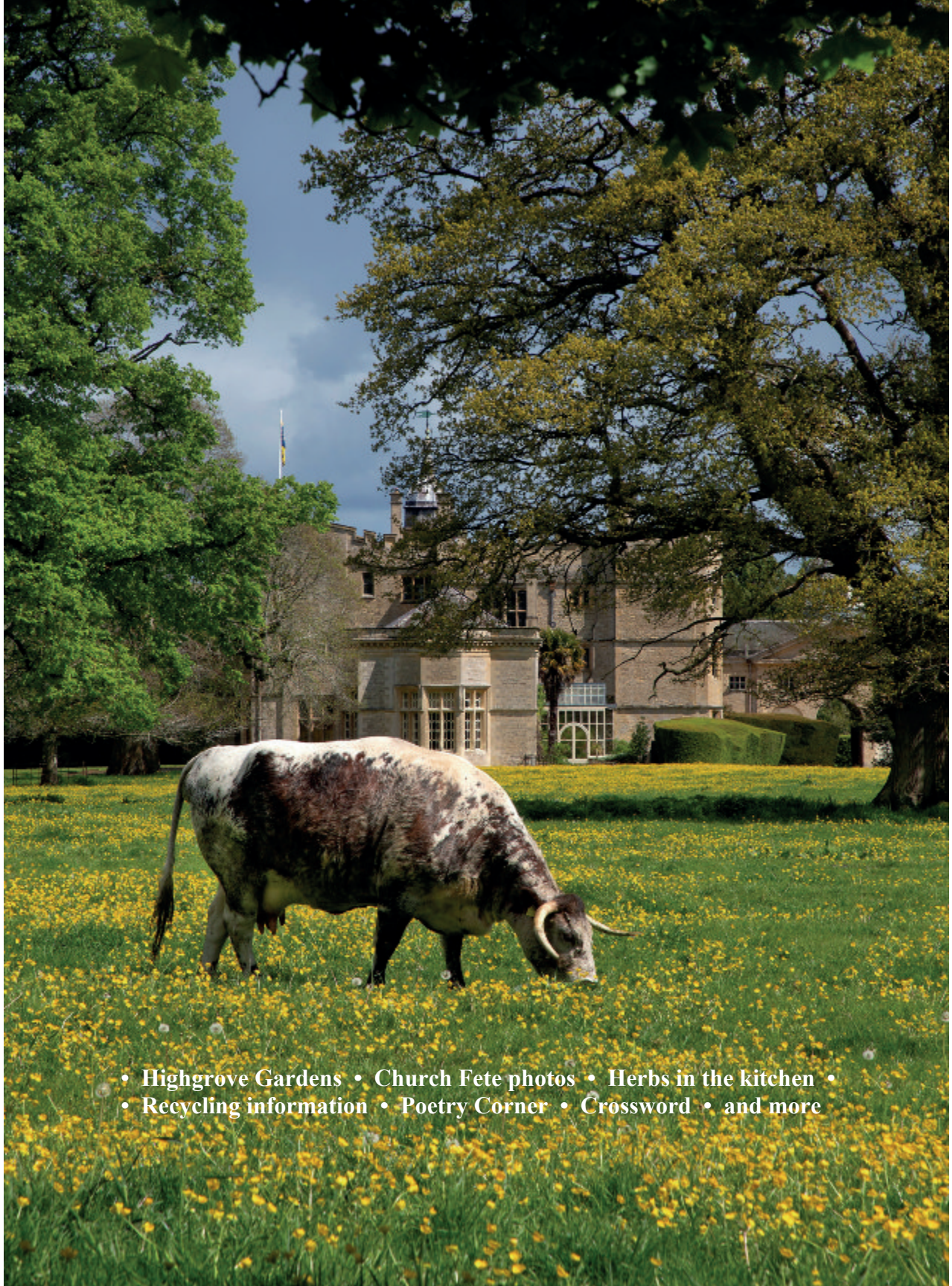


Steeple Aston *Life*

August 2021 Issue No. 576



- Highgrove Gardens • Church Fete photos • Herbs in the kitchen •
- Recycling information • Poetry Corner • Crossword • and more

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Cover photo: Taken in the meadows at Rousham House by Nigel Francis.

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

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

COPY DEADLINES

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

The copy deadline for the September 2021 issue is therefore 15th August.

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**
salife.advertising@gmail.com

01869 347347

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Please note: there is a new deadline for adverts (black & white only), which should be submitted no later than the 15th of the month.

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½ page - £12, ¼ page- £6.
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Steeple Aston Directory

Age UK		Richard Preston	340512
Allotments (Church)	SACAA Clerk	Nigel Grugeon sacaaclerk@btinternet.com	
Angling Club		Antony Morley	tonyriver_83@hotmail.com
Archive (SAVA)	Chairman	Martin Lipson	347046
Badminton (Tuesday mornings)		Barbara Brewer	340423
Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Lydia Powell	347746
Beekeepers (Swarm collection, advice)		Paul Honigmann	340665
Bell ringers		Graham & Dorothy Clifton	347273
Hand-bell ringers		Sally Cooper	347173
Brownies		Fiona McLoone	340132
Catholic Church - St Teresa's (Charlbury)		Father Tony Joyce	01608 642703
Cherwell District Council	Bodicote House		01295 227001
Choral Society	Chair	Ann Livings	233518
Church of England (St Peter & St Paul)	Rector	Rev Marcus Green	340903
Church Wardens		Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton	340099 , 347273
Methodist Church – Tackley		Rev Paul Carter	01865 243216
	Steward	Tim Bailey	01869 331516
Councillors - Cherwell District Council		ClIr Mike Kerford-Byrnes	07805 665393
		ClIr Bryn Williams	07836 271998
		ClIr Hugo Brown	
Cricket Club	Chairman	Peter Higgins	347493
Crimestoppers			0800 555111
Deddington Guides		Marian Trinder	340806, 07786001641
Deddington Health Centre	Appointments		338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	338847
	Out of Hours		111
Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Head Teacher	Frances Brown	340204
Football Club	Secretary	Peter Wild	07950 837773
Garden Club	Chairman	Richard Preston	340512
Golf Society	Chairman	Alan Brewer	340423
Horticultural Society	Show Secretary	Vicky Clifton	07817 025948
Parish Council	Chairman / Clerk	Richard MacAndrew/ Cathy Fleet	347209, 347000
Police	24hr Call Centre	(non emergency)	101
Post Office & Harris Stores		Raj	340201
Pre-school			340863
Public House	Red Lion	Chris Gates	340225
Robinson's Close	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Scouts Group		Colin Cassford	243038
Sports & Recreation Centre	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Steeple Aston Walking Group		Penny, Stuart, Sue and Graham	sawgox25@gmail.com
Toddler Group		Charlotte Clarke	07799 030490
Valentine Club		Richard & Daphne Preston	340512
Village Hall (see advertisement)	Letting Agent	Katie Rushworth	340196
Village Website	www.steepleaston.org.uk	Editor: Jenny Bell	347714
Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme			0300 3030125
WI	Joint Presidents	Merrill Bayley, Cathy Lawday	347802, 347209



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

Steeple Aston *Life*

August 2021
Issue No. 576

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Editorial

“My spelling is Wobbly. It's good spelling but it Wobbles, and the letters get in the wrong places.” (A.A. Milne, English author, 1882 to 1956, writing as Winnie-the-Pooh.)

One of the tasks of an editor is to correct the spelling of contributors. This is relatively easy if a letter has been omitted or two letters transposed. But what do you do if alternative spellings are available – e.g. focused and focussed,

Many newspapers and magazines have a ‘house style’ to help a publication’s contributors and editors not only with accuracy, but also consistency. My go-to guide is ‘The Guardian Stylebook’ (which, incidentally, recommends ‘focused’). To be consistent with dates I now place the day before the month – e.g. 15th August, not August 15th.

Punctuation is another area where editors often impose their own rules. I usually place a comma before ‘but’, but rarely before ‘and’. I use single quotes (‘xxx’) for book titles and emphasis, with double quotes (“xxx”) reserved for speech. Other views are available.

Many people struggle with the apostrophe. We might smile at the ‘greengrocer’s apostrophe’ – apple’s and pear’s, for example – but who among us can claim perfection in placing this multi-purpose punctuation mark? It can be used to indicate possession (the dog’s dinner), but moves around if there are multiple subjects (the dogs’ dinners – strictly the dogs’ dinners, but the second ‘s’ is usually omitted). It is also used as a replacement for letters in a word or words (don’t, ‘twas). No wonder we get confused.

There is a field next to the village hall. Is this Robinson Close, Robinson’s Close or Robinsons Close? Assuming that the area is named after a person, Robinson’s Close is probably correct. Except that place names frequently lose their apostrophe (e.g. Paines Hill). So from now on we will refer to it as Robinsons Close.

Robert



A group from SAVA's guided walk around the heart of the village earlier this year. Photo: Nigel Francis



Steeple Aston Open Gardens – 20th June 2021

The rains persisted until lunchtime on a very unseasonable day in June. In fact, it was decidedly cold and after months of hard work, the six gardens that opened for the National Garden Scheme (NGS) were wondering if many visitors would venture out. In fact, an estimated 400 people came to stroll around the gardens, in turn raising an amazing £2,974.00 for the worthwhile charities that the NGS supports. This result is remarkably similar to other years when the sun has actually shone and we have not been threatened by a pandemic.

Thanks must go to the gardeners who made all this possible, but also to the church for supplying much welcomed tea and cake and all the local villagers who kindly walked around many of the six gardens that are not normally visible to passers-by. A great result, supported by so many and helping so many less fortunate than ourselves by providing funds to those worthwhile charities.

Richard Preston

Mobile coverage in rural areas

If you are 18 years or older, you can take part in a Government survey being run by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS). This is seeking your views on how mobile coverage in rural areas is affecting you. Go to: <https://bit.ly/3hDJepm>

The survey will remain available until at least Tuesday 10th August 2021.

Hanging basket entries for Flower Show

Do you have a hanging basket or outdoor planter which you would like to enter in Class 18 of the Annual Flower Show on Bank Holiday Monday 30th August? To save having to transport the exhibit to the show, it will be judged in situ at your home. All you have to do is call Janet on 01869 347882, Richard on 01869 340512 or Vicky on 07817 025948 before midnight on Sunday 22nd August to enter. Entry fee is 30 pence.



Parish Council e-mailing list

The Parish Council is compiling a contact list of email addresses which we will use occasionally to get in touch on matters of village interest. We will not pass on your details to any third parties and we will check every year to see if you wish to remain on the list.

If you are not already on our list, but would like your email address to be included, please contact the Parish Clerk, Cathy Fleet at parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com

Letter from *Westminster*



SAL's bi-monthly epistle from our MP, Victoria Prentis

Parish councils have been the bedrock of our democracy since the Local Government Act in 1894. Two subsequent Acts of Parliament in 1972 and 2011 have handed them greater powers and re-affirmed their role in local democracy, serving approximately 16 million people across England. In Cherwell alone we have 79 parish councils, town councils and parish meetings. Parish councillors are some of the most hard-working people in their local community. From bus shelters to allotments, housing needs to planning applications, they are a strong voice for residents.

A few weeks ago, I met members of Lower Heyford and Caulcott Parish Council to talk about the increase in traffic on the historic Grade II-listed Rousham Bridge. They believe that a weight limit should be imposed to preserve the integrity of the structure. They also raised concerns over the need for traffic calming measures to help manage the roads through the villages. While the parish council have received assurances from Oxfordshire County Council that a weight limit would be introduced, this is yet to happen so I have written to the Chief Executive for an update on progress.

Last month, I also joined a virtual meeting of Somerton residents who wanted to discuss their personal experiences and learning from the pandemic. We have come a long way in recent months; the new Health Secretary has made it clear that we need to balance the harms caused by COVID with the wider impact of ongoing restrictions. Personal responsibility will be key as we move forward, alongside the ongoing success of vaccination rollout, with a booster programme now under active consideration.

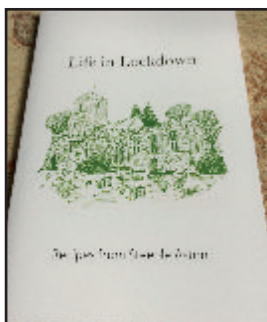
I have also been in touch with all the local Parish Councils following news of a possible Strategic Rail Freight Interchange (SRFI) between Ardley and Heyford. The site proposed by Oxfordshire Railfreight Ltd would be on the side of the Chiltern Mainline, on land to the east of Heyford Park and west of the B430 (opposite the Viridor ERF facility). I have significant concerns about the location of the development, but will wait to see what mitigation measures are proposed. Preliminary meetings with some Parish Councils as well as the District and County Council about the plans have proven useful. I am always keen to hear constituents' thoughts and look forward to meeting others soon to discuss the proposals. It is important that consideration is given to the SRFI's impact on the local villages. I am determined to make sure my constituents' voices are heard throughout.

Victoria Prentis
MP for North Oxfordshire

Steeple Aston Noticeboard



Life in Lockdown recipe book



The Steeple Aston 'Life in Lockdown' recipe book has been published! If you didn't manage to grab your copy at the Church Fete hurry to buy one – or more – from Hill House. A snip at £5, copies await you in the entrance hall. Hill House is on Southside down the lane which is through the second gateway beyond the Red Lion Car Park going towards the main road. There's a sign on the gatepost 'To Hill House'. It's the big house at the bottom of the lane. The recipe books are on the table in the entrance hall. A useful and attractive memento of Lockdown, these little books make excellent presents – so why not buy several!

The cover illustration is by Laura Howard.

VICTORIA PRENTIS MP

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR NORTH OXFORDSHIRE

Meet Victoria:

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



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Victoria Online:

 @victoriaprentis
 @victoria_prentis
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www.victoriaprentis.com

Contact Victoria:

Constituency:

 01869 233685
 Orchard House
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Deddington
OX15 0TD

Westminster:

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 House of Commons
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Steeple People



How long have you lived in Steeple Aston?

Twenty-three years.

Where did you move from?

Carterton.

What brought you here?

The village was ideally situated for my wife's employment in Bicester and my daily commute to RAF Brize Norton.

What do you like best about living in Steeple Aston?

Stepping out of the door straight into the countryside.

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

Too many builders' vans!

Where do you think of as 'home'?

Sussex and the South Downs where I grew up.

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

Formative years spent in the Sussex village of Hurstpierpoint. Joined the RAF at age 17 as a Mechanical Transport Driver. Became an Instructional Officer at RAF Brize Norton.

Married Carol who was literally the girl next door. Had cats together!

Early bird or night owl?

I flit between the two.

Optimist or pessimist?

Pessimist with a dash of optimism.

What was the best thing about being a child?

Spending time with my grandfather.

What is the best thing about being an adult?

Being captain of your own destiny.

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

A train driver.

What do you do for a living now?

Freelance gardener and member of 'Gardening For All Seasons'.

What is the best job you've ever done?

Working on 'E' Flight 202 Air Sea Rescue Squadron at RAF Leconfield.

What's your secret/guilty pleasure?

When home alone in the evening relaxing with a glass of red wine and the hi-fi cranked up, I would say to 11, but that's a bit of a cliché!

What's your favourite food?

An aromatic curry.

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

Vinyl and CD collection along with Carol and our tuxedo moggy, Kizzy.

If you could ban one thing in the country, what would it be?

Elitism.

If you won the lottery, what's the first thing you would buy?

An original Gibson SG 62.

What do you do to relax?

I dabble with song-writing and playing guitar, but nothing to concern Ray Davies or Angus Young!

What's your favourite saying or piece of advice?

There is strength in humility.

Who is your hero? Which person do you most admire, and why?

My grandfather, as he was interesting, fun to be around, seemed so fearless and able to turn his hand to anything.

Who would you most like to have dinner with – dead or alive?

I'd like to have one more chance to converse with my late mother.

What do you get grumpy/mad about?

People who are full of their own importance and don't respect others.

What makes you happiest in the world?

A gargantuan guitar riff.

Chris Neville



The ARTS Page



I've had two very different but wonderful evenings at the theatre recently, worth mentioning because both are still 'on the road'.

At the Oxford Playhouse, the T. S. Eliot 'Four Quartets' performed by Ralph Fiennes was a revelation. I have known the poems since student days, loved them, wrestled with them – they are not easy – and with the extra time Covid has allowed, re-studied them. But hearing and seeing them, superbly narrated/acted by Fiennes (a masterclass in theatre craft and diction), brought them to life with simple but intense set, lighting and music. The broad canvas Eliot draws, the philosophical musings, notably on the way time and memory work, combined with the sheer beauty and music of the text, was one of the most enjoyable and productive 80 minutes I can remember. Hopefully they may bring out a film, but you can catch it at the Harold Pinter Theatre in London between Thursday 18th November and Saturday 18th December.

Now for something completely different and closer to home – the Mikron Theatre Company in North Aston on 9th July, with a new play 'Atalanta'. It was open-air touring theatre at its best, about women's football and their fight to be recognised, based on Huddersfield Atalanta FC in the 1920s. A cast of four – taking various different parts, singing, dancing, playing instruments (very well!), it had this non-football fan hooked! Formed 49 years ago and based in Huddersfield, with patrons including Prunella Scales and Timothy West, Mikron "tour on our narrowboat in the summer and by road in spring and autumn, to every conceivable type of venue, reaching audiences that other companies cannot". They are also touring 'A Dog's Tale', based around Crufts and something of a thriller. Mikron are coming again with both shows to our area during August – including Banbury, Kidlington, Oxford and Witney. All the details are on their website – mikron.org.uk. The show in North Aston was attended by children and adults. This type of company is the lifeblood of our theatre.

The new exhibition at the Banbury Museum – 'I grew up in the 80s' looks terrific – "a wide array of wonderfully preserved objects, encompassing toys, technology, sport, fashion, food, film, books, TV and more". Runs until 3rd October 2021. banburymuseum.org

Daily Info – www.dailyinfo.co.uk – is a real cornucopia, nay gallimaufry, of activities in and around Oxford, right across the sphere of arts and entertainment, laid out day-by-day under the 'What's On' tab.

The 'Four Quartets' and the Mikron show got me thinking that when life returns to normal (?) some local activity might be revived. Food for thought. Please write in with ideas and also send any reviews and previews you may have.

Nicholas Cleobury
nicholascleobury@btinternet.com








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**Come and see us at the Steeple Aston & Middle Aston Horticultural Society Annual Show
Monday 30th August from 2pm**

Our stall will have a wide range of upcycled items for sale - including gift bags, cards, tea towels, table runners, napkins, bags, picture frames and more!

Block print your own produce bag – do your bit for the planet and have fun! – we have made lots of produce bags from upcycled curtain linings and will have a range of fruit & veg blocks and fabric paint for you to customise your own bag!

**www.sustainablesteeple.com
www.facebook.com/SustainableSteeple
amanda@sustainablesteeple.com or 07793 553150**



The Gardening Spot

This is a gardening spot with a difference!

Over the past couple of years there have been several houses changing ownership in the village. To all the newcomers to Steeple and Middle Aston, a very warm welcome. Along with a change of faces comes a different approach to gardening. Over the coming months and years we will see different designs in village gardens and how gardening is approached. Keeping up with the changes is why 'Steeple and Middle Aston Horticultural Society' has not only survived since its origins in the mid-1860s, but actually progressed to be acknowledged as one of the biggest and best flower shows in the county.

This has not happened by chance! People's lives have changed dramatically since the first exhibition of roots and crafts held in the old Dr Radcliffe's School on North Side, where darning socks and the best swedes were judged. Thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of an ever-changing committee the show has kept up with changing hobbies and pastimes that are not always related to gardening, although there are a few exhibitors who grow some amazing flowers and vegetables. So why tell you all this when maybe I should be describing how to disbud your dahlias?

On August Bank Holiday Monday, the 'Annual Flower Show and Fun Dog Show' will return to Robinsons Close and the village hall after an enforced break last year. There will be one of the largest marquees on the sports field to provide space for what can be over 800 exhibits varying from flowers to fruit, photographs to paintings and everything in-between. On the field will be numerous stalls challenging your skills at bowling, smashing plates, eating ice-creams and rifle shooting. There will also be a children's bouncy castle and games, vintage cars and some slightly more unusual vehicles, and stalls selling a variety of items.

The 'Fun Dog Show' offers rosettes for the first three places in all the classes and a 'Dog of the Day' trophy for the overall winner. And not forgetting those wonderful teas in the village hall. More importantly, and demonstrated by all those who attended the Church Fete in July, a chance to meet up with fellow villagers and friends who you might not have seen for a long while.

This will be the society's 129th Annual Show and a celebration of village life at its very best. I can hear you all asking, "what can I do to be involved and how can I help!" The answer is simple. Be a part of this wonderful occasion that must surely be the social highlight of the year for so many villagers.

- Enter one of the 139 classes which can be found in the schedule that is available on the village website, in the village shop or contact me directly. If this is your first time of entering and you are not sure what to do, just give me a call or email.
- Borrow a dog or possibly bring your own to enter the fun dog show. The emphasis is on fun so don't worry if you are not up to Crufts' standard. Entries are taken on the show ground from 2pm with the first class at 2.30pm, so don't be late.
- Maybe you would like to have a stall to promote your own society or sell some of your crafts. Contact me if this is something you would like to do.
- If you could help on the day that would be amazing as it takes a lot of manpower to stage the show and our existing committee is in the main, ageing and not as agile as we used to be!

Please take part in whatever way you can as the future success of this village tradition can only succeed if villagers participate in some way and, believe me, you will enjoy yourself. For more information or schedules, look on the village website, give me a call on 01869 340512 or email

richard.preston5@btopenworld.com

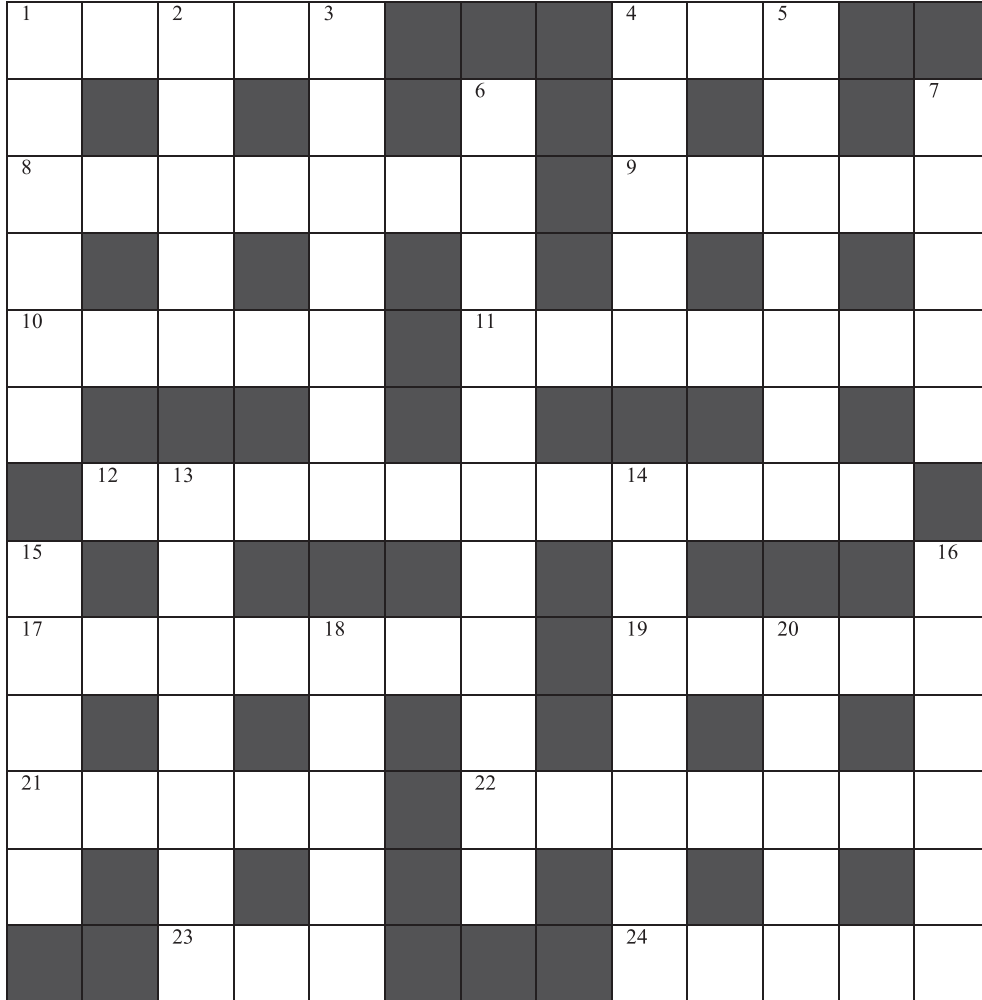
We, the horticultural society committee, look forward to seeing you at the show on Monday 30th August. This will be your chance to show why Steeple and Middle Aston are the best places to live!

Richard Preston – Chairman of SA & MA Horticultural Society

CROSSWORD

compiled by Cathy Lawday

Solution on p.37



ACROSS

1. the seventh sign of the zodiac (5)
4. towards the stern of a ship or plane (3)
8. capital city of Northern Ireland (7)
9. the currency unit of Egypt (5)
10. a job that is well-paid and easy to do (5)
11. the longest river in Asia (7)
12. those who eat no meat (11)
17. small breed of dog which has no ability to bark (7)
19. Israeli resort (5)
21. a native of Sweden (5)
22. a waterfall between the USA and Canada (7)
23. the compass point midway between north and northeast (3)
24. conscious and alert (5)

DOWN

1. city and port in northwest Germany (6)
2. the underground part of plants such as tulips (5)
3. to investigate, examine (7)
4. pertaining to the Alps (5)
5. the county town of Somerset (7)
6. holidays taken in the country where one lives (11)
7. small snake common in Europe (5)
13. oriental (7)
14. the Japanese art of flower arranging (7)
15. clinically overweight (5)
16. a colourless, odourless gas used as fuel (6)
18. the daughter of a sibling (5)
20. a 'Forbidden City', the centre of Tibetan Buddhism. (5)

STEEPLE ASTON

(129th Annual)

FLOWER SHOW

AND

FUN DOG SHOW



.....
BANK HOLIDAY MONDAY

30th AUGUST @ 2pm



.....
Village Hall and Robinsons Close, Fir Lane, OX25 4SF

.....
Admission £2 adults – Children under 16 no charge
Enter 5 classes or more and gain free admission

.....
SIDESHOWS AND ATTRACTIONS
TRADE STANDS AND REFRESHMENTS

.....
FOR MORE INFORMATION
and a schedule (the show is open to everyone)
CALL RICHARD 01869 340512 or www.steepleaston.org.uk

Or look on  Steeple Aston and Middle Aston Horticultural Society

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



There were only six of us at the start of the July Parish Council meeting. The Chairman said he had hoped that someone new, who was interested in joining the Parish Council, might have come to the meeting. But it was on one of the heatwave evenings and everyone agreed that there was no competition between being in the garden in the shade with a drink or, as we were, in the Sports and Recreation Centre. The Council still needs one new member so if you are interested, please come to a meeting or get in touch with a Councillor or the Clerk.

The meeting seemed to be dominated by considering the state of hedges and weeds around the village. The discussion began with the rather dead-looking plant outside Cedar Lodge that might have once been Giant Hogweed. As long as it really is dead everyone seemed unworried, but if not it will be reported to Highways via Fix-my-Street.

Next it was the turn of the footpath behind Coneygar Fields going towards Middle Aston. One Councillor said his clothes got wet when he jogged along there and someone else said it was fine and caused no problem. I walked there a few days ago and it is more overgrown than it was last year, which I assume is the result of all the rain we have had. On the other hand, admittedly I walked and did not jog, but it seemed fine to me and I stayed dry.

The other plants in need of attention are those on the Play Area where the bushes and hedges have got a bit overgrown and weedy (but not needy because they are growing like anything). The hope is that someone can be found who will manage the Play Area including both the cleaning and, if feasible, some weeding and hedge trimming as well.

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents does an annual survey of the Play Area. The Councillors thought the survey might indicate the need to replace the gate to the MUGA (multi-use games area), repair to the sloping picnic table and improvements to the surface under the zip wire. At

present there is a membrane under the zipwire which is meant to be covered by chippings, but these get shifted because of the popularity of the equipment. A more substantial alternative was discussed. Also, for reasons which nobody can really explain, the mosaic in the Play Area seems to be sinking compared to the ground around it and the mosaic gets covered by mud. It was suggested that the whole mosaic might be lifted to the same height as the adjacent ground.

The defibrillator at the Red Lion is currently being stored in the building, but it was agreed that it should be available at any time and that meant it had to be kept outside in a special watertight cabinet. Our County Councillor, Arash Fatemian, was at part of the meeting and he offered funding for the cabinet, which offer was gratefully accepted on the village's behalf.

Arash explained about the planning issues relevant to the potential development at Hatch End. He told us why Highways has not yet commented on the scheme. He had both good news and bad news. Apparently, the application in its present form is bound to be refused because the categories for which the buildings can be used are too wide. The scheme will only be considered if the categories are confined to uses which can be carried out in residential areas without detriment to the locality. But the bad news is that Hatch End already has approval for its current building footprint and number of parking places and as long as the developers stay below these limits it may not be easy to stop them. One Councillor pointed out that the current arrangement had five users and the proposed scheme will have 24 and this by itself would mean more parking spaces are needed than now. The developers have included what we expect to be inadequate parking and by this subterfuge are in danger of getting planning approval. The main scope for stopping them is the traffic chaos that will be caused by lorries in the construction phase.

The appeal against refusal for a development at The Beeches has been lost and, according to the inspector's report, this is largely thanks to the Mid-

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



Cherwell Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is great that the huge amount of work the Plan involved is protecting our village.

It is very surprising, but someone has carefully unscrewed the coat hooks from outside the Sports and Recreation Centre. One of the Councillors brought in some spare hooks and there was a discussion of how glue in the screw heads might stop them being removed again. As one Councillor pointed out this could be overkill as the hooks had not been stolen during the previous 20 years and the new owner of the old hooks had now got some and so was unlikely to wish to purloin any more. Number 4 Paines Hill is gradually deteriorating and there are continuing concerns about how safe it is and when the windows will fall out. Apparently, something may be happening, but if not Environmental Protection say “the next course of action will be to commence formal proceedings to achieve compliance”. What is it about public servants that they won’t use short descriptions when pompous length is an alternative?

At the last meeting, the Councillors asked the Clerk to prepare a note which might be put under the windscreen wipers of thoughtlessly parked vehicles. Her draft was described as ‘terse and unfriendly’ which she explained was because that was exactly what she was feeling when she wrote it. The draft will be adapted to match her returned good humour. The only issue was who might use the notices and whether that person would only be brave enough to do it after dark.

The Councillors were told about the National Bus Strategy. This is a Boris initiative meant to increase the use of buses. Apparently, Oxfordshire County Council can apply for funding and has asked the Parish Councils for comments to help make the case for Oxfordshire’s transport needs. Our Councillors will say, on our behalf, how valuable our buses are to us. One Councillor said there seemed to be a “definite rowing back from bus privatisation – even praising Reading who refused to sell their borough buses to a private company”. One of the aims of the strategy is to minimise private car journeys, for example

avoiding two round trips into Oxford, 60 miles, to deliver and later pick up somebody when the trips could be made by bus. At long last some Tories may be learning from their mistakes. I will dream on.

The speed device needs batteries which are very heavy to change and the Councillors are considering buying a solar charging alternative.

Then we got to the really good news. The developers of new housing have to contribute to the facilities in the locality of their development. This means that the Rectory Homes development opposite the Red Lion will be contributing almost £88,000 to the village. This funding has to be made available before the first house can be occupied, which is anticipated to be around springtime next year. The funds are expected to be allocated as follows:

- £13,775 for improving facilities at the Village Hall and/or Sports & Recreation Centre
- £24,300 for improvements to the football pitches and resurfacing of the basketball court
- £10,060 for replacements and improvements to the SRC building, and last but not least....
- £39,820 for improvements to play equipment

The Councillors are intending to have a stall at the Horticultural Show. The idea is for anyone to ask them/tell them about their concerns. It is also a good opportunity for anyone considering applying as a Councillor to have an informal chat about what is involved. Do come to the Show anyway, whether or not you would like to talk to the Councillors.

Steeplejack

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

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We have moved house. Our new home in Middle Aston is surrounded by marjoram, thyme, chives, lemon balm, mint in various forms, bay trees and sage. That's what I've discovered so far. I brought parsley and rosemary with me. Slugs have munched my basil.

Now is the season for – well – almost everything leafy, even some brassicas. We have had an extraordinary gardening season. Tomatoes are ripening – hurray. Soon there will be sweetcorn and there are gluts of beans, peas and the beginnings of courgettes. Gardens are still lush and herbs are no exception. Of course, they are fairly drought-resistant and that is why marjoram has taken hold in cracks and crevices around this house. I've extolled the virtues of Salsa Verde before and maintain my devotion to this wonderfully flexible friend of fish, meat, grilled vegetables. Adding herbs to everyday dishes makes the ordinary extraordinary. A tweak with some lemon or orange zest, a sprinkle of fresh chilli and a tiny bit of anchovy – and the flavour brightens. The whole assembly seems to spring to life just a little bit more. If you are a bread maker, add herbs. If you like ice with your drinks, try adding mint too.

Homemade mayonnaise is a wonderful thing. Herby homemade mayonnaise is sublime. Choose any herbs you like, but tarragon is very good, combined with dill or fennel for fish is even better. A tomato salad sprinkled with freshly snipped chives, and maybe some basil takes you straight to Italy. And with new potatoes – red skins if possible – here is a herby sauce, slightly different from Salsa Verde. It is also great with toasted sourdough, or dolloped in simply grilled fish or meat, or as a topping for a bean and pea salad, with added pulses for protein.

Lavender is at its best now. Pick a couple of heads of the most fragrant you can. Pick off the purple buds and add to slightly softened vanilla ice-cream, mix it and put back into the freezer.

Fresh Herb Sauce

This makes enough sauce for a bowl of potato salad for at least six hungry people. It's great for picnics.

30g mixed, fresh, leafy herbs – 10g of parsley, plus 20g from a selection of tarragon, dill, basil and marjoram
2 crushed cloves of garlic
2 spring onions – finely chopped
Zest of half a lemon, and 2 tablespoons of juice
Freshly ground salt and pepper to taste, and chilli if you like it
6 tablespoons of the best olive oil you have

Whizz all of this together in a food processor. Refrigerate in a clean jar for up to a week, maybe more. When it grows mould, it's rotten.

Herby shortbread

British berries are at their best. Serving them simply with herby ice-cream and a similarly flavoured shortbread takes pudding to the next realm. I've chosen rosemary here, but you could use lavender or lemon thyme. This quantity will make about a dozen sensible-sized biscuits.

55g caster sugar, plus a little extra for dusting
1 tablespoon chopped rosemary leaves
115g softened butter
Finely grated zest of orange
170g plain flour, or gluten-free equivalent

Whizz the sugar and rosemary in a food processor. Combine the butter gently, and the flour. Bring the mixture together on a floured board and roll out to a thickness of 5mm. Cut out to the shape you prefer. Prick each one with a fork and bake on a lined tray at 150 °C until golden brown, probably about 15 minutes. Cool in a wire tray and try and eat them as soon as possible.

Caroline Edwards

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

Highgrove Gardens

You enter the Prince of Wales' gardens at Highgrove by turning down an unremarkable little lane in Doughton, outside Tetbury, Gloucestershire. Being greeted by an armed policeman (although a very cheerful and friendly one) was a bit startling and unexpected – and frankly those words describe much of how we found our visit. If you add delight and pleasure that sums up how much we enjoyed the tour of these splendid and unique gardens.

It's easy to think that if you had a large estate and nine gardeners to help with the work you could create a magnificent garden, but our guide was at pains to emphasise that the vision and most of the ideas were those of the Prince himself. The names of the different parts of the garden and the descriptions we were given of the values, the messages and the thought behind each area certainly seem to match what we know about the Prince of Wales' longstanding views about care for the planet, ethical management of the earth and enjoyment of the countryside. "He's very hands-on", said our guide, also giving credit to designers and gardeners from whom the Prince has received advice or whom he has consulted.

Highgrove is a big garden! Rather it is a series of individual gardens such as the Sundial Garden (guess its focal point!); the Carpet Garden (reminiscent of an Islamic garden with water gently flowing around) and a wonderful walled, traditional kitchen garden with a profusion of vegetables and flowers growing together – there are far too many parts of the whole to write about here! I especially loved the long Thyme Walk leading from the back of the house which is bordered by a guard of honour of curiously shaped golden yew bushes. They reminded us of Victorian blancmanges or jelly moulds. Perhaps the stars of the show were the wildflower meadows and the wonderful deep, deep blue delphiniums which appeared in many places. The level of detail and thought about each area is extraordinary, although at the same time this is nowhere a formal or stiff garden.

Bev Davies and I visited with a group from 'The Arts Society Cotswolds' (based in Burford) – all travelling independently to comply with Covid restrictions – but I understand that it is possible to book other than with a group. Then you are linked into a group when you arrive. You have to keep close to your guide as, for the sake of security, there's no wandering about allowed. After your tour, which lasts two concentrated hours, you can linger in the very smart Orchard Tea Rooms or explore the shop for as long as you wish.

At £30 a head this is not a cheap visit and, of course, it is a distance from Steeple Aston, but I do recommend it as a special treat. Highgrove is being hailed as one of the great gardens of our time – so why not take a look and see what you think?

Eileen Baglin-Jones

These life-size model elephants have been given a home at the Gloucestershire estate in memory of Mark Shand, the late brother of the Duchess of Cornwall.

(Photo Eileen Baglin-Jones)





A veritable loss

Imagine for a moment
Someone who tells us lies
the lies cause no surprise
and no-one's really bothered

they might say they are harmless
they wouldn't hurt a fly
they make the day go by
we need a bit of levity

but then let us imagine
the net effect of this
there's something we would miss
if truth becomes distorted

once lost things get forgotten
and truth's a thing we need
it combats lies and greed
but sometimes it's a bitter pill

so have a care if praising
someone who lies each day
the truth won't go away
or problems that they lie about

Peter Wild

Flexible working

More and more folk are working from home,
And giving their office a miss.
And I'm guessing that lots of them thought
Working from home would be bliss.

No more commuter rush hour,
No public transport pain,
No bus or tube, no traffic queues,
No hot and crowded train.

But there's another side to flexible working.
I've been doing it for years,
It's not all fun and freedom,
And can often end in tears!

I was a freelance author,
Writing mainly for OUP,
And I can tell you that 'freelance',
Has no connection with 'free'.

Your working day no longer
From nine to five will last.
You now work any hour of any day.
'Clocking off' is a thing of the past.

The freelance day is dawn till dusk.
But remember you're only a pawn,
When necessity requires it,
You work from dusk till dawn.

My editor rings at 5.45,
Can I do revisions by the next day?
Of course I can do it. I say
'Cos: no revisions, no work, no pay!

I tell her I'm sure I can do it,
I don't demur, not even a peep.
After all, it's not as if
I really need to sleep.

I think my editor suspects
I live the 'life of Riley'.
She thinks unreasonable demands are OK
So long as she signs them with a smiley.

She imagines my freelance breakfast in bed,
With strawberries and champagne.
In truth I eat Weetabix at my desk
As I try to wake up my brain.

Alone at home, you miss the office,
The jokes, the birthday cakes,
The chat by the coffee machine,
And the memory of lunch breaks.

Each weekday I beavered away till 3.00
Then dashed to the school gate.
My kids would be standing and waiting,
"Mummy, you're always late!"

I've worked over holidays, Easter and Christmas,
And there's no 'time off in lieu'.
My husband used to complain about it,
My children moaned at me too.

Oh, that familiar stab of guilt
Are my priorities right?
Let's have some quality family time now
(I can always work through the night).

So I'm not a flexible working fan.
Because, between you and me,
I can tell you from bitter experience
The only flexible thing was me!

Cathy Lawday



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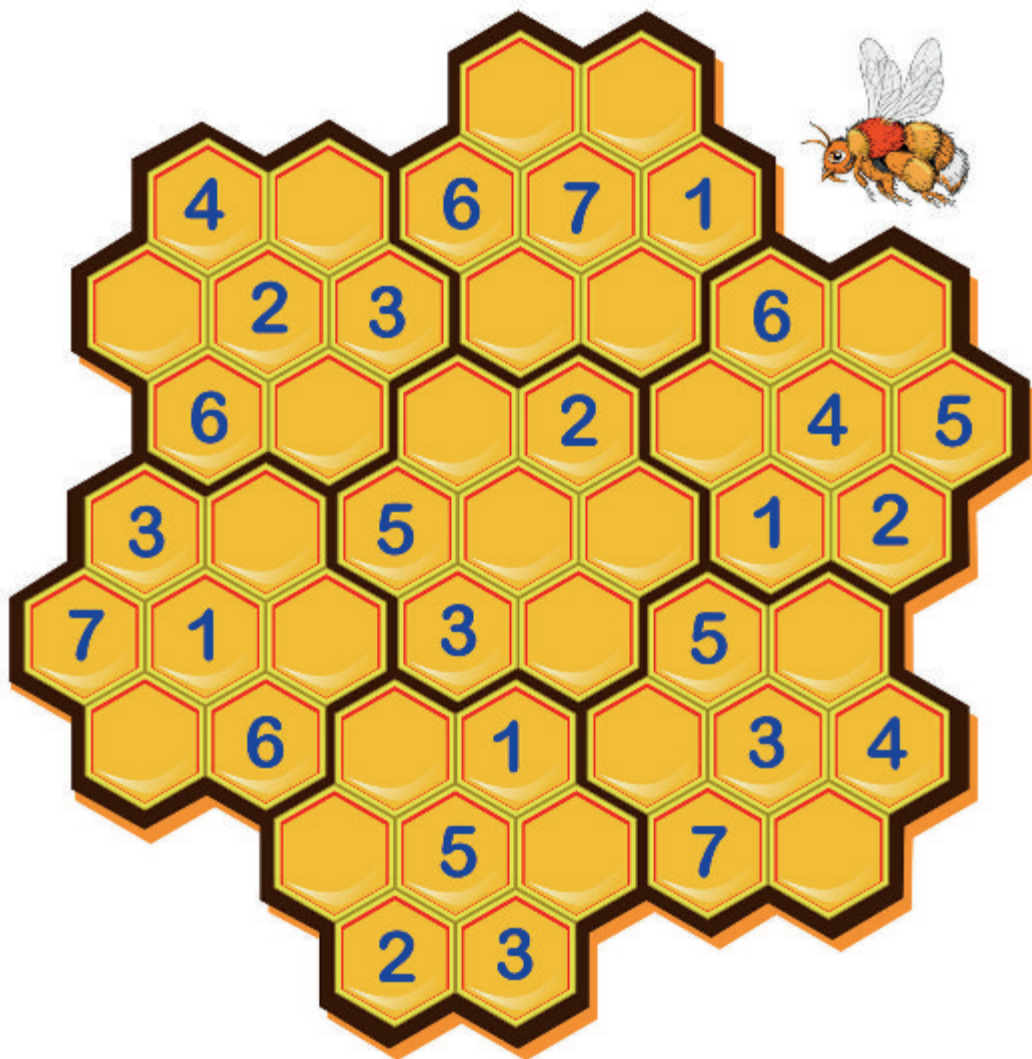
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???? Mind Games

Bee clever

Solve this Sudoku puzzle so that each honeycomb cell, each horizontal row and each diagonal line have different numbers from 1 to 7 (solution on page 37).



Name that author!

Can you provide the first names for the following authors (answers on page 37)?

- T. S. Eliot
- A. A. Milne
- E. M. Forster
- C. S. Lewis
- H. G. Wells



The 2021 Church Fete

Organising a Fete under COVID restrictions had its challenges: the committee began meeting when only six people could gather together outdoors. So there could only be six people on the committee, and we met in the rectory garden on days with a good weather forecast...

One of our first decisions was to make this an entirely outdoor event. If the weather was against us, we'd cancel. If it was so-so, we'd cope. More marquees and gazebos were the way forward. Some very valuable sponsorship from Nicholson's of North Aston, along with generosity from others in providing or loaning structures to us, enabled this to happen. And then the basic rule was – KISS. Keep it simple, stupid...But more than that.

The committee was terrific in tackling every eventuality thrown at us, reading through miles of COVID paperwork so that new announcements and threats of announcements didn't phase us. Everyone just got on with it and took up the idea of being creative and can-do. An outdoor tea tent? Of course, no problem. No beer and Pimms? Well then – we'll do a BBQ with soft cold drinks. Some regulars were unavailable, but that didn't stop others from turning up.

Pony rides, Aunt Sally, skittles, WI, Scouts, Sustainable Steeple, Tombola, Bees (did you see the live hive?), a whole tent of children's activities – plus a children's bookstall, gifts, tractors, cars, ice cream – the list kept growing. We couldn't do the usual raffle, but the on-field only raffle, with half a dozen superb prizes, was still a fantastic success. Thanks to all those who donated prizes and congrats to Caroline Parsons who won the traditional Hamper!

And the band... I've been moonlighting (or *Moonlight Serenading*) as the frontman for Abingdon Swingtime for a little while; this was the band's first gig since lockdown. I tell you – trying to stop the band playing was an issue (as was actually finding a rehearsal venue that the very confusing regulations allowed, but we got there eventually)!

Thanks to everyone for coming. Seeing Robinsons Close so full of families and folk of every age was an enormous joy. All of us on the committee were overjoyed by the response from the village. And you all raised pretty much exactly £3,000 for your village church: money which, after the last year or so, provides an enormous lifeline and is very, very much needed. Thank you!

Revd Marcus Green





All photos by Catherine Crook



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- ... choose Earl Grey tea
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- ... not take sugar in tea or coffee
- ... frequently food-shop in *Sainsbury's* or *Waitrose* or better still in *Marks and Spencer*
- ... never shop in *Lidl* or *Aldi*, rarely in *Tesco*, but admit you have heard of *Poundland*
- ... never have consumed anything in *McDonalds* or any of its rivals
- ... avoid choosing a glass of wine as an aperitif
- ... never admit to watching TV soaps
- ... speak about my doctor, my hairdresser, my butcher etc.
- ... hardly ever eat chips, let alone fish fingers or burgers
- ... shun budget airlines
- ... greet friends with a moi-moi pretend kiss
- ... have notices such as “No traders, hawkers, Jehovah's Witnesses” etc. on the front door
- ... buy *The Times* or the *Telegraph* daily
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- ... seldom use the bus with an over-60s bus pass
- ... consider bottled brown sauce as toxic

Malcolm H. (with tongue firmly in cheek)



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APPLE PRESS

The Steeple Aston Apple Press 2021

We will be running “Community Apple Pressing days” in September / October when you can just turn up. Look out for notices around the village and on the village website.

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The WI has finally got under way again after lockdown. Emerging like hedgehogs from hibernation, we first poked our noses into the air at the Church Fete, where we had a stall with a display of ‘What we did in lockdown’. We had made quilts for the Linus project (a charity which gives quilts and blankets to children who are long-stay hospital patients, to personalise and brighten up their beds). We also sewed laundry bags for NHS nurses, made face masks and enjoyed a wide variety of craft projects: examples of needlepoint, jewellery-making, paper-cutting, knitting, embroidery, patchwork and applique work were all on display. The display attracted attention and several people who visited the stall expressed interest in joining the WI.

Our next event was a garden party on 13th July – a warm, dry day. Almost all our members attended, including our three newest members, and we were also joined by several guests. Presentations were made to outgoing committee members Linda Needle, Pauline Brock, Janice Kinory and Esther Brown. Long-service certificates were awarded to Trish Vickers, Jill Vallis and Julie Smith who have all been WI members for 25 years, to Liz Falconer (over 40 years), Linda Needle (46 years), and to Sheila Side, who joined the WI in 1956 and has achieved 65 years of membership.

Members enjoyed a picnic whilst renewing old friendships, beginning new ones, and enjoying being together again after the long Covid hiatus.

If you are interested in finding out more about the WI or becoming a member, please contact me. We are actively seeking new members and you would be made very welcome.

Cathy Lawday (President) 01869 347209



Linda Needle and Janice Kinory with their leaving gifts.



Jane Johnson and Jill Vallis chat to new members Sue Porcas, Kathryn Coish and Yun Ping Ma.

The WI stall at the Church Fete is shown bottom right on p.23

Village Hall News



A few groups have already returned to use our facilities and it is nice to have them back. We are awaiting the updated government guidelines (these will probably be in place by the time SAL is printed) and have decided that after Monday 19th July we will leave all Covid measurements and notices in place for those as they see fit to use, as we have a responsibility to everyone who uses the building.

Different groups have different needs and so we are asking groups to think how they would like to function from 19th July (bearing in mind that most groups will not normally be functioning during the summer). So, we shall still have the hand sanitisers for those that want to use them and a one-way system for those that want it. Groups can socially distance as they would like and wear/not wear masks. All relevant notices will remain in the hall. It is the hirer's responsibility to ensure compliance with any regulations currently in place at the time of hiring.

The Village Hall is a community asset run by a management committee of well-meaning volunteers. Thank you for your continuing support, cooperation, patience and understanding.

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



It was great to meet up with the Brownies for our annual Sausage Sizzle – the next generation of Guides in the making! The Guides did really well teaching them fire safety rules and passing on their newly-learnt skills. (Thank you to the Fenemore family for their hospitality.)

The incident hike at Milton set some fun challenges on another fine evening. We're hoping that we may at least manage day camp this year so next we needed to hone our skills in learning how to put up those all-important toilet tents! We rounded off the evening with help from Charlotte making 'arm pit' fudge!..... resulting in bags of dubious brown stuff which tasted better than it looked, apparently!

We enjoyed our Backwoodsman cooking.....with just a basic fire and no pans or utensils! (Thank you to Brian Fuller for his hospitality.) We finished the evening with a Promise Ceremony, when we welcomed eight new Guides.

We may yet still fit in stream walking – a favourite activity in the holidays.

Finally, we would like to say thank you for all her help over the years to Leader Tilly who is concentrating on her new career in the Ambulance Service. We wish her every success!

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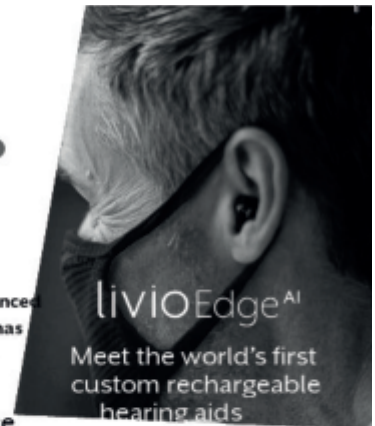
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Recycling Resources

Following last month's article and advert, I have had a lot of questions about different items and how best to recycle them, as well as a few people chatting to me about plastics, food waste and a variety of topics close to my heart!

As a result of some of the queries about how to recycle various items, we are looking at what other collective recycling initiatives we might be able to undertake, like the computer/tech one we did in June. In the meantime, we thought it might be useful to include details of some of our 'go to' places for information.

I know Martin (Dale) was singing the praises of WRAP in January's edition and I echo his views that their site provides a wealth of information – www.wrap.org.uk

It does however take a bit of getting around, so I have included direct links to some of the initiatives that they are involved with, alongside a variety of other sites.

Recycling

www.recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with I like the Recycle Now website generally, but this tool is really useful as it enables you to check what to do with a specific item. For example, I was recently asked about recycling printer cartridges and didn't know the answer (as we can send our business ones back to the manufacturer), so I checked it out and came across The Recycling Factory –

www.therecyclingfactory.com/ – which not only recycles inkjet printer cartridges, but will also pay you or a charity of your choice for the privilege.

www.terracycle.com/en-GB/brigades I have used Terracycle on several occasions to find solutions to difficult to recycle items. They run a wide range of free schemes, including free post envelopes for razors/razor blades, drop off points for Walkers crisp packets (other varieties are available) and my favourite one, being able to drop off empty blister packs (tablets) at Superdrug stores! – I had no idea I could do that before spending time on this site. They offer paid for 'zero waste boxes' too, which is what we did for the video recycling in June, and I am looking into some of the other paid for services that they offer. If there are any you think are particularly interesting, please let me know.

uk.ecoatm.com/pages/how-it-works I was in Sainsbury's in Bicester the other day and spotted that they now have an ecoATM where you can recycle old mobile phones. There are a few things you have to do first (e.g., restore to factory settings), but you can find the instructions online. You will receive an instant payment for your phone too.



Food Waste

lovefoodhatewaste.com/makefoodmatter if you are interested in reducing the amount of food you waste, there are some great ideas here. You can download activity packs and a heap of resources and recipes (including a great one for homemade pizzas using the heels of a loaf). Designed with families in mind, there are a great range of activities included that could be fun to do during the school holidays.

Plastics

<https://clearonplastics.com/> A great resource that provides a really balanced view on the ongoing debate on plastics! Not as black-and-white as terms like 'war on plastic' lead us to believe.

You can find this and lots more information on our website – www.sustainablesteeple.com – and don't forget that you can donate unwanted furniture, wood, fabric and more to Sustainable Steeple and we will upcycle it for resale, with all the proceeds going into a fund for the village – which we're looking forward to being able to use for projects now that Covid restrictions are easing.

Any questions, or ideas, please email amanda@sustainablesteeple.com or call on 07793 553150.

Next month – Nothing New: a different approach to consuming.



THE VALENTINE CLUB

By time you read this, The Valentine Club will have met in person for the first time for what seems like a lifetime. At the time of writing I don't know what the weather was like on the 20th July, but what I do know is that over 70 members or prospective new members came to Middle Aston House to enjoy 'high tea' in the wonderful outdoor setting that this grand old house provides. Thank you to Middle Aston House for being such wonderful hosts and to 'Bring for Joy' and 'Finders Keepers' for sponsoring this opportunity to welcome old and new friends to the club after such a long break.

For our meeting this month on Tuesday 17th August we are going to Rousham House where, yet again, we will be enjoying tea and an opportunity to walk around this world-renowned estate. Meeting at 2.30pm with tea a little later and all at no cost to members or prospective new members. A very big thank you to Charles Cottrell-Dormer for allowing us access to the grounds at no charge and to Ann Starling and her friends for organising teas.

For our September meeting on Tuesday 21st we are back in the village hall where we will be entertained by a superb singer, but details for that later.

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

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 14th August 2021



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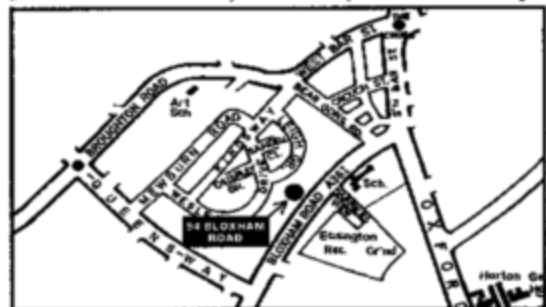
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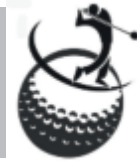


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On Friday 2nd July, 16 of us took a trip across to Wiltshire to play a beautiful golf course called Wrag Barn Golf & Country Club. All credit to the ground staff in producing a well-manicured course along with superb greens. The catering was excellent – being a warm evening we were served on the terrace overlooking the 18th.

We were playing for The Cardale Challenge Trophy, which was put up by Jim Nicholls some 15 years ago. The trophy was won by this year's captain Martin Kay with 39 points playing off a handicap of 11. Runner-up on count back with Tony Peck was Vaughan Billings 32 points off 20. Nearest the pin was Vaughan Billings and nearest the pin in two was Martin Kay. Our guest prize went to Adrian Smith with 33 points and the only two on the day went to another guest Josh Pack.

On the Friday 20th August we shall be playing at the Wychwood, Lyneham OX7 6QQ. Wychwood was designed to use the natural features of its location. It is set in 170 acres on the fringe of the Cotswolds and blends superbly with its surroundings. Lakes and streams enhance the challenge of the course with water coming into play on eight of the 18 holes. Now, if this has got you interested and you would like to join us, please give Chris or myself a call on 347173 or 340423. Stay safe & play well.

Sad story. Man killed on golf course.

A foursome of men waited at the men's tee while a foursome of women was hitting in front of them taking their time. When the final lady was ready to hit her ball, she hacked it 10 feet. Then she went over and missed it completely. Then she hacked it another ten feet and finally hacked it another five feet. She looked up at the patiently waiting men and said apologetically, "I guess all those flipping lessons I took over the winter didn't help."

One of the men immediately responded, "Well, there you have it. You should have taken golf lessons instead!" He never even had a chance to duck. He was only 43.

Alan Brewer (Chair)

AD&D Photographic Society



In July we welcomed Peter Greenway, LRPS, for an interesting talk about his voluntary work for the National Trust (NT), taking photographs of local properties such as Waddesdon Manor, Ashdown House and his favourite, Chastleton House, which are often used in promotional literature. As a lover of heritage and all things historical it is his love of objects that fascinates Peter – and, of course, the teashop.

Volunteering for the NT involves meeting standards, guidelines and following the law on the dreaded GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Any new photographer has an 84-page document to digest on NT branding, emphasising the attractions for a range of different visitor groups. Blue sky, family fun and links to the place for the viewer ensures an image is accepted into the NT database. Peter explained how his NT photography has diversified his picture taking and pushed him out of his comfort zone both on composition and the technical stuff.

The advent of social media has increased the likelihood of one of Peter's photographs being viewed by a wider audience, so do look out for his work when you are browsing through the NT handbook, website, or Instagram. He has even had an image displayed on the roadside hoarding for Waddesdon Manor.

Our next meeting on 4th August at 7.30pm should be our last on Zoom. It will be delivered by Harry Wheeler-Brand on 'The Magic of Long Exposure'. We will then move to the Adderbury Institute for future meetings, but do check our website for up-to-date information. You are welcome to join us.

Anne Hunsley
www.addphoto.co.uk

Helping nature thrive along the Cherwell Valley

The villages and parishes of Somerton, Lower Heyford, Upper Heyford, Steeple Aston, North Aston, Somerton and Souldern ring the Upper Cherwell Valley Conservation Target Area. This encompasses over 1000 acres of predominantly floodplain meadows and pastures. The best examples of this habitat can support up to 40 species of grass and wildflowers in just one square metre. A handful of meadows along this stretch of the Cherwell hold a high proportion of the UK's population of a very scarce member of the parsley family – narrow-leaved water dropwort. Other wildflowers found here include meadow-rue, ragged robin, meadow saxifrage and sneezewort. One of the meadows was historically the hay meadow for Somerton village, where lots were drawn to decide which part of the meadow local people could cut.

Floodplain meadows are cut for hay or silage and afterwards they are usually grazed by sheep and cattle. In the height of summer traditional meadows produce a fantastic array of plant life, which in turn supports a whole ecosystem of pollinators, other invertebrates, fungi, mammals and birds. Otters have returned to the river in recent years and several of our 'Red-listed' bird species can be seen in the area, including curlew reed bunting, skylark, grey partridge, yellow wagtail, yellowhammer and bullfinch.

The wonderful sound of a Curlew's 'bubbling' call slicing through the early morning mist in our river valleys is one of the most evocative sounds of springtime in Oxfordshire. Sadly, many of the Curlew's grassland breeding sites have become more intensively grazed or more frequently mown and the numbers of generalist predators have increased, making nests more vulnerable. Curlews continue to breed in meadows beside the River Cherwell, albeit in reduced numbers. Sadly, each year most Curlew nests are lost before hatching and only a few young survive to fledging. Farmers and local conservation volunteers, organised by the Banbury Ornithological Society, are working together to help conserve these wonderful birds, but their future hangs in the balance. The majority of these precious wildlife havens are on private land, but it is worth mentioning that sticking to footpaths and keeping dogs on leads reduces disturbance to ground nesting birds and their vulnerable chicks and other wildlife.

To find out more about the Upper Cherwell Valley, other Conservation Target Areas and nature recovery projects in Oxfordshire, please visit www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk

Roselle Chapman, Wild Oxfordshire



Sandford St Martin...

Sandford St Martin are our toughest opponents – SACC's win rate is only 40%. Despite some accurate bowling from Paul Longman (2-36); some good late swing from Jonty Renk (1-32) and some filthy left-arm doobers from Peter Higgins (1-23), Sandford reached 268-5 in their 40 overs. We started brightly with an opening stand of 72 between Tim Jones (17) and Alex Ramos (28) and for the observant ones among you, yes, there were a lot of byes and no balls! Will Doggett hit a battling 17, but at 120-9 things looked a bit bleak. However a joyous undefeated 10th wicket partnership of 39 between Phil Chesser (19*) and Peter Higgins (21*) allowed us to reach a creditable 159-9. It did take the Sandford Captain a while to work out that he needed seven fielders on the leg side! A searing defeat, but we felt optimistic about our first game against Minster Lovell.

Minster Lovell... *(written by Phil Chesser)*

Arriving at a rather soggy Minster Lovell, the day started well with captain Scotchbrook persuading the opposition to reduce the game to 25 overs! With the keys to the pavilion found and the stumps recovered, the game got under way with SACC bowling. Alex Ramos (0-27) and Paul Longman (1-15) opened, with 'Swanny' forcing a catch at midwicket for an early breakthrough. A very good partnership then followed for Minster, briefly interrupted when their very destructive left-hander was given out LBW by their own umpire. The ball clearly hit his glove, but to his credit he left the field before being sportingly asked to return by Jon 'spirit of the game' Scotchbrook.

After ten overs Olly Doggett (0-32), showing remarkable consistency having not bowled for almost a year, and Tom Chesser (2-30) took over the bowling. A very good stand was ended after a leg side keeper's catch off Tom – regulation according to the bowler, spectacular according to the keeper! Tom then bowled out the new batsman and at 69-3 things were looking good. Some big hitting tipped the balance back in Minster's favour until Nigel Doggett (2-5 off 2 overs) used all of his guile to sneak both batsmen out – one a beauty that took out leg stump, the other a top edge that stayed high in the air forever before landing in the shaking gloves of wicketkeeper Phil Chesser. Paul Nicholaides and Sam Hatz finished off the innings, unfortunately up against two young batsmen who showed little respect for anything that came their way. Minster finished on 166-5 – a challenging run chase of more than 6.5 per over.

Will Doggett and Tom Chesser opened the batting for Steeple Aston, with Will hitting three glorious boundaries off the first over. Tom hit his first ball for four, but in doing so put his right shoulder out and had to retire. Nigel Doggett joined Will for some special family time, which ended quicker than planned when Nige was out for 6. A great partnership of 65 followed between Will and Jon Scotchbrook, ending with the skipper out LBW for 39, with the score a creditable 95-2. That became 111-3 with the departure of Will for 36. Nelson then saw off both Tim Jones and Olly 'go large early' Doggett. 111-5, with the sixth wicket falling shortly after, meant the return of Tom Chesser to join Alex Ramos in the middle. They moved the score on nicely, helped by several no balls and 17 off one over.

With 30 needed off three overs, Tom's shoulder went again and he retired for the second time on 15, bringing in the lesser-talented Chesser to join Alex. Re-living Great Tew circa 2014, the two of them struck the ball well (it's all relative) – 30 off three became 21 off two and then 10 off the last. Tense, more so given that Alex was at the wrong (non-striker's) end. After missing the first three balls, and with helpful advice ("just watch the ball...") coming from his son on the boundary, Phil missed again. But so did the keeper – two byes. Eight needed from two balls. Somehow managing to hit the penultimate ball for four, Phil just needed to repeat the feat. Another swipe to square leg, a misfield, then another. The keeper could have run out both batsmen, but threw the ball to the bowler, who himself fumbled Nathan Lyon style allowing Phil to sprint (again, it's all relative) through for the third run. Absolute chaos, but a fantastic end to the game resulting in an extremely rare tie.

Cricket really is the best game of all!

Best wishes

Peter Higgins – Chairman

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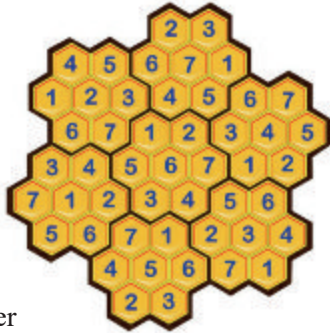
Crossword solution *(see page 12)*

ACROSS: 1. libra; 4. aft; 8. Belfast; 9. pound; 10. cushy; 11. Yangtze; 12. vegetarians; 17. basenji; 19. Eilat; 21. Swede; 22. Niagara; 23. NNE; 24. Aware

DOWN: 1. Lubeck; 2. bulbs; 3. analyse; 4. Alpen; 5. Taunton; 6. Staycations; 7. adder; 13. eastern; 14. ikebana; 15. obese; 16. ethane; 18. niece; 20. Lhasa

Mind games answers *(see page 21)*

Bee clever:



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 Edward Morgan Forster
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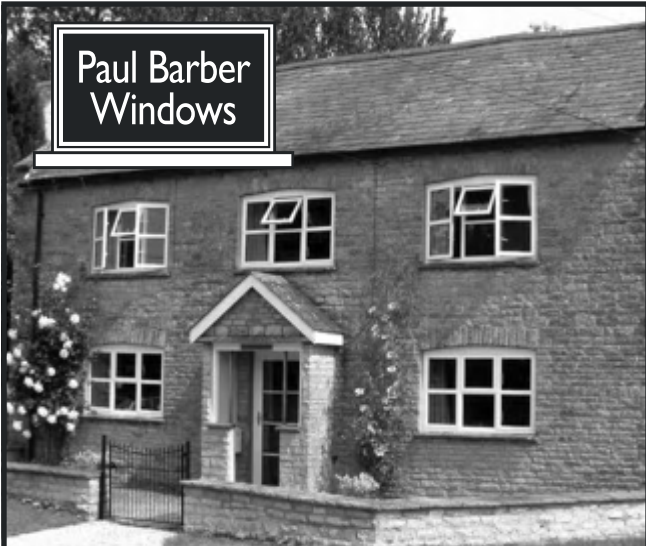


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Church Matters



And so the holidays settle in. Are you staying home or trying to get away? This year feels complicated doesn't it!

I find my mind wandering back to the summer after I left primary school. I guess it comes from living next door to the sound of a school and the sudden silence when term ends! Let's not get into too much detail about the exact year in question – but the weather was glorious and I spent a very happy few weeks enjoying the innocent euphoria of leaving one school and anticipating the next.

I'd managed to pass the exams into the local grammar school, as had two of my closest friends. We prepared together for whatever was coming at us next – walking our dogs on the moors, going to the fleapit cinema in town, waiting for endless days to merge into more endless days, meeting other friends on the hoof, swimming in ponds and running down lanes, laughing, talking, having no idea. They were truly 'holy days'.

Sometimes we lose the connection between a vacation and a holiday – between a rest and something that bit more precious, a *gift*. The word 'holiday' comes from a time when the only rest most people received was because of a religious celebration. A 'holy day' meant more than respite from labour. For us, we're usually more focused on a destination or family or friends or achieving something new. But the sense of wonder and gift and value that comes from seeing even an ordinary thing as 'holy' can be...transformative. Laughter between friends. Silence before sleep. Time to enjoy a good book. Music never heard before.

It's nice to get on a plane to enjoy these things; it's not essential.

And so the holy days of this summer settle in when we look with the eyes of our hearts and find that God loves even you and me and grants us all kinds of kindness. Holy days don't happen only when school is out. They can happen any time. But perhaps at this time of year many of us get a chance to take a moment, breathe, see freshly the wonders around us – and be thankful again.

I'm thankful for family and home and for the memory of loved ones gone before. I'm thankful for small kindnesses I receive which transform so many days and for the chance to offer such kindnesses to others. I'm thankful for the terrific England football team, for their excellence on and off the pitch and for the example of manager and players in showing that every single person matters equally. I'm thankful for the chance to go to the theatre and to concerts again.

I'm thankful when I hear music that lifts my spirits and reminds me that – no matter how grey the weather is – this day is filled with beauty. There are always gifts around us, things to be thankful for, moments of wonder to make each day a holy day. Sometimes we struggle to see them and yet Jesus promises us that the 'Kingdom of God' (that place where such gifts are always for the taking) is always 'at hand': just touching distance away. Reach out. It's that close.

Our services continue Sunday by Sunday through the summer – come and join us if you can, as we gather to worship and express our thankfulness and to pray that more and more of our days might be 'holy'. We're especially delighted that the new Bishop of Dorchester is joining us one Sunday in August (see page 42). We're also especially looking forward to the whole season of thankfulness that is Harvest, which will come at the very beginning of October.

More news is always available on our website: www.sntchurch.com



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🏠 EXTENSIONS

🏠 CONVERSIONS

🏠 RENOVATIONS

🏠 NEW BUILD

Church Services

	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley
Sunday 1st August	9.30am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Revd Marcus Green	11am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Revd Marcus Green	5.30pm Evensong Revd Marcus Green
Sunday 8th August			10.30am United Benefice Holy Communion Revd Clare Hayns
Sunday 15th August	9.30am Morning Prayer Richard Bailey	11am Morning Prayer Richard Bailey	5.30pm Evensong Canon Robin Gibbons
Sunday 22nd August		10.30am United Benefice Holy Communion Rt Revd Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester	
Sunday 29th August	9.30am Morning Prayer Richard Bailey	11am Morning Prayer Richard Bailey	9.30am Family Communion Revd Marcus Green
Sunday 5th September	9.30am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Revd Marcus Green	11am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Revd Marcus Green	5.30pm Evensong Revd Marcus Green and Canon Robin Gibbons
www.sntchurch.com			

Local Info

Steeple Aston Village Hall

	Hiring Fee	Caution
Hall (meeting night)		
Represented Clubs.....	£9	
Non-Represented Clubs.....	£17	
Hall Only (social occasion)		
Represented Clubs.....	£32	
Others.....	£53	
All Facilities (social occasion)		
Village Residents	£65	£200
Represented Clubs.....	£65	£200
Others - up to 6 hours.....	£110	£300
Others - over 6 hours.....	£160	£300
All Facilities (off peak - 4 hours)		
Village Residents	£30	£75
Represented Clubs.....	£30	£75
Committee Room		
Represented Clubs.....	£6	
Non-Represented Clubs.....	£12	
Discount for represented clubs – 15% for six block bookings		

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

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

Rubbish bin collection day is Thursday

August

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



September

2nd green
 9th blue & brown
 16th green
 23rd blue & brown
 30th 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 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

Check the village website at www.steepleaston.org.uk (Home > Calendar) for any changes caused by Covid restrictions.

August			
Wednesday 4th	AD&D Photographic Society (p33)	Zoom	
Sunday 15th	SAL September copy and advert deadline		
Tuesday 17th	The Valentine Club, 'High Tea' (p31)	Rousham House	2.30pm
Saturday 28th	Farmers' Market (p9)	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Monday 30th	Flower Show and Fun Dog Show (p13)	Robinsons Close	from 2pm
September			
Tuesday 14th	'Verse and Converse'. WI social evening with games, poems, quiz. Wine and nibbles.	Village Hall	7.30pm
Wednesday 15th	SAL October copy and advert deadline		
Monday 20th	Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall	7.30pm
Saturday 25th	Farmers' Market (p9)	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm

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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