

# Steeple Aston

September 2023    Issue No. 601

# *Life*

- 
- The many apples of Steeple Aston • New website for Village Hall • Church Services •
  - Word Path Puzzle • Cricket Report • Arts Page • Steeple People • Valentine Club •



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Cover: Rousham House seen through the Eyecatcher Folly. (Photo by Nigel Francis)

## Steeple Aston *Life*

### COPY

All articles and letters to  
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### COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline is the 14<sup>th</sup> of the  
previous month.  
This means the copy deadline for the October  
2023 issue is Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September.

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Valentine Club		Richard & Daphne Preston	340512
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Village Website	<a href="http://www.steepleaston.org.uk">www.steepleaston.org.uk</a>	Editor: Jenny Bell	943573
Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme		0300 3030125	
WI	President	Julie Hillier	349185





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

## Steeple Aston *Life*

September 2023

Issue No. 601

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# Editorial

*"Autumn seemed to arrive suddenly that year. The morning of the first of September was crisp and golden as an apple."* *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*, by J. K. Rowling.

Do you know what happened on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1752? The answer is 'absolutely nothing'. The date does not exist!

How is this possible? We can put the blame on Julius Caesar. Up to 1752, Britain followed the Julian calendar. However, due to a miscalculation of the solar year by 11 minutes, the calendar had a built-in error of one day every 128 years. This might not sound very much, but it began to affect the date of Easter.

To overcome the problem, the Gregorian calendar was introduced, named after Pope Gregory XIII. This is a solar calendar, based on a year of 365 days divided into 12 months. Each month has 30 or 31 days, with 28 days in February. However, to keep the calendar synchronised with the seasons, an extra day is added to February every four years – almost.

The rules to calculate a leap year are:

1. The year must be evenly divisible by four (that is, no fractions);
2. However, if the year can also be evenly divisible by 100, it is not a leap year;
3. But if the year can be evenly divisible by 400, it is a leap year.

Confused? Well, 1900, 2100, 2200 and 2300 are not leap years, but 2000 and 2400 are leap years. The next leap year is 2024.

The Gregorian calendar was first adopted by France, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain in 1582. Britain followed some years later in 1751, but was out of sync with Europe by 11 days. To correct this problem, it was decided that Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1752 would be followed by Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> September 1752.

There have been stories, probably apocryphal, of civil unrest at this time with rioters demanding, "give us back our eleven days," as if their lives had been shortened.

Incidentally, the Romans associated September with Vulcan, the god of fires, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. 2000 years later, we call it 'climate change'.

**Robert**

*Vulcan by Adolphe Girardon,  
French painter and illustrator  
(1855-1933)*



# Steeple Aston Noticeboard



## Home and Away

This painting of boats of the Norfolk Broads, by Steeple Aston's Susan King, was featured in the 'Home and Away' theme of OX Magazine in their August issue.

[www.oxmag.co.uk/articles/oxfordshire-artists-home-and-away](http://www.oxmag.co.uk/articles/oxfordshire-artists-home-and-away)



## New Parish Councillor

Matthew Watson is the latest recruit to the Parish Council. He was officially co-opted as a councillor at the July meeting, leaving one further vacancy on the council to be filled.

Matthew (known as Mat) has only been in Steeple Aston for just over a year, but is keen to get involved in village life and meet local people. He moved here from London with his partner Jo and two-year-old daughter Grace in March 2022.

## Meals on Wheels

The 'Meals on Wheels' service started in Steeple Aston back in May 1978 and has supported many people during the last 40+ years with hot freshly-prepared meals.

Sadly, lock-down meant that the service had to be stopped. But Jasmine kindly took over during this time and has ever since been supplying meals for those who need it – thank you Jasmin.

During the years of doing Meals on Wheels, bits of extra money came in from the WRVS subsidy (who helped to start it), and when Steeple Aston then went on its own, we kept getting the odd small donations. These small amounts of money were put into a Post Office Savings account and with interest the balance stood at £1157.17. It was in my name, but not my money, so I felt it was right that this money should be used, rather than sit in a savings account.

Several recipients of the meals had used the wonderful services of Katherine House and benefitted from their care. Therefore, I felt that the right thing to do was for this money to go to Katherine House Hospice and I hope that you all feel that I have done the right thing. I have now had confirmation from them that the money has been received. *"How kind of you to support us in this way, thank you! Please extend our gratitude to everyone who kindly donated to the wonderful total, your donation will make a real difference to those that we care for."*

I would like to say a massive thank you to all the loyal helpers, some of whom have done it for as long as I have since we first started!

***Best wishes, Hanny Nicholson***



# Steeple Aston Noticeboard



*Steeple Aston Parish Council and Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum*

## PUBLIC MEETING

### *More houses in Steeple Aston?*

Many local people attended the public meeting in February to hear about Cherwell's possible plans for more dwellings in Steeple Aston and Kirtlington. The meeting agreed that it would be best if local people could decide where new homes might be built, how many, and of what kind.

Good progress has been made since then in identifying possible sites, assessing them, and informing land owners. This second meeting is intended to hear your views on the sites assessed and the criteria used. You can see these on the village website (from 6<sup>th</sup> September): [www.steepleaston.org.uk](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk) We look forward to seeing you on:

**WEDNESDAY, 13<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023**

**at 7.30 pm**

**STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL**

#### **Ride and Stride**

The annual Ride and Stride, a sponsored ride around Oxfordshire churches, will take place on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September. Our rector and her husband, Harriet and John, intend to visit all the churches in the Woodstock Deanery – all 20 (I think!). Please sponsor them and/or take part yourself, on foot or by bike (or on horseback). Forms and details are on line at [www.ohct.org.uk/ride-stride](http://www.ohct.org.uk/ride-stride) – information is also available at the back of the church.

You can direct half of the money raised to the church of your choice (hopefully SS Peter and Paul, Steeple Aston). The remainder goes to Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust. The church here in Steeple has benefitted from this in the past.

**Dorothy Clifton**

**Local coordinator, telephone 347273**

#### **Church Fete Prize Draw**

**Allocated Prizes:** Red Lion Meal for two - D Machin; The Food Hamper - Lazenby; Meal at the Yurt, North Aston - Jenny Taylor; Cocktails at Heyford Hotel - Silversides; Two tickets for the Ashmolean - Anne Bonwick. **Unallocated Prizes:** won by Richard MacAndrew, Alice Munroe, Gillian Tyler, Caroline Edwards, Irum Mathews, John Ultsch x2, McClusky, Hooper, Tina Ferguson, Bev Davies, Toby.

## C&S Chimney Services

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# Steeple People



## Caitlin Kennedy



**How long have you lived in Steeple Aston?** A year.

**Where did you move from?** Woodstock, where we lived for five years.

**What brought you here?** Hearing good things about Steeple Aston from people who live here, like Hanny Nicholson, who I met through Woodstock Choral Society.

**What do you like best about living in Steeple Aston?**

Joining a wonderful community, both in the village and through the school.

**Where do you think of as 'home'?** I grew up in France and worked there and my parents lived in Italy for a long time, so in many ways I feel European, but home is definitely Oxfordshire.

**Give a potted history of yourself.** Grew up with a sister in France, came here for university, went to Strasbourg to work for the Council of Europe, married John and worked for The Prince's Trust in London before our daughter joined us.

**What do your family find most annoying about you?** Trying to get them to drink more water.

**Early bird or night owl? Cat or dog? Optimist or pessimist?** Night owl and apprentice early bird. Dog. Optimist.

**What was your first job?** I started as an assistant on Council of Europe programmes to support Eastern European countries in their transition to democracy.

**What do you do for a living now?** I work for Coram, the children's charity which began as the Foundling Hospital in London in 1739.

**What's your secret/guilty pleasure?** Going to French pharmacies.

**Can you recommend a really good book?** I loved *Wildwood* by Roger Deakin, a travel book about trees.

**What's your favourite food?** Cheese.

**If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?** Kyrgyzstan to see the walnut groves described by Roger Deakin.

**What do you do to relax?** Read or go for a walk.

**What's your favourite saying or piece of advice?** Drink more water!

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

**What makes you happiest in the world?** Seeing herons.

**Tell us something about you that most people don't know.** I love being on the back of a tandem – you can chat and see the world without worrying about steering, and I do also pedal!

## How to be a Steeple person

Steeple Aston Life is always looking for people to feature on this page. 'Steeple People' first appeared in June 2016 and has printed 82 mini-biographies to date. This means that with a village population of 972 (2021 census), we still have some way to go. If you are one of the undocumented 890 and would like to appear, please email [editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)

It matters not whether you were born in Steeple Aston, or moved here a few months ago, we would love to hear from you. Bring your light out from under a bushel and let it shine!



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# The ARTS Page



I quoted William Byrd some time back on the Arts Page, but it's worth a repeat in this year, the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death. "Since singing is so good a thing, I wish all men would learn to sing". Today we should say "everyone" instead of "all men".

Countless studies give reasons that singing is so good for us. It releases endorphins, serotonin and dopamine – happy chemicals that boost your mood. It increases lung capacity, relieves anxiety, improves mental alertness, builds a sense of community, boosts your self-esteem, and much more. There are many websites on this topic, but perhaps try:

[www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-singing](http://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-singing)

We are surrounded by choirs, but have one on our doorstep – the Steeple Aston Choral Society. From time to time, I meet people who were told at school that they can't sing! This is usually untrue. Open to all, why not give SACS a try? Rehearsals are Monday nights. More details at [www.steepleaston.org.uk/clubs-societies/arts-and-music/](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk/clubs-societies/arts-and-music/) Their next concert is on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October in the Village Hall (see page 16).

There will also be a few opportunities in the future to sing in the church at selected services. More on this next time.

Down the road, we have an internationally-renowned Song Festival. 'Oxford Lieder' is now called the 'Oxford International Song Festival'. The theme this year is 'Art:Song – Images, Words, Music'. This theme aligns the visual arts with poetry and music in a wide variety of ways. "Alongside world-renowned singers and pianists, you'll find colour, fashion, musical manuscripts, artist-poets, artist-composers and more," says Sholto Kynoch – Artistic Director. Running from 13<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October, it is well worth looking at the brochure, listing a cornucopia of riches (<https://oxfordsong.org/>). I've watched this Festival grow over many years, led by my friend Sholto Kynock. He has done wonders!

It's not too early to look at Pantomimes, they do get booked up well in advance.

- [Oxfordplayhouse.org](http://Oxfordplayhouse.org): Jack and the Beanstalk (24<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to 7<sup>th</sup> January 2024).
- [Chippingnortontheatre.com](http://Chippingnortontheatre.com): Cinderella (15<sup>th</sup> November 2023 to 14<sup>th</sup> January 2024).
- [Creationtheatre.co.uk](http://Creationtheatre.co.uk): A Christmas Carol (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023 to 6<sup>th</sup> January 2024).
- [Storymuseum.org.uk](http://Storymuseum.org.uk): Tom Thumb (21<sup>st</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> December 2023).

Information on these and more is at [oxfordshire.redkitedays.co.uk/oxfordshire-big-panto-guide/](http://oxfordshire.redkitedays.co.uk/oxfordshire-big-panto-guide/)

Staying with theatre, here are three Oxford venues with a wide and often whacky variety of shows, entertainment, hands on events and more.

- Burton Taylor Studio ([oxfordplayhouse.com/whats-on/category/burton-taylor-studio](http://oxfordplayhouse.com/whats-on/category/burton-taylor-studio))
- Pegasus Theatre ([pegasustheatre.org.uk/](http://pegasustheatre.org.uk/))
- Old Fire Station ([oldfirestation.org.uk/](http://oldfirestation.org.uk/))

There is so much there and limited space here, so I leave it to you to browse, but here are tasters from all three.

- Burton Taylor Studio: 'A Trio of Tennessee Williams' ("...these rare Williams plays deserve packed houses..."). Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2.30pm and 7.30pm.
- Pegasus Theatre: 'Dancin' Oxford – Family Dance Party'. Great fun for young children and their families. Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> September and Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 11.30am and 2.30pm.
- Old Fire Station: Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> September at 7pm 'Shakespearean Raga' – Indian and British artists put the Bard's words in conversation with Indian Classical Music, highlighting their ability to translate human emotions in moving ways.

I've left out many of the old favourites this month. From previous Arts Pages you have all the requisite details. However, do write in with your own suggestions and recommendations, especially in areas that I do not cover. It will be a more vibrant page with your input. [nicholascleobury@btinternet.com](mailto:nicholascleobury@btinternet.com)

I will end with four quotations, the first two being similar. Dostoevsky: "I am sorry this letter is so long, I didn't have time to make it shorter" and Mark Twain: "I apologise for such a long letter, I didn't have time to write a short one". Perhaps one should also quote Polonius: "Brevity is the Soul of Wit".

Finally, by one of my mentors – Leonard Bernstein: "To achieve great things, two things are needed – have a plan and not quite enough time".

*Nicholas Cleobury*



## THE RED LION

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★★★★★ - Google Review



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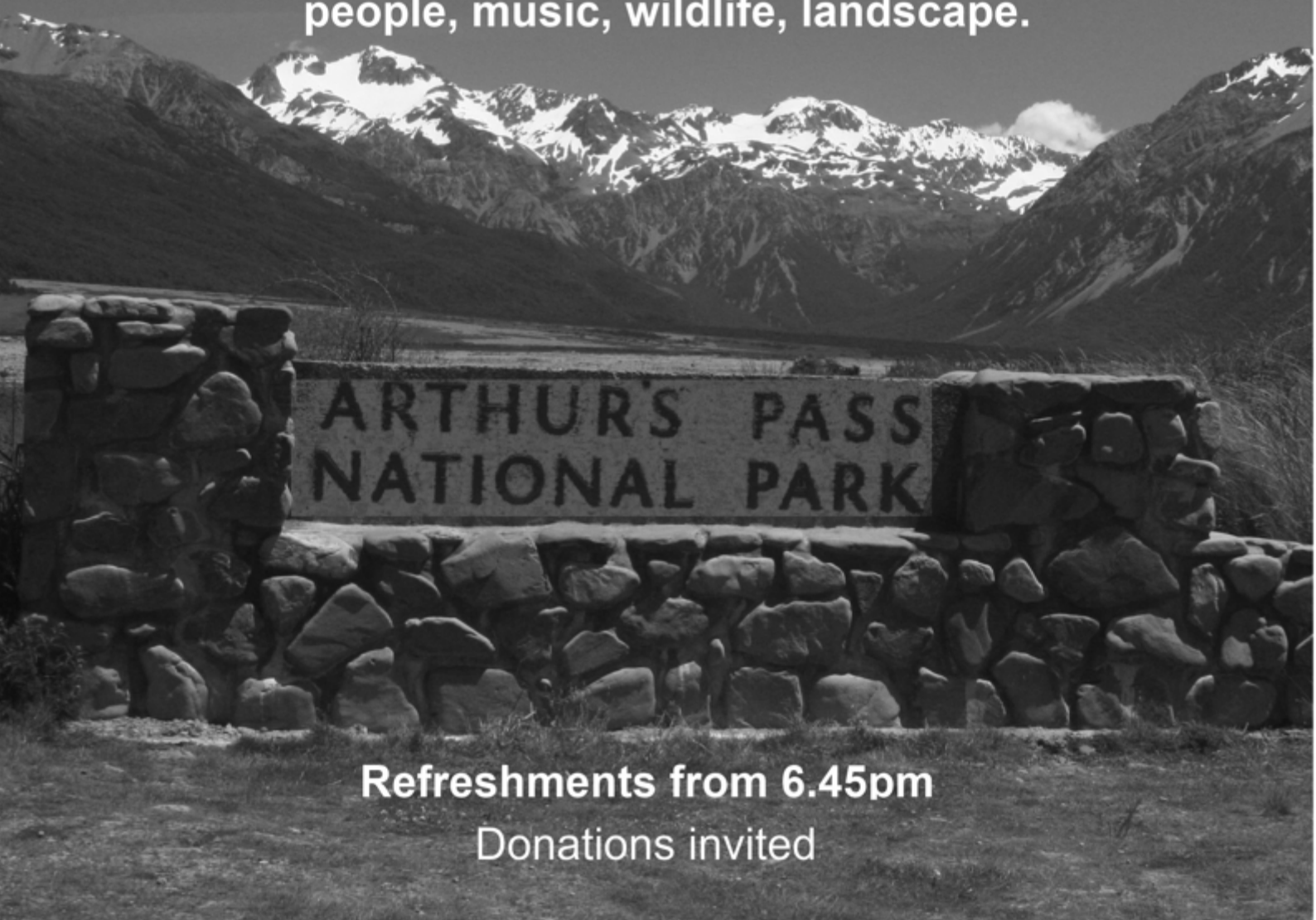


**St Peter and St Paul Church, Steeple Aston**  
**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023 - 7.00pm**

# **NEW ZEALAND**

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# HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

## **New Zealand?**

If ever I am asked if I have been to New Zealand, I rather enjoy responding with the honest answer, “Yes, for two days!”. This usually elicits a puzzled expression. Indeed, the possibility of seeing and learning anything substantial about that island nation on the other side of the world in two days is rather ludicrous.

We had planned to spend three weeks of a longer visit to the southern hemisphere in New Zealand when I retired from work, but my husband was taken ill as we arrived there, so we retreated to our family in Australia for him to recover and sadly missed those weeks. It was a disappointment, but I retain warm memories of the kindness of everyone we encountered in New Zealand and I’ve wanted to return ever since.

Now there is an opportunity here in Steeple Aston to learn more about this fascinating country on 22<sup>nd</sup> September in the church (see page 13). Many of you will know Janet Lincé from the wonderful concerts she and her Choros choir have given. Janet also has considerable knowledge of New Zealand, having visited the country numerous times and indeed owning a house there. She has offered to share information and reflections about New Zealand during an illustrated talk in aid of church funds.

So why not come along to what we hope will be the first of occasional talks – ‘Steeple Talks’ we might call them – on various topics of interest. Maybe a talk isn’t quite as exciting as gaining first-hand experience, but it will no doubt bring back some good memories for people who have visited New Zealand (properly!) and will provide preparation and inspiration for those of us who would love to travel there. Or it might simply be of interest and a happy way to spend an hour or so on a Friday evening. Why not come, collect a drink at 6.45pm, and enjoy Janet’s lecture from 7.00pm. There’s no set charge, but donations for church funds will be much appreciated.

Watch out for the next ‘Steeple Talk’ – subject to be announced soon.

*Eileen Baglin-Jones*

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STEEPLE ASTON  
Community  
APPLE PRESS

### **The Steeple Aston Apple Press 2023**

Community "Apple Pressing days" will be held at the **Red Lion**. Look out for dates on the village website, Facebook and notices around the village.

No booking required, just turn up with your apples and empty bottles!

Alternatively, the complete kit is available for hire at the unchanged rate of £20

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# The Gardening Spot

## Is September the beginning or end of a gardener's year?

For some, it is the time to gather in all that remains in the garden, for others it is time to clear the garden of debris, dig over and plan for 2024. I am a great believer in planning ahead, so as we approach the winter months I like to clear the garden, cultivate where possible and introduce as much organic matter as possible before it gets too cold and wet to venture outside.

If you haven't harvested your potatoes, now is the time to dig them up, dry off and store in a cool, dark place where they will not get frosted. Protect any brassicas that are still on your plot, such as Brussels sprouts and cabbage, as our local fan club (pigeons) will almost certainly take a fancy to them if they can get at the crops. Pick apples and store if you have enough. Mine seem to have vanished this year so, sadly, I will have to buy a few Bramleys later this winter.

Now is the time to plant out such flowers as pansies, wallflowers and forget-me-nots ready for next spring. How about planting up a few containers for winter interest such as cyclamen, heucheras, heathers and other plants available in any garden centre or possibly your local supermarket? This is the perfect time of the year to divide clumps of perennials as they will benefit from being split up and provide you with additional free plants.

Bulb planting time is also upon us, so have a look around at the numerous varieties of daffodils you can purchase and start to plant them when the ground is available, along with crocuses, hyacinths and bluebells. Take cuttings from fuchsias, salvias and pelargoniums, as yet again they will provide you with additional plants for your garden completely free!

It is also time to trim your hedges, bringing them to the height you want and neaten them up for the winter. As for lawns, well this year is so different to last year when the grass went a very brown colour – something to do with climate change I was told. If you can, try to remove as much thatch as possible and keep mowing as you never know when the winter weather might arrive and mowing becomes just about impossible. I am not a fan of winter feed on a lawn and would much rather save my money until the spring when the grass is about to rush into action. If you have any bald patches (in the grass, I mean!) and the weather has not turned cold, now is a great time to reseed those patches in readiness for next spring. If you can lay your hands on a scarifier, then they are great at removing thatch and revitalising your lawn, but not essential as a rake will do much the same thing.

I am writing this in the middle of August, so I don't know how the Annual Flower Show went or who won what. What I will tell you, in strictest confidence, is that I have a problem. At the top of my garden I am very fortunate in having a large heap of well-rotted horse manure, mixed regularly with grass mowings and compostable material. So I decided to plant a couple of pumpkin plants on the heap to see what happens. We have had a lot of rain this year and not too much extreme heat, so the pumpkins have done well. I have three pumpkins which I can't lift and the hire of a forklift is just a bit too much. If you see me at the flower show and I have not won first prize with the heaviest pumpkin, it is simply because mine are too big to transport!

***Richard Preston – champion pumpkin grower uncrowned***





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# ???? Mind Games

## Word Path Puzzles

hand									foot
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

*Change the word at the start of the path to the word at the end, in five steps. Each step on the path must be a proper word, and must differ from the previous word by just one letter. Answers on page 24. There may be more than one way of doing this. (Submitted by Cathy Lawday.)*

**Example:**

hand		band		bond		fond		food		foot
------	--	------	--	------	--	------	--	------	--	------

1.

army										ride
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

2.

tent										gush
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

3.

buck										silo
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

4.

call										bend
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

5.

wade										vast
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

6.

doze										rush
------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

## When does an apple not taste like an apple?

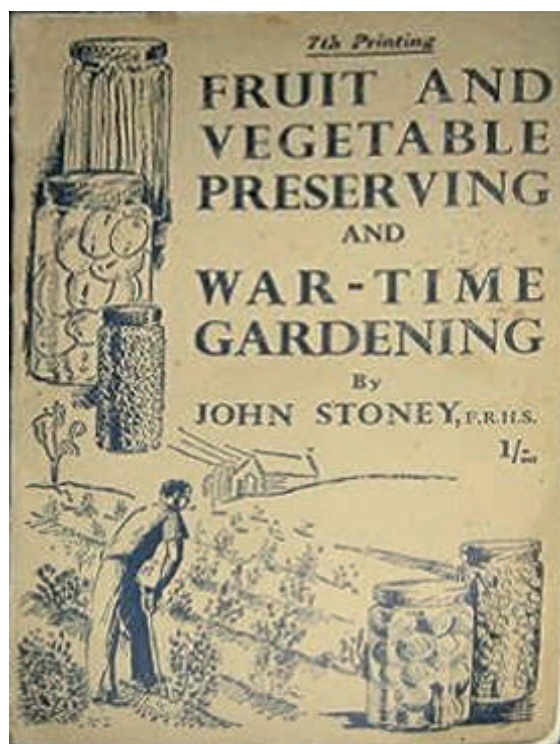
This may sound like a bad joke, but bear with me for now. Back in the June issue, we reported how 'buying the blossom' was an ingenious way of making money from the natural fruits of the village. The 1881 OS map reveals large segments of land given over to orchards primarily for growing a wide variety of apples, and the railway at nearby Heyford was used for transporting the crop to markets far and wide.

Former village greengrocer Richard Preston recounts how in the 1950s and 60s, many of the gardens that run down to the stream in the centre of the village had apple orchards, some having since disappeared. He recalls Cox's Orange Pippin, Bramley and Blenheim being grown, along with Laxton Fortune, Worcester Pearmain and Lady Sudeley, all widespread in those days.

One of the more unusual varieties was the Nonpareil apple, of which Stephen Switzer wrote in 1724 in *The Practical Fruit Gardener* – "it is no stranger to England; though it might have its origins from France, yet there are trees of them about the Ashtons (Astons) in Oxfordshire, of about a hundred years old, which (as they have by tradition) were first brought out of France and planted by a Jesuit in Queen Mary or Queen Elizabeth's time".

In 1929, writing in *The History of Steeple Aston and Middle Aston*, CC Brookes wrote about this apple stating it "is still a favourite here". With a dull russet colouring, the Nonpareil is one of the oldest varieties of apple, believed by Victorian pomologist Robert Hogg to have originated from France in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Its aromatic qualities were much appreciated, more so here than in its country of birth, and it grew best in the south of England. What made it stand out even more was its flavour of pear-drops, an unusual component only present in a small group of apples, including one of its likely descendants, Ashmead's Kernel.

*Continued on next page*



'Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and War-time Gardening', by John Stoney, published in 1941.



An apple barn in Water Lane (prior to conversion into a dwelling).



Switzer further promoted it, saying “the lovely russet of its coat, so much improved if exposed to the sun, that even the colour equals the finest Russets, and the taste is incomparably better”. When selecting apples for quality, he recommended the coat as a good recommendation – “that the pulp and skin be not tough, but short and as melting as possible, that the taste be rather sharp than sweet, or an agreeable mixture of both, especially for winter”. Those for summer may be indeed of a finer sugared juice because they are for eating, but he said “give me the sharpness of the Nonpareil for winter rather than the beauty or sweetness of any of the much-magnified French apples”.

When it comes to collecting and preserving fruit, there are many ingenious means of gathering and storing them. A book from the 1940s donated to SAVA by Mel and Irene Smith entitled *Fruit and Vegetable Preserving and War-time Gardening*, by John Stoney, details methods of preserving apples. The firm, late varieties should be selected for drying, cut into quarters or sliced, and could be prepared using a peeler, corer and slicer similar to a mincing machine. The slices are arranged on trays, placed in a slow oven to start removing the moisture, raising the temperature until they are leathery and stored in a dry area in tight fitted boxes lined with grease-proof paper. For apple rings, fruits are dipped into a salt solution, then removed and placed in trays at a high temperature gradually reducing it. Apple rings typically take around three hours, sometimes longer, turning occasionally, but whole apples may take up to 8-10 hours to dry. Steeple Aston had its own apple and potato store located in Water Lane and the door is still visible today, although it has now been converted as part of a residential dwelling.

For those interested, the village apple press will be available on selected dates in the autumn for villagers to use – just bring along your apples and bottles. Who knows what tasty juice will emerge!

**Carol Neville**  
*Steeple Aston Village Archive*



*The village apple press in use.*



*Apple tasting by Steeple Aston villagers in 2022.*

### Answers to Word Path Puzzle (page 21)

1. army, arms, aims, aids, rids, ride
2. tent, test, best, bust, bush, gush
3. buck, bunk, sunk, sink, silk, silo
4. call, cell, bell, belt, bent, bend
5. wade, fade, face, fact, fast, vast
6. doze, dose, pose, posh, push, rush



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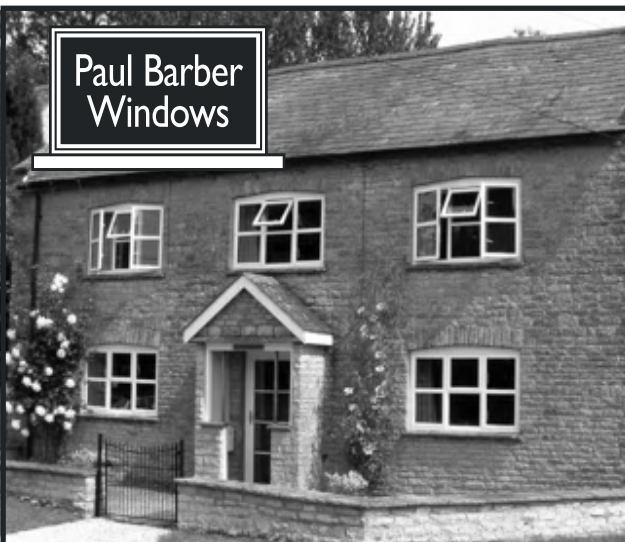
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## **Blenheim Park....**

Winning the toss, stand-in skipper Phil Chesser chose to bowl first. Starting the innings with only nine players, as Nick Foster and Olly Doggett tried to work out what to do with their dogs, who weren't allowed into the ground, the ever-steady Alain Michaelis and debutant Ben Evans opened the bowling. Without any consultation with the captain or bowler, Alec Michaelis and Dan Milner positioned themselves at silly mid-off and silly mid-on, only for Alec to rapidly take two catches off Ben's bowling to leave Blenheim Park on 6 for 2.

A beauty from Ben (3-18 off 6) clean-bowled the opposition number four for a duck, making the score 9 for 3. A partnership of over 80 runs then followed, with Steeple looking unlikely to take a wicket despite some steady bowling from Adrian Downing (0-28 off 7) and Paul Longman (0-24 off 7), until a chaotic run out left Blenheim on 95-4. Another strong partnership of 48 was ended by Alain Michaelis (a superb 1-16 off 7) who, inspired by his captain's decision to change his bowling end, clean bowled the Blenheim number five for 77 off the last ball of his spell. The innings finished with some huge hits from their number seven (where was he earlier?!), leaving Blenheim on 156-5 off their 35 overs.

Nick Foster and Olly Doggett opened SACC's innings. Olly was out early, which was a good thing as his dog was stuck in the car, whilst Nick had persuaded the girls at the gate to look after his. This brought Alec Michaelis to the crease and he scored an imperious 74 in a partnership of 118 (second highest in SACC history for the 2<sup>nd</sup> wicket) with Nick, before being clean bowled. A few quick runs by Merrik Baggalay helped Nick cruise to a beautiful 61 not out and see Steeple through to a victory by 7 wickets with over 10 overs left.

## **Great & Little Tew...**

With skipper Doggett winning the toss and opting to bowl first, SACC took to the field. Opening the bowling with Ben Evans and Paul Longman, Steeple got off to a quick start with new bowling star Ben taking an early wicket, caught at deep gully by the skipper. Tew's number three – father of the two opening batsmen – then took things into his own hands disrespectfully smacking the ball all over the park before being bowled by a relieved and once again happy Paul Longman (1-30 off 5 overs). A very rapid short spell by Hector Higgins (0-3 off 3 overs), which saw only one run off the bat, and some tight bowling by Tom Chesser (1-19 off 5 overs) totally dried up the runs for Tew. An excellent spell by Pete Higgins (2-17 off 5 overs) and yet more wickets for Ben (3-22 off 5 overs) restricted Tew further. However, a quick-fire innings by Tew skipper James Churchill, who chanced his arm somewhat and got away with it, took Tew to 116-7 off their 25 overs. Special mention should go to Steeple's fielders in the deep, in particular Hector Higgins and Nick Foster who saved many runs despite occasionally confusing each other with their enthusiasm.

A quick turnaround saw Steeple open with Nick Foster and Arthur Higgins. With Nick falling uncharacteristically cheaply, Olly (30) joined Arthur (48) at the crease for a very entertaining and excellent partnership, which did include the spilling of one of the easiest catches one will ever see. Olly's dismissal saw Steeple's most crotch players at the crease – skipper Nige failing to trouble the scorers and Jon Scotchbrook improving his season's average slightly with a scratchy 9. Fortunately, Olly and Arthur – caught very well in the deep just shy of his 50 – had set the foundations and enabled Tom Chesser (12 not out) to take us to a four-wicket victory with around 5 overs to spare – another good win for the mighty SACC.

*Phil Chesser*  
*Hon Fixtures Secretary, SACC*



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## THE VALENTINE CLUB

Over the past few years, the club has been fortunate enough to enjoy travelling with Heyfordian coaches whilst visiting many parts of the country. We have always had first-class service and wonderful drivers. So it was with great sadness that we learnt of the loss of one of our largest local businesses after over 70 years serving the neighbourhood.

There was a bit of a knock-on to the club as we were due to visit The National Memorial Arboretum the day after they closed for business, but I am sure we will be going there very soon. We still have a few trips due for this year and I will be able to report on them once we have visited the various destinations planned.

Our meeting in July was held at Middle Aston House and 70 of us were all able to enjoy some delicious cakes and sandwiches all washed down with copious quantities of tea and coffee and most importantly, accompanied by wonderful company and the opportunity to 'put the world to rights'.

In August, we welcomed back Lee Wilkinson to entertain us with his guitar, singing and a few comical tales along the way. A great entertainer who is always welcome at The Valentine Club.

For our meeting this month, we bring Neil to the club to sing numbers from the 60s and 70s which, to be honest, most of us would own up to remembering those years of great music with sensible lyrics like 'Do, Wah, Diddy, Diddy', unlike the music of today!

To find more about The Valentine Club, simply visit our website at <https://valentineclub.wixsite.com/aston> or keep up-to-date by looking on the village website [www.steepleaston.org.uk](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk) or use that old-fashioned thing called a telephone and call me on 01869 340512

If you would like to support The Valentine Club and all the great things that we do why not have a go at [CherwellLottery.co.uk/support/the-valentine-club](http://CherwellLottery.co.uk/support/the-valentine-club) where you can participate in the Cherwell Lottery and hopefully, like many of our supporters, become a winner?

**Richard Preston – Group organiser**  
[Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com](mailto:Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com)



*Valentine Club members at Middle Aston House in July.*



# **Race Night**

**Saturday 14th October 2023**

**at and in aid of the**

**Sports and Recreation Centre**



**Doors open 6:30pm, Starter's Orders 7:00pm**

**£2 entry for Adults, Lucky Number Race Card  
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# Poetry Corner



## Souvenirs

For many years the British did not  
travel far from home  
English seaside resorts were as far  
as they would roam.  
And from their fortnight's holiday  
in Skegness or Morecambe Bay  
They'd bring home souvenirs, to  
remind them of their stay.

Sucking on striped rock shaped  
like a walking stick  
Wearing a cowboy hat with the  
slogan 'Kiss me Quick'.  
A wooden box with shells stuck  
on every side  
A professionally-taken snap of a  
turn on the donkey ride.

Then package holidays arrived  
and people could afford  
To go further afield, to travel  
abroad.  
Now they brought home souvenirs  
on an epic scale  
To prove they'd been to foreign  
parts and lived to tell the tale.

A snow globe of the Eiffel tower,  
some lavender soap from France  
From Spain a costumed doll doing  
a flamenco dance.  
A bottle of sickly limoncello, a  
reproduction of 'Starry Night'  
A lurid coloured poster showing a  
bloody bullfight.

And from Venice, the fleeced  
sightseer  
Brings a plastic gondola and a  
plastic gondolier.  
Imagine the scene on a packed  
charter plane  
Chockfull with tourists coming  
home from Spain.

Boarding is delayed by a British  
souvenir shopper  
Trying to stuff a straw donkey in  
the overhead locker.  
But these days souvenirs are on a  
minor scale  
Compared with things past  
travellers brought, modern  
mementos pale.

Marbles and artefacts swiped from  
ancient Greece  
Taken without a 'by your leave',  
or even a 'please'.  
Far worse than Blackpool rock in  
the shape of a dummy  
Bodies snatched from the  
Pyramids, including many a  
mummy.

India's Kohinoor diamond,  
priceless emeralds, pearls  
Taken back as souvenirs, as  
'presents for the girls'.  
How do we make amends? How  
can we atone  
For plundering national treasures  
like the Rosetta stone?

We really are quite shameless,  
we're unmoved by moral attack  
We are deaf to foreign pleading  
and just shake off the flak.  
We support local economies by  
buying tatty tourist bric-a-brac  
To ease our guilty conscience for  
all that stuff we won't give back.

*Cathy Lawday*

---

## A worm's eye view

on the horizon sits a bird  
it's been sitting there all day  
I know what's on its mind  
its waiting for its prey

and that would be me  
the source of either breakfast, lunch or tea

and there's no way of avoiding it  
as on that branch my foe will sit  
without a thought  
without remorse  
it's how it is  
it's nature's course  
but I can wait  
I'm patient too

there's nothing pressing I need do  
so sit and stare  
if that's your worst  
It's now a case of  
who cracks first....

... the day goes by  
we both stay firm  
the bird above  
below the worm  
the bird looks down  
I still remain  
the prey must pray  
that there's no rain

**Peter Wild**



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- live in Steeple or Middle Aston, or attended Dr Radcliffe's School for a minimum of 2 years.

In the past awards have been made to help fund school or college field trips, tools or equipment for apprenticeships or vocational training, uniforms for trainees, specialist software and laptops, equipment for students at college or university, travel costs, and help with living expenses for those living away from home.

Awards are made based on the financial needs of the applicant, so family household income is considered, but there is no restriction as to family income; each case is considered individually. Young people can apply any year that they are eligible regardless of whether they have received an award in the past.

Applications for the awards must be made by 11<sup>th</sup> November. Any late applications will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The scholarship committee then reviews the applications and aims to make awards during December.

To simplify the application process this year we are asking young people to apply electronically via a Google form. The link to this is given below as well as a QR code. The link can also be found on the Steeple Aston website and Facebook page.

<https://forms.gle/ZjxSi5FYxUPr5ya4A>



If you need help with the application process or need more information then please contact me, Tina Ferguson. My email address is [tina.merlins@gmail.com](mailto:tina.merlins@gmail.com)





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**and**

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September – 10am – 4pm**

**Wooden Christmas Decorations** – over the course of three evenings, hand paint, with festive designs, a wooden Christmas tree (made from recycled wood) and a set of tree decorations.

**Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November, 6:30 – 8:30pm (3-week course)**

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call 01869 349020 or email [shop@theindianblockprintco.com](mailto:shop@theindianblockprintco.com)





A little something different this month from AD&DPS – a guide to Street Photography as presented by Peter Crane at our Club night this month.

**Being a Street Photographer:** Peter thought Street Photography is a bit like fishing – you are out to catch a moment or chance event. You need to be alert and not switched off. You need to have a little confidence and a great deal of patience. By carrying his camera by his side in order to not bring attention to himself and by blending in, he can capture great shots by being at the right place at the right time.

**Peter demonstrated:**

Relationship of colours together.

Relationship of shapes – buildings, graffiti, road signs, posters etc. having a connection with people in the image.

Juxtaposition of signage with subjects – people with the many signs and text around us in our surroundings.

Similarities of people to their surroundings – people with the background.

Reflective surfaces to shoot images – use of windows, mirrors and puddles.

Atmospheric Silhouettes – use of street lighting at night

**What we learnt:**

Be patient. Be observant and quick to respond. That taking photographs of people in different settings, when they are going about their daily routines or adventures, needs to be done with respect and consideration. It is the observational glimpse of other's lives, without ridicule, that is the strength of this artistic form.

Our slideshow of members' images titled 'On the edge' closed the evening. There was a variety of interpretations from mountain edges, cliff edges, the edge of time and even 'On a knife edge'.

We look forward to seeing you at The Adderbury Institute on 30<sup>th</sup> September or 1<sup>st</sup> October for our Annual Exhibition. We have some fantastic images to share. Please come along.

*Courtney Killpack, [www.addphoto.co.uk](http://www.addphoto.co.uk)*

## Steeple Aston Garden Club



Our visit to Fir Farm, Upper Slaughter, a 1500 acre organic farm, was like stepping back in time. The farmhouse, stables, wildflower meadows, orchard and a very productive kitchen garden, were a joy to wander round. Jonathon Heath, the Head Gardener, gave us a very informative and amusing insight into the running of the estate. We were also treated to a very welcome cup of tea in the lovely sunshine. I don't think many of us wanted to leave – what a secret treasure Fir Farm is. Our contribution for the visit went to North Cotswold Food Bank, as requested by the owners.

Our visit in August was a tour of Aston Pottery Gardens at Bampton, some of us also taking the opportunity to have lunch there beforehand.

The Garden Club is looking for new members. You don't have to know much about gardening – we all learn so much from our summer visits, our speakers in winter and, of course, from chatting to each other. The annual cost to join is £10.00 per person. This also gives you discounts at Yarnton Nurseries, Nicholsons and Swallows Nursery and Plant Centre.

For further information please contact Richard Preston (tel. 340512) or Chris Clarke (tel. 347192). We would love to hear from you.

**Chris Clarke**  
**SAG. Secretary**



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# Village Hall News



The Village Hall now has its own website which it will use to continuously update with events and news. There is an online calendar showing what is currently booked and also the availability of both the committee room and the main hall. You can also book using the online booking form although it is (and always will be) possible to talk to and book through Angela, our letting agent.

We will have pages showing the facilities available at the hall and galleries of past events and links to our main users, but please let us know what you would like to see on the website. The website can be found at **savh.org.uk** or through the link on the main village website – **steepleaston.org.uk**

## **Forthcoming events (further details later):**

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> November: Annual Firework Evening, Robinsons Close, from 18:15

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December: Wassail Evening

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2024: Annual Quiz evening

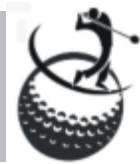
Our letting agent is Mrs. Angela Smith, telephone 07734112967 (please do not call this number between 6pm and 8pm unless urgent).

Email: **steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com**

Collect keys from 'Mijas' South Side, Steeple Aston. OX25 4RU.

**Barbara Brewer – chair**

# Steeple Aston Golf Society



The third game of the season was at The Springs where the weather was dry, the course was in good condition, the food was excellent and the staff friendly.

Fifteen players turned out on the day, with Eric Blincoe winning the Jubilee Cup with an excellent 37 points, five shots clear of runner-up Martin Kay. Eric also took the lucrative birdie two pot and was the only player to get one. He will be cut one shot for winning and one shot for scoring 37 points or more. Nearest the pin was Vaughan Billings and nearest the pin in 2 was Martin Kay. The guest prize went to Vinny Gee.

Our third meeting was on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> August where we played at Wrag Barn. Report in next month's Life and on the Steeple Aston website.

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September meeting is at The Vale, Bishampton, Pershore WR10 2LZ. This course offers an American-style layout, with large greens, trees, bunkers and several water hazards. Its rolling fairways provide a testing round, as well as superb views of the Malvern Hills. Picturesque and peaceful. It is a 12 noon get-together for a 13:00 start. If you fancy playing at this Jack Nicklaus designed course, please call Alan or Chris on 01869 340423 / 347173

*A golfer's life has ups and downs, out there on the link  
One stroke you're in the woodland the next you're in the drink  
So if you're buried in the sand and feeling under par  
Leave the golf ball where it lies, and stomp off to the bar.*

Happy golfing

**Alan Brewer (chair)**

The WI had a break in August, with no formal meeting. However, there have been social get-togethers. Some members enjoyed dinner at the *Red Lion* on the 7<sup>th</sup> July and there was another dinner at the *White Horse* in Duns Tew on the 17<sup>th</sup> August.

The WI had a stall at the Summer Flower Show on 28<sup>th</sup> August where they sold cakes and other home produce, and also accessories such as handbags, scarves and jewellery.

In September, they will once again be selling tea, coffee and juices, along with all manner of cakes, biscuits, cookies, etc., at a sale held in the Sports & Rec. building. This will be from 2pm to 5pm on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September – so come early and don't miss out!

Monthly meetings resume in September, on the second Tuesday of each month. The first, on 12<sup>th</sup> September, is a talk by Graham Sutherland entitled 'Drainpipe trousers to Rock 'n' Roll'. Visitors are very welcome, so if you are interested in joining the WI, do come along. Or contact President Julie Hillier ([j.hillier3@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:j.hillier3@hotmail.co.uk)). You will be made very welcome.

Cathy Lawday



# Church Matters



## Being Thankful!

Hopefully you have all had a lovely summer, with rest and relaxation.

September has come round and with it a new academic year. My prayers and best wishes to everyone starting at preschool, school or university.

With the arrival of September, it is the beginning of the harvest season and hopefully, as the well-known hymn says, “all is safely gathered in”. Each of our local churches will have special harvest services at the beginning of October – please look out for further details. The Harvest Festival is the time when we say thank you for all that God has provided for us. We say thank you to the farmers, who have worked hard all year to put food on our plates.

We should, though, also remember the huge number of other things that we should be thankful for. I have previously mentioned that at the end of the day I take time to stop and reflect on the day. One of the questions that my mediation app asks is “What are you thankful for this day?” Sometimes the answer is obvious, a special moment, receiving praise. There are other days when nothing remarkable appears to have happened. The day filled with the hum-drum of life. But if I take a moment to stop and reflect, then there are still many things to be thankful for.

Today, I did a pastoral visit and they were very thankful that I had come round for a chat.

Today, the sky is blue and sun is actually shining! In a summer which has seen lots of rain, a moment of sunshine is something to be thankful for. Especially as the forecast for the following day isn't as glorious.

Today, I listened to Radio 4's 'Today' programme and a lady in Maui relating the story of how she escaped the wildfires there. Repeatedly smelling smoke throughout the night, but not finding anything in the house, then a couple of hours later being woken by her neighbours and being told to “Get out now! Look outside.” and seeing the sky red with fire. She is thankful that they are safe and that their house has survived.

One of my daughters when starting secondary school was a little nervous, so she prayed and decided that she would wear her cross to school. The person she sat next to at lunchtime asked her about the cross and if she was a Christian. This was the beginning of a beautiful friendship that has lasted through secondary school and university and reached halfway round the world (as the friend moved abroad).

I invite you to take a moment, to reflect about “What are you thankful for today?”

**Harriet**



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# Church Services



	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley
<b>Sunday</b> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> September</b> Trinity 13	<b>9.30am</b> Holy Communion <i>BCP</i>	<b>11.00am</b> Morning Prayer	<b>5.30pm</b> Holy Communion
<b>Sunday</b> <b>10<sup>th</sup> September</b> Trinity 14	<b>9.30am</b> Morning Prayer	<b>11.00am</b> Holy Communion <i>BCP</i>	<b>5.30pm</b> Evensong
<b>Sunday</b> <b>17<sup>th</sup> September</b> Trinity 15	<b>9.30am</b> Family Service with Baptism	<b>11.00am</b> Family Service with Baptism	<b>5.30pm</b> Holy Communion
<b>Sunday</b> <b>24<sup>th</sup> September</b> Trinity 16	<b>9.30am</b> Morning Prayer	<b>11.00am</b> Holy Communion	<b>9.30am</b> Holy Communion
<b>Sunday</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup> October</b> Trinity 17	<b>9.30am</b> Harvest Service	<b>6.00pm</b> Harvest Evensong followed by supper	<b>5.30pm</b> Evensong
<a href="http://www.sntchurch.com">www.sntchurch.com</a>			




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# Local Info

## STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL HIRING FEES

Website: [www.savh.org.uk](http://www.savh.org.uk)

### All Facilities

#### Peak Times – involving hire after 6pm

Village Residents (up to 6hrs)	£65 (Plus Refundable Deposit £200)
(Additional hours at £10/hr)	
Non-Village (up to 6hrs)	£110 (Plus Refundable Deposit £300)
Non-Village (over 6hrs)	£160 (Plus Refundable Deposit £300)

#### Off-Peak – all hire before 6pm

Hourly Rate	£10/hr (or £30 for 4 hours)
Plus Refundable Deposit	£200

### Hall Only

Represented Clubs	£9 (up to 3hrs)
Others	£17 (up to 3hrs)
plus Refundable Deposit	£200

### Committee Room

Represented Clubs	£6 (up to 3hrs)
Others	£12 (up to 3hrs)
Letting Agent	Angela Smith (07734-112967)
Chairperson	Barbara Brewer (01869-340423)
Secretary	Margaret Bulleyment (01869-347346)

Represented Clubs must nominate a trustee to attend Village Hall committee meetings.

Discounted rate for represented clubs – 15% for six block bookings.

## Steeple Aston Sports & Recreation Centre Letting Charges

Social Function peak times: (Daily up to 6 hours, from 6.00pm)	£55.00
Social Function off-peak times: (Daily up to 5 hours, up to 6.00pm)	£27.50
Meeting of represented clubs: (Daily per session, max 2 hours)	£11.00
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Chair – Torquil McLusky Tel : 01869 347914	
Treasurer – Chris Cooper Tel : 01869 347173	

## BUS TIMES

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0717 0817 0920 1620 1731 1838 1933 2027 2127 2257

##### Saturdays

0722 0832 then hourly to 1532 1643 1753 1852 1941 2041 2218  
0817 0920 1620 1731 1838 1933 2027 2127 2257

##### Sundays and most public holidays

0907 1037 1207 1337 1507 1637 1808  
0955 1125 1255 1425 1555 1725 1853

#### From Steeple Aston (outside Post Office) to Banbury (arrival time in italics)

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0848 1648 1808 1918 2008 2053 2153 2315 0015

##### Saturdays

0809 0909 then hourly to 1609 1728 1838 1929 2024 2124 2246 2346  
0848 0948 1648 1808 1918 2008 2053 2153 2315 0015

##### Sundays and most public holidays

0917 1044 1214 1344 1514 1644 1823 1944  
0956 1123 1253 1423 1553 1723 1903 2023

Times subject to change. Before starting your journey please check the timetables at [www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables](http://www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables) E&OE

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## Rubbish bin collection day is Thursday

### September 2023

7 <sup>th</sup>	Blue and brown
14 <sup>th</sup>	Green
21 <sup>st</sup>	Blue and brown
28 <sup>th</sup>	Green



### October 2023

5 <sup>th</sup>	Blue and brown
12 <sup>th</sup>	Green
19 <sup>th</sup>	Blue and brown
26 <sup>th</sup>	Green

**Food caddy is collected weekly**

# Steeple Aston Calendar

Check the village website at [www.steepleaston.org.uk](http://www.steepleaston.org.uk) (Home > Calendar) for any changes.

Please send details of events for October and November to [editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)

<b>September</b>			
Saturday 2nd	Circus at Deddington School Field		
Wednesday 6th	AD&D Photographic Society. Scott Hurd from Namibia	Adderbury Institute	7.30pm
Friday 8 <sup>th</sup>	WI. Sale of coffee, tea, juice, cakes, cookies	S & R Building	2pm to 5pm
Saturday 9th	Annual Ride and Stride, sponsored ride round Oxfordshire churches		
Tuesday 12th	Valentine Club. Neil, with music of 60s and 70s	Village Hall	2.30pm
Tuesday 12th	WI. Graham Sutherland: 'Drainpipe trousers to Rock 'n' Roll'	Village Hall	7pm for 7.30pm
Wednesday 13th	Garden Club. Visit to Barton Abbey, Steeple Barton		
Wednesday 13th	Public meeting: More houses in Steeple Aston?	Village Hall	7.30pm
<b>Thursday 14th</b>	<b>SAL October 2023 copy and advert deadlines</b>		
Monday 18th	Parish Council meeting	S & R Building	7.30pm
Friday 22nd	New Zealand – illustrated talk by Janet Lincé	SA Church	7.00pm
Saturday 23rd	Deddington Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Saturday 23rd	Sustainable Steeple	Deddington Church	9am to 12.30pm
<b>October</b>			
Sunday 1st	Harvest Supper (following Harvest Festival Evensong)	Village Hall	
Tuesday 3rd	Garden Club. Alan Clark: 'Extreme Allotmenteeing'	Village Hall	7pm for 7.30pm
Saturday 7th	Steeple Aston Choral Society: Music for Pleasure	Village Hall	6.30pm for 7pm
<b>Saturday 14th</b>	<b>SAL November 2023 copy and advert deadlines</b>		
Monday 16th	Parish Council meeting	S & R Building	7.30pm
Tuesday 17th	Valentine Club. Fish & Chips, plus pudding (£8)	Village Hall	1.30pm
Saturday 28th	Deddington Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Saturday 28th	Sustainable Steeple	Deddington Church	9am to 12.30pm

**Choral Society Rehearsals.** Village Hall - 7.45pm - Mondays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 10am -12.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Bell Ringing practice.** Church Tower - 7.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Brownies.** Sport & Rec Centre - 6pm - 7.30pm - Wednesdays  
**Toddler Group.** Sport & Rec Centre - 9.30am -11.30am - Thursdays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 8pm - Thursdays  
**Village History Centre (SAVA).** 10am - 12pm - Saturdays

**Steeple Aston Life is published by Steeple Aston Life Committee**

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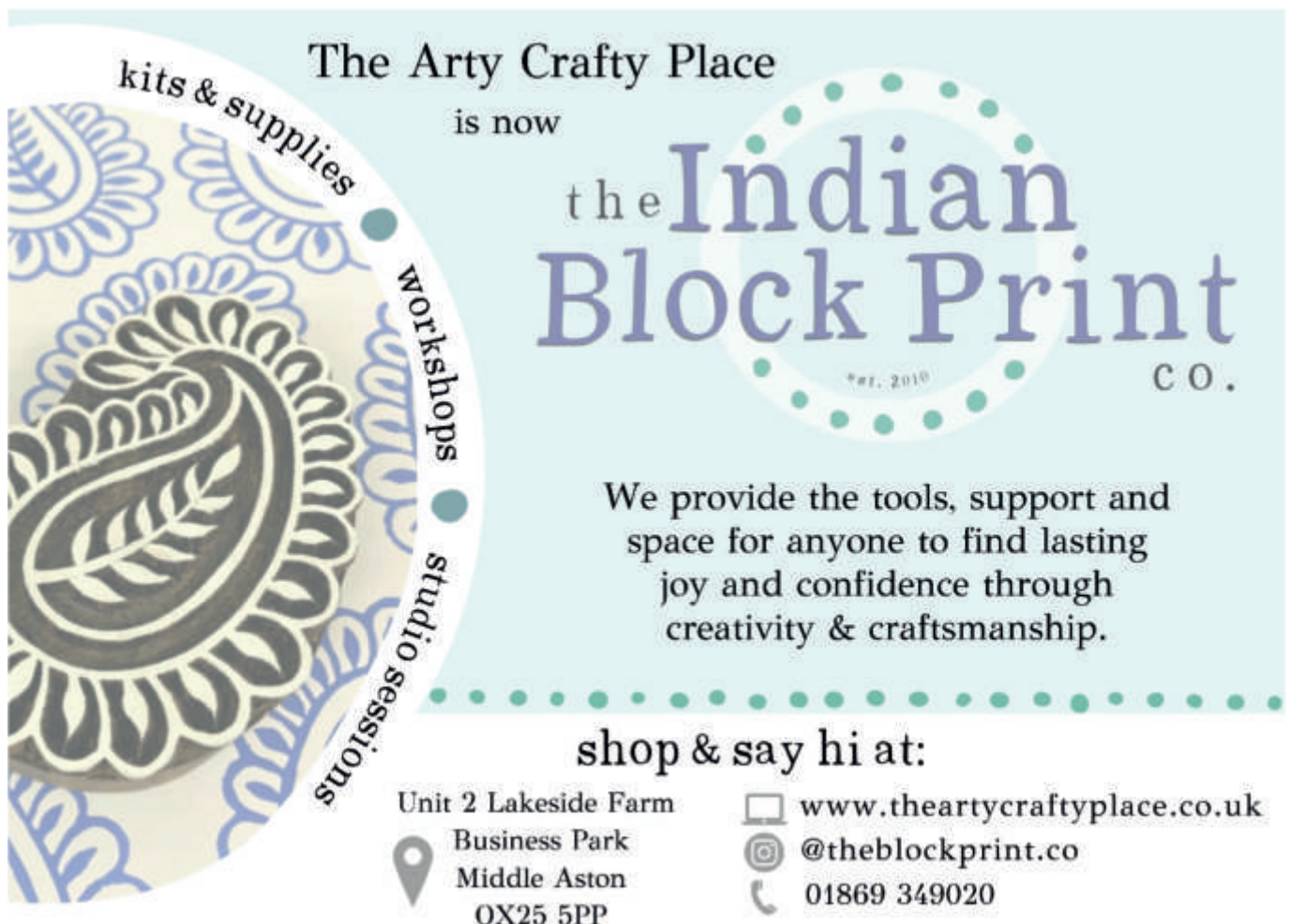
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