

Steeple Aston *Life*

April 2022 Issue No. 584



- Upton House • Platinum Jubilee Tree • Cooking with leeks •
- Sports and Recreation building • Garden Club • Florence Hambidge •

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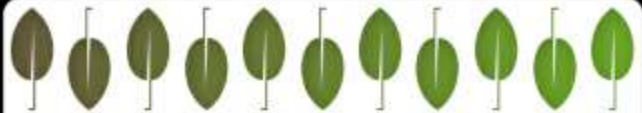
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Cover photo: Nigel Francis -
Spring blossom at Middle Aston House

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

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

COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline is the 15th of the
previous month.

The copy deadline for the May 2022
issue is therefore 15th April.

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

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All adverts, and all advertising queries
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	Steward	Tim Bailey	01869 331516
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		Cllr Bryn Williams	07836 271998
		Cllr Hugo Brown	
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Deddington Health Centre	Appointments		338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	338847
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“...folly is not always folly.”
Jane Austen

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Editor: Robert Scott
editorsalife@gmail.com

Treasurer: Vaughan Billings
01869 340857

Secretary: Jenny Taylor
01869 340551

Advertising:
Charlotte Bartlett
01869 347347
salife.advertising@gmail.com

Deliveries:
Stuart & Penny Cummins
01869 349155
cummins2011@outlook.com

Layout design:
Edward Dowler, Martin Lipson

Committee:
Jenny Bell, Sue McLean,
Nigel Francis, Angela Smith

Editorial

“I have seen the Lady April bringing the daffodils, bringing the springing grass and the soft warm April rain.” (John Masefield, English poet and writer, 1878 to 1967.)

April was the second month of the year in the Roman calendar until January and February were added around 700 BC, bumping it into fourth place. For a time it had 29 days, until Julius Caesar reformed the calendar in the mid-40s BC, adding an extra day.

It is suggested that the word April comes from the Latin word Aprilis, meaning to open – possibly a reference to the blooming of flowers.

Two signs in the Zodiac calendar fall in April, both four-legged hooved animals. Aries the ram (21st March to 19th April) is a sun sign ruled by Mars, the Roman god of war. Taurus the bull (20th April to 20th May) is an earth sign ruled by Venus, the Roman goddess of love. If you were born in April, your birthstone is the diamond. The word diamond comes from the Greek adamas, meaning untameable and related to the English word adamant.

April’s flowers are the daisy (below) and the sweet pea. In the Middle Ages one variety of daisy, the *Bellis perennis*, was known as the *Daeges eage* (or *Day’s eye*) because its petals closed at night to cover the yellow centre. The sweet pea is a very old food crop, harvested and eaten for around 11,000 years.

Turn your eyes skyward around the nights of 22nd and 23rd April to view The Lyrids meteor shower. Often called shooting stars, though they have nothing to do with stars, you might see up to 20 meteors per hour. They occur when the earth passes through debris left behind by a comet. These meteors are tiny dust particles, about the size of a grain of sand. As the grain enters the earth’s atmosphere friction causes it to heat up and burn with an impressive flash. You need to be in an area with little light pollution and allow a few minutes for your eyes to adjust to the low light.

Robert





Friends of Heyford Station

Heyford Station, although on the edge of Lower Heyford, in fact serves many villages close by including the Astons, the Bartons, the Heyfords, Rousham, Caulcott, Deddington and Somerton.

Ours is a small voluntary group who meet a few times each year to make sure that Heyford Station is working as it should do. We liaise with GWR on all matters relating to the station and do modest work on the planters and garden areas and generally around the station. The involvement is not overly taxing and we would welcome new members from any of the surrounding villages.

If you would like to consider joining us, please drop an e-mail to:

cadamson62@gmail.com or **honsec.fohs@gmail.com**

and we will send you some details of FoHS, how we work and so on. We look forward to hearing from you.

Bonfire smoke in Pre-School playground

Once again, staff at Steeple Aston Pre-School are concerned about the smell and smoke from nearby bonfires that keep coming in to their playground. There is particular concern for staff and children who have asthma. It is also thought that acrid smoke can be dangerous to the development of pre-schoolers. The manager Ann Buswell said: "Today it looks as if it's coming from over in the churchyard direction as we look from our playground. We had an article in Steeple Aston Life about it before and it seemed to be addressed for a period of time. But these last couple of weeks it has started up again!". The previous complaints were in Autumn 2020. Cherwell District Council said that there are no laws against having an occasional bonfire, but it is an offence for the smoke to cause a nuisance.

Red Lion to re-open at the end of April

The Red Lion pub is currently closed for structural repairs. When it re-opens, hopefully at the end of April, new tenants will be in place. Chris Gates, who took over the pub last May on a one-year lease, has decided not to continue. His wife Naomi's coffee shop, a 'Bit on the Side', has also closed.

Edwin Pope, Operations Director at Hook Norton Brewery, which owns the pub, said that significant structural issues and damp were discovered when they were refurbishing the residential accommodation above the pub last year. He anticipates that the remedial work will take four to six weeks, so he is aiming to re-open on April 28th. He says there are two potential new tenants wanting to take over the pub and he will encourage existing staff to reapply for their positions.



21st May - 29th May 2022

11.00am - 6.00pm

Sue & Niki would like to invite you
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Instagram:

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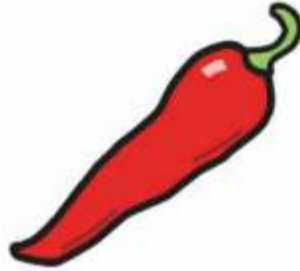
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Telephone:

Sue: 07803 831497

Niki: 07774 644365

Some like it hot... and some like it mild



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please contact Chris Cooper on [01869 347173](tel:01869347173) or Chris777.cooper@btinternet.com

Paid part-time opportunity working with the Village Community

Steeple Aston Village Hall and the Recreational Trust requires
a part-time booking agent to carry out the following duties:

- 1) Receive and process bookings from members of the public and organisations and issue invoices accordingly.
- 2) Report on a monthly basis to the treasurer records of bookings and payments.
- 3) Issue and collect keys to hirers (regular hirers have their own keys)

The booking agent will be self-employed and paid on invoice monthly at a rate equivalent to £2k per annum. They will need to live in or close by to Steeple Aston and will be expected to work from home.

If you are interested and would like to discuss the job further then please contact:
Margaret Bullement 01869 347346

The Sports & Rec Hall

Not everyone realises that as well as a thriving Village Hall, Steeple Aston is lucky enough to have a second community hall, the **Sports & Recreational Centre**. It is run by a dedicated team of volunteers and provides facilities for Steeple Aston Football Club, the Scouts, Brownies and a thriving Mums and Toddlers group which meets every Thursday morning. There is also table tennis, occasional adult education classes and private hire for parties of all ages, with or without a bar. The Recreational Trust also maintains the playing field.

The Sports & Rec Hall isn't as big as the Village Hall and is a friendly place that is a bit less 'grown up' than its big sister across the car-park – we are 10 years younger after all! That means that you don't need so many people there for there to be a really good atmosphere; come along to our **Quiz Night on Saturday 30th April** and find out!

As well as the Quiz Night there is an annual '**Race Night**' and regular events to help raise money for the upkeep and facilities. There is a bar, a TV and a small kitchen and full disabled access. This year we plan to improve the kitchen and also hope to improve our 'green' credentials by changing the boiler. We also want to get a proper internet connection set up in the Hall – we recognise how frustrating it is not to be able to log-on!

Steeple Aston Football Club is very important to the Sports & Rec. The club was actually founded in 1897 and has a long history and traditions. The facilities are fantastic (they were partly funded by a grant from the FA and National Lottery). The club plays in the Banbury District & Lord Jersey FA (BDLJFA). Players come from Steeple Aston, but also from surrounding villages and towns. There is often a great atmosphere on a Saturday afternoon and win or lose the team will go back to the Sports & Rec to discuss and dissect play. Some of the local rivalries go back decades. We also host Ardley Juniors.

The Recreational Trust is responsible for the playing field and every year the Sports & Rec and the Village Hall work together to put on Steeple Aston's justifiably famous Firework display (always on 5th November – whatever day of the week that is!).

We recognise that the pandemic has been tough for everyone and the cost-of-living crisis that we are facing now is making things even tougher for many, so if you want to organise something for the community, please get in touch as we are happy to work with you to help get things off the ground. In the past we have supported mindfulness groups, charity events and local groups with discounted hire rates, so please do ask.

We also recognise that we need to get more people involved – so if you have a few hours available each month and have something that you like doing and you think other people might want to join in then please give me a call – whether that's sewing or parkour, model making or film night, bridge or nature club, we're happy to try to help in whatever way we can. We are especially keen to see new faces getting involved, so please call, no previous experience required!

Torquil McLusky – Chair. Telephone 01869 347914

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Fabric Needed for Jubilee Bunting Project

We're helping the Jubilee Committee collect fabric for a project to 'bunt' the village for the Jubilee Weekend.

Whether it's old shirts, skirts, bed linen, curtains, tablecloths, fabric scraps... as long as it's colourful, cotton/polycotton and clean, we want it!

Details of how to get involved in Jubilee bunting workshops or get your hands on 'make it at home' kits will be announced by the Jubilee Committee shortly.

Drop off to 5 Bradshaw Close (Anna Thatcher) or to Windyridge, Paines Hill (Amanda Rodgers). To arrange pick up email amanda@sustainablesteeple.com or call 07793 553150.



When it comes to a great vegetable, the multi-talented leek, humble in its culinary performance, often quietly steals the show. Leeks flavour stocks and soups and can add dimension and depth to pies, tarts and quiches. Even a simple sautéed leek on hot buttered toast is a quick, satisfying supper. Below are a couple of leek pasta sauces as an offering to your April culinary repertoire. Each recipe serves 4 to 6.

Leek, Gorgonzola and Walnut Orzo

4 leeks	30g parmesan
1 onion	90g gorgonzola
180g orzo pasta	30g walnuts
butter	lemon juice plus zest
150ml white wine	30g chives
300ml hot chicken stock	30g parsley

In a dry frying pan scatter the walnuts and carefully toast for 5 to 7 minutes until fragrant.

Melt butter in a largish frying pan adding the finely chopped onion with some salt. Cook the onion until soft, but not coloured.

Add the leeks and cook until softened, then add the orzo and stir to coat in the butter. Increase the heat, then pour in the wine and reduce until almost completely evaporated. Pour in the hot stock, one ladle at a time.

When the stock has almost disappeared, add more. Unlike risotto, this dish does not require constant stirring. If the orzo needs more liquid to cook, add a couple of ladles of boiling water.

When the orzo is just cooked and the sauce is creamy, stir in most of the walnuts and parsley, all the gorgonzola and lemon juice, plus an extra splash of wine.

Taste, season, divide among plates and top with the remaining nuts and lemon zest and chopped chives and parsley

Leek Anchovy Farfalle

400g short pasta (such as farfalle, penne or fusilli)	75ml cream
50ml extra virgin olive oil	90g parmesan, finely grated, plus more for serving
4 large leeks, sliced	150g frozen baby peas, thawed in warm water, drained.
75g anchovies, drained, approx 1½ tins	Sea salt flakes
6 garlic cloves, finely grated	Freshly ground black pepper
½ tsp red chilli flakes	

Preheat oven to 200° Gas mark 6

Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until very al dente, i.e. 3 to 4 minutes less cooking time than suggested on the pasta package direction. Set aside after draining.

Heat oil in largish dutch oven-style pot. Alternatively use a large pasta pot and then transfer into a casserole dish for the oven. Add chopped leeks. Season with a couple pinches of salt flakes. Sauté, stirring occasionally until tender – approx. 7 minutes.

Add well-drained anchovies, grated garlic, red chilli flakes and several grinds of black pepper. Cook for approx. 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, to help anchovies break down. Add cream and half of the parmesan. Bring to a gentle simmer, season with salt and black pepper

Add peas and reserved orzo and toss gently to coat. Sprinkle with more parmesan. Bake until top is crisp and cream is bubbling around the edges, about 25 to 30 minutes.

Let cool slightly before serving.



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The Garden Club is back!

We are back! Our first meeting of the year will be at the Village Hall on Tuesday 5th April at 7pm for a 7.30pm start. *Please note this is the first Tuesday of the month!*

We will hold a very short AGM first, followed by a talk by Richard Preston on 'The Life and Times of Primrose Garden'. For those of you who know Richard, it will come as little surprise that he can provide the history of what used to be the kitchen garden to The Grange and its evolution to a commercial enterprise for 50 years, and then to the garden that now opens regularly to clubs and the NGS throughout the year. For those of you who don't know him, it will be a wonderful opportunity to get an insight into the workings of a kitchen garden where his grandfather used to be head gardener for nearly fifty years until the outbreak of World War Two. Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be available at no charge!

On Thursday 26th May we will be visiting Chivel Farm at Heythrop for a tour around Mr and Mrs Sword's wonderful garden. Refreshments will be included at an inclusive cost of £8.75, payable on the day. This is a garden that never ceases to amaze. On 16th June we are visiting Rousham Gardens, meeting at 6pm, where we will have an opportunity to wander around these world-renowned gardens and then enjoy a glass of wine and some nibbles, all for the inclusive price of £10 per person.

Membership for this year becomes due on the first of April and new membership cards will be available for individuals priced at £10, with family tickets at £15. Apart from providing interesting talks throughout the winter months, the club makes regular trips to gardens of interest during the summer months. An additional benefit is 10% discount at Yarnton Garden Centre on garden products and the same at Applegarth Nurseries at Chipping Norton, plus the chance to meet with fellow gardeners where you can compare notes and put the world to rights at the same time.

Looking forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

The Garden Club Committee

These foolish things

The first of April is the day we remember what we are the other 364 days of the year. (Mark Twain)

Better a witty fool than a foolish wit. (William Shakespeare)

A mother takes 20 years to make a man of her boy and another woman makes a fool of him in 20 minutes. (Robert Frost)

I sometimes wonder if the manufacturers of foolproof items keep a fool or two on their payroll to test things. (Alan Coren)

A common mistake that people make when trying to design something completely foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools. (Douglas Adams)

Better to remain silent and be thought a fool than to speak out and remove all doubt. (Abraham Lincoln)

I have great faith in fools: self-confidence, my friends call it. (Edgar Allan Poe)

The ARTS Page



In these troubled times, here are two uplifting performances of the State Anthem of Ukraine and a basic translation.

<https://youtu.be/mUfwy3f3R4s> - The Met/New York

<https://youtu.be/ngyCBPPTHjE> - RPO/Royal Albert Hall

Ukraine's glory has not yet died, nor her freedom,

Upon us, my young brothers, fate shall yet smile.

Our enemies will perish, like dew in the morning sun,

And we too shall rule, brothers, in our own land.

Refrain

Souls and bodies we'll lay down, all for our freedom,

And we will show that we, brothers, are of the Cossack nation!

Mykola Leontovych was a Ukrainian choral composer killed by the Soviet State Security in January 1921 for being a member of the Ukrainian Independence movement. Plus ça change, plus c'est le même chose.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mykola_Leontovych

Here are two wonderfully contrasted pieces by him.

<https://youtu.be/SYt6lLrsVn0> – *In thy Kingdom*

<https://youtu.be/PvgSKnrj62g> – *Shchedryk – Carol of the Bells*

A performance of Bach's glorious 'Mass in B minor' by the Schola Cantorum of Oxford (a delayed 60th Birthday Concert by Oxford's leading university choir, which I conducted in the 70s), takes place in Oxford Town Hall at 7.30pm on Saturday 23rd April (ticketsoxford.com) with a stellar line up, including local/international baritone Roderick Williams, who has a connection with the Ukraine situation.

Laszlo Heltay fled Hungary in 1956 and came to Oxford, founded the Kodaly Choir in 1957 and the Collegium Musicum Oxoniense in 1960, which later became the Schola Cantorum. Laszlo contributed hugely to musical life in the UK and way beyond and was extremely helpful and kind to me. I hope we can similarly welcome Ukrainian musicians today.

A show with Steeple Aston connections is on at the Oxford Playhouse from 13th to 16th April (oxfordplayhouse.com). 'Legally Blond' is performed by the Musical Youth Company of Oxford (recent winners of the Flame Award for Inspirational Contribution to Musical Theatre among numerous other awards and nominations). It is directed by Dr. Radcliffe's own Guy Brigg, with four of the school's pupils in the cast. This fabulously fun, Olivier award-winning musical follows the transformation of beautiful, popular, expert shopper Elle Woods as she crosses the country on a mission to win back the man who wanted someone 'serious'. Supported by friends (and her dog!) she arrives at Harvard and discovers that not only can being smart be hugely rewarding, but it is necessary to stay true to yourself to achieve real success.

A gem looks to be the Abingdon Operatic Society's 'Made in Dagenham – The Musical' at the Amey Theatre, Abingdon School, from 19th to 23rd April. I saw the 2010 film, which was terrific. The musical dates 2014. Do try and support this enterprising company, highly commended by friends in Steeple!

www.abingdonoperatic.co.uk

I'm emboldened by Margaret Bullement's mention of 'Pipedown' in March's SAL to flag up this organisation. It's a 'Campaign for Freedom from Piped Music'. Piped Music/Muzak is everywhere and is ghastly and intrusive. "Until now noise has been the Cinderella of pollution and people have not been aware of the impact that it has on their health," (Deepak Prasher). Their website is www.pipedown.org.uk and it is only £15 a year to join. Patrons include Stephen Fry, Joanna Lumley and Simon Rattle.

"The good we get from art is not what we learn from it, it is what we become through it." Oscar Wilde

All good wishes – Nick and Heather.

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The Gardening Spot

I have found a new way to make a fortune!

On my visit to a local garden centre, I won't tell you which one for fear that they might try to take legal proceedings against me, but I must tell you this story and it is not an April Fool.

On strolling around the centre on a grey Saturday morning, admiring all the wonderful candles and high-end furniture, I came across two things which I believe could make me a millionaire come next year. The first thing that caught my eye and encouraged me to check my eyesight was a cellophane bag, about two feet tall and a foot wide at the top, bunched together with some string at the base. Inside the bag were five 'sticks', possibly beech, that had been dropped in a mouldy green coloured paint. On the price ticket were the figures £13.50. Now, I know interior design is a big thing these days, but sticks in a bag?

A few minutes later after drinking some very expensive coffee and purchasing shares in a cake manufacturer, I experienced something which needs some explanation. ORGANIC LOGS! What on earth is the difference between organic logs and ordinary firewood? I can tell you. Two-pounds sterling. A bundle of ordinary logs, for those of us who will burn anything, came in at around £5, but the organic logs were an additional £2! Same size. Same colour, but obviously not treated with artificial or insecticide whilst growing over the decades.

If anyone is interested, I can supply some beech twigs at very competitive prices. This time next year I will be a millionaire! Now who used to say that?

So, down to gardening. Here we are in April and the weeds are growing. This is a sign that it is time to sow many of our favourite vegetables direct into the garden. As I have said before, don't take too much notice of the date, but watch the weather and if the ground is warming up and not under a foot of snow or a flood then get busy in the garden.

In the greenhouse, think about growing a couple of tomato plants but only plant them out around the end of the month and watch out for late frosts. A cucumber plant is great but do not plant it in your greenhouse until next month unless you have heat. Check your roses to make sure they are secure if the climbing variety and give them a feed to get the best blooms. Use a fungicide to reduce 'black spot', thus making your plants stronger and healthier.

Start cutting the grass at regular intervals, not letting it get too long, but at the same time, not too short as that simply encourages moss. Trim the edges as that sets off the lawn to look its best. Repeating myself I know, but keep hoeing and weeding as those little infiltrators will take over if given half a chance. My simple advice is to hoe your garden once a week, weeds or no weeds, as that will prevent any invasion of unwanted plants and keep your garden looking pristine.

The best way to learn anything about gardening is to talk to other gardeners. This may be by taking a walk to the Church allotments where you will usually find someone attending their patch, or possibly come along to The Garden Club which is meeting on Tuesday 5th April in the Village Hall at 7pm. Happy gardening everyone and if you are interested in purchasing a few sticks, please let me know.

Richard Preston

Gardener, late developing teenager and grumpy old man.

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



The last Parish Council meeting began with Judith Kalthoff saying that she was worried by the Government's proposals for Ukrainian refugees. She thinks it is too much of a burden for one person to sign up to having refugees for a minimum of six months without any support or cover if things go wrong for any reason. She believes that, as it looks as if the Government won't help, we should be getting together as a community both to support each other and to make refugees feel welcome here. You will see her request for expressions of interest in the box below.

After the meeting I was given a copy of the government's advice being sent to District Councils about what they are expected to be offering to refugees. Rather arbitrarily, I picked on two issues to look at. I wanted to know if things had gone wrong with the placement, whether Cherwell would rehouse the refugees either at the time or at the end of the six month minimum period. The advice said nothing about this. Then I looked for whether those who have a Council Tax Reduction because of disability or single occupancy would keep the discount if they took in refugees. The advice on this was so opaque it was impossible to know the answer.

There were a few quick issues discussed. The noticeboards will be varnished and some wild flower seeds scattered. Arrangements are being made for the death of the monarch and this includes buying a book of condolences, rather than using an electronic version. The logic given for this expensive choice was that the golden oldies of the village would prefer it or at any rate find it easier. As a golden oldie myself I was a bit indignant.

The Councillors accepted a quote to spray the weeds around the village. They were not prepared to put this decision on hold till after the first meeting of the Environment Group due to be held on 31st March.

Our District Councillor Mike Kerford-Byrnes is not standing again in the May 2022 elections so the March Parish Council meeting was the last one he will come to as our District Councillor. He was asked if our Parish Council's increase in expenditure of about 8% was relatively high compared to other local villages. After the meeting Mike looked at the

equivalent increase in other villages and told me that quite a lot of villages had very similar rates of about 8% or slightly more.

Mike told us that CDC's offices are now flying the Ukrainian flag and that Cherwell District Council are hoping to accommodate some Ukrainian refugees. Mike thanked our Parish Councillors for their work and said Parish Councillors did not always receive the appreciation that they deserved and he had enjoyed his dealings with them. As a parting gift Mike gave our Councillors a gavel (and block) inscribed to say it was from him and that he had been our District Councillor for 11 years. The Chairman cheerfully christened the gavel and said he was sure he would get some good use from it.

The Councillors knew that the planning appeal about the development of Hatch End would be heard in April. They had noticed that the existing buildings had been repainted and refurbished a bit. They wondered if this meant the project would not go ahead as quickly as expected initially. They knew that if planning approval was successfully achieved it could be reactivated in future relatively easily. Our Councillors wanted to know what information Highways has about the traffic going past the entrance to Hatch End since this is the main focus of objections to the proposal. Martin Lipson, who will be representing Steeple and Middle Aston at the planning appeal, has put in a Freedom of Information Request asking for Highways' traffic assessments for the area.

We were told about the plans for the celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. As many households as possible will be encouraged to sell things at their garden gates and in my case this will include my meringues – so please make sure you have some cream available! We are also going to be given some free recycled material from which to make bunting to decorate our homes and fences. There will be a souvenir poster and the profit from its sale will be put towards the potential Community Orchard on Water Lane. The Councillors have applied for some grants, but don't yet know if their applications have been successful

Parish Council Meeting Notes



The offer to the village of the Community Orchard is not yet completely finalised, but looks as if it is going ahead and both Sustainable Steeple and the sale of posters should give the project some financial stability.

The zipwire needs some attention and the Councillors are getting estimates for its repair. The two low walls outside the door to the Committee Room at the Village Hall are in need of repair. Ten people have been recruited to deliver the defibrillator in an emergency. I assume that those concerned are very keen to attend the awareness session about how you use the machine. We were told it was easy, but it would be good to see it being operated. Apparently, the phone system will be tested, but I would feel much more comfortable if it was using the machine that was being tested.

There was a lot of discussion about the vigorous way in which Gigaclear has dug up our roads and pavements. But they seem to have been considerably

less conscientious about repairing their trenches. Apparently checking on the quality of the repairs is for Oxfordshire County Council's Highways and it is not up to our Parish Council to protest.

There was a potential new Councillor at the meeting and it would be good if he decides to apply as there has been a vacancy for some time now. I hope there will be more on this next month.

The next Parish Council meeting will be on 11 April instead of the usual third Monday in the month. Do come if you can.

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

Dear Steeple Aston Community,

Following the start of the Ukrainian-Russian conflict last month and the UK government response to the refugee crisis, I would like to create a community support network in Steeple Aston.

Following conversations with many of you since the conflict began and attending the Parish Council meeting on the 21st March 2022, I hope to put systems in place so that Ukrainians who may come to live with us in Steeple Aston feel very welcome and well looked after and people who open their homes to host or provide support in other ways can help and support each other.

This is also in response to what many of us reflected on – we feel deeply saddened about what's happening; we want to help, but feel somewhat overwhelmed about what one can realistically do.

It would be great to hear from anyone who would like to help, offer resources and skills and their kindness. Please contact me on Judith.kalthoff@googlemail.com or on 07985277589 as I am aiming to put a list of volunteers together. I am also hoping that we can meet over the next few weeks to talk about this in more detail with anyone who is interested.

With warm wishes, Judith.

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HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

Upton House

In October 2015 I began writing these little articles after meeting Cathy Lawday (then editor of SAL) by chance at Kelmscott Manor. She encouraged me to write about that lovely old house by the Thames and thought I might like to suggest a few more places which people might care to visit. Somehow, I've never stopped! I'm always thrilled when an SAL reader tells me that they've pursued an idea and visited some of the interesting and special places we are so fortunate to live near – or at least fairly near!

I can't believe that I've never included Upton House, which is surely the closest National Trust property and a most interesting place to visit – perhaps I've assumed that everyone in the village knows about it already – but here goes to put the omission right.

Bought in 1927 by Lord Bearsted, fortunate to have the enormous resources of the Shell organisation to rely on for finance. He and his wife wanted to create a place to display their collections. These were of art, paintings and decorative arts, Art Deco and other furniture, tapestries, miniatures, silver and porcelain – the list goes on and on. These collections were built up alongside their generosity to good causes such as hospitals and schools. Lord Bearsted was a great philanthropist.

Much of the collection is on show inside the house, including in a special gallery built to house the art collection – one of the finest of its time. There is also a rather wonderful large, terraced garden to explore, with the terraces invisible until you come to the edge of the wide expanse of grass which you access from the broad stone patio outside the rear of the house. As you reach the edge and look down the lake glistens in the sun (if you are lucky) or reflects cloud formations floating above.

Upton House has generous opening times, especially between March and October (see: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/upton-house-and-gardens), a shop, a café, a second-hand books shop, a plant sale area and waymarked walks off into the countryside for the energetic.. The plants I saw in mid-March looked strong and healthy to me. There is something for everyone at Upton House.

Situated just before you plunge down Edgehill on the A422 about seven miles from Banbury (postcode OX15 6HT), Upton House is only about half-an-hour's drive from Steeple Aston. It's a lovely place for a quick walk or a long day's visit.

Eileen Baglin-Jones





My name is back to front!

My name is now a palindrome
and that has made my day
'cause when you are a palindrome
it's your name either way
the beauty of a palindrome
it's shaped just like a punt
it looks the same when backwards
as when it's from the front

I used to have a problem
when Robert was my name
I couldn't say it properly
and that was such a shame
at first my name got shortened
from Robert down to Rob
I've changed it to a palindrome
now you can call me Bob

With my name as a palindrome
I'm such a happy man
'cause Robert's left behind me
that name's an also ran
I've only got three letters
the middle one being O
with B's on either side of it
whichever way you go.

I'm looking for a partner
my search will never waver
I used to date a Hannah
I also eyed up Ava
the palindrome's the clincher
when each one is a belle
but now I have a new love
a girl whose name is Elle

My name is now a palindrome
and that has made my day
'cause when you are a palindrome
it's your name either way
the beauty of a palindrome
it's shaped just like a punt
it looks the same when backwards
as when it's from the front

Peter Wild

A perspective on grumbling

Oh, how we love to grumble
To share a good old wine
To whinge and moan and criticise
Is a national pastime.

We moan about the weather
About our lousy boss
About our noisy neighbours
And other folk who make us cross

We complain about high prices,
And the rising cost of fuel
About the rubbish on the telly
And what they teach in school.

We whinge about our taxes
And about the traffic too
We criticise the government
And carp at what they do.

But when a real disaster
Puts a country in freefall
All our irritations
Seem so petty and so small.

Then we think of those
Who are suffering such strife
Where fighting for survival
Is the only goal in life.

Refugees and misplaced persons
Driven from their home
Parted from their loved ones,
Who've lost everything they own.

Taking just what they can carry
Leaving family behind
Imagining when they return
The horrors they might find.

Then all our worries fade away
Then our complaints all cease
And we are simply thankful
That, for now, we live in peace.

Cathy Lawday

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???? Mind Games

Wordsquare *from Cathy Lawday*

Can you find the 20 words that are defined below?

- Answers can only contain letters from the grid.
- Answers can only use letters from the grid once.
- Each word must contain the letter in the shaded square.

T	R	A
D	I	S
E	N	L

1. A mode of transport (5) -----
2. An angry outburst (6) -----
3. Precipitation (4) -----
4. Passageway (5) -----
5. To eat dinner (4) -----
6. The movement of the sea (5) -----
7. Peel or skin (4) -----
8. To become weary or bored (4) -----
9. A mark or blemish (5) -----
10. To travel in a yacht (4) -----
11. To lift up (5) -----
12. Attempted (5) -----
13. Spoke (4) -----
14. Found on fingers and toes (5) -----
15. To slip or skate (5) -----
16. Dry, parched (4) -----
17. Robbery (4) -----
18. A walking path (5) -----
19. Animal's den or burrow (4) -----
20. Killed (5) -----

ANSWERS
 1. train; 2. tirade; 3. rain; 4. aisle; 5. dine; 6. tides; 7. rind; 8. tire; 9. stain; 10. sail; 11. raise; 12. tried; 13. said; 14. nails; 15. slide; 16. arid; 17. raid; 18. trail; 19. lair; 20. slain.

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Florence Hambidge and her notebooks

Florence Hambidge (1862-1941) and her family lived as tenants in 'Whitestones' on South Side for nearly 40 years up to her death. She left behind two beautifully handwritten notebooks, now in the SAVA archive, which offer an intriguing insight into her life and the times between 1914 and 1939.

The entries reveal the preoccupations of a mother of three growing children, a wife and a homemaker. Predominantly, there are recipes – over sixty in all – for cakes, chutneys, jellies and puddings (including 'Josephine' and 'Kentish Well' puddings) which she ascribes to her relatives and friends or has copied from newspapers. Many are ranked – 'Best Orange marmalade', 'Second Best', and so on. There are cooking tips too – 'Clarifying Dripping', 'Using up cold potatoes', as well as household advice – 'For Killing Flies', 'Cleaning Net Curtains'.

The influence of '*Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*' is plain to see. First published in 1861, the hugely expanded version of 1907 easily outsold any other cookery book and remains in print today. Florence was one of probably thousands of wives inspired to set down their own domestic version of her book. Isabella Beeton did not, however, confine herself to improve cooking which she saw as 'civilising', but also to encouraged traditional qualities such as frugality, hygiene and early rising. The 1861 book is prefaced with a quotation from 'The Vicar of Wakefield':

"The prudent wife and the careful matron, are much more serviceable in life than petticoated philosophers, blustering heroines, or virago queens. She who makes her husband and her children happy reclaims the one from vice and trains up the other to virtue."

Similar moral exhortations can be found in Florence Hambidge's simple notebooks, where nearly thirty poems and fifty wise sayings punctuate the culinary writings. Seemingly sent by friends or collected from newspapers, she underlines the crucial passages. For example: "*It is impossible to go wrong if you think and act with high moral principles, let the consequences be what they may".*



*Florence aged 18
in 1890.*

Continued on next page

Florence's patriotism in a time of war is evident in her choice of jingoistic poetry pieces – 'To the Shirkers, from the Trenches', 'To France' and 'My Dug-Out' are reminders that civilian poetry did not always carry the same sentiments as those of the more famous war poets. Tapping into another form of patriotism, she advocates what we would call today responsible citizenship. In 'The Big Budget 1916' she writes:

*The Budget's out, we know the worst
With heavy taxes we are cursed
NO! Gladly shall our pockets bleed
To serve our country in her need!*

If her poems and adages seem somewhat serious, there are about forty extracts designed to amuse. These are stories of the 'overheard on a bus' variety, or are centred around the utterings of vicars, children, doctors or soldiers.

Florence was born in Banbury as Florence Shilson. Her father was a 'woolstapler', a wealthy wool merchant, and they lived in a large house in West Bar. She married Herbert Webster Hambidge, a corn factor from Chadlington. In 1901, the family lived in part of the Manor House in Lower Heyford, though the three children are all recorded as being born in Steeple Aston. By 1911, they are settled at 'Whitestones'.

By 1939, Florence was living alone in 'Whitestones', but still designated as married. The whereabouts of her husband is unknown, but a photo of Herbert from 1932 shows him in a wheelchair. By the time of her death in 1941 she is said to be a widow, but records of Herbert's death remain elusive. Most likely, in the last decade of her life, she lived in a house which her children had left, with a disabled husband who was eventually institutionalised. She was interred in the Shilson family grave in Banbury.

The oldest child Dorothy later lived in Warwick and her son John 'Jack' (the engraver on the pillar outside 'Whitestones' which I referred to in SAL May 2021) served in the army at the end of WW1 and WW2. The youngest, Stella, had an even more adventurous life which is a tale in itself. I am grateful to Toni Smith, her great granddaughter in California for the photos and information.

Dave Jarrett

If you would like to see Florence Hambidge's notebooks for yourself, call in at the Village History Centre any Saturday morning from 10am till 12.00.



Florence with her husband outside 'Whitestones' in 1932.



Steeple Aston's Jubilee Weekend

Please put Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th June in your diaries to join a weekend of celebrations across the village.

Saturday opens with a **Fete at the Gate** and a village wide project to **'Bunt' our Streets**.

Sunday follows with a **Village Picnic** and the return of the infamous, madcap **Whit Races** after nearly a ten year break.

Details of how to sign up for Jubilee Bunting workshops, get your hands on 'make it at home' kits or sign up for the Whit Races will be announced by the Jubilee Committee shortly.

But, we need your help to make it a success.

We are looking for hidden village skills to help with tasks from design and printing to first aid.

Want to see your old curtain scraps decorating Nizewell Head to North Side? We need your fabric donations to create our 'make it at home' bunting kits.

Has your street or society already made plans? Let us know so we can include it on the calendar.

To volunteer or tell us about your event contact angharad.lloydjones.sapc@gmail.com or call 07980 281123.

To donate fabric see this issue's Sustainable Steeple advert for more details or contact amanda@sustainablesteeple.com or 07793 553150.

This month Covid caused us once again to revise our plans. Our March speaker, who was going to demonstrate the art of block printing and tutor us in how to do it, could not come because of Covid. So we had a sociable members' evening instead, with a variety of games and brain teasers: members had to identify people in a picture quiz, solve kitchen anagrams, answer questions on the topic of television detectives, name the backing bands for various singers and decide whether Italian names were a painter, a cheese or a type of pasta. The team consisting of Janice Kinory, Kathryn Coysh and Merrill Bailey was the overall winner. We had an enjoyable evening and ended with a cake to celebrate our 104th birthday.

Steeple Aston WI is the longest-running WI in Oxfordshire. It was founded in 1918, the year when the right to vote was extended to include some women aged over 30, the price of posting a letter was increased to 1½d, the school-leaving age was raised to 14 years old, the poet Wilfred Owen was killed in action and World War I ended. Julie Hillier had arranged for two of the WI Memory Books to be on display, showing just how much things have changed in the years since the WI was founded.

Earlier in March, 14 members had a trip to the theatre in Oxford to see Nigel Havers and Patricia Hodge in Noel Coward's *Private Lives*. It was a very professional production, slick and amusing, with sets which perfectly conjured up the era. We all thoroughly enjoyed it.

On 3rd March we met for a coffee get-together at the Red Lion. Unfortunately, this will be our last such meeting as the Red Lion is now closed while building work takes place and Chris and Naomi will not be the hosts when it reopens. We will miss the friendly welcome and delicious cakes of Naomi's 'Bit on the Side', which has been a welcome addition to village life.

On 12th March we had a Grand Coffee Morning at my home to raise WI funds. We had a raffle with some great prizes. A pear tree, kindly donated by Nicholson's, was won by Jennie Sapsford. Other prizes were donated by Hopcroft Holt Hotel, Polka Dots hair salon, Eagles delicatessen, The Arty Crafty Place and Steeple Aston shop. Over 20 people attended, and (to blow the dust off an old cliché) a good time was had by all. If you would like to join us, please contact me on 347209 or at cathy@lawdaymacandrew.co.uk

Cathy Lawday

Once upon a time: April dates through the ages

- 1616.** Poet and playwright William Shakespeare dies on 23rd April
- 1622.** Royal Society of London founded on 1st April, with patronage from Charles II.
- 1633.** On 10th April, bananas went on sale for the first time in England.
- 1739.** Dick Turpin, notorious highwayman, was hanged in York on 7th April.
- 1884.** Oxford University admits female students to examinations on 29th April, but they are not awarded degrees.
- 1896.** On 6th April, Olympic Games reborn.
- 1912.** On the evening of 14th April, RMS Titanic hit an iceberg and sank the following morning with the loss of around 1500 lives.
- 1949.** 'South Pacific', the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, open on Broadway on 7th April.

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THE VALENTINE CLUB

What a busy month March proved to be. At our monthly meeting we invited Mandy Massam from Age UK Oxfordshire to help us avoid the pitfalls of scams that are all too common these days. Then we welcomed a local celebrity, Mr. Alan Brewer, who gave us an insight into his dubious past as a crew member with first BOAC and then British Airways and all those 'fluffy bits' that accompanied him on his exploits across the globe.

A week later we took a full coach to Aerospace, Bristol, to see the many aircraft that are housed there, including the iconic Concorde.

April is going to be equally busy with our meeting one week earlier than usual where we welcome Jeff Evans with his presentation of 'Pop on the Box'. This is followed the next week with a holiday for 43 members to The Isle of Wight where, with the help of InterChoice, we take over Norton Grange for five days. Passports are at the ready along with sunhats and not forgetting our buckets and spades!

Someone asked me way back when I announced that I was retiring from my work, "what are you going to do with yourself?" At that time I was not certain, but as time moved on I found that like so many other retired folk, I have no idea where the time goes and my day is full. Being part of The Valentine Club has brought with it so many new friends – becoming that bit older has its benefits.

You can see what the club is up-to by visiting our own website at www.valentineclub.wixsite/aston or keep up-to-date by looking on the village website www.steepleaston.org.uk or simply call me on 01869 340512.

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

Steeple Aston Golf Society



We now have the following dates confirmed for our 2022 season, we would love to see new members of all genders.

Friday 13th May: The Wychwood – meet 11.30, first tee 12.30

Friday 17th June: Wrag Barn – meet 12.00, first tee 13.00, restricted to 16 players

Friday 15th July: The Springs – meet 12.00, first tee 13.00

Friday 5th August: Naunton – Captain's Day – meet 12.00, first tee 13.00

Friday 9th September: Studley Wood – meet 12.00, first tee 13.00

Friday 14th October: Temple – meet 11.00, first tee 12.00

Contact **Alan 01869 340423** or **Chris 347173** if you would like further information.

I saw a homeless man outside my golf club and asked if I gave him £20 would he buy booze? He said no, he hadn't had a beer in years. Then I said if I give you £20 will you buy golf gear? He again said no, he stopped golfing five years ago. So then I said I'll do you better than £20. I'll take you home and get you all cleaned up. My wife will cook a fantastic meal for you. Then I'll bring you back and still give you £20. He asked me won't she get mad? I said it didn't matter. I just want her to see what happens to a man when he stops drinking and playing golf.

Alan Brewer

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The rebuilding of Heyford Station at Didcot

The second of our features about the project to rebuild the original Heyford station building at the Didcot Railway Centre

By Chris Adamson, Chair, Friends of Heyford Station and project volunteer Tim Part, project manager



Over the winter period much work has been undertaken on repairing and replacing the fencing around the Heyford station site at Didcot. Some of the fencing was over 40 years old and had clearly seen better days. Careful research was undertaken to ensure that the replacement fencing replicated fencing originally installed by the Great Western Railway to separate its railway from the general public and animals. Chestnut 'cleft fencing' (coppiced wood split to make posts and rails) as well as post and wire fence runs have been installed, the wires on the latter being more concentrated at the bottom to deter animals (or even children!).

The original station building at Heyford had a wrap-around canopy supported by large decorative brackets known as spandrels. These featured a distinctive lions head and arrangements are being made for the casting of some replica heads as these were missing when the old building was dismantled in 1985.

The Building Control authorities have granted permission for physical work to start on the foundations. Tuesday 22nd February 2022 was a significant day for the project when a layer of Geotex and some 30 tons of limestone aggregate marked the commencement of construction of the foundations. The foundations will be further built up of more aggregates, steel reinforcement cages and concrete and have been designed to allow wooden floorboards to be fitted, as in the original building.

If you would care to follow our progress more closely, we have a website that charts this fascinating and extraordinary project in detail at www.gwsheyford.org.uk and, of course, if you would like to join the volunteer team or make a donation, either or both will be most welcome.




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John Lewis, LRPS, the photographer not the shop, asked us to concentrate on composition in our photography, a huge complex topic. The subjective issue of taking an image to emit emotion and communicate an idea for the viewer has many facets. A better composed picture will be more effective and make a stronger impression.

The example of a portrait of Igor Stravinsky by Arnold Newman demonstrated this idea. The sitter is in a corner, but the image is dominated by shapes created by a piano. Art can give many examples of composition that can be replicated by the photographer.

John felt that there must be an intense curiosity rather than a passing visual interest in a subject to ensure better composition. The subject matter can be shocking, sad, amusing, gentle or dramatic to get the viewer's attention. Using diagonal lines, leading lines, and shapes, especially in black-and-white, can result in a satisfying image that gives a sense of movement.

The idea of colour to create a mood generated lots of conversation. John highlighted the colour wheel as an effective tool to produce an experience that affects a mood, emotion or behaviour, for example letting one colour dominate creates drama. I would encourage you to look at John's website, www.johnlewis.co.uk, to see his images.

We followed his talk with a look at members' images based around the topic of 'Shadows'. Our comments were more focused on the idea of composition after listening to John.

Our next meeting will be our AGM at the Adderbury Institute on Wednesday, 6th April at 7.30pm. This will be followed by a presentation of members' favourite images from the last year. You are welcome to join us, but please check the website for up-to-date information.

Anne Hunsley
www.addphoto.co.uk

Photo taken in Newlyn, Cornwall. ©John Lewis



Platinum Jubilee tree

The Queen's Green Canopy (QGC) is a tree planting initiative to mark Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee and invites people to 'Plant a Tree for the Jubilee'. Trees planted from October 2021 to December 2022 can be counted under the scheme and added virtually to a QGC map. If you wish to read more about this and get involved by planting your own tree, then visit the website at <https://queensgreencanopy.org>

As a village, Steeple Aston has a tradition of planting trees for the Queen's Jubilees! The avenue of the appropriately named silver limes on the Sixty Foot approach to the village were planted for the Silver Jubilee in 1977. Then for the Diamond Jubilee, ten years ago, an oak tree was planted in the churchyard, accompanied by a Cumbrian green slate memorial stone which was commissioned by the Parish Council.

The PCC (parochial church council) would like to continue the tradition and plant a tree in the churchyard for the Platinum Jubilee, especially since we have lost several trees in the last few years. We are somewhat limited by the need to obtain the church equivalent of planning permission for tree planting, so we are only looking at native species and have come up with the following shortlist:

- Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
- Field Maple (*acer campestre*)

These would complement our existing trees (yews, hollies, copper beech, sycamore, oak, Scots Pine). We hope to plant the tree in the autumn.

Please vote for your favourite option by sending your choice to Shirley Palmer:
s.e.palmer@btinternet.com

Below: Sixty foot approach

Right: the Churchyard oak tree





Living with Covid – Important

We are very happy that groups and activities are returning to the hall after the problems of the last two years. However, it is important that everyone realises that although Covid restrictions have been lifted, the government information that Village Halls are required to adhere to has changed very little. Every group and activity will have different requirements and a different approach, but the basic principles still remain for the safety and well-being of everyone.

DEFRA/ACRE/CFO has advised us to ask users to follow the principles below.

1. People should stay at home if unwell.

Those who have tested positive for Covid should inform the leader of their hall activity and close contacts* (see below). They should not attend the hall until they have two negative lateral flow tests on days 5 and 6.

2. Indoor meetings should still be well-ventilated.

3. A face covering should still be worn in crowded and enclosed spaces.

4. Hands should be cleaned frequently.

5. Social distancing should be maintained as far as possible.

6. If a more crowded event is to take place – receptions, etc. – hirers should be encouraged to ask everyone to take a lateral flow test beforehand.

*The NHS app is still in use and you can report a positive test to them, but the NHS QR contact poster is no longer in use.

If you have any questions, please contact Barbara Brewer or Margaret Bulleyment.

Monday 9th May

AGM, Village Hall committee room 8pm.

The Annual General Meeting of the Steeple Aston Management committee will take place on the above date. The AGM lasts approximately 15 minutes and is followed by the monthly Village Hall committee meeting. Members of the public are very welcome to attend the meeting and if anyone feels they would like to join the committee, or would like more information, please telephone 01869 340423 for further details.

Sunday 29th May

NGS (National Garden Scheme) Open Gardens 2 to 6pm. Teas in Village Hall

The Village Hall Committee is once again organising refreshments for the Open Gardens. The money raised goes towards Macmillan Nurses and other cancer charities. If anyone would like to bake or supply a cake, or help serve teas in the afternoon (for approximately one hour, for a time to suit you), please contact Barbara on 01869 340423.

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.

Barbara Brewer – chair

What is your carbon footprint?

So here we are a few months after Christmas. I rather think that very few had the Christmas they planned. There have been many changes that families have had to make caused by Covid. That certainly happened to us. However, as ever we enjoyed our food and turkey was prominent. Lighting the brandy on the Christmas pudding was almost a fire hazard! We had a good time, as I hope everyone did.

And we used lots of stuff which we find hard to quantify. Was that justifiable? Is it OK to do that in the current ecological climate? Yes, I think it is. Everybody needs a festival at which to rejoice.

But I bet that most people in Steeple Aston are also like us, putting waste on compost heaps wherever possible, not overusing gas, being careful with recycling and so on. So what else can we do, I ask myself? I'm not thinking of large things. Right now, I cannot contemplate major improvements like alternative heating or a car which would eventually reduce my carbon footprint.

So, I thought, what is my carbon footprint? How much do I use within the global average? Off I went to my good old web browser and found a footprint calculator. Very easy to do these days. If you want to have a go at this I really recommend the WWF calculator – <https://footprint.wwf.org.uk/#/> – because it keeps the questions simple, gives clear choices for answers and doesn't require more than a general knowledge of things. For example, it asks what sort of temperature you like in the house, not the detailed number of Kw used or the amount you spend on fuel to the last penny. For most of us this latter would mean fumbling through loads of stuff and would be off-putting! No – it's nice and easy.

Well, I had a go. It really didn't take long and bearing in mind that it probably isn't totally accurate and that it only gives an approximation of my footprint, it does at least show roughly where you are. I'm pleased to say that I rate just below the norm. I probably could do better and over time will make the effort no doubt, but it's very comforting to feel that I am not miles out.

And I'm sure that households in Steeple Aston are similar or a great deal better!

Martin Dale



The Cricket Report



Fixtures for 2022 Season....

Here are our fixtures for the 2022 season. The most important thing you need to remember is that Home Matches are now at Great Tew Cricket. Here is the full address: Great Tew CC, Ledwell Road, Great Tew, Oxfordshire OX7 4AG.
Telephone: 01608 683896

The advantages of our new ground are numerous: one of the best tracks in Oxfordshire with full practice nets, but most importantly a bar with catering facilities. Please do come and support your village club. The fixtures are:

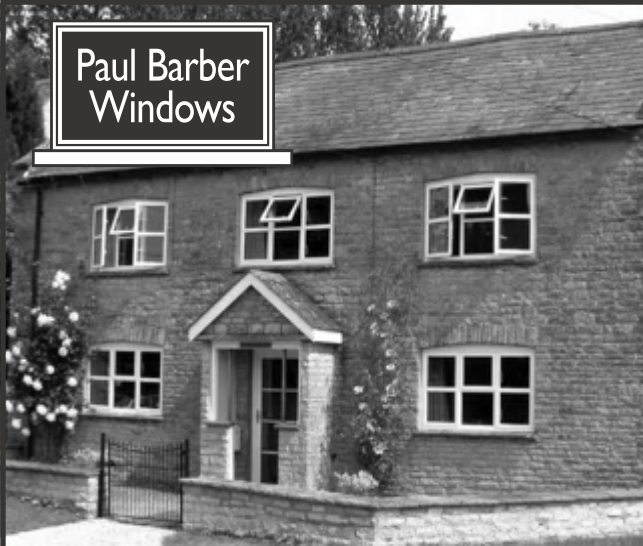
Day	Date	Opponents	Venue	Time
Sunday	15 th May	Blenheim Park	Away	1pm
Saturday	21 st May	Peter Higgins XI	Home	11.30am
Sunday	29 th May	Middleton Stoney	Away	2pm
Sunday	5 th June	Sandford St Martin	Away	2pm
Sunday	19 th June	Oxford Downs	Away	2pm
Sunday	26 th June	Minster Lovell	Away	1.30pm
Sunday	3 rd July	Philanderers	Home	2pm
Sunday	17 th July	Ascott-under-Wychwood	Home	2pm
Sunday	7 th /14 th August	Great & Little Tew	Away	2pm
Sunday	11 th September	Chairman's v. Captain's	Home	1.30pm

We very much hope to see you on the boundary this summer.

With best wishes to all.

Peter Higgins
Chairman SACC

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Church Matters



As a kid, I was one of those who hated being lined up on games day so teams could be chosen. You know the experience – captains pick their mates and then pick the best players. Then it's a shame parade. I wasn't especially sporty as a child and would often find myself somewhere near the end of the process.

One of the amazing things about the Easter Story is that none of this goes on. Sure, Jesus has friends around him in his disciples, and sure, there are folk who don't like Jesus, but as Holy Week leads up to the Crucifixion and then Easter Sunday, Jesus shows his friends no favours – and never shames even those who would stop at nothing to take his life.

Everyone around Jesus is on a level playing field. I'm amazed by this, and I love it.

We get to see Pilate's indecision and weakness, for sure. But so too we see Peter's betrayal. We see Judas handing Jesus over to the soldiers – but we also see a soldier confessing Jesus as the Son of God, and two pharisees (Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus) caring for his crucified body after all the disciples have fled. We see crowds praising and cursing, men's bravado and women's bravery. There's no sense of hierarchy or order or an 'in crowd'.

We are simply presented with the holy chaos of people. Some getting it partly right; some getting it mostly wrong; all as human as each other and as loved by God.

One of the reasons I hated those schools' games afternoons, or those playground sports as a kid, was that I never felt I fitted in. There were people who were better than me who belonged on the football team. Much as I hated it, I pretty much deserved to be picked last! And I know that some folk don't come to church much now because they feel just that way – they don't feel they fit in. Others seem to belong there. Not them.

I apologise for this, if that rings anywhere near true for you. Easter tells a different story, and it's a much better one.

Everyone around Jesus is on a level playing field.

When it comes to faith, there are no experts, no team captains – except one. And that Lord Jesus walked through the first Holy Week leading up to Easter talking to absolutely everyone, including absolutely everyone, ignoring absolutely no-one, because at the end he died and rose so the love and hope he brings might be for absolutely everyone. He chooses us all.

I very much hope you might come to one of our Easter services this April as we celebrate God's love which is for you and for me, and which, through these difficult days, brings hope that changes life. But if you can't come, I pray you'll find on television, on the radio, on the web, some touch of Jesus that brings this much better story of love home for you.

Revd Marcus Green

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Sunday 10th April Palm Sunday	9.30am Family Service Rev'd Marcus Green	9.30am Family Service Rev'd Marcus Green	10.30am Service with Tackley Methodists
Maundy Thursday 14th April	7.30pm Informal Communion Rev'd Marcus Green		
Good Friday 15th April		12 noon Good Friday Reflection Rev'd Marcus Green	
Sunday 17th April Easter Day	9am Easter Communion tbc	11am Easter Communion Rev'd Marcus Green	9.30am Easter Communion Rev'd Marcus Green
Sunday 24th April			10.30am Holy Communion Rev'd Marcus Green
Sunday 1st May	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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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

April 2022

7th Blue and brown
 14th Green
 21st Blue and brown
 28th Green

May 2022

5th Blue and brown
 12th Green
 19th Blue and brown
 26th Green

Food caddy is collected weekly

Steeple Aston Sport & Recreation Centre Letting Charges

Social Function peak times (up to 6 hours)	£55
Social Function off-peak times (up to 5 hours)	£27.50
Meeting of represented club (per session)	£11
Caution money for Private Lettings	£100

Letting Agent Katie Rushworth Tel. 01869 340196
 E-Mail to rec.trust@googlemail.com

Chair – Torquil McLusky Tel. 01869 347914
 Treasurer – Chris Cooper Tel. 01869 347173

BUS TIMES

STAGECOACH S4 BUS SERVICE

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 offers services through Steeple Aston to and from Lower Heyford Station (Monday to Friday), to and from Chipping Norton (Wednesdays) and to and from Bicester (Fridays). See <http://ourbus.co/bartons/> for details and times

Steeple Aston Calendar

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

April			
Saturday 2nd	WI. Block printing workshop	Arty Crafty Studio	10:00am
Tuesday 5th	The Garden Club (page 11)	Village Hall	7.00pm
Wednesday 6th	AD&D Photo Society. AGM. 3 best images of 2021	Adderbury Institute	7.30pm
Tuesday 12th	Valentine Club. 'Pop on the Box', by Jeff Evans	Village Hall	2.30pm
Tuesday 12th	WI. AGM. Speaker: '40 years of UK Musicals'	Village Hall	7.00pm
Thursday 14th	WI. Evening stroll and drinks	Middle Aston House	5.00pm
Friday 15th	SAL May 2022 copy and advert deadline		
Monday 18th	4Parish Council meeting	Sports & Rec	7.30pm
Saturday 23rd	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Thursday 28th	WI. Pub lunch (time and venue tbc)		
Saturday 30th	Quiz & Chilli Night (page 7)	Sports & Rec	
May			
21st to 29th	Oxfordshire Art Weeks (page 5)		
Wednesday 4th	AD&D Photo Society. Steve Williams: Sport	Adderbury Institute	7.30pm
Monday 9th	AGM Village Hall Management Committee	VH Committee Room	8.00pm
Tuesday 10th	WI. 'The Oxford of Morse, Lewis and Endeavour'	Village Hall	7.00pm
Sunday 15th	SAL April 2022 copy and advert deadline		
Monday 16th	Parish Council meeting	Sports & Rec	7.30pm
Tuesday 17th	Valentine Club. Lee Wilkinson (page 31)	Village Hall	2.30pm
Wednesday 25th	Valentine Club. Steam train journey (page 31)		
Wednesday 25th	WI. Pub lunch (time and venue tbc)		
Saturday 28th	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Sunday 29th	NGS Open Gardens. Teas in Village Hall.		2 to 6pm

Due to coronavirus some clubs and societies might still be meeting 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). 10am - 12pm - Saturdays

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e-mail: print@joshuahorgan.co.uk

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