

Steeple Aston *Life*

December 2022 Issue No. 592



- Steeple Aston Apple Juice • Thermal Camera Imaging • Visit to Adlestrop •
- Letter from Westminster • Walks around Steeple Aston • Christmas Crossword •

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Cover: 'The Eyecatcher' in the snow. Photo by Nigel Francis

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

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

COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline is the 14th of the
previous month.

This means the copy deadline for the
January 2023 issue is 14th December.

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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previous month.

ADVERTISING RATES

1/4 page - £8

1/3 page - £11

1/2 page - £15

Full page (village events only) - £15

Steeple Aston Directory

Age UK		Richard Preston	340512
Allotments (Church)	SACAA Clerk	Nigel Grugeon	sacaaclerk@btinternet.com
Angling Club		Antony Morley	tonyriver_83@hotmail.com
Archive (SAVA)	Chairman	Martin Lipson	347046
Badminton (Tuesday mornings)		Barbara Brewer	340423
Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Alison Moran	347033
Beekeepers (Swarm collection, advice)		Paul Honigmann	340665
Bell ringers		Graham & Dorothy Clifton	347273
Hand-bell ringers		Sally Cooper	347173
Brownies		Fiona McLoone	340132
Catholic Church -			
St Teresa's (Charlbury)		Father Tony Joyce	01608 642703
Cherwell District Council	Bodicote House		01295 227001
Choral Society	Chair	Ann Livings	233518
Church of England (St Peter & St Paul)	Rector		
	Churchwardens	Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton	340099 , 347273
Methodist Church – Tackley		Rev Paul Carter	01865 243216
	Steward	Tim Bailey	01869 331516
Councillors - Cherwell District Council		Cllr Eddie Reeves	07445 395166
		Cllr Bryn Williams	07836 271998
		Cllr Hugo Brown	
Cricket Club	Chairman	Peter Higgins	347493
Crimestoppers			0800 555111
Deddington Guides		Marian Trinder	340806, 07786 001641
Deddington Health Centre	Appointments		338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	338847
	Out of Hours		111
Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Head Teacher	Frances Brown	340204
Football Club	Secretary	Peter Wild	07950 837773
Garden Club	Chairman	Richard Preston	340512
Golf Society	Chairman	Alan Brewer	340423
Horticultural Society	Show Secretary	Vicky Clifton	07817 025948
Parish Council	Chairman / Clerk	Richard MacAndrew/ Cathy Fleet	347209, 347000
Police	24hr Call Centre	(non emergency)	101
Post Office & Harris Stores		Raj	340201
Pre-school			340863
Public House	Red Lion		340225
Robinson's Close	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
Scouts Group		Colin Cassford	243038
Sports & Recreation Centre	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
Steeple Aston Walking Group		Penny, Stuart, Sue and Graham	sawgox25@gmail.com
Toddler Group		Charlotte Clarke	07799 030490
Valentine Club		Richard & Daphne Preston	340512
Village Hall (see advertisement)	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
Village EmergencyTelephone System			690691
Village Website	www.steepleaston.org.uk	Editor: Jenny Bell	347714
Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme			0300 3030125
WI	President	Cathy Lawday	347209



"...folly is not always folly."
Jane Austen

Steeple Aston *Life*

December 2022

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Editorial

"God gave us memory so that we might have roses in December." – James M. Barrie, Scottish novelist and playwright, best remembered as the creator of Peter Pan (1860 to 1937).

The winter solstice will soon be here (21st December). It is the day with the shortest period of sunlight (7 hours 47 minutes in Oxfordshire) and the longest night of the year. After this, the days start getting longer and the nights shorter. At the spring equinox (20th March 2023), day and night will be of equal length.

The word 'solstice' comes from the Latin 'solstitium', which translates as 'sun stands still'. On this day the apparent movement of the sun in the sky stops before changing direction. It is also a time at which the sun appears low in the sky. Some say that winter begins at the solstice, but meteorologists use 1st December as their starting point.

Under the old Julian calendar, the winter solstice occurred on 25 December. This slipped to 21st December with the introduction of the Gregorian calendar in 1582, named after Pope Gregory XIII, but the Christian church continued to celebrate the birth of Jesus on 25th December. Yule was a pre-Christian festival celebrated in Scandinavia, giving us the Yule log. Saturnalia was a festival in ancient Rome celebrated around the middle of December – a time of elaborate meals and the giving of gifts, traditions which remain with us.

2022 has been a year of extremes, with an unusually hot summer and a very wet autumn. Thames Water introduced a hosepipe ban on 24 August, following reports that the River Thames was at its lowest level since 2005. However, the hosepipe ban has now been lifted. Thames Water says, "We still need more showers through the winter to continue filling underground sources and rivers, but our forecasts suggest that even 60% of normal winter rain will be enough to return to a healthy position."

If you are a contributor to Steeple Aston Life, please note that the copy and advert deadline for each issue is now the 14th of the preceding month. This is to give a little more time to put the newsletter together. If you are not a contributor, an item or article from you will be very welcome.

Robert



Steeple Aston Noticeboard



20mph speed limit

Residents of the village who drive through our neighbouring communities will have noticed that Oxfordshire CC is rolling out a 20mph speed limit in villages across the county. The benefits of 20mph limits are well documented:

- there is a significant reduction in fatal injuries, when a child is hit at 30mph they are much more likely to die than if hit at 20mph;
- noise pollution almost halves;
- the latest research from engineering consultants Skyrad reveals that driving at 20mph lowers emissions of carbon dioxide by 26% and of nitrous oxide by 28%

The Environment and Sustainability Committee of the Parish Council (ESC) recently canvassed the views of the village on 20mph limits. Those who responded expressed a clear preference for early adoption of the limit in our village. With the support of our County Councillor, Arash Fatemian, we applied to OCC to be part of the early rollout of the new limit. OCC complimented the Committee on our brilliant, innovative and superbly effective and simple way of engagement. Our thanks go to Claire Hall who organised this, and to all who responded.

We have been informed that we will be in phase 3 of the rollout, which is due to start in early 2024. In the meantime we'd like to encourage residents to voluntarily reduce their speed to 20mph when driving through the village. We don't need to wait for the new signs to enjoy cleaner air, safer roads and lower fuel bills.

Carl Tomlinson
Chair, Steeple Aston ESC

Coronation celebration

I am planning, along with Josie Cassidy, to pull together a big intergenerational village celebration on the day of the coronation. We're asking those who want to be involved to put a save-the-date in their diary for Saturday 6th May 2023.

Our plans are in the early stages, but we're hoping to encourage all village groups, clubs and societies to take part if they'd like to – and have a parade through Steeple Aston, finishing with food, drink, music and fun at Robinson's Close (and of course live screening of the actual coronation!). Other ideas include a photo wall of royal memories, a coronation competition (food? essays? bouquets?), best dressed king & queen, a live band...

We'll be looking to hire a marquee, bouncy castle and possibly a hog roast, too. Anyone with any contacts, or ideas for other entertainment, or if you simply want to get involved – please do contact us: SteepleCoronation@yahoo.com

The more the merrier!

Helen Wright



Cycling Climbs Challenge

I finished my 100 Greatest Cycling Climbs challenge on Friday 21st October. To finish in Swansea on Constitution Hill was spectacular with Lisa, Amy, Ben and Welly cheering me to the top – I could hear Welly barking all the way up.

It has been an amazing adventure. I have been to so many places in Britain that I have never visited and there is no better way to explore our wonderful country than on your bike. You are in the scenery and seeing everything all around you.

There so many memories to cherish and places to go back to. It took 36 days of cycling to complete. I rode 3833km and climbed 69,219m (nearly eight times up Everest). I only had four punctures, no injuries and no mechanicals with my bike. My favourite ride was in the Cairngorms, favourite climb was the Bealach Na Ba in NW Scotland, closely followed by Honister Pass in the Lakes. The hardest climb was Hardknott Pass in the Lakes.

I have genuinely loved every minute and to do it raising funds for the Cure Parkinson's Trust because my father-in-law Stuart suffered from Parkinson's was my inspiration. I just wish that Stuart could have been there to see me finish.

I have raised £3800 so far. A massive THANK YOU to everyone who has donated, but if you haven't here is my JustGiving page: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Steve-Boote2>

Steve Boote



Apple Juice on sale now

For the very first time, Steeple Aston's apples have been pressed to create our own village blend. Available from the Red Lion and Harris Stores on Southside, it is a delicious blend of crisp dry and fruity sweet. The juice is pasteurised, so will keep indefinitely.

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Angharad Lloyd-Jones





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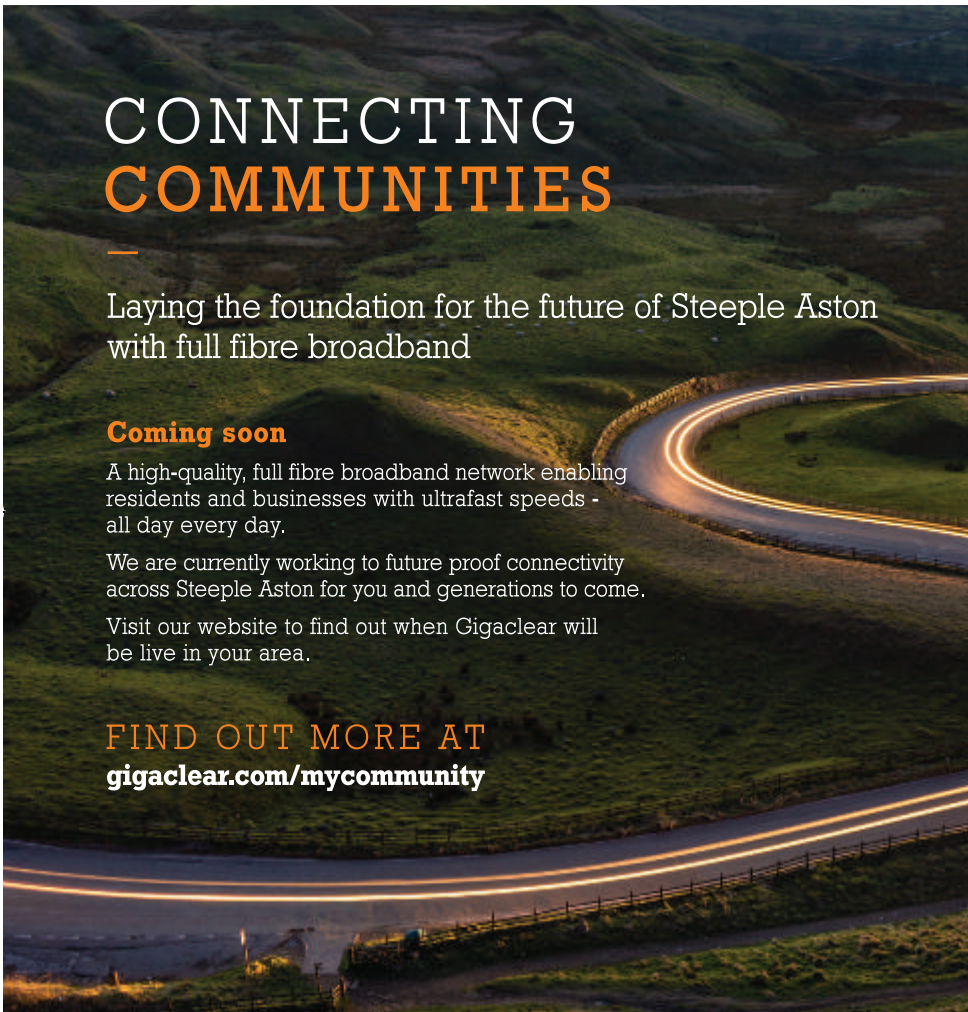
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Steeple People



Richard Preston



How long have you lived in Steeple Aston? All my life.

Where did you move from? From Heyford Road to North Side.

What brought you here? So far, all attempts to get rid of me have failed!

What do you like best about living in Steeple Aston? Being involved in village life and, in the past, earning my living from the village and immediate surrounds.

How has the village changed in the time you've been here? Considerably. At one stage everyone knew each other and it has become a much wealthier village.

Where do you think of as 'home'? Here, where my parents lived and grandparents before them.

Give a potted history of yourself. Born in the village. Went to school here for ten years. Very shy when younger. Easy option when leaving school was to follow my dad's trade, but never regretted that decision. Love the countryside, but not very keen on cities.

How do you see yourself, in five words or less? Positive and optimistic.

How do others see you, in five words or less? Pain in the neck.

What do your family or friends find most annoying about you? I tend to have an opinion on most things.

Early bird or night owl? Cat or dog? Optimist or pessimist? Early bird. Dog. Optimist.

Technology: friend or foe? Trying to master it, but failing much of the time.

What was the best thing about being a child? No worries.

What is the best thing about being an adult? Finding an answer to any worries.

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? Anything other than a greengrocer.

What was your first job? A greengrocer and market gardener.

What do you do for a living now? Too much, but all unpaid!

What is the best job you've ever done? Only had one job.

What's your secret/guilty pleasure? Chocolate, although many people know I love chocolate.

Tell us about any interesting hobbies you have. Gardening.

What's your favourite piece of music? 60's and 70's rock.

What are you reading at the moment? The most boring news in the papers. Not very keen on reading. Too much of an outside person.

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

If you became prime minister, what law would you pass? How long have you got? Basically, I would try to recover the basic concept of common sense. Most politicians appear to have lost this simple attribute!

If you won the lottery, what's the first thing you would buy? I would love to set up a charitable fund to help others, but depends how much I win. Might consider a new tractor!

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? Wales! Why go through the hassle of airports?

What do you do to relax? Turn the telly on and go to sleep.

What's your favourite saying or piece of advice? There is a solution to any problem.

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

Who would you most like to have dinner with – dead or alive? Hank Marvin of The Shadows.

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

What do you get grumpy/mad about? People not doing what they say they would do.

What makes you happiest in the world? Being at home with my family.

Tell us a good joke. Why did the tomato turn red? Because he saw the salad dressing.

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The ARTS Page



This from Claudia Roth, the German government's Culture Minister: "With the 2022 budget, the members of the Bundestag are specifically strengthening the arts, culture and media in the face of the unprecedented crises of our time. Now, more than ever, we need the open spaces for discourse and the diverse food for thought provided by art and culture."

I write as we hear, amongst others, of the cut to the English National Opera's budget, and less well publicised, the removal of the Britten Sinfonia's entire budget, close to my heart, as I founded the orchestra back in 1993. I also read of Germany's 200 Euro Culture Pass to all those reaching their 18th birthday. France, Italy and Spain already have similar schemes.

There is a pattern here, that we do not value the arts enough or realise their huge impact on the quality of people's lives, health and well-being, contributing to our economy and boosting tourism. 0.17% of government money goes to Arts Council England (ACE). Both Germany and France increased their already bigger arts budgets by around 7% this year.

There are many smaller companies benefiting from the new ACE grants, spread around the country, but our flagship organisations also need to be nurtured.

Pantomimes have been flagged up previously in SAL, so I'll go straight to Carol Services. Too many to mention, but foremost is our own at 6pm on Sunday 18th December in the church. If you would like to sing in the choir for this, please get in touch – nicholascleobury@btinternet.com - for details.

A good website to see what Christmas events there are is [**dailyinfo.co.uk**](http://dailyinfo.co.uk) (What's on/Concerts) and you can make your own choices.

I've picked out five local organisations offering interesting events.

- Banbury Museum ([**banburymuseum.org**](http://banburymuseum.org)) – 'May the toys be with you', UK's finest collection of vintage Star Wars toys and original cinema posters. On till 19th March.
- Pegasus ([**pegasustheatre.org.uk**](http://pegasustheatre.org.uk)) has a great array of events, including 'Hansel and Gretel' for ages 3 to 7 (10th to 18th December) and a 'Christmas Magic Show' (22nd to 24th December).
- The North Wall Arts Centre ([**thenorthwall.com**](http://thenorthwall.com)) again has a good range. Until 2nd January Oxford Printmakers Co-operative's 'A Time to Gather' looks enticing and could even provide some Christmas presents.
- Creation Theatre ([**creationtheatre.co.uk**](http://creationtheatre.co.uk)) offers 'The Tale of Beauty and the Tail of the Beast' from 4th December to 7th January – "an anarchic adaptation of this Christmas Classic!". It looks terrific.

I usually mention the Chipping Norton Theatre ([**chippingnortontheatre.com**](http://chippingnortontheatre.com)) for its enterprising programming. Amongst their offerings are films. Worth noting that the much praised 'Living', starring Bill Nighy, is showing on 13th and 14th December.

The Charlbury Refugee Action Group (CRAG) is a terrific organisation ([**charlbury.info/community/88**](http://charlbury.info/community/88)). The next in their Concert series is the Somerville College Choir at 3pm on Sunday 4th December at Charlbury Memorial Hall. Tickets £15 (£5 for under-16s) include complimentary tea and homemade cake.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and an Artistic and Happy New Year.

Nicholas Cleobury



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Letter from *Westminster*



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

It was an enormous privilege to be appointed Attorney General for England and Wales by the Prime Minister in October. It is a role that has existed in Parliament since at least 1243. Before I was first elected as your MP in 2015, I worked in the Government Legal Department for seventeen years. I provided advice on military, prisons and national security matters and represented the Government in court. I am excited to be returning to the law in my new role, and to be working with the many excellent professionals across the Law Officers' Departments once again.

I have been very busy out and about in the constituency since I last wrote here. Visits to local schools including Glory Farm Primary and Heyford Park remain a highlight as I had the opportunity to speak to lots of enthusiastic pupils. I also visited local businesses including the state-of-the-art Arrival microfactory in Launton as well as Smiths Bletchington's Dewars Farm Quarry in Ardley.

During my last surgery at The Garth in Bicester I enjoyed speaking to constituents about a range of issues, including 11-year old Grace who wanted to talk about litter picking and avoiding single-use plastics as we all play a part to protect the environment. I have some more surgeries lined up in the next few months, so please do get in touch if you want to book an appointment.

In October, I caught up with Laura Sapwell, Governor of HMP Bullingdon. It was our first in-person meeting since before the pandemic and provided a useful opportunity to discuss future plans for the prison. She has made some really positive changes during her time there so far, including improving access to education for prisoners and job support, providing skills which are so important to release and rehabilitation. I also met our local police commander in Cherwell, Superintendent Emma Garside at Bicester Police Station. Emma told me that drug dealing, violent crime and anti-social behaviour are some of the most prevalent challenges she faces. She was keen to discuss what she has been doing to tackle them, and the progress she has made so far. I am grateful to Emma for meeting me and will continue our regular conversations to make sure that constituents' views on local policing matters are always heard.

Alongside my visits and meetings, I have also launched some new constituency campaigns. I know many of you share my concerns about the discharge of sewage into rivers. I wrote to the Chief Executive of Thames Water, Sarah Bentley, to find out about what is being done to safeguard the River Cherwell and limit sewage discharge into it. I am keen to understand what Thames Water is doing in our area to deliver on the new duties placed on water companies, and look forward to a meeting in the next few weeks. You can follow updates on my website at www.victoriaprentis.com

Access to high-speed broadband and reliable mobile coverage is another issue that has been raised consistently with me in recent months. While Banbury and Bicester broadly benefit from strong broadband and reliable mobile coverage, there are many in surrounding villages who have been left behind by the rollout of gigabit-capable broadband and are frustrated by mobile not-spots. Our area has the lowest rate of gigabit-capable broadband coverage in Oxfordshire, and one of the lowest in the South East, with coverage 20 percent below the national average. It is absolutely vital that residents have access to a reliable broadband service. We must also work towards achieving universal mobile coverage in line with the Government's Shared Rural Network programme.

My Digital Connectivity Survey is now live on my website. To help me build a comprehensive picture of where mobile and broadband coverage is weak in North Oxfordshire, please visit www.victoriaprentis.com/digital-connectivity. Paper copies can also be requested by getting in touch with my office. Your experiences will help inform my findings, which will be shared with providers and colleagues in Government.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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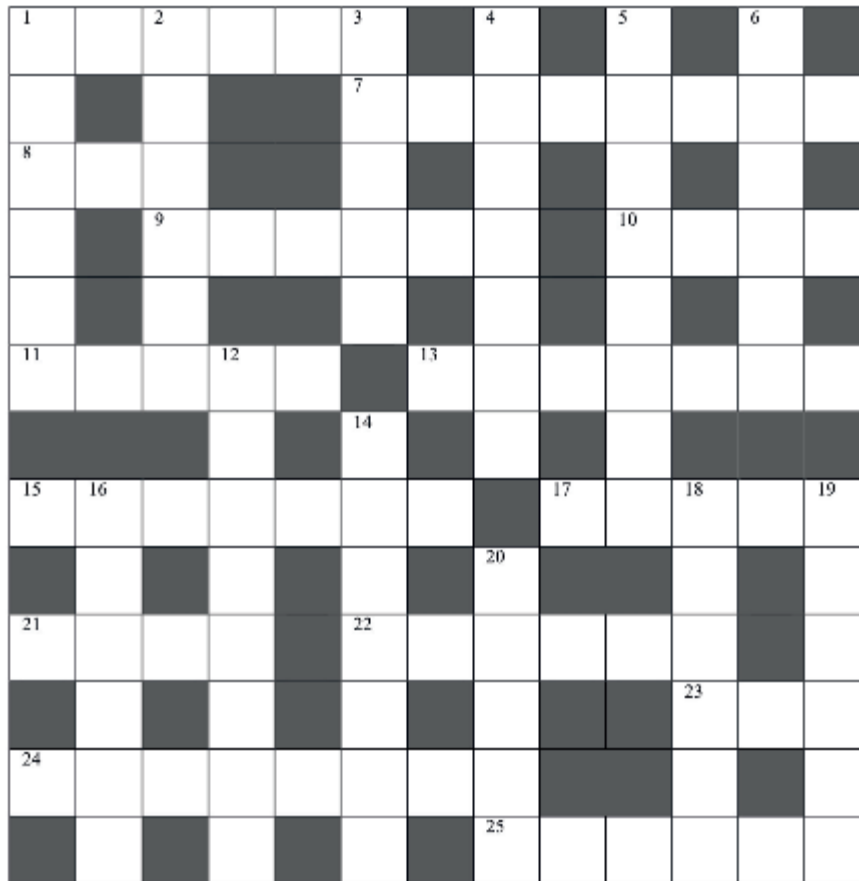
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???? Mind Games

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1. a warming beetroot soup (6)
7. you can't make this without breaking eggs (8)
8. a biblical mode of transport (3)
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21. a gift brought by the magi (4)
22. psalm 100 tells us to make a noise (6)
23. plant with a white berry, often paired with 3 down (3)
24. the four gospels give slightly different of the nativity (8)
25. originally a Dutch word, meaning sail boats (6)

DOWN

1. another word for bleating (6)
2. a French slang term used to describe the English (6)
3. plant with a red berry, often paired with 23 across (7)
4. Victorians began to send Christmas cards in the 19th (7)
5. a short sentence said or sung by the minister in a church service, to which the congregation gives a response (8)
6. to attack by firing from a low-flying aircraft (6)
12. a tattoo often placed underneath the eye (8)
14. the city formerly known as Peking (7)
16. to burn or singe (6)
18. to burnish to a shine (5)
19. figures represented in Roman mythology as half man, half goat (6)
20. a person with an itinerant way of life (5)

(from Cathy Lawday)

Answers on page 35

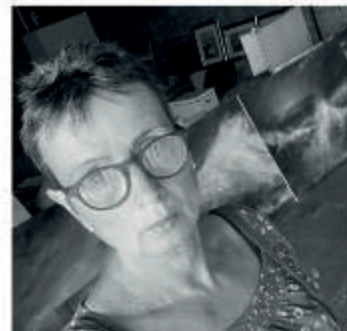
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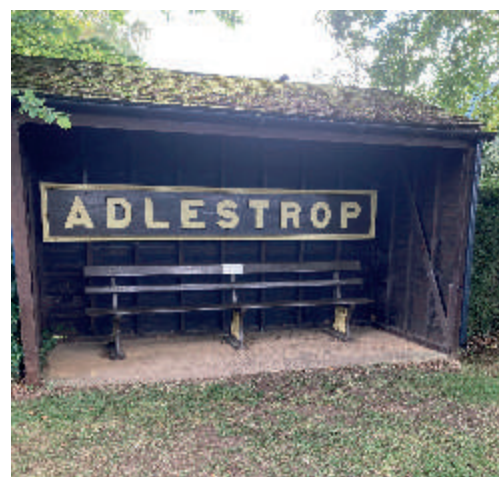


HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

Adlestrop

I expect you know the poem: Edward Thomas' beautiful evocation of a warm summer's afternoon in countryside not far from here. It's worth reading as we slide into winter to remind ourselves of the summer that has gone and as a promise of those to come. Read it yourself, or you might prefer Richard Burton performing it for you on YouTube (see links below). It's a charming and delightful picture of that hot moment when a train stopped 'unwontedly' at a sleepy rural station. Its impact was made even stronger for me when I learnt that Edward Thomas had written it during the unhappy days of the First World War and that he was soon (in 1917) to be killed in that dreadful conflict.

Life changed in our country in many dramatic ways after that war, of course, and the sort of peace and calm in rural England described by Edward Thomas now has to be searched for. I think you can still glimpse it if you visit Adlestrop. The bench from the railway station (which no longer exists) has been preserved and lives in its own little shelter. You can usually park in the village hall car park opposite and if you then take a stroll around the village of Adlestrop, starting from the lane next to the old bench, you'll discover pretty houses which have no doubt been there since the afternoon of heat when the train stopped nearby!



I think the quiet of the village with its stone cottages and houses and its tiny part-time post office can transport you in imagination back the hundred years or so to that day. You can spot the old Georgian post box and a rather sweet note telling you where the tap which supplied water to the village was situated. Yes. The tap! So while we may yearn sometimes for a life which sounds as though it was simple, slow, gentle and uncomplicated, perhaps we must not forget the advances which technology and engineering have brought us. Thank goodness for inside toilets and bathrooms, washing machines and central heating You can add to the list, no doubt, as you enjoy a visit to Adlestrop.

The village is signposted off the A436 which would take you from the A44 Chipping Norton-to-Evesham road to Stow-on-the-Wold.

Eileen Baglin-Jones

Richard Burton reading 'Adlestrop': <http://bit.ly/3WWbciQ>

Or read the poem to yourself: poets.org/poem/adlestrop

A Thermal Camera shows where you are losing heat

By Annie Bayley on behalf of the Steeple Aston Environment and Sustainability Committee

If you're already wearing a thermal vest and two woolly jumpers, you may be tired of people telling you how to save energy at home. Switch off appliances you're not using – obviously. Don't fill the whole kettle just to make a cup of tea – duh! Don't wash up under a running hot tap – double duh!!

Making the home itself energy efficient sounds like a bigger deal. Let's say you've changed the light bulbs to LEDs and stuffed as much rockwool as you can under the roof tiles, but you're living in an old house. If it was built before the 1920s it probably has single skin walls, meaning there's no cavity to be filled, and internal or external insulation is a big investment.

Still, dramatic pictures show that there are worse things than walls when it comes to heat loss. Thermal images indicate little of use when printed in black-and-white, so please go to Steeple Aston Online (steepleaston.org.uk/home/noticeboard/#link7) for colour photographs. Here, among other things, you will see warm air streaming up the chimney flue of an unused fireplace and warm air escaping through a gap beneath a door.

The solutions can be surprisingly cheap, and soon pay for themselves through cost savings on your heating bills.

Under a tenner

Draught-proofing strip – fills the gaps around a door or window.

Door brush – stops the wind blowing under your door.

Letterbox brush – ditto through the mail slot.

Draught excluder roll – prevents a cold room from cooling a warm room.

Flexible filler – blocks the cracks under the skirting boards.

£10 to £20

6 or 12 square metres of secondary glazing film – acts as temporary, removable double glazing.

Reflector foil for six radiators – hidden behind your radiators, reflects heat back into the room.

Chimney balloon – holds the hot air back from rushing up an unused flue.

Hot water tank jacket – speaks for itself!

Johnsons of Deddington now stock many of these products and can give you simple advice on how to install them.

One final thing – be sure to get a free smart meter from your energy provider if you haven't already. It will not only enable you to measure the amount of energy you're using, but also ensure that you are billed accurately for your actual consumption and never overcharged on the basis of your estimated use.

Would you be interested in having thermal images taken of your own home? If so, please email SteepleAstonESC@outlook.com



A thermal camera in use.



The Gardening Spot

Where did this year go?

As I write this in mid-November, I have just come in from the garden after mowing the grass yet again. Thought I could have wrapped the mower up weeks ago, but should not complain as the grass did not grow for a long period during the summer. Is it climate change or simply yet another strange season? For us gardeners, no season is ever the same, but there is a positive note to this. It means that we disgruntled collection of miserable gardeners have something else to moan about. If we look back over the past twelve months, we have experienced just about everything the weather gods could throw at us. Snow early in the year, followed by -5°C, then not a bad spring when things started to grow, then the hottest temperatures recorded by the met office, to be followed by rain and more rain. But where would us 'mature' gardeners be without a little grumble every now and again.

So what should you be doing in the garden during December? To be honest, absolutely nothing, unless you feel inclined to collect a few of the leaves that your neighbour has kindly deposited over the fence. I should add here that I mean the wind has blown them over, not your neighbour throwing them over in the middle of the night! I am sure I should be giving you good advice on how to improve your garden during December, but life is too short and there is always next year. What a thought. Another few days and it will be 2023. Where does the time go?

For me, gardening has always been a part of my life, not always my choice, but having grown up on a commercial garden of just one acre and having a father who believed it was "good for me" to learn how to use a hoe at the age of two, brings one into the horticultural world with a very intense apprenticeship. Not that I got paid for such services, but as my dear old dad would say, the satisfaction is in seeing the end result.

Gardening was very much part of the life of folk living in the country in the past as it enabled them to provide food for the table and supplement the low incomes that were associated with rural employment. Dr Radcliffe's School actually taught gardening, but only for the boys as the girls were taught how to sew and bake.

Today we have some fantastic allotments, growing just about everything possible and providing a place to socialise and chew over the many subjects that come up from time to time. We have a Garden Club that is growing in numbers and diversity. For the first time ever, the club is going to celebrate Christmas by enjoying a meal together at Middle Aston House. Again, this is what gardening is all about. Getting together and chewing over the pros and cons of gardening and everything else.

And not forgetting the annual flower show which has been around in the village since the 1860s. I must admit, I sometimes feel like I was at the first show when the judge would be admiring the largest mangle and checking to make sure the woollen socks had been darned correctly.

Well, that is enough ramblings from me, so it just leaves me enough time and space to wish each and everyone of you, gardeners or not, A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS – and go easy on those brussels sprouts!

Richard Preston – a retired gardener
Sorry, my mistake. No gardener retires!



WASSAIL EVENING

*'CELEBRATE A COUNTRY
CHRISTMAS'*

*An informal gathering to enjoy an evening of
seasonal songs and carols, together with
mulled wine and mince pies*

STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL
Sunday 11th December 2022 at 6.00 pm



Walks around Steeple Aston with babies and children

One of the reasons my husband and I moved to Steeple Aston was for the lovely walks in this area. A particular favourite is across the fields to Lower Heyford, where you can wander for miles along the canal.

But when my son arrived, I found myself restricted with where I could walk. It was fine when my son was in a sling, attached to me, but then he grew too big for it and my daughter arrived too, so my only option with both of them is the double buggy. Unfortunately the double buggy doesn't fit through kissing gates, can't go over stiles, and can't even manage rutted pathways without getting stuck. I have an Out-n-About Nipper, which means I can go off-road, but mud is a no-go, as I learned the hard way last winter as I attempted a particularly huge puddle along the pathway behind Dr Radcliffe's.

So where can you walk with children in a buggy around Steeple Aston? Here are a few ideas...

Circumnavigate the village

It's not the most original idea, but the walk along South Side, via Water Lane and North Side to Paines Hill or vice versa is a staple of mine. The hills can be tough, especially in the summer heat while pushing heavy toddlers, but it's lovely to watch the changing seasons over the year. I particularly enjoy when the blossom is out along Paines Hill, and my son loved last Halloween when all the spiders and skeletons were out. Now the pub is open again (hurrah!) you could even stop for lunch on the way round. My son particularly enjoys this route when the conkers start to drop; you can find plenty of them on Water Lane just past the pub.

A slight bugbear on this one is the cars that park all over the pavements, preventing us from getting past without walking into the middle of the road. Perhaps you'll have more luck than me if you have a single pram; mine is rather wide!

Walk to Middle Aston and back

I think you can do this with a buggy as long as it hasn't been raining – I can with mine at least. Head along Fenway to the stables, then take the pathway to your right along the field and keep going until you pop out on the lane that links Middle Aston Lane to Oxford Road. This does involve walking a short way through the woods, which is the hardest bit if you don't have an off-road buggy, especially in the winter. Once you reach the road, turn right into Middle Aston and keep going. I like to pop into Middle Aston House on the way past and walk to the lake, where my children can see the swans. I keep meaning to stop at the bar for a drink overlooking the lake, but I haven't got round to it yet.

The farm at the end of Cow Lane

As long as the ground isn't too wet, the pathway along Cow Lane to the farm is a good one with a buggy. It's a little bumpy, but my daughter usually uses this as an opportunity to nap, while my son admires the tractors and cows that we see at the end.

We have on occasion gone past the farm and across the field to Lower Heyford, but the ground is quite rutted so not every buggy would make this without getting stuck. Once you've crossed the canal, you can continue past The Bell pub and down the lane to Kizzie's café, which is next door to Heyford Station. Do note that there are three kissing gates to get through, so I cannot do this route extension unless I have someone to help me. Of course, if you don't want to go to Kizzie's you can just retrace your steps back to Steeple Aston.

Angela Smith

Parish Council Meeting Notes



The recent Parish Council meeting started very positively and enthusiastically. Helen Wright, an ex-Councillor, explained to us what she and her fellow Coronation Committee members were hoping to organise for next May. Their idea is that the village should come together for an 'intergenerational knees up' on the coronation weekend. They are considering having a procession through the village which they hoped would include children and as many individuals and village organisations as possible. They were hoping to get things like a bouncy castle and were intending that the seating for the food should be at trestle tables to encourage us all to start talking to the person seated next to us whom we might previously only have known by sight.

I was torn about the proposals as they sounded brilliant in every way except for the reason for the party. If, like me, you think the royal family are expensive, unnecessary and frequently unattractive, then you are probably as torn as me in celebrating them. At the meeting I was good-temperedly teased by everyone present as being, they claimed, the only person in the village with these views on royalty. I won't change my views on that, but I will contribute to the festivities as a village enterprise. Helen is hoping people will come forward and offer to help and you can contact the Coronation Committee at steplecoronation@yahoo.com. Helen – what would you like me to do (as long as it is not dressing up as the Queen Consort)?

It would not be a proper Parish Council meeting if the subject of dog poo did not come up, but this time it was good news. The chairman of the Parish Council has been out looking for dog poo and says he has only found one during all his recent poo patrols.

Our Parish Councillors are concerned that the Oxfordshire Highways Department are concentrating on towns and not making different decisions that are appropriate to country areas which frequently have poor public transport and narrow roads with limited pavements. This shows itself, for example, in the ruling for future new developments that less space has to be provided for parking. The Chairman of our Parish Council and the chairs of four other local Parish Councils got together and jointly wrote to the leader of Oxfordshire County Council about a range of highways and other issues. They wrote five

months ago and their letter has only just received a substantive reply. The reply has inaccuracies and omissions and the Parish Council's request to meet with the leader was deflected.

The Councillors approached our MP, Victoria Prentis about the concerns. She offered to meet them in the Sainsbury's café, but with others there, and would not meet them alone. (I don't blame her as any Tory MP, at the very least, deserves at the moment to be sworn at. My politics coming out again; sorry.) Someone suggested emailing Victoria as she does reply to emails. But no one seemed to think this approach would achieve anything. Unfortunately, for getting things done, we will still have Victoria Prentis as our MP after next year's constituency boundary changes.

There was a long discussion about wobbly noticeboards. Apparently, the Church noticeboard has been strengthened with effective brackets and the issue was whether this would be a good way of repairing the noticeboard holding the village map. Martin Lipson prepared the current version of the map and he offered to bring it up to date with the addition of Townend and other changes. The Councillors would try to get Oxfordshire County Council funding to repair the frame of the noticeboard.

It was suggested to the Parish Council that there was some social isolation in the village and a weekly lunch club might be beneficial. The discussion ranged over possibilities, but in the end the Councillors agreed that this was not something for them to organise. Perhaps someone out there would like to set this up, though we were told by one person that there had been such a club many years ago and it had folded.

The Councillors thought the Village Orchard on Water Lane was looking good now that the fallen tree has been removed. The Mid Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan is being updated and it was agreed it would be good if the Orchard could be designated as a Local Green Space and so protected, as far as it could be, from future development. The Orchard Committee are raising funds from selling village grown apple juice which you can get from the shop and the pub. We were told it was £3.50 a bottle and when I queried the price I was told it is 'the inaugural Steeple Aston blend' and it is delicious.

Parish Council Meeting Notes



The Environment Committee are interested in knowing if there is any interest in having a thermal imaging camera in the village. I would like to know where the insulation on my house is faulty so I hope you will join me in saying “yes please”.

The Parish Council has updated its risk assessment. This was accepted without any discussion and I could not help wondering if the lack of discussion in public (though it is on the website) was to avoid me being able to describe the discussion.

The Play Area equipment was discussed at length. Apparently, the round swing has four cables which are fraying and need replacing and the zip wire, having been serviced, also needs a new stop. The trampoline still has seven missing links, but the children are delighted about being able to use it again.

Another play area in the village is the pocket park at Nizewell Head. Apparently, the village leased this land from Cherwell till 2016. Since neither the village nor Cherwell have done anything positive to end the lease it is legally deemed to be continuing. The Councillors thought that if the area reverted to Cherwell it might well just be locked up on the spurious grounds that children would otherwise trip over on the molehills. The Councillors decided that they would like the village to keep the land and agreed that they would clear the surrounding brambles in the spring and would find out what sort of equipment would be suitable, subject to funding being available.

There is a small wall by the door to the Committee Room at the Village Hall. The wall has been damaged by cars and it was suggested that the plaster cap on it should be removed and replaced by an aluminium angle (a long bracket covering the side and top of the wall). Someone said that when the bollards by Robinsons Close were replaced with higher ones the cars did not hit them anymore because they were now tall enough to be visible when reversing. For this reason, the wall will be made taller as well as getting a bright top and side. I was delighted to hear that the gravel path between the car park and the entrance to

the Village Hall is going to be resurfaced to look like gravel, but be solid for wheelchairs. When I was pushing a wheelchair along this path it was not easy on the patches where there was still some gravel. Thank you for this thoughtful change.

We were told why it was that the houses in Townend are larger than those shown on the approved planning application. Apparently, what happens is that after approval has been given the developers use the rules on permitted added extensions to make the houses considerably bigger, and hence more expensive.

At the very end of the meeting we got to the bad bit. The current Chairman, Richard MacAndrew, announced he is going to stand down from next May, by which time he will have done about five years as a Councillor. The other Councillors seemed to be stunned into temporary silence and then told him what a good job he was doing. I will write a well-earned appreciation of his contribution, but not for six months.

The Parish Council should have seven members and for over a year it has been running with six. By next May they will need two more instead of just one. If you enjoy living in this active and fun community, would you consider being a Councillor? Don't worry, you would not be selected as chair because that job has to be done by someone experienced in Council business. If you would like to know more you can contact the Parish Clerk on 01869349000 for an informal discussion.

Steeplejack

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

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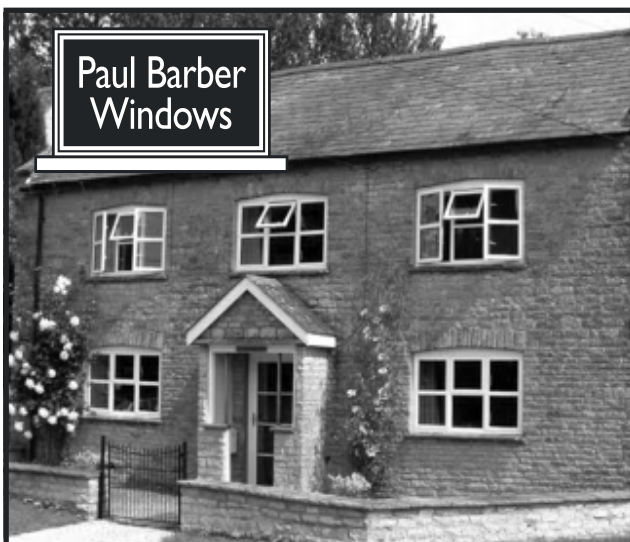
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Poetry Corner



Forward planning

I've left it late to buy my goods
next year I will remember
to get a stock of Christmas puds
in August or September
The turkey I will get in June
before the panic buys
I guess July should be alright
to stock up on mince pies
those little gifts that fill our socks
I'd better buy in May
to just make sure I have them here
in time for Christmas Day
On second thoughts I must buy soon
in case my wallet fails
so January would suit me best
I'll blitz the Christmas sales
so all in all I'll start right now
there's nothing I need fear
my timing's looking pretty good
I'll just miss out this year!

Peter Wild

Twinset and pearls

This Christmas will be a bit different
There'll be no speech from the Queen
She won't be sitting in twinset and pearls
Looking and sounding serene.

We won't hear about "my husband and I"
Or what a horrible year this has been
She won't be appearing in twinset and pearls
It's the end of an annual routine

She won't be looking back at the year
Talking about events that she's seen
She won't be there in her twinset and pearls
Smiling from our screen.

She was a part of Christmas I tried to avoid
Like sprouts, charades and tangerine
I've steered clear of watching her speech
Since I was about fourteen.

But it feels quite odd now that she's gone
And if you know what I mean
I think I'll miss the twinset and pearls
Smiling from the screen.

Cathy Lawday

Sue King will have her original art
on sale at the Christmas Fayre
on 3rd December in the
Steeple Aston Village Hall
together with Christmas and other greetings
cards as well as calendars printed from her
original artwork and hand made Christmas
tree decorations.

Enquiries to sue.king2@icloud.com
Art on Instagram: sueking4207



Steeple Aston Handbells

The Steeple Aston Handbell Ringers are very much looking forward to ringing door-to-door in the build up to Christmas this year. Our tour of Steeple and Middle Aston will begin on Saturday 10th December.

We will be collecting for Maggie's Oxford. It is a charity based at the Churchill Hospital where people with cancer can meet with other people who are experiencing the same things that they are. It provides support groups and gives advice and information and is completely free.

The majority of money collected will go to this worthy cause, but a small portion will be put aside for the Steeple Aston Tower Fund for the maintenance of the church bells. This amount is decided on at the Bellringers AGM held in the new year.

We are looking forward to playing a Christmas Carol at your door.

Sally Cooper

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THE VALENTINE CLUB

HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE from all at The Valentine Club.

Another year has come and nearly gone, but thank goodness we have moved out of the pandemic that reduced the quality of life for so many of us. Not to say Covid has gone, but thanks to some amazing scientists and a government that rolled out the vaccine so quickly, we are in a much better place than we were 12 months ago.

On that subject, Cherwell District Council's Lottery Fund very kindly supported us by granting £1,000 to help the club back on its feet and assist in the running costs. We have decided, for the time being, not to hold the annual jumble sale. This is a pity as it is the ultimate style of recycling and, more to the point, brought in close on a thousand pounds each year.

In our search to find financial support for the activities we have on our programme, thanks go to The George Earle Fund, aimed specifically at the older generation. They considered that we were doing such a great job that they awarded £2,000 to the club. This will enable us not only to secure good quality speakers and entertainers next year, but also subsidise many of the coach trips planned. The average cost of booking a coach is now over £600, let alone the entry to many of the venues and any add-ons we might be able to throw in. Seven trips are already organised for next year!

For our November meeting we welcomed Deborah Hayter to tell us all about 'The Lost Villages of Oxfordshire'. It was really great to bring Deborah to the club as she is the daughter-in-law of a past rector of Steeple Aston, Michael Hayter.

December is always the highlight of our club as we start by visiting The Marriot Hotel in Warwick, where we will enjoy a three-course meal and entertainment based on Mamma Mia. This is followed a few days later on the 6th December by our Christmas meal where S & J Cuisine and helpers will be feeding around 100 members in the Village Hall, followed by top class entertainment.

The other day, a member of Oxfordshire County Council contacted me to ask, "why is your club so successful when other seniors groups in the county are struggling or have folded?" I don't think there is an easy answer to this, but I would put much of it down to a small but very supportive committee and such an amazing bunch of 'overgrown teenagers' that make up The Valentine Club. Success builds success. Having a large number of members means we can afford to hire a coach for trips out and book quality entertainers, but at the end of the day it comes down to the members as they are such a welcoming crowd who know how to enjoy life.

One thing that really helps is the support we have from The Cherwell Lottery where, for every £1 lottery ticket bought, 50% comes directly to the club and the rest makes up the prize money. Over the past 12 months, we have had two winners of £250 and a lot of smaller winners, making this much better odds than the National Lottery. If you feel you can support the club by participating, search 'Cherwell Lottery' online, or give me a call. Make sure you support The Valentine Club!

To learn more about the Valentine Club, visit our own website on www.valentineclub.wixsite.com/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
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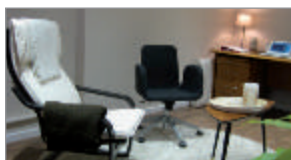
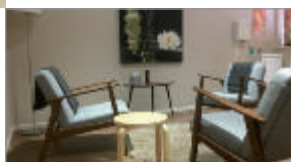
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LORD'S TAVERNERS

Empowering young people through cricket

Once again, Steeple Aston Cricket Club will be supporting the Lord's Taverners charity. The charity was founded in 1950 by a group of actors and BBC employees such as John Mills, Jack Hawkins, Roy Plomley and Brian Johnston. Its mission remains to empower young people with disabilities and those from disadvantaged communities to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence by playing sport.

In 2011, SACC first played against the Tavs – we lost, but raised an incredible £22,000 for the charity. In 2016 we won on the last ball in a thrilling match and raised £33,000. With the £55,000 we raised we were able to fund entirely a Lord's Taverners mini-bus, which had been specially converted to carry disabled children with their wheelchairs to play cricket and travel to Lord's Cricket Ground to play Table Cricket.

According to David Gower, current President of the Lord's Taverners, Steeple Aston CC has raised more money for the Tavs than any other village cricket club has ever raised in its 72-year history.

We are delighted then to welcome the Lord's Taverners back to play Steeple Aston CC at Great Tew cricket ground on Sunday 21st May 2023. Please put this date in your diaries now and come and watch:

Monty Panesar, Michael Vaughan, Matthew Hoggard, Rob Andrew (Captain), Matt Dawson, Will Greenwood, Gavin Hastings, Chris Tarrant and many other famous sportsmen and actors are due to play against us in the deciding match to see who goes 2-1 up. All under the auspices of umpires David Gower, Mike Gatting and Gladstone Small. There will be a number of fund-raising events, so please put these in your diary now:

- Nicholas Cleobury and friends present an hour's entertainment of Music and Readings, in Steeple Aston Church at 6.30pm on Friday 10th March 2023.
- Golf Tournament at Denham Golf Club on Tuesday 21st March 2023.
- Lord's Taverners Pre-Match dinner at Great Tew CC on Saturday 20th May 2023, an evening with Sporting Superstars.

Our target this time is £45,000, which would make a grand total of £100,000. We cannot, of course, do this without the support of our wonderful villagers, so please come to one or all of these events and if you cannot make it, please buy some Raffle Tickets as we have some incredible prizes. The Lord's Taverners charity really is amazing – sport really can transform the lives of disabled children and those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

All the best

Peter Higgins
Chairman SACC



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We enjoyed a relaxed but fun and informative evening with one of our own talking about gaining his Royal Photographic Society Licentiate (LRPS) and Associate (ARPS) distinctions. John Cavana, ARPS, spent many months selecting the panel of ten images to submit for assessment to achieve his LRPS distinction, having been encouraged by a fellow member in 2015. The images were not on a particular theme, but did have a cohesive link. The aim was to show a variety of techniques and approaches such as macro, landscape and long exposure. It was an interesting exercise for us to put the images in a presentation order and explain why. Surprisingly, it can make a huge difference to the way a panel is viewed and shown to its best potential.

The ARPS distinction was a panel of fifteen photographs which is more a body of work that is supported by a statement of intent. John chose to use a group of images taken at the Langa township in Cape Town. The group is so emotive and evocative that they can be viewed for a great length of time and there is still more to see. John spent over six years travelling to South Africa and was able to photograph the experience of life in the township with the help of a local photographer. These are honest images that show a harsh environment and obvious poverty. John's RPS body of work can be seen on the ADDPS website under the Members' Gallery section (RPS member panel). Do take a look.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 7th December at 7.30pm at The Adderbury Institute. See our website for further details. You can also catch us at Castle Quay on the 10th December, 9am until 2pm, to see our images and talk to us about becoming a member.

Anne Hunsley www.addphoto.co.uk

Steeple Aston Golf Society



SAGS final meeting for the year was held at Temple G.C. near Maidenhead. We have always introduced a new course each year and this open parkland course did not disappoint. The lovely old clubhouse had pictures of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby teeing off and going down the first fairway.

16 players attended, Tony Giles winning the May Fu Tu Trophy playing off 14 with 38 points. In second place on count back was Jack Kay off of 17, 37 points. Our guest winner was Ross Carroll off 12, amassing 41 points – we only found out later that this was his home course. Nearest the pin on 13 was Vaughan Billings and on the 18th in two was Mark Lawrence. Mark and Ross also picked up the 2's money. The team prize went to Robbie Robinson, Mark Lawrence and Tony Giles scoring 105 points.

Our booking agent Mike Brown has been busy securing next year's meetings and all that I can tell you is that the new course for us to visit will be The Worcestershire.

Like any organisation, things like this just don't happen, it is a year of planning, being involved, taking part and caring to look after other people's enjoyment whilst getting a buzz from it yourself. So a big thanks to Mike Brown, Chris Cooper and our chosen captain Paul Kay for the year.

If you are reading this and think, do you know what, I wouldn't mind giving this a go, well come and join us next year you will be very welcome. Call Alan or Chris on 01869 340423 / 347173.

Happy golfing, have a great Christmas and a safe New Year.

Alan Brewer (chair)

And finally for this year: two Mexican detectives were investigating the murder of Juan Gonzalez. "How was he killed?" asked one detective. "With a golf gun", the other detective replied. "A golf gun? What is a golf gun?" "I don't know. But it sure made a hole in Juan."



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You have two options to choose from:

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or

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Village Hall News



What a great turn out we had on rather a damp evening to our annual bonfire and fireworks event, with so many other local displays happening on the same evening. We watched a great display of fireworks and a wonderful Guy Fawkes made by the children of class 4 at Dr. Radcliffe's School burn on top of the bonfire. There was hot soup provided by Hanny Nicholson, along with squash and sausages from the Village Hall Committee.

Our thanks to the willing helpers of the Recreation Trust, Village Hall Committee, Simon Thatcher and team of helpers for building the bonfire, Richard Preston and his team for the display, Raj and Parry at the shop for selling tickets, Bob Bickley for the use of his paddock for the bonfire, and also the very generous local companies who kindly sponsored the event: Lakeside Farm Business Park (David & Robert Fry), Mr. Charles Sandy and Mr. Patrick Bradshaw at Hatch End Industrial Estate. Without their support and help we could not have offered such a splendid display of fireworks.

Forthcoming Events

Sunday 11th December: Wassail evening 6pm. Enjoy a light-hearted evening of mulled wine, soft drinks, mince pies, carols, readings and Christmas music. This is an opportunity for everyone, families, young and old, to join in some community singing. So come along and celebrate a country Christmas. Everyone is welcome. Free entry.

Saturday 21st January 2023: Annual Quiz Night

Ring Barbara on 01869 340423 to book your team. Entrance fee £2.50 per person, maximum eight people to a table. Entrance fee at time of booking please. Entry 7pm for a prompt 7.30pm start. There will be a licensed bar so please do not bring your own drinks. Only 12 tables will be available, four already booked, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

On behalf of myself and the Village Hall Committee we would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a safe, joyous New Year.

Our letting agent is Mrs. Angela Smith – 07734 112967 Please do not call this number between 6pm and 8pm unless urgent. Email steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com Collect keys from 'Mijas' South Side, Steeple Aston. OX25 4RU.

Barbara Brewer – chair

Steeple Aston Garden Club



The Garden Club was invited by Tackley Garden Club to join them in October for a talk by Tim Walker, a previous Director of Oxford Botanic Gardens. Well, what an entertaining evening it was, Tim Walker is a highly amusing speaker and kept us all enthralled with his anecdotes of his time at the Botanic Gardens. Thank you Tackley.

We were able to return the invitation, as we had Andrew Goodall, Head Gardener at Broughton Grange Gardens, visit us in November with his talk 'Life and Times of a Head Gardener'.

In December we are looking forward to our Xmas lunch at Middle Aston House, on the 14th.

Richard is intending to organise a trip to Wisley next year, so keep a look out for further info.

There is no meeting in January 2023, so our next speaker is Andy Howard 'Fruit thro' the Seasons' on 7th February, 7pm for 7.30pm start, at the Village Hall. Any non-member wishing to come along is quite welcome, as a guest.

Wishing you all a very happy & peaceful Christmas.

Chris Clarke

Secretary

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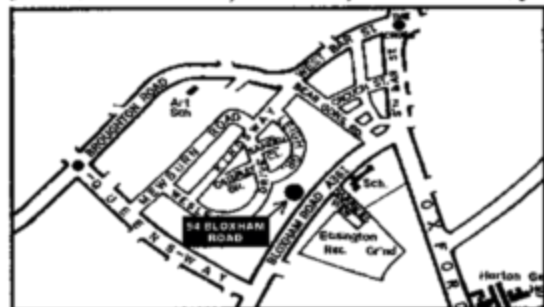
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Our social evening on 8th November was a great success. After the business part of the meeting was over, Helen Wright came to talk to members about plans for the village to celebrate the Coronation and to discuss ideas for how the WI might contribute and take part.



We were then treated to drinks and some delicious canapes whilst we sat back to be entertained by The Jay Birds, a small women's *a cappella* choir. Accompanying themselves on guitar, bodhran and shruti, they sang a selection of lovely folk songs, some traditional and some modern, including one written by The Staves. They ended their set by giving out song sheets so we could join in and sing along with some well-known songs such as a Buddy Holly medley and Beatles' hits. They were very talented and also good company and members thoroughly enjoyed their performance.

The Jay Birds were followed by a quiz of varied general knowledge questions, the answers to which were all bird-related, such as Sir Christopher Wren, Dickie Bird, Russell Crowe, Florence Nightingale, The Byrds, The Maltese Falcon, Wild Swans, and more. People buckled down to work out the answers and got some high scores.

Members were given details of this year's Christmas meal, which is at the Cartwright Hotel, Aynho, on Tuesday 13th December. There will be coach travel there and back, a welcome drink, musical entertainment and a three-course meal, all for £20. All members are welcome.

We also have a theatre trip, to see 'Mamma Mia' at the New Theatre, Oxford at 2.30 on Thursday 8th December. Committee members will be 'doing a turn' at the Wassail on Sunday 11th December, so do come along.

The future direction of the WI?

At the meeting, members were given advance notice that several of the Committee, including myself, will be standing down at the AGM in April. This gives plenty of time for members to decide if they would like to take the WI forward. Here is an opportunity for younger people in the village to take up the reins and make the WI what they would like it to be. There are various options for the future. Perhaps Steeple Aston could join up with a neighbouring WI in Heyford or Great Tew. Or maybe it could sever links with the national WI and simply become an independent women's group. For more information about becoming a member, or taking a more active role on the Committee, or to discuss any ideas for the future, please contact me.

Cathy Lawday President, WI

347209 cathy@lawdaymacandrew.co.uk

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD ANSWERS (see page 15)

ACROSS: 1. Borsch; 7. Omelette; 8. Ass; 9. Ballet; 10. Star; 11. Gifts; 13. Cracker; 15. Escaped; 17. Pepys; 21. Gold; 22. Joyful; 23. Ivy; 24. Accounts; 25. Yachts.

DOWN: 1. Baaing; 2. Rosbif; 3. Holly; 4. Century; 5. Versicle; 6. Strafe; 12. Teardrop; 14. Beijing; 16. Scorch; 18. Polish; 19. Satyrs; 20. Gypsy.

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Churchwardens' Chat



So now we are in the fifth month of not having a Rector – but the life of the church doesn't stop and we continue to move (slowly!) towards appointing a successor to Marcus. We continue to be grateful to the various clergy who come to take services and it was good to have an opportunity on All Saints' weekend to say thank you to many of the people who do so much to keep the church functioning, such as the cleaning team, the flower arrangers and the churchyard working party. They are all vital and, of course, a warm welcome awaits any who do not usually come to services, but who might like to join us any Sunday for worship, for time to sit back from daily tasks and reflect on the week and enjoy coffee after the service with the opportunity to catch up on others' news.

We have met some people who haven't realised that looking after the church and churchyard, the heating, electricity and paying towards the salaries and fees of clergy, and so forth, all must be paid for by money the church raises. Apart from a grant from the Parish Council towards having the churchyard mown (thanks indeed for that!) it all depends on everyone in the Parish. The church is not just for the people who attend services. It's for everyone: for special family occasions like weddings and funerals, a place for the community to come together when there are national or special annual events such as harvest or Christmas celebrations, or just a peaceful place to relax quietly, pray or just sit away from the hurly burly of modern life. That's why we keep the church open every day, thanks to the team of unlockers and lockers. You'll hear more about our worries because, like many of us, the church finances are a cause for anxiety. Despite having to count and recount our resources we have continued to make donations to various important causes during the year. We are determined to continue to be outward looking.


A team from church took the harvest donations to the Banbury Food Bank, an organisation we are keen to continue to support. In the spirit of Christmas giving, we'd like to encourage everyone in the village to continue to make contributions to the Food Bank which could be delivered each month – in December for a start. Please begin to bring donations of tins and dry goods and leave them in the pew at the back of church which is on your left as you come in through the South Door (behind the bookstall). It's sad but true that so many families continue to need the help of food banks.


It's hard to believe that it's nearly Christmas again! Our project to ask people to sponsor the lighting of the star at the top of the church tower has been greeted with enthusiasm. If you haven't yet booked a date in support do call in at church where you will find all the details of how to take part. We are very grateful to everyone who has already paid their £10 and chosen a night to illuminate the star (pay for the electricity and contribute a little to church funds!). Details of Christmas church services will be delivered to each household – we want to be sure that everyone knows what is happening and knows too that a welcome awaits all as we celebrate the birth of the Christ Child. Sometimes it's easy to forget what the festival of Christmas is really about. On December 18th there will be a traditional service of readings and carols with music from Nick Cleobury's ad hoc Christmas choir and mulled wine and mince pies afterwards to send us home rejoicing! The magic and mystery of the Christmas story reflected in the faces of children as the scene in the manger is set up during the Crib service on Christmas Eve afternoon is always a delight to see in the happy and lively atmosphere of that service. We don't need a Rector for either of these services, but it will be a pleasure to welcome Rev Andrew Bunch on Christmas morning – a Sunday this year – to take Christmas Communion. Do come to any or all! We wish you a very happy Christmas!


Eileen Baglin-Jones and Graham Clifton, Churchwardens




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Church Services



	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley
Sunday 4th December Second Sunday of Advent	9.30am BCP Communion Rev. J. Underwood	11.00am BCP Communion Rev. J. Underwood	5.30pm Evensong Richard Bailey
Sunday 11th December Third Sunday of Advent	9.30am Morning Prayer Rev. Nigel Knights-Johnson	11.00am Morning Prayer Rev. Nigel Knights-Johnson	5.30pm Holy Communion Rev. Sue Spankie
Sunday 18th December Fourth Sunday of Advent	3.30pm Carol Service	11.00am Service of said Communion 6.00pm Carol Service	5.30pm Carol Service
Sunday 24th December Christmas Eve		4.00pm Crib Service Richard Bailey	
There is a service of Midnight Communion at 11.30pm at Woodstock. All welcome.			
Sunday 25th December Christmas Day	9.00am Holy Communion Rev. Andrew Bunch	11.00am Holy Communion Rev. Andrew Bunch	9.30am Family Communion Rev. Sue Spankie
Details of the people leading some of the services have not been confirmed as we go to press.			
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Non-Represented Clubs.....	£17	
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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
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Rubbish bin collection day is Thursday

December 2022

1st Blue and brown
 8th Green
 15th Blue and brown
 22nd Green
 29th Blue and brown



January 2023

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

Food caddy is collected weekly

Steeple Aston Sport & Recreation Centre Letting Charges

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Social Function off-peak times (up to 5 hours)	£27.50
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 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

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 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

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Steeple Aston Calendar

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

DECEMBER 2022			
Friday 2nd	Valentine Club. 'Mamma Mia' with three-course lunch	Warwick	
Saturday 3rd	Christmas Fayre	Village Hall	12pm to 4pm
Tuesday 6th	Valentine Club Christmas dinner with entertainment £5 per person. Doors open at midday with meal at 1pm	Village Hall	12 noon
Wednesday 7th	AD&D Photographic Society Club Night	Adderbury Institute	7.30pm
Thursday 8th	WI. Trip to 'Mamma Mia'. Coach from Village Hall 1pm	New Theatre, Oxford	2.30pm
Saturday 10th	AD&D Photographic Society Pop Up	Castle Quay	9am to 2pm
Sunday 11th	Wassail evening	Village Hall	6pm
Tuesday 13th	WI. Christmas meal. Coach from Village Hall 6pm	Cartwright Hotel, Aynho	6.30pm
Wednesday 14th	Garden Club Xmas Lunch	Middle Aston House	
Wednesday 14th	SAL January 2023 copy and advert deadline		
Saturday 17th	Deddington Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Saturday 17th	Sustainable Steeple	Deddington Church	9am to 12.30pm
JANUARY 2023			
Wednesday 4th	AD&D Photographic Society Club Night	Adderbury Institute	7.30pm
Tuesday 10th	WI. Speaker Tom Way, wildlife photographer	Village Hall	7pm for 7.30pm
Saturday 14th	SAL February 2023 copy and advert deadline		
Tuesday 17th	Valentine Club. 'Old Gold' singing duo	Village Hall	14:30:00
Saturday 21st	Annual Quiz Night	Village Hall	7pm for 7.30pm
Saturday 28th	Deddington Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Saturday 28th	Sustainable Steeple	Deddington Church	9am to 12.30pm

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
Badminton. Village Hall - 8pm - Thursdays
Village History Centre (SAVA). 10am - 12pm - Saturdays

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