

Steeple Aston *Life*

May 2022 Issue No. 585



- Spring Show results
- Nelson Mass photos
- Helping bees survive
- Local club reports
- Swifts in Steeple Aston
- Cooking with rhubarb

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May 2022: CONTENTS

Click on the item's page number below to go straight to its page. To return to Contents, click on the page number at the foot of any page.

MAY FEATURES	PAGE	REPORTS FROM CLUBS & SOCIETIES	PAGE
Bee Buzz	34	AD&D Photographic Society	27
Nelson Mass	19	Valentine Club	31
Spring Show results	22/23	WI	35
Swifts in Steeple Aston	25		
REGULAR FEATURES	PAGE	INFORMATION	PAGE
Arts page	12	Bus times	43
Church Matters	39	Church Services	41
Editorial	3	Rubbish bin collection dates	43
Garden Club	17	Steeple Aston Calendar	44
Gardening Spot	13	Steeple Aston Directory	2
In the kitchen	9	Steeple Aston Noticeboard	4
Mind Games	21	Village Hall News	33
Poetry Corner	18		
Steeple People	11		
Steeplejack (PC Meeting Notes)	14/15		

Cover photo: Nigel Francis - Vintage Cars

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

All articles and letters to the Editor
editorial@salife.org.uk

COPY DEADLINES

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

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

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

ADVERTISING

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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ADVERTISING RATES

1/4 page - £8

1/3 page - £11

1/2 page - £15

Full page (village events only) - £15

Steeple Aston Directory

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Angling Club		Antony Morley	<i>tonyriver_83@hotmail.com</i>
Archive (SAVA)	Chairman	Martin Lipson	347046
Badminton (Tuesday mornings)		Barbara Brewer	340423
Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Alison Moran	347033
Beekeepers (Swarm collection, advice)		Paul Honigmann	340665
Bell ringers		Graham & Dorothy Clifton	347273
Hand-bell ringers		Sally Cooper	347173
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Cherwell District Council	Bodicote House		01295 227001
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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
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		Cllr Bryn Williams	07836 271998
		Cllr Hugo Brown	
Cricket Club	Chairman	Peter Higgins	347493
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Deddington Health Centre	Appointments		338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	338847
	Out of Hours		111
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Garden Club	Chairman	Richard Preston	340512
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Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme			0300 3030125
WI	Joint Presidents	Merrill Bayley, Cathy Lawday	347802, 347209



“...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

Editorial

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, and summer's lease hath all too short a date.

– William Shakespeare

Here are some things you might not know about the month of May.

- The above quotation comes from Shakespeare's Sonnet 18. This is the one that starts "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?"
- May is thought to have been named after Maia, the Greek goddess of fertility. Originally the third month of the year, it was demoted by the addition of January and February to the Roman calendar.
- In old England, May was known as 'the month of three milkings', referring to the fact that cows could be milked three times a day during this time.
- Old superstitions suggested that you should not wash blankets, buy a broom or get married during the month (Marry in May and you'll rue the day!).
- Nine UK prime ministers were born in May, more than in any other month. They include Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington, William Pitt the younger and Tony Blair. But not Theresa May, who was born in October.
- The birthstone for May is the emerald, representing love and success. The birth flowers for the month are lily of the valley and the common hawthorn, also known as the May tree. This is named after the month in which it blooms and is a sign that spring is turning into summer. The pale green leaves are often the first to appear in spring, with the pale-pink blossom appearing in May.
- In the UK, dancing around a decorated pole on the first day of May is a tradition that might date back 2000 years or more. Originally, adults held hands as they cavorted in a circle around the pole. Oliver Cromwell put a stop to this merriment by banning maypoles in 1644. However, the monarchy was restored in 1660 and maypoles returned. Dancing with long ribbons attached to the pole only began in Victorian times.

Robert

The Spring Show (see page 22) included, for those aged between 12 and 15, a category for a photo suitable for the Steeple Aston Life cover. It was won with this shot of The Folly by Ben Wade-martins.



Steeple Aston Noticeboard



Chicken Sheds' planning application refused

Cherwell District Council's Planning Committee has unexpectedly refused the application by developers Middle Aston Ltd. to build 25 new business units at Hatch End Old Poultry Farm between Steeple and Middle Aston.

According to the Decision Notice, the application was refused because it is contrary to local and national planning policies in that it "would create additional trips over the existing permitted use of the site. The proposed development would regularly attract large commercial vehicles and large numbers of cars onto the local minor roads which are unsuitable to serve the proposed development, and would have a severe traffic impact."

Martin Lipson, Vice Chair of Steeple Aston Parish Council reports:

"Cherwell's Planning Committee bravely and unexpectedly voted 10-6 for a refusal of the Hatch End development. The parish representatives were not permitted to speak again (as they did last December when the application was deferred), so this was very largely down to an impassioned speech by Mike Kerford-Byrnes, our District Councillor who retires this month, at his final committee meeting. He focussed on the danger to parents and children walking to and from the school, with unknown numbers of vehicles generated by the new scheme attempting to pass them at peak times.

"The defiant mood of the members was compounded by their annoyance, echoing our own, at the County Council's Highways officers refusing to be concerned about the traffic and safety issues, something which has become their standard opinion on most applications. The fact that they hadn't supported our wish to see the footpath extended along the highway was a factor in the Committee's surprise decision.

"Well done to Cherwell, and especially to Mike."

The developers have six months in which to appeal.

(Reproduced with permission from the Steeple Aston Online website.)

Christian Aid Week 2022

Christian Aid Week this year is from 15th to 21st May. Once again, a team of volunteers will be delivering an envelope to you. There will be an address on your envelope where you can return it with your donation. Envelopes can also be dropped in at Harris's Stores (by kind permission of Pari). Rachel Marsden will personally collect on North Side and Ruth Dale will collect on and around Water Lane.

I am very aware that we are all concentrating our efforts on fund raising for Ukraine. Christian Aid, however, works tirelessly throughout the world to relieve poverty and suffering and needs funds more than ever. It would be wonderful if you could give something, however small. If you are a UK taxpayer, please complete the Gift Aid form. Of course, the easiest way to donate is via the internet at christianaid.org.uk

Caroline Parsons – Local Organiser

Concert for Ukraine

At the Steeple Aston 'Concert for Ukraine' on 28th April a collection was made for Red Cross and Unicef. If you were not able to attend the concert, but would like to donate, here are online pages:

Red Cross: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/AstonsConcertforUkraine>

UNICEF: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/AstonsConcert-ForUkraine>

Young Musicians' Evening

Are you a vocalist, pianist or instrumentalist? Beginner or advanced? Would you like to take part in a musical evening on Saturday 7th May in the Village Hall at 7pm? If so, for further details contact Margaret Bulleyment (jbulleyment@waitrose.com) or Martin Dale (martindale865@gmail.com)



21st May - 29th May 2022

11.00am - 6.00pm

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Instagram:

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Telephone:

Sue: 07803 831497

Niki: 07774 644365



JOIN US FOR A RIGHT Royal knees-up

Join us to celebrate our village on Saturday 4th & Sunday 5th June.

But what will be going on?

‘Bunt’ our Streets

Whether you are a bunting beginner or expert we’re going to help you and your family create personalised bunting to decorate your home or that of a neighbour. Each Steeple Aston household will be given a free ‘Make it at Home’ Bunting Kit complete with all you need to create your own Jubilee bunting. We’re keeping it easy so whatever your age or skill you can join in.

To help get those creative juices flowing, we are hosting two complimentary workshops at the Village Hall showing the simplest techniques and shortcuts, including the chance to ‘print your own’ with Indian Blocks from the Arty Crafty Place.

Sunday 8 th May	10.30am-12.30pm or 2pm-4pm
Sunday 22 nd May	10.30am-12.30pm or 2pm-4pm

All equipment is provided but places are limited so contact amanda@sustainablesteeple.com or 07793 553150 to book.

Make it at Home Bunting Kits will be available from Tuesday 3rd May to be collected from Amanda Rodgers, Windyridge, Paines Hill. If you would like your kit to be delivered to your home please contact amanda@sustainablesteeple.com or 07793 553150. Other pick up locations to be confirmed.

If you are a sewing fiend don’t be shy. Do you know someone in the village who won’t be able to make their own bunting? Why not offer to create some for them?

Saturday 4th June - The Fete at the Gate, 11am-3pm

Throw open your gate. Set up a table. Show off your hidden talent.

On Saturday 4th June we will be encouraging you to stroll around the village and discover what it is Steeple Aston residents do best. From masterful meringues and upcycled crafts to the ultimate slime recipe or car boot sale. Get involved and decide what you want to sell from your garden gate.

Don’t have a space? Let us know at angharad.lloydjones.sapc@gmail.com and we’ll find you an easy convenient spot.



Sunday 5th June - The Village Picnic & Whit Races, Robinsons Close, 10am onwards

A day of races, food and fun. The Whit Races will kick off at 10am for children and adults alike. From the Egg n' Spoon race to the Hangover Handicap you won't necessarily need to be fast to win.

From midday, the village is invited to a grand picnic. Bring your chairs, blankets, giant Jenga, friends, family and head to Robinson's Close. This is a BYO event so don't forget to pack your lunch whether it is Pepperoni Pizza or posh nosh. In the event of rain, festivities will decamp to the Village Hall. Please don't bring any BBQ's as the football team won't be very happy.

For further information refer to the Steeple Aston website <https://www.steepleaston.org.uk/> and Facebook page for regular updates.



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Join us as part of the Jubilee Weekend

‘Fete at the Gate’

Sustainable Steeple will be having a stall on the driveway at Windyridge, Paines Hill, as part of the village wide ‘Fete at the Gate’ on Saturday 4th June, as part of the Jubilee celebrations.

We will be selling a broad range of hand crafted, upcycled gifts for home and garden.

Proceeds from this sale and wider Sustainable Steeple activities will be made available for use by the newly formed village Environment & Sustainability Committee.

Having a clear out? If you have unwanted items you think could be upcycled, please get in touch by emailing amanda@sustainablesteeple.com or calling 07793 553150.



Rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb. Poached rhubarb, rhubarb crumble, rhubarb jam. There are lots of ways to take advantage of this year's rhubarb season. All recipes make at least four generous servings.

Oven Baked Spiced Lamb Chops with Rhubarb

1 tbs sunflower oil	120 ml good stock
1 butter (walnut sized) dollop	4 rhubarb stalks chopped into 2 cm bits
1½ kg lamb shoulder chops	sea salt
3 onions, chopped	freshly ground pepper
2 celery sticks, chopped	1 tbs chopped mint
2 cloves garlic, crushed	1 tbs parsley
1 tsp ground cumin, coriander, turmeric	2 tsps frozen pomegranate seeds
½ tsp ground cinnamon	

Preheat the oven to 150°C.

Heat the oil and butter in a large ovenproof casserole.

Season the chops and brown in batches on both sides.

Add the onion, celery and garlic. Cover and cook until soft, adding a splash of water if needed. Add all the spices and cook for one minute, then add the stock and the lamb, along with any meat juices.

Season, bring to the boil. Cover the meat with a piece of baking paper, then a lid or aluminium foil.

Bake for 1½ hours until the lamb is very tender and falling off the bone, turning the lamb once during cooking.

Add rhubarb to the casserole. Cover and bake for a further 10 to 15 minutes until the rhubarb is tender and holding its shape.

Carefully transfer the lamb and rhubarb to a serving platter and scatter over the pomegranate seeds, parsley and mint.

Ginger Rhubarb Fool

200g rhubarb, sliced into chunks
50g crystallised ginger chopped into slivers
1 orange, juiced and grated
1 tbs runny honey
75 ml whipping cream
50ml natural Greek yoghurt
10 ginger snaps, crushed

Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4.

Place the rhubarb in a shallow baking dish with the crystallised ginger, orange juice and zest. Drizzle the honey over the top. Cook for 15 minutes, until soft.

Meanwhile, in a medium-sized bowl, whisk the whipping cream to medium peaks, then fold in the yogurt. Fold in three-quarters of the crushed ginger snaps.

Spoon the roasted rhubarb into two serving glasses. Top with the yoghurt cream mix and sprinkle the remaining crushed ginger snaps over the top.

Rhubarb Lemonade

8 large stalks of rhubarb	200ml water
125g caster sugar	1 bottle sparkling water
1 lemon, juiced and grated	ice cubes
30g fresh mint	

If needed, peel rhubarb and cut into small pieces. Add to a pot with sugar, lemon juice, lemon zest, water and mint.

Simmer for approx. 15 minutes until the rhubarb is soft.

Let the mixture cool down a bit, then pass through a sieve and save the syrup.

When you are ready serve rhubarb lemonade, add some ice cubes, rhubarb syrup and sparkling water to a glass.



Alistair Redhouse

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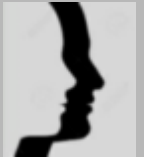
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Steeple People



Peter Wild

How long have you lived in Steeple Aston? I lived in Steeple Aston between 1989 and 2015, although I had been associated with the village since 1974 when I first came to visit the lady who became my wife.

What brought you here? My wife was born and bred in Steeple Aston, as were her family of many generations, so we moved here to raise a family.

Where do you think of as 'home'? Wherever my family is – home is a state of mind as well as a place.

Potted history. Born in Sheffield, moved to Derbyshire, moved to Oxfordshire, stayed. Counted my blessings, options weighed. Moved up the ranks, got better paid. Now semi-retired, fortune made (last bit is an exaggeration just to make a rhyme!).

How do you see yourself? Continuing on a lively journey.

How do others see you? Annoying, but worth the effort.

Technology: friend or foe? Friend and foe.

What was the best thing about being a child? Summer holidays and Christmas

What is the best thing about being an adult? Summer holidays and Christmas.

What was your first job? Sweeping a factory floor.

What do you do for a living now? Semi-retired. I have my own business as an education consultant.

What is the best job you've ever done? Working for myself – you can give yourself a stiff talking to and then forget about it.

What is the worst job you've ever done? Picking out bad peas by hand on a conveyor belt on a twelve-hour night shift.

Tell us about any interesting hobbies you have. Writing poems and ditties.

What's your favourite piece of music? I have very eclectic tastes, but if I were on Desert Island Discs, then 'Running up that Hill' by Kate Bush would be on the playlist.

What are you reading at the moment? 'The Night Manager' by John le Carré.

What is your all-time favourite book? 'The Gormenghast Trilogy' by Mervyn Peake.

What's your favourite food? Roast dinner.

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

If you won the lottery, what's the first thing you would buy? It depends on how much I won! £3.62 has been my biggest win so far.

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? I would start off in the USA and work my way around the globe.

What do you do to relax? I am partial to doing nothing (a highly underrated art form), but reading has been my principal lifelong hobby and source of relaxation.

What's your favourite saying or piece of advice? Wait until the ink is dry.

If you were on a desert island, what would you miss most? Electricity.

What do you get grumpy/mad about? Thoughtless and narcissistic behaviour.

What makes you happiest in the world? Family occasions.

Tell us a surprising thing that you are really good at. Analysing people.

...and a surprising thing that you are really bad at. Small talk. I have to pre-programme myself.

...and something about you that most people don't know. I would love to go into outer space.

Tell us a good joke. How many psychiatrists does it take to change a light bulb? Just one, but only if the lightbulb really wants to change.



The ARTS Page



When you read this, the 'Concert for Ukraine' will have happened (Steeple Aston Church, 28th April). I want to thank all those who contributed, attended and helped, including wonderful contributions from Dr Radcliffe's School. It was a joy researching Ukrainian music and words and learning more about their cultural life. Amongst the highlights was this wonderful poem by Lina Kostenko.

Wings by Lina Kostenko

It's true – those who have wings
Do not need the ground
If there is no land, there will be sky.
If there is no field, there will be freedom.
If there is no couple, there will be clouds.
This is the truth of the birds.
What about the human? What about him?
He lives on the ground, and yet doesn't fly.
But he has wings! Yes, he has wings.
Those wings are not from fuzz and feathers,
but from truth and honour and trust.

Some have wings of fidelity in love,
Some from eternal aspirations.
Others fly with sincerity and work
And others with generous care.
There are wings of song or hope,
Wings of poetry and dreams.
It seems that the human doesn't fly,
But they have wings! They have wings!
about the human? What about him?
He lives on the ground, and yet doesn't fly.
But he has wings! Yes, he has wings

And this short piece by the Kyiv Youth Choir
<https://youtu.be/v0lk-22PXNQ>

Personal recommendations are often the best way of choosing from the plethora of Arts events in our area. I was given a glowing report of the Banbury Symphony Orchestra concert in Deddington in March. They have two more concerts coming up – Sunday 22nd May at 3.30pm in St Peter's Church, Hook Norton, and Saturday 9th July at 7.30pm in St Mary's, Banbury, with international guitarist Craig Ogden (who lives locally). **banburysymphony.com**

'Coronation Songs of Praise' will take place in Steeple Aston Church on 5th June at 6pm. The music will largely come from what was performed at the actual Coronation on 2nd June 1953. Not all of it – it was a marathon! I have a small connection. The choir was conducted by my mentor Sir William McKie and the orchestra by my conducting teacher Sir Adrian Boult. I'm putting a Jubilee Choir together, do let me know if you are interested in joining us.

From the Schubert Song sung at the Ukraine Concert

Du holde Kunst, in wieviel grauen Stunden,
Wo mich des Lebens wilder Kreis umstrickt,

Hast du mein Herz zu warmer Lieb' entzunden,
Hast mich in eine beßre Welt entrückt,
In eine beßre Welt entrückt!

Oft hat ein Seufzer, deiner Harf' entflossen,
Ein süßer, heiliger Akkord von dir,

Den Himmel beßrer Zeiten mir erschlossen,
Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir dafür,
Du holde Kunst, ich danke dir!

Best wishes.

O blessed art, how often in dark hours,
When the savage ring of life tightens round me,

Have you kindled warm love in my heart,
Have transported me to a better world!
Transported to a better world

Often a sigh has escaped from your harp,
A sweet, sacred harmony of yours

Has opened up the heavens to better times for me,
O blessed art, I thank you for that!
O blessed art, I thank you!

Nick and Heather
nicholascleobury@btinternet.com



The Gardening Spot

Don't cast a clout till May is out!

We have all heard the saying about May, but does it mean we keep our winter clothes to hand until the 31st of May or simply wait until the flowers on the May trees have disappeared? Whatever the answer, May can be a funny month when it comes to our unpredictable weather in this country, so keep an eye out for those late frosts and possibly edge on the side of caution. For me, May is the transitional month between spring and summer and it is the time of year when we ensure all is right in the garden for those balmy, hot sunny days where we can bring out the deckchairs and light the BBQ.

Harden off your bedding plants by leaving them outside during the day and returning them under cover at night. Do this for about seven days before planting in the garden. Prune penstemons back to the lowest pair of leaves and give them a feed with a slow-release fertiliser. You can give your lavender plants a trim now as that will encourage bushiness and make a tighter plant. The spring bulbs will by now be past their best, but don't be tempted to remove their foliage just yet – wait until it has died back and yellow. What will make all the difference for next year is some food such as blood, fish and bonemeal, applied now to build up the bulbs in readiness for 2023.

In the vegetable garden or allotment, remember to earth up your potatoes to encourage a greater crop and protect against that late frost. Net over the strawberries and raspberries to prevent the birds eating your crop. Sow runner beans directly into the soil around the end of the month or transplant those precious bean plants again towards the end of this month. Sow successional crops such as carrots, beetroot, and salads to provide you with a continuous supply of fresh salads throughout the summer. Thin out any hardy or annual seeds sown directly into the garden to the recommended spacing and water afterwards to settle the roots.

Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as honeysuckle or forsythia after flowering has finished. Give your evergreen hedges a trim whilst they are actively growing, but not if a frost is forecast. These hedges can then be trimmed again later in the year whilst they are still growing.

Carry on mowing the grass regularly and don't forget to trim the edges as that shows off your lawn to best effect.

In the greenhouse, hopefully as the month progresses, you can remove those plants that you have been protecting over the colder months and place them outside giving you room for a few crops such as tomatoes, cucumbers, or fast-growing salads. Tomatoes can still be planted in the greenhouse, but remember to water regularly, pinching out the side shoots and supporting the plants so that they in turn can support the crop that will develop very soon.

Most importantly, enjoy the garden no matter how large or small and make time to visit other gardens, be they large estates or private gardens that can be viewed via the National Garden Scheme.

Finally, for those of you, and there were a lot who commented on my article of last month, I now have a wonderful supply of sticks which I can supply at a very competitive price and later in the year I will be able to identify a source of 'Organic Logs'!

Thank you all for taking the time to read this. Happy gardening and I hope to see many of you as you discover the hidden gardens of Steeple Aston whilst visiting them on Sunday 29th May.

Richard Preston – long term gardener and supplier of STICKS!

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



The most recent Parish Council meeting started with a bang. Last month, our retiring District Councillor presented the Parish Council with a gavel and this month the chairman banged it down to start the meeting. It must have been an auspicious start to the meeting because the agenda was completed in record time and the washing I had put in just before the meeting was not finished when I returned.

The Parish Council is still short of one Councillor. There should be seven of them, but we only have six at present. The role is useful and the subjects interesting. I have been writing about the Parish Council for many years now and I have never been bored by the discussion. You are welcome to ring any of the Councillors or the Clerk to get the official description of the job. In addition, you can ask me for a light-hearted description of why I enjoy writing about Parish Council meetings (01869 347850) and why I would expect you to be interested.

The meeting always starts by going over the things outstanding from the previous meeting. The donation to the village of the orchard on Water Lane is going ahead and solicitors have been appointed to deal with the transfer. The Orchard Committee is keen to get started on the planting and tidying of the orchard, but are waiting till the land has been transferred. The walls on either side of the door into the Committee Room at the Village Hall are being mended and the box displaying the map of the village will be revarnished.

The Councillors have some topics which come up regularly at their meetings. Recently the most common of these has been whether they can find someone to clean the lavatory at the Play Area. It is not an attractive job so there are only two solutions. Pay enough to get someone, or accept that the Parish Council will have to go on using the current contractors. The Councillors rejected the

first solution initially, but then announced the salary was 'negotiable' and still did not get anyone. Instead, they have decided to accept that the contractors will be doing the cleaning from now on; at least that means they don't have to discuss it anymore.

We were told that the Hatch End development has been refused. However, the existing buildings have been refurbished and some desirable employment opportunities have been retained. Village worries about the development were related to the extra traffic likely to be generated, especially in the building phase, and the safety worries from a lack of a pavement in front of the development. The traffic and safety case were made on our behalf by our District Councillor, Mike Kerford-Byrnes – the donor of the gavel mentioned above. There was an interesting discussion of the changing role of Oxfordshire's Highways Department. They used to monitor the safety and suitability of the roads in all developments, but now it seems as if this is a thing of the past. There was anecdotal evidence that other Parish Councils had noticed the same thing. Anyway, when the Hatch End appeal was heard the Cherwell Councillors rejected the advice they had been given by Highways and overruled their official's comments and turned down the application.

One of our Councillors had put in a Freedom of Information Request to Highways asking what information they held on the transport implications of the Hatch End proposals to defend their assessment of no safety implications for the school from the proposed development. The Councillor was told Highways had none. This is a bit startling because Highways also claimed to have assessed the scheme and found nothing to object to. Did they assess it by holding a finger to the wind? Or even two fingers? Please note that this is my interpretation and the Councillors were not that explicit.

Parish Council Meeting Notes



The Dr Radcliffe Trust is going to resurface the lower car park by Robinsons Close which should have the effect of enabling more cars to be parked there. The Parish Council have agreed to keep the lower car park area tidy and cut the hedges around it which should have the effect of making all the potential space into useable space.

Then we got to the highlight of the meeting. The Councillors decided to spend £50 on a loose-leaf folder, which was described as a 'book of condolences', for anyone who wishes to leave a message when the Queen dies. Two households have already offered the Council a folder for free, but the Councillors, in their wisdom (or prejudice) have decided that the messages on A4 loose pages should be stored in a £50 folder. Luckily, the Councillor making the purchase had more sense and told me after the meeting he had only spent £25. There was a discussion of what would happen to the folder afterwards. Some thought it would go into the village archive and others thought it would be sent to some palace or other. I was told after the meeting that "after the State Funeral the Council can write to the Private Secretary, Buckingham Palace, to inform that there is a book of condolences held in the Council archive". If the Council is prepared to throw away £25, or possibly £50, on something which is totally unnecessary perhaps they would like to reconsider all their spending priorities in a similarly cavalier fashion.

One of the houses closest to the Eyecatcher, Wincote, is going to be substantially developed. To get at the back of the building the workers need to go on the allotments. All sides seem to be benefitting, the owners of Wincote, the diocese which owns the land and the allotment holders who need a new mower.

The committee organising the Platinum Jubilee celebrations seem to be doing a fantastic job. They have managed to get a grant of £3,000 from the Arts Council and the Parish Council has been given £500 via Cherwell District Council. The details of what they are doing are elsewhere in this edition of SAL. The net result is that there should be bunting for every house in the village. On the Saturday of the Jubilee weekend there will be 'Bake at the Gate' – an opportunity to have a stall by our gates selling, in my case, meringues. The Sunday of the Jubilee weekend, which is also Whitsunday, will see the resurrection of the Whit Races at Robinsons Close.

The meeting closed with the Parish Council discussing the contribution of Mike Kerford-Byrnes and an appreciation of his huge commitment to his role as our District Councillor. Thank you, Mike, for everything.

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

Thank You

At the time of writing there are two Ukrainian families in Steeple Aston. The family in my house have had friendship, food and limitless other help from many of you. A huge **Thank You** from us all – we have been overwhelmed by your generosity.

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Steeple Aston Garden Club



Following a successful meeting on the 5th April we now start our programme of summer visits to local gardens that might not normally be open to the general public.

Our first visit is to Chivel Farm at Heythrop (OX7 5TR) on Thursday 26th May at 6pm, where we will be able to view the magnificent gardens of Mr. and Mrs. Sword. The entrance cost is £8.75 to include refreshments. If you plan to go, please let either Richard (340512) or Chris (347192) know in advance simply for catering purposes and possible car sharing.

For our June outing we are going to visit Rousham Gardens, the world-renowned gardens right on our doorstep. Keep the date of Thursday 16th June free to join us for a look around the gardens followed by drinks and nibbles. Cost for this is £10 per head inclusive.

On Monday 25th July we are travelling to Broughton Grange to view these magnificent gardens. We meet at Broughton Grange at 2pm and the inclusive cost for this visit is £12 per person (subsidised). Non-members are welcome, but we will have to charge £17.

A full programme of events will be available soon, including a Christmas dinner at Middle Aston House on the 14th December.

To join this well-established village organisation will cost just £10 per year for individuals or £15 for a family. This in turn will reward you with 10% discount at Applegarth Nurseries at Chipping Norton and the same for garden products at Yarnton Home and Garden.

For further information call Chris on 347192 or Richard on 340512.

Steeple Aston Open Gardens

Part of the National Garden Scheme

Sunday 29th May, 2pm to 6pm

Entrance fee £7 (admits to all seven gardens)

Seven gardens are opening their gates for you to visit on the 29th May and in doing so, raising money for such worthwhile charities as Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie and Carers Trust.

For the first time, The Old Post Office (John and Karen Adriaanse) is opening and joining them as part of the NGS, The Church Allotments. Other gardens open are Kralingen (Mr and Mrs Nicholson), Primrose Garden, (Richard and Daphne Preston), Longbyre (Vaughan and Lorraine Billings), The Pound House (Ray and Chris Clarke) and Combe Pyne (Chris and Sally Cooper).

All you need to do is visit any one of the gardens listed and pay your £7. No charge for children. At that point you will be given a ticket which enables you to enter any of the remaining gardens at no further charge. To make the day even more enjoyable, why not call in at the village hall where homemade teas will be available supporting the charities of the NGS and the Village Hall.

Thank you in advance for your support. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give Richard a call on 340512.

Poetry Corner



It's time for tea

I thought it was time that I gave you a mention
you never get into the news
a thing I admire, a right good invention
a cure when you're down with the blues

now medical men they don't give you much credit
they've not got the measure of thee
but I count my blessings each time that I sit
with a biscuit and hot mug of tea

a miracle really a leaf and hot water
there's nothing much else that you need
the tea is the brick and the biscuit's the mortar
when you need your spirits to feed

it builds up your fortitude, gives you resolve
constructing a wall round your feeling
there isn't a problem that tea cannot solve
when vexed it will offer some healing

so let's lift our mug up and fill it with tea
(the biscuit's a matter of choice)
you don't turn to coffee, I think you'll agree,
when sadness has taken your voice

Peter Wild

Escaping the present

We're seeking some frivolity, some silliness, some froth
As an antidote to the modern world and all its rage and wrath
It's time to leave the present, to spend an hour in a costume drama
To escape depressing documentaries, Newsnight, Panorama.

When a lady's main concern was having a waist of 18 inches
Achieved by firmly lacing up the whalebone till it pinches
In the boudoir a maid helps madame put on her bustle
Downstairs the doorbell rings and the butler starts to buttle.

Never mind the heroine can't breathe inside that brutal corset
She's got an invitation to dine with Lady Dorset
Who cares that she'll be poisoned by the arsenic in her wig
She's hoping that Lord Bridgerton will ask her for a jig.

Tales of romance and intrigue among the landed gentry
Where those of independent means lived a life of plenty
Where the dressers, maids and valets knew all there was to know
About affairs above the stairs and also those below.

Where women would retire and leave the men to pass the port
To discuss matters of importance or what's happening at court
Where the wealthy have a box at the opera or the ballet
And complain how difficult it is to find a decent valet.

Where staircases and titles and houses are all grand
And heroes own a country pile with many miles of land
Where bodices are ripped and proposals are indecent
Where we can happily forget anything more recent.

Give us Poldark, give us Bridgerton, give us The Gilded Age
Where cotillions and waltzes dance right off the page.
Give us boudoirs, powder rooms, bedchambers and bordellos
Give us another story from the pen of Julian Fellowes.
Let's leave depressing Newsnight, documentaries, Panorama
And while away an hour in the world of a costume drama.

Cathy Lawday

A long-awaited musical feast

After two years' absence, Steeple Aston Choral Society (SACS) was overjoyed to be back in the wonderful acoustic of the village church for its spring concert – *An Evening with Franz Joseph Haydn*.

The long-awaited musical feast began with a few smaller courses, all of which reflected Haydn's time living in this country. Organist Jon Kingston played two sparkling *Pieces for a Musical Clock*, an 18th century luxury item, and then contralto Fran Jellard sang the melancholic *My Mother Bids Me Bind My Hair*. This song was the number one hit of its time and Jane Austen had a copy.

From the same fashionable song collection tenor Jeffrey Stewart celebrated the importance of a topmast sailor with the stirring *Sailor's Song*. Bass-baritone Christopher Foster sang a popular aria from *The Seasons*, commonly called *The Whistling Ploughman*, as the singer has to whistle another Haydn melody, as well as sing.

Then Nicholas Cleobury gave a very illuminating and entertaining introduction to the main work – Haydn's 'Nelson' Mass, or to give its correct title, *Mass for Troubled Times* – which was a prescient SACS choice back in 2018, when no one knew what the next two years would bring. By 1789 Napoleon had won four major battles against the Austrians, but as the Mass had its first performance news came of Lord Nelson's victory at the Battle of the Nile and it was later nicknamed 'Nelson'.



The soloists later praised the choir for their enthusiasm in singing this exuberant work and it certainly sounded like that, as the singers attacked the energetic fugues and more meditative movements, with the soloists woven into the intricate musical texture. Soprano Angela Kazimierczuk had some spectacular musical 'fireworks', which she performed with aplomb. The final movement, *Dona nobis pacem*, is appropriately not the usual quiet ending, but a vivacious and triumphant conclusion to this incredible work.

SACS would like to thank all their faithful supporters – those in the audience, our five soloists, Nicholas and Heather Cleobury, conductor Paul Badley, accompanist Paul Herrington (sadly missing on the night due to you-know-what) and photographer Nigel Francis – for an exhilarating evening.

For your diary:

Sunday 19 June – SACS *Midsummer Medleys* Party Concert – 7pm in the Village Hall (tables available from 6.30pm). Tickets – £10 (children under 16 free). Bring your friends and enjoy an evening of folk songs, medleys from the musicals and an audience sing-a-long, with some strawberries and a glass of wine. If you would like to sing with SACS in this concert, please contact Margaret Bulleyment – jbulleyment@waitrose.com – asap. Rehearsals are Mondays 7.45 to 9.45pm in the Village Hall.

Saturday 7 May – Steeple Aston Young Musicians' Evening (SAYME) – 7pm in the Village Hall. Paul Herrington (see above) is organising an evening for young instrumentalists of all abilities.

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???? Mind Games

Word Pairs Puzzle

from Cathy Lawday

Find a word to fill each gap. The word must complete both phrases
e.g. anti distancing = anti social / social distancing

1. funny class
2. tooth tale
3. cd com
4. price crimes
5. cushion -up
6. top monkeys
7. social mogul
8. pitch storm
9. box politics
10. civil lift

Answers:
1. funny business / business class; 2. tooth fairy / fairy tale; 3. CD rom / rom com; 4. price war / war crimes; 5. cushion cover / cover-up; 6. top brass / brass monkeys; 7. social media / media mogul; 8. pitch perfect / perfect storm; 9. box office / office politics; 10. civil service / service lift

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Spring Show attracts record number of visitors

After an absence of three years (the last Spring Show was in 2019 if you can remember that far back), we were able to bring the joy of spring and all things bright and cheerful back to Steeple Aston.



Over 300 exhibits adorned the tables in the Village Hall on Sunday 20th March, which is well above the average for this show. Record numbers came along during the afternoon to view the abundance of spring blooms, amazing cookery, handicraft, photography and the superb children's exhibits.

A very large and generous raffle, along with a competition and a stall for Sustainable Steeple helped the day along, not forgetting the fabulous, as ever, teas served in the committee room.

Just to mention a massive thanks to the committee of the Horticultural Society who work tirelessly to make this event happen. One of the biggest thanks must go to the wonderful people who entered something – this is what enables the show to take place. It was so encouraging to see so many new names at this show and we hope to see you all at the Annual Show that will be with us again on August Bank Holiday Monday (29th August) celebrating its 130th appearance.

Richard Preston, Chair of the Horticultural Society



Pictured here is Daphne Preston (right), winner of the Mead Trophy for most points in show, with Dorothy Clifton (left). Also shown is Daphne's winning floral art arrangement on the subject 'Yellow'.

STEEPLE ASTON SPRING SHOW RESULTS – 2022

Duncan Cup	Daphne Preston	WI Cup	Victoria Clifton, Julia Whybrew
Flower Club	Daphne Preston	Handicraft Cup	Janet Coley
Bedding Family Trophy	James Walker	Mead Vase	Daphne Preston
Under 5s	Edward Austin	8 – 11 years	James Walker
5 to 7yrs	OliviaClarke.OtilieMaClean	12 to 15 years	Ollie Martin
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
Tulips in container	Mary White	Trish Vickers	Roderick Nicholson
Long Trumpet Daffodils	Roderick Nicholson		
Short Trumpet Daffodils	John Coley	Roderick Nicholson	
Multi headed daffodils	John Coley		
Miniature Daffodils	Trish Vickers	Daphne Preston	John Coley
Hyacinths in a bowl	Daphne Preston	Roderick Nicholson	Trish Vickers
Other pot grown bulb	Roderick Nicholson	Trish Vickers	
Container of spring flowers	Trish Vickers	Daphne Preston	Roderick Nicholson
Cactus or succulent	Daphne Preston	James Marsden	Julie Smith
Pot Plant – flowering	Mary White	Daphne Preston	
Pot Plant – foliage	Julie Smith	John Coley	Daphne Preston
Vase of cut garden blooms	Daphne Preston	Trish Vickers	Mary White
Buds or Blossom	Daphne Preston	Trish Vickers	Roderick Nicholson
5 Long Trumpet Daffodils – cut	Julie Smith	John Coley	Daphne Preston
5 Short Trumpet Daffodils – Cut	Daphne Preston	John Coley	Mary White
5 miniature Daffodils	John Coley	Daphne Preston	Trish Vickers
5 stems of multi-headed daffodils	Mary White		
3 stems of rhubarb	Helen Wright	Rebecca Lewin	Stephen Latchford
Scented spring flowers	Mary White	Daphne Preston	Victoria Clifton
Single cut Daffodil	Andrew Marsden	Claire Hall	Daphne Preston
Savoury flan	Victoria Clifton	Joyce Bedding	Julia Whybrew
Plaited loaf	Alice Monroe	Ollie Martin	John Coley
3 Sausage rolls	Ollie Martin	Julia Whybrew	Victoria Clifton
A Lemon tart	Daphne Preston	Victoria Sandwich	Claire Hall
3 Egg Victoria sandwich	Joyce Bedding	Daphne Preston	Rebecca Lewin
3 Pieces of flapjack	Victoria Clifton	Zoe Shayler	Ollie Martin
Banana Bread	Julia Whybrew	Hattie Wright	Clare Walker
5 Chocolate truffles	Clare Walker	Hattie Wright	Julia Whybrew
Seville Marmalade	John Coley	Andrew Marsden	E. Longinotti
Fruit curd	Antonia MaClean	Julia Whybrew	Victoria Clifton
3 Eggs	Clare Walker		
Homemade Lemonade	John Coley	Dan Wright	Victoria Clifton
Homemade Alcoholic drink	Dan Wright	Julia Whybrew	Diana Gardner
A miniature arrangement	Rebecca Lewin	Charlotte Clarke	Trish Vickers
Flower arrang't – A country	Daphne Preston	Rebecca Lewin	
Flower arrangement – Foliage	Daphne Preston	Charlotte Clarke	Rebecca Lewin
Flower arrangement – Yellow	Daphne Preston	Rebecca Lewin	
Edible jewellery	Rebecca Lewin	Janet Coley	
Twiddle Muff	Pamela Knowles	Helen Lewin	
Limerick	Susannah Cohen	Diana Gardner	Andrew Marsden
Painting or drawing	Susannah Cohen	Janet Coley	Sue King
Any other handicraft	Janet Coley	Pamela Knowles	Rebecca Lewin
Congratulations card	Trish Vickers	Pamela Knowles	Claire Hall
Photo – Steeple Aston selfie	Nigel Francis	Ollie Martin	Rebecca Lewin
Photo – Patterns in nature	Janet Coley	Carole Neville	Ben Wade Martin
Photo – A pet	Ollie Martin	Helen Wright	Nigel Francis
Photo – Extreme weather (b & w)	Janet Coley	Ben Wade Martin	Moreland
Under 5s – Paperplate flower	Jacob Lewin	Edward Austin	
Painting or drawing of an Easter egg	Edward Austin	Maximillion Austin	Milo Knowles
-Decorated biscuit	Milo Knowles	Jacob Lewin	
Age 5-7 – Decorated egg	Olivia Clarke	Seren Grainger	Otilie MaClean
Decorated mini rolls	Otilie MaClean	Megan Walker	Olivia Clarke
- Painting or drawing	Otilie MaClean	James Monroe	Isobel Coysh
Age 8 – 11- Dreamcatcher	Woody Wright	Hattie Wright	James Walker
- Painting or drawing	James Walker	Nancy Alcraft	Darcey Yates
-Pizza	James Walker	Darcey Yates	Hattie Wright
Age 12- 15 - Decorated cake	Zoe Shayler	Ollie Martin	
An upcycled item	Ollie Martin	Jenny Marsden	
A photo for SAL cover	Ben Wade Martin	Ollie Martin	Charlie Wright

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Looking after swifts in Steeple Aston

There are nearly 60% fewer swifts in Britain than 25 years ago. They spend almost all their lives on the wing and nest out of sight under eaves, gutters or tiles. On warm evenings you may hear them as they scream over roof tops in the village near where they are nesting. They can be confused with house martins and swallows, but there are several differences. One is that you won't see swifts perched on telephone wires or aerials. They only land when they are nesting. Another difference is that house martins and swallows make nests out of mud which can easily be seen. House martins attach them under eaves. Swallows lodge them on a beam or ledge inside a barn or other outbuilding, but with swifts the only way to find where they are nesting is to spot them disappearing into their nest hole.

However, all three birds depend on insects for food and the fact that there are now so many fewer insects is likely to be contributing to the decrease in numbers of swifts and house martins in particular.

In the case of swifts though, there is another reason for the decline. This is that their nest sites are so easily lost when buildings need repairs or maintenance. Even quite insignificant changes can prevent a swift getting access to its nest site, one which it may have used for many years. It is mainly this loss of nest places which the Cherwell Swifts project has been trying to tackle, firstly by finding and recording their nest places so that we can advise about swift-friendly building work, and secondly by promoting the provision of alternative nest places. These can be nest boxes attached to the outside of buildings or nesting bricks which are designed specifically for Swifts and can be neatly integrated into new buildings or renovated ones.

Steeple Aston still has nesting swifts. There are a few pairs on South Side and several in The Crescent. There may be more still to find. Meantime we are hoping that by putting up nest boxes we will encourage more.

There is one particular way people can help look after these charismatic birds. If you know or think you know of a place where swifts are nesting, please email Elen Wade-Martins and let her know. Her email address is elenwm@yahoo.co.uk

Elen will collect the information and send it to the Cherwell Swifts Conservation Project so that it is up to date with the Steeple Aston swift population. She can also put you in touch with the project if you are interested in learning more about how you might be able to help.

Chris Mason
Cherwell Swifts



*Swifts occupied these nest bricks in Stonesfield.
Photo: Paul Wren*



*Swift using a nest box in Adderbury.
Photo: Paul Wren.*

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It has been a few months since we have been meeting at The Adderbury Institute, so it was great to hold an AGM that wasn't on Zoom. The usual formalities were observed and the Committee were voted in for another year.

It is always great to welcome visitors who might want to become members, so here are some of the things we get up to. We hold a presentation evening on the first Wednesday of the month where we have a guest speaker. During the evening there is also a time to look at members' images submitted to fit a topic title; next month is 'Show an emotion'. Our AGM gave us an opportunity to show our three favourite images from the last year. The variety of shots was impressive and it was encouraging to see members submitting pictures that were not necessary their usual style, but they all had a special meaning.

As a society we also venture out on photoshoots; in the last year we have visited bluebell woods, Broughton Castle and the National Memorial Arboretum, to name but a few. We are looking forward to a future visit to Slimbridge Wetland Centre.

Membership also includes workshop evenings that have included technical sessions on depth-of-field, macro focus stacking and a session on lighting with a model. The Society aims to add to skills and improve techniques in a fun and non-competitive atmosphere.

So, all you budding or established photographers, why not join us one month and see if it might be a hobby you could develop (pun intended). You don't need lots of expensive equipment, phones these days take splendid images.

Our next speaker will be Steve Williams about photographing sport on Wednesday 4th May at 7.30pm at The Adderbury Institute. Do check our website for more details.

Anne Hunsley
www.addphoto.co.uk



Fritillary – a dark purple (and sometimes white) wildflower, also known as the 'Snake's head'. It is the county flower of Oxfordshire.

Photo by Colin Lamb.

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THE VALENTINE CLUB

Where do I start reporting, not only what we have done during the past month as a club, but what is coming up over the next few weeks? At the very end of March, we took 47 members to Aerospace at Filton, near Bristol, to view the numerous aircraft-related exhibits, not least the iconic Concorde.

Our club meeting on 12th April brought back memories of the music many of us enjoyed whilst watching such programmes as 'Top of the Pops' on the television way back in the day when you had to battle with 'horizontal or vertical hold' to see what was going on. Anyone under the age of 40 will probably not have a clue what I am talking about! Jeff Evans gave us a very comprehensive and informative talk on the history of 'Pop on the box'.

Then, for the first time ever as a club, 43 members decided to get out bucket and spades and travel as a group to the seaside, or to be more precise, Norton Grange on The Isle of Wight. I understand 'border patrol' had been warned, but more about that next month.

For our meeting on 17th May we will welcome back one of our favourite entertainers, Lee Wilkinson. Then later in the month we are off to enjoy a day of rail travel by steam, journeying from Cheltenham to Broadway, followed by food and possibly some shopping.

Finally, but of great significance, not only is it our Queen's Platinum Jubilee this year, but it is the 70th anniversary of The Valentine Club. According to records, as scarce as they are, the club was formed in 1952, almost certainly on the 14th February, hence the name. We have decided to mark the day and celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee with a tea party for members in the village hall on the 3rd June. Afternoon tea was probably how the club first started, celebrating the achievement of reaching a senior age and recovering from World War II. Times have changed (or have they?), but the club is still here and us seniors are still active and enjoying life to the full.

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

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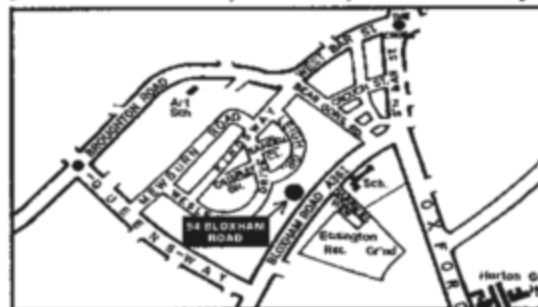
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Village Hall News



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 Schemes) Open Gardens 2-6pm. Teas in Village Hall. The Church allotments plus six gardens open, admission £7 to all gardens.

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. Cakes can be brought to the hall after 10am on the Sunday morning or dropped off to me before the event.

Please note our letting agent is Mrs. Katie Rushworth

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Barbara Brewer – chair

1st Deddington Guides *Report*



It's been a busy spring term. Meeting together whilst taking all precautions to protect everyone from Covid, we've been outside whenever possible. In February we held a promise ceremony for 11 guides and four Young Leaders out of doors in the dark, by torchlight, in a temperature of two degrees with families present. That will be one to remember!!

Our Patrols have been working so well together on their chosen activities. We've learnt many new skills to enable the guides to feel confident in helping in any emergency.

With the help from our Young Leaders we celebrated 'World Thinking Day' on 22 February with some international-themed activities. Groups of guides have taken on the challenge of the climbing wall, some went to Cadbury's World. On the theme of food, pancakes on Shrove Tuesday and decorating cream crackers before eating them were popular events.

We were very proud of our Guides at the Mothering Sunday service – being in the colour party, taking the collection and helping to distribute gifts to all the mothers.

More food news. We began our fire lighting practices by toasting marshmallows in preparation for our first cookout of the summer! We're all looking forward to that.

To round off the term we held our quiz around the village and an Easter egg challenge. We held a sale of cakes and books, plus a raffle, and in one hour raised £150 to send to the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to further their work on the Polish border helping youngsters in the Ukraine. So well done Guides who demonstrated team work, customer service skills and a sense of responsibility and caring for others to helping to raise this money. Thank you too for your support.

We've had great fun this term and are looking forward to being out of doors for every meeting we can next term. And really hoping that we can camp again!

Maggie Rampley 07957 600755 and Marian Trinder

Bee Buzz



Preserving locally adapted species

Has it ever struck you how lifeforms vary across the country? We all know that certain plants and animals only thrive in marshes, by the sea shore, etc. But there are plant and animal *landraces* all across the kingdom, the same species adapted to different localised microclimates. After all, the growing season in Scotland is two months shorter than in Kent and the Cotswold hills don't lend themselves to heavily mechanised megafields like the plains of East Anglia.

These regional landraces are actually surprisingly modern. At the peak of the last ice age, just 23,000 years ago, Oxfordshire was covered with ice. As it melted it was replaced with tundra, then forest (dominated by linden, i.e. lime trees – still a key insect food source) and a variety of animals moved back in because we were joined to Europe by a land bridge, part of Doggerland, until sea levels rose 7,000 to 8,000 years ago. Many creatures reproduce once a year so there has been plenty of time for natural selection to create distinct landraces.

Tiny things, like insects, need old growth forests to hide in. Most British trees were cut down to supply lumber for WWI trenches and replaced with plantations which are harvested before cavities can form. Even so, Britain actually has the majority of Europe's veteran trees and truly ancient woods on private estates. Many of these are near us.

Oxfordshire has unusually varied habitats due to its complex geology, but also because it has an unusual concentration of really old trees and crumbly old houses. These provide many cavities for wildlife and have acted like time capsules, preserving ancient lineages of creatures, fungi and so on. Whereas in parts of Europe, many old houses were destroyed in WWII.

Oxfordshire's nooks and crannies have allowed our local honeybee landrace to persist, despite in recent years being flooded by highly marketed, cheap honeybee imports which really aren't suited to our climate and which only survive because beekeepers keep medicating them. But Brexit, like the collapse of the Doggerland land bridge, has cut us off from such European imports which creates an opportunity to promote and preserve our native bees.

So where am I going with this? Well, a number of Oxfordshire beekeepers are propagating tough 'survivor' strains of the local honeybees and it appears that our local landrace is particularly pest resistant (in this climate). So we are interested in collecting local swarms, which is how bee colonies reproduce. Swarms in this area usually occur from May to July and there are several wild colonies in the village which swarm most years, for example in the church tower. As long as you do not interfere with them, swarming bees are not dangerous as they are focused only on protecting their queen from harm and finding a new home.

It is important to get to swarms quickly as they sometimes fly off in an hour or less and once they enter a chosen home like a chimney or hole in a wall they are pretty much impossible to collect. So should you see a swarm of honeybees, whether in flight as a big cloud or hanging resting as a cluster, please ring me on **01869 340665** and I will try to collect them and match them to a suitable home (kind of a matchmaking service).

Bee Keeper

On the first Saturday in April a group of WI members enjoyed a morning at the Arty Crafty Place in Middle Aston. The art of block printing was demonstrated to us and then we each printed designs for ourselves – on tote bags, scarves, tea towels, greeting cards and gift tags. In addition, we all worked on a joint project and printed a tablecloth for use on the tea and coffee table at our monthly meetings (see photo). Everyone enjoyed the occasion and several people said they would like to go to the studio again. Our thanks to Holly for a pleasant and productive morning.



This month our members responded when our former Secretary, Esther Brown, asked for help in furnishing and equipping four bungalows in Heyford Park which were being made into homes for Ukrainian refugee families, and later when member Julia Whybrew welcomed a family into her home in Steeple Aston. Thank you to all those who donated. We wish these families well and hope they can find somewhere to call home – either here or back in Ukraine once the brutal conflict is over.

On 12th April we had our AGM. There were reports from the Treasurer, Secretary and President and our rep from the Oxford Federation came along to oversee the election of a committee for the coming year. The existing committee was voted in again, the only change was that Julie Smith has decided to step down. A relatively new WI member, Freya Alden, is a very welcome addition to the team.

I was pleased to make two unexpected announcements in my report: first that Steeple Aston WI achieved 2nd place in the Oxford recruitment competition by increasing our membership from 28 to 42 members in the past year; second that we have been awarded a bursary of £150. These have been given by the National WI to 150 branches to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee. It is to be spent on something educational and we plan to use it to pay for our members to have a private tour and talk at the Ashmolean in September.

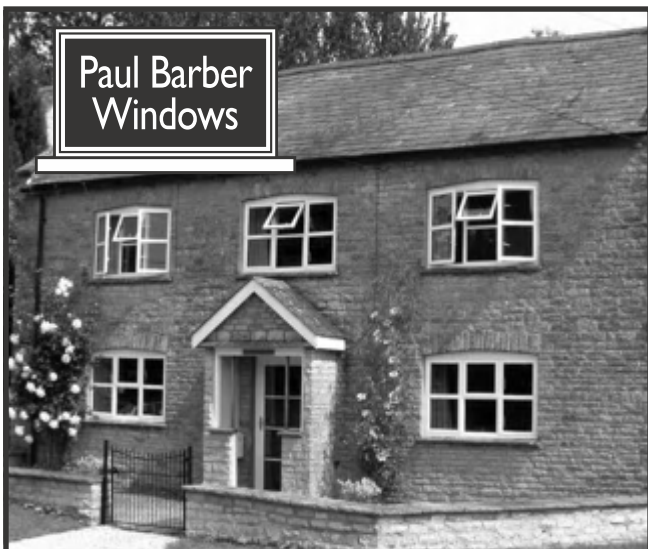
After AGM business was complete, Martyn Harrison spoke about British musicals over the last 40 years and sang songs from various shows, from the record-breaking 'Les Mis' which has been running longer than any other musical anywhere, to recent shows based on pop hits, such as 'Mamma Mia'. His anecdotes and his wonderful singing voice made for an entertaining evening.

We are looking forward to the year ahead. We have planned a varied programme of events: talks on Oxford, on Princess Margaret, caffeine, wildlife photography, spying in WWII, supplying props, costumes and animals to film crews, a craft workshop, a summer garden party, a summer outing, a Christmas meal, a tour of the Ashmolean, bowls, walking netball, possibly croquet, as well as members' social evenings. We will also be taking part in the village Platinum Jubilee celebrations and are organising a competition for children and adults to design and make a crown. More details nearer the time.

If you would like to become a WI member and join in these events, contact me on 347209 or cathy@lawdaymacandrew.co.uk

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Moving On...

This is my penultimate column in these pages. I'm just back from a long sabbatical to announce that in June I will be departing the Benefice. It has been an enormous privilege to be rector of Steeple Aston with North Aston and Tackley for the last nine years and I will of course carry with me lots of very happy memories as I take my leave and move into Oxford.

The special joy of a role like this in a community like ours is that I am not only the pastor of the wonderful faithful people who attend worship each week; I'm rector of the whole village – of the whole benefice. I get to know lots of people who value the church for its place in the community and who have celebrated and mourned and marked all sorts of things in our buildings. Faith comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes and I believe in a God who loves people – all people: those who are devoted to the community of faith and those who are not; those who pray often and those who only ask for prayer when life is tough or when they have something that particularly gives them cause for thanks; those who live by forgiveness and those who neither forget nor forgive; people filled with sorrow and with joy. God loves us all, and the privilege of my job is often simply to stand and watch that love happen.

The truly wonderful thing about God's love is that it is for everyone. Youngest to oldest. Saints and sinners. Church buildings like ours are supposed to be a symbol of this – here for everyone too. Open each day, available whenever, offering opportunity and time and space for any and everyone to quietly come before God as hundreds and thousands have done across the years before us.

Every rector also knows that nothing happens without an army of willing volunteers, led by the churchwardens, all of whom deserve more thanks than can ever be properly given. From Sunday services to church fetes and everything in between – the rector is often the undeserving face at the front getting the credit, but there are countless others who have actually done the hard work. So – thank you. To everyone. Thank you.

And every rector knows that he (so far, here, only 'he', but who knows – hopefully 'she' as well before we see very many more rectors pass through) is just one more person in a long line of those who have gone before, seeking to serve, to help and to do a bit of godly good while in situ. Entertainers, ascetics, scoundrels and scholars – we rectors are just like everyone else: people occasionally overcome by the kindness of God, seeking to share something of that gift.

I stood and watched the school give their Easter service and as I listened to them sing, I realised it was the last time I would do that. It was a bit of a moment for me. I'm beginning to pile up 'last times' now. So for all my many mistakes I ask your forgiveness – and for everything else, but principally, for having had this time here in this place with you, I thank God with all my heart.

And I'm not going far, though life as chaplain of Worcester College may indeed seem like a different world...

We will all have a terrific time celebrating Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee together at the start of June. My final service is the week after and everyone is invited to church at 11am on 12th June if you'd like to mark that occasion too.

Revd Marcus Green steeplerector@hotmail.co.uk

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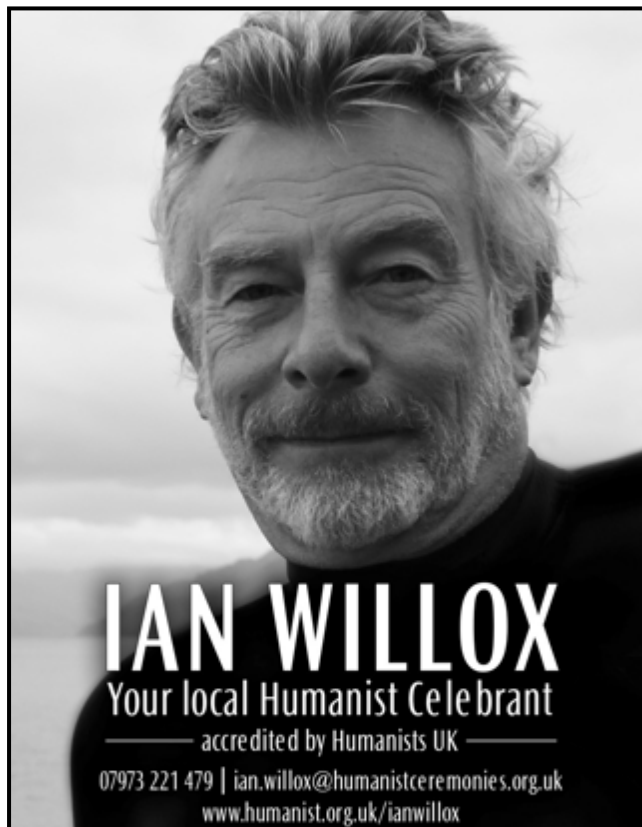
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	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley
Sunday 1st May	9.30am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Rev'd Marcus Green	11am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Rev'd Marcus Green	5.30pm Evensong Rev'd Marcus Green
Sunday 8th May	9.30am Family Service Rev'd Marcus Green	11am Family Service Rev'd Marcus Green	5.30pm Holy Communion Rev'd Marcus Green
Sunday 15th May	10.30am United Benefice Holy Communion Rev'd Marcus Green		
Sunday 22nd May	9.30am Morning Prayer with baptism Rev'd Marcus Green	11am Holy Communion Rev'd Marcus Green	5.30pm Informal Service Rev'd Marcus Green
Sunday 29th May	9.30am Morning Prayer Richard Bailey	11am Morning Prayer Rev'd Marcus Green	9.30am Family Communion Rev'd Marcus Green
Sunday 5th June Pentecost Jubilee Weekend	9.30am Holy Communion <i>Book of Common Prayer</i> Rev'd Marcus Green	6pm Coronation Songs of Praise Rev'd Marcus Green	11am Jubilee Celebration Service Rev'd Marcus Green
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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 Bullement (347346)

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

Rubbish bin collection day is Thursday

May 2022

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



June 2022

2nd Blue and Brown
 9th Green
 16th Blue and Brown
 23rd Green
 30th Blue and Brown

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

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 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.

May 2022			
Wednesday 4th	AD&D Photo Society. Steve Williams: Sport (p27)	Adderbury Institute	7.30pm
Monday 9th	AGM Village Hall Management Committee (p33)	VH Committee Room	8pm
Tuesday 10th	WI. 'The Oxford of Morse, Lewis and Endeavour' (p35)	Village Hall	7pm
Sunday 15th	SAL June 2022 copy and advert deadline		
Monday 16th	Parish Council meeting	Sports & Rec	7.30pm
Tuesday 17th	Valentine Club. Lee Wilkinson (p31)	Village Hall	2.30pm
21st to 29th	Oxfordshire Art Weeks (see advert on page 5)	Steeple Aston	11am to 6pm
Wednesday 25th	Valentine Club. Steam train journey (p31)		
Wednesday 25th	WI. Pub lunch (time and venue tbc)		
Saturday 28th	Farmers' Market (page 28)	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Sunday 29th	NGS Open Gardens. Teas in Village Hall. (p17)		2.00 to 6.00pm
June 2022			
Thursday 2nd	'Coronation Songs of Praise' (p12)	Steeple Aston Church	6pm
Friday 3rd	Valentine Club. Afternoon tea (p31)	Village Hall	2.30pm
Saturday 4 th and Sunday 5 th	WI. Design/Make a crown competition (p35)	tbc	tbc
Tuesday 14th	WI. 'Princess Margaret – a controversial life' (p35)	Village Hall	7pm
Wednesday 15th	SAL July 2022 copy and advert deadline		
Sunday 19th	SACS Midsummer Medleys Party Concert	Village Hall	7pm
Wednesday 29th	WI. Trip to Kelmscott Manor and Aston Pottery (p35)	Meet at Village Hall	11.30am

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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