

# Steeple Aston *Life*

July 2025

Issue No. 623



**\*Soaring swifts\*   \*Summer fun\*   \*Middle Aston blooms\***



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Previous issues of SAL are also available on this site

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Cover photo: Rousham gardens, photo by Nigel Francis.

## Steeple Aston *Life*

### **COPY**

All articles and letters to  
the Editor  
**[editorialife@gmail.com](mailto:editorialife@gmail.com)**

### **COPY DEADLINES**

The copy deadline for the August 2025 issue is  
Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July

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<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> page - £18

Full page (village events only) - £20.00

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		Cllr Eddie Reeves	07445 395166
		Cllr David Rogers	07900 998555
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Village Website	Editor	Jenny Bell - steepleaston.org.uk	01869 943573
WI	President	Julie Hillier	01869 349185





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

## Steeple Aston *Life*

July 2025  
Issue No.623

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Jenny Bell, Nigel Francis

# Editorial

July is named after Julius Caesar, and being the second month of summer, is often the warmest of the year in the northern hemisphere. In early July, the 'dog days of summer' begin, named after the star, Sirius, part of the Canis Major (Greater Dog) star system. Historically observed in Ancient Roman and Greek astrology, 'dog days' were connected with bad luck, mad dog attacks, freak thunderstorms, heat and drought! We've just had one of our driest springs on record, and there are already murmurings of hosepipe bans! The 'dog days' signal the onset of hotter temperatures, when our canine companions are restricted to early or late perambulations of the village, or enjoy a refreshing doggie ice cream!

This season, villagers will no doubt be busy preparing entries for next month's summer horticultural show, enjoying a sizzling garden BBQ or a much-needed holiday escape. We offer ideas for fun summer activities, and also celebrate the splendid acrobatic displays of the swift, a welcome visitor to our shores. Album reviews of some gifted Canadian musicians are featured, and we would love to hear your thoughts on any books, films or musical delights you're enjoying this season.

Stay cool!

**Carol**



*George demonstrates how to enjoy the 'cat days' of summer! Photo by Chris Neville*



## Lazy summer reading

Now's the ideal time for kicking back on the sun lounger with a good book and an ice cool tipple. So why not share your passion with fellow readers? What has inspired you, made you howl with laughter (or tears), provoked deep contemplation, or was just a jolly good summer romp through the pages. Whether you're the member of a book club or purely indulge in reading as a solitary escape, it would be great to hear what captivated you over the summer. We would love your recommendations (or otherwise) on what's currently out there, or maybe an established novel you've just discovered. Email the Editor at: [editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com) with the books you've been reading. Reviews need be no more than half a page maximum (250 words) with a photo of the book cover if you wish. Get reading and enjoy!

## RAISE THE ROOF - HERE WE GO!

Once more, may we sincerely thank everyone who has so kindly donated towards repairing the church roof. You are all so very kind.

We have just received a promise from a large national fund that means we are nearly there! In fact, we are confident enough to ask our builder to start in September 2025, so that we can have a weather-proof roof over the Lady Chapel and the Vestry for the next winter. We'll be able to dispatch those many buckets under the vestry roof - hooray!

However, from our little display in the church porch, you may have seen that there is still need. We now have £87,000: some from our own funds, some in real gifts and some in promised gifts from major Trust funds. We still need more for ancillary things, such as funding for the various surveys and architect's fees etc, and the ever-important factor that, until the roof tiles are removed, nobody knows whether beams need changing. These would need to be oak to last the next 200 years, which are very expensive.

So, although this is a wonderful moment full of thanks and positive thoughts, we would still be more than grateful if anyone would like to help us financially to achieve this as a whole, for the sake of the parish, the village and our children's children. The autumn will be interesting at church, to say the least. Watch this space!

**Martin Dale, for the Parish Church Council**

## Dear Editor

I was interested to see a statement from Deddington Health Centre's Patient Participation Group in a recent issue of Steeple Aston Life. I applied to join the PPG in August last year, and they were 'delighted' to offer me a position on their virtual PPG. Having heard nothing more by February this year, I asked for an update. I've yet to receive a response to that request. Perhaps 'patient participation' isn't really their thing.

**Richard MacAndrew**



# Oxfordshire Artweeks

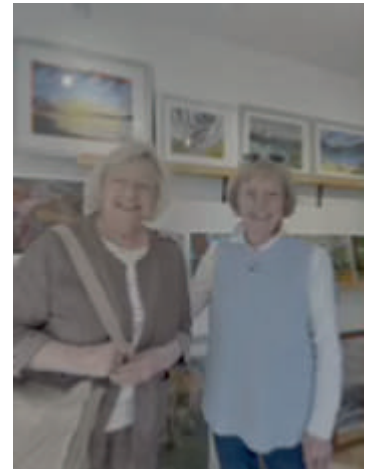
## Report



Thanks to all who visited Venue 383 in Bradshaw Close for this Year's Oxfordshire Artweeks Exhibition at the end of May. This was the first open studio exhibition in my newly constructed cabin, which now has space for a gallery as well as a work area (thanks to our local builder, Simon Bailey).

For those who missed Artweeks you are very welcome to pop in as the gallery is still set up - give me a call (07803 831497).

Picture shows visitors from near and far:  
Bev Davies with her sister, Heather Hetherington, visiting from Canada.



My triptych collage of Queenstown by Night (above) was also part of Artweeks as it was submitted for the 'Scenes Unseen' Art on a Postcard Silent Auction, raising money for the Chipping Norton Theatre online.

Sue King

[sue\\_king2@icloud.com](mailto:sue_king2@icloud.com)

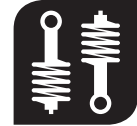
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A4260 corridor & Adjacent roads (Kidlington to Banbury)**

We're asking for your views on the proposal to introduce new lower speed limits on & along the A4260 corridor (including selected adjacent roads) between Kidlington at the south & Banbury to the north. Specifically, the proposals comprise of the following reduced speed limits:

1. 30mph speed limits on the A4260 Oxford Road at Bodicote & Banbury.
2. 40mph speed limits on the:
  - A4260 Oxford/Banbury Road at Hopcrofts Holt,
  - B4030 at Hopcrofts Holt,
  - A420 Banbury Road at Shipton-on-Cherwell, and
  - A4095 Bunkers Hill & Upper Campsfield Road at Shipton-on-Cherwell.
3. 50mph speed limits on the:
  - A4260 Banbury Road at Shipton-on-Cherwell,
  - A4260 Banbury Road at Rousham,
  - A4260 Oxford Road at Steeple Aston,
  - A4260 Oxford Road at North Aston,
  - A4260 Banbury Road at Deddington, and
  - B4027 at Tackley.
4. 60mph speed limit on the A4260 Oxford Road (Northbound carriageway only) at Middle Aston.

The proposals are being put forward - following investigations by Officers - as part of the Council's 'Vision Zero' strategy, which seeks to work on a safe system approach to reducing fatal and severe injuries to road casualties. The Council proposes to reduce vehicle speeds to safer levels for road users, including pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, motorcyclists, and all motorists.

The proposals are available to view on the Council's consultation portal at the address below:  
[letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kidlingtonbanbury\\_a4260\\_speeds2025](https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kidlingtonbanbury_a4260_speeds2025)

As stated on the notice, any objections or other representations on the proposals should be submitted by **Friday 04th July 2025**.

**Cllr Gareth Epps**  
Deddington Division

**Access to Banbury railway station (Tramway Road improvements)**

Phase three of construction started on 18 June. We will build the improved Station Approach Road and station west car park A with new drainage, surfacing, lighting, fencing and landscaping. We need to close Station Approach Road north and the station forecourt for drop off and parking (except for disabled access). Therefore, a number of changes will be in place until construction finishes, which is scheduled to end in December 2025.

For further details, please consult the website below.

**Tramway Road project team**

**Email:** [tramwayroad@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tramwayroad@oxfordshire.gov.uk) **Web page:** [oxfordshire.gov.uk/banburystation](https://oxfordshire.gov.uk/banburystation)

## Middle Aston Open Gardens

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June saw the first open gardens in Middle Aston for quite some time. Six different garden owners worked their green fingers to the bone in preparation for the event, three of which had never been opened to the public, so added to the appeal in visiting.



*Tea and delicious cakes were enjoyed after a garden stroll.*

Like any event organiser, plus one of the gardeners, I was glued to my weather app for the week before, hoping the wet afternoon forecast would change. As time moved on, the picture looked worse with the addition of a Met office yellow weather warning. However, the gods looked down on us, and it wasn't as bad as planned. We were blessed with some very hardy plant enthusiasts and locals who grabbed a brolly and visited. Steeple Aston WI provided tea and cakes for us. A welcome sight when wet visitors needed a warming break. Such a spread of delicious cakes was hard to resist. My thanks to WI members and other villagers for baking.

There were many villagers who helped put on the event, and I thank them wholeheartedly for their time. Thanks also go to Middle Aston House for allowing us to use their car park and opening the grounds. Most importantly, the garden owners: Dorothy & Graham Clifton, Nuur & Hannah Norbury-Meeajane, John & Caroline Williamson, Caroline Parsons and Kate Symondson & Will Spray.

Everyone's hard work paid off, and I'm delighted to report we raised £1,250 towards the Church roof appeal.

Nigel Francis had visited the gardens ahead of the event, when the sun was shining, so you can enjoy his photos too.

**Vicky Clifton**



*Edward Austin at the cake stall.*

*Photos: Graham Clifton*



## Middle Aston in Bloom



*Photos: Nigel Francis*





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# Letter from *Westminster*

*SAL's regular epistle from our MP, Sean Woodcock*



As always, I've been busy representing and working for the constituents of Banbury. I've been speaking up in Parliament about various issues affecting local people, including overcrowding on Chiltern Railways' trains. Constituents have regularly told me about the issues they've faced regarding poor service on Chiltern trains to or from Banbury, so I was pleased to hear that the Department of Transport is working with Chiltern Railways to improve procurement and refurbish carriages. I followed this up more recently in a meeting with the Rail Minister, Lord Hendo, to discuss overcrowding further, and to follow up on the progress that the Department for Transport are making. I will continue to monitor these issues and stay informed about any future updates.

I have spoken in the Chamber on the provision of youth services, given that 19/25 of Oxfordshire's youth services were closed under the Conservatives. I later met with the Distraction Community Youth Project to discuss youth work in Banbury and the local area. My other contributions have included the use of drones, where I was pleased to hear that drone development will be supported, increasing Britain's security. I also welcomed the news that 2,017 more children in the Banbury constituency will start receiving free school meals from September, which is set to make a real difference in regard to attainment, behaviour and attendance of children in our schools.

In the constituency, I have been out and about in Souldern, Charlbury and Hook Norton speaking to residents, and holding regular surgeries listening to constituents' issues and offering support and advice. Speaking to local people always shapes the issues I champion, such as writing to Sainsbury's to ask them to reconsider their decision to shut the customer toilets in the Banbury store on Oxford Road. I heard of the difficulties faced by constituents as a result of this decision, so I will continue to monitor this, and hope that the decision will be reversed. As always, if anyone would like to book a time to meet with me, you can email me at [sean.woodcock.casework@parliament.uk](mailto:sean.woodcock.casework@parliament.uk) and my team will set up an appointment.

I have been assisting constituents with other issues raised, including helping to get a blocked sewage pipe fixed that left them unable to use the toilet in their house, and arranging support from the Home Office to allow my terminally ill constituent's daughter to visit from Pakistan. I have been speaking to and meeting with local groups, businesses and venues to hear their ideas and understand their concerns. Through meeting with these groups, I have been able to understand the challenges faced, see their hard work in action and realise how I can provide increased support moving forward. I have also held meetings with local groups and stakeholders, including a Policing and Crime Roundtable meeting, engaging with Thames Valley Police and other stakeholders to hear solutions on, and understand how to better tackle crime in our towns and villages. Additionally, I have met with representatives of the Country, Land and Business Association, National Farmers' Union and NE Cotswold Farmers' Cluster, alongside local farmers, to discuss issues and how I can offer further support. This is on top of attending a roundtable meeting with the National Farmers Union to understand these issues in more detail.

## Steeple Aston Parish Councillors

Angharad Lloyd-Jones (Chair)

Martin Lipson (Vice Chair), Planning,  
Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan Forum

Peter Dammermann

Greg Elphick

Charlotte Powell, Sports & Recreation Centre,  
Environment

Mathew Watson

Cathy Fleet – Parish Clerk

Email: [parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com](mailto:parishclerk.steepleaston@gmail.com)

I have written to the government, urging them to support the recognition of Palestine at the UN conference in June, and have been vocal in my support for the NC1 amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill, which will decriminalise abortion and provide support for vulnerable women and girls. Additionally, I have been pleased to welcome investments into our local public services, with Labour's announcements of funding to schools and hospitals set to benefit the Warriner school and the Horton General Hospital – my former school and birthplace. I know the difference this will make to people's lives, as our local children and hospital patients will benefit from improved facilities and services. As always, supporting local people and the constituents of Banbury shapes my priorities, and every day I work hard to make sure residents' voices are heard. I will continue to champion the needs of Banbury and local people in my work, both in the constituency and in Parliament.

**Sean Woodcock MP**

## Steeple Aston footpaths guide

Are you new to the village, or interested in exploring our beautiful countryside?

Why not pick up 'A Guide to the Footpaths in & around the parish of Steeple Aston' from the village shop, priced at just £2.00, to discover seven local routes. As the last Cotswold village, with the River Cherwell marking the end of the Cotswolds, the surrounding hills and valleys bring a pleasant air of tranquility. Footpaths vary in length from 2km to 5.2km with different routes available. This informative guide is produced by Steeple Aston Life, therefore, all sales help with production costs of the magazine. Thank you.

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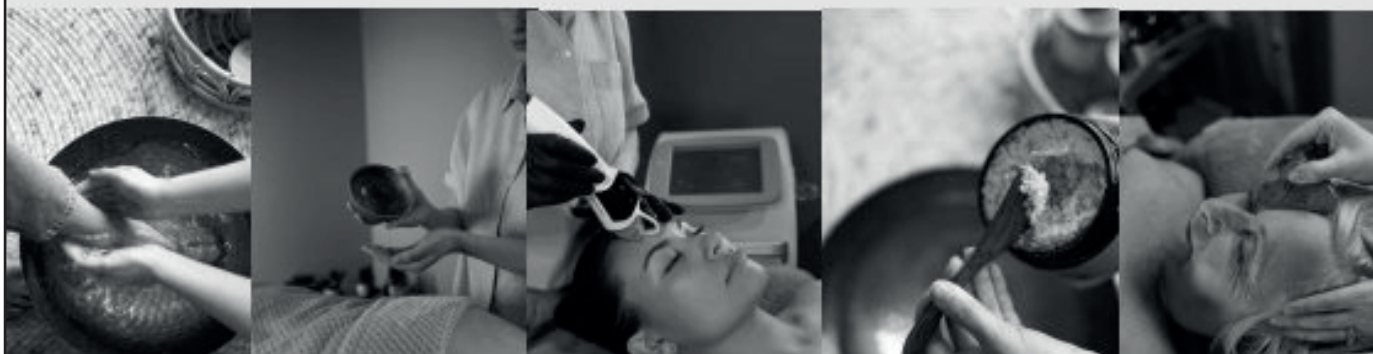
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


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# The ARTS Page



## Not in the top 50? They should have been!

In 2023, *Rolling Stone* magazine listed the 50 best Canadian singers and bands of all time. All the usual suspects were there from Joni Mitchell, Leonard Cohen and four-fifths of The Band, through to Celine Dion, Avril Lavigne and Justin Bieber. However, three names were not mentioned which should surely have been included in the top 50, if not the top 20, by virtue of outstanding albums.

In 2014, **The Barr Brothers** released the album *Sleeping Operator*, which has been on my playlist ever since. It is a unique, meticulously crafted, warm mix that blends Appalachian sounds with Americana, folk and African rhythms. Their totally original songs use any instruments to hand: harp, banjo, dulcimer, marimba and ngoni. When I saw them earlier this year, they even played the spokes of a bicycle wheel! The result is not a jumbled mishmash, but a wonderfully eclectic album packed with beautifully constructed, original songs which sound like nothing you will hear elsewhere. Despite somewhat opaque lyrics, from the simple instrumental opening of *Static Orphans*, through to the gorgeous hymn-like finale of *Please Let Me Let It Go*, the album is a totally original, rich melodic feast.

*Come Morning* is the 2022 release by **The Bros. Landreth**. Drawing on the musical inspirations they grew up listening to – Bonnie Raitt, Little Feat, and Ry Cooder among others – Joey and Dave Landreth have put together a gentle, understated alternative country/folk album that is pure pleasure. Harmonically interesting music, well-crafted lyrics, excellent guitar work and slide solos make an album that is rooted in joy and optimism.



Best of the three, in my opinion, is **Allison Russell**. Her 2021 album, *Outside Child*, creates something beautiful from a shocking upbringing. At fifteen, she fled a decade of abuse by her stepfather and lived on the streets, first in her hometown of Montreal; then in Vancouver where, in her own words, “music saved me”. From this harrowing background emerges an astonishingly uplifting album of catharsis, recovery and hope, with a real Americana flavour. Russell plays banjo and clarinet, and is accompanied by an excellent band of musicians, her distinctive voice blending seamlessly with first-class harmony singers. Her lyrics do not spare the listener: *Blood on my shirt, two ripped buttons/Might have killed me that time, oh if I'd let him* but her resilience shines through as in *hy-brazil*, an homage to her Scottish Canadian grandmother:

*Though I drowned for ten years, I'm still rising  
Stronger for my pain and suffering  
My body was broken but my heart's reborn  
I'm freer than the sky*

If you stream the album and like what you hear, buy the CD. The liner notes contain a brief, illuminating background to each song, and a translation of the occasional verses that are in French.

## Songsmith



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On a bright sunny evening in June, members of Steeple Aston WI gathered in Sally Cooper's garden, where Chris Cooper and the SAWI committee gave a demonstration of how to host a perfect barbeque. We were joined by several new members who have transferred from Heyford WI, which has unfortunately closed down. This brings our total membership to a very healthy thirty-eight. President, Julie Hillier, thanked all those who had baked cakes to be sold at Middle Aston Open Gardens, which, despite the poor weather, had raised over £1,500. We also received the news that SAWI member, Hildy Frenken, has completed the Camino de Santiago walk, raising a magnificent £950 for Katharine House Hospice. Julie had attended Fringford Village Hall to take part (electronically) in the National WI AGM. The technology did not run as smoothly as hoped, and proceedings were hampered by occasional freezing and lack of sound, but the resolution was voted on and passed. The WI nationally is still a powerful force for change in the country. It gained over 22,000 new members last year. Attendees were given information about the WI podcast, free online workshops, and the 'My WI' website; and also learnt that for reasons of cost, NFWI is to dispose of the HQ building in London.

The meeting was then addressed by two excellent speakers: Emma Bridgewater and Angel from the Chateau. The speaker at our meeting this month is Liz Wooley, who will talk about brewing in Oxford. Liz will also be leading this month's walk, a tour of Oxford on 10th July. It will start on Park End Street at 10.00am and finish on Pembroke Street, off St Aldates, about two hours later. It costs £7.50 and requires a minimum number, so please sign up. Our September walk will be at Broughton Castle, followed by lunch at The Four Stones. At the Church Fete this month, we will have a stall with various competitions to raise money for the church roof. Then in August, at the Horticultural Society Summer Show, our stall will be selling home-made cakes, jams and chutneys, and also nearly new bric-a-brac. So, will members please start preserving, and also sorting through your cupboards for unwanted items in good condition! Profits will go towards the cost of next year's programme of events, outings and speakers. Wishing all our members, both long-standing and more recent, a sunny and relaxing summer.

**Cathy Lawday**

### PC report

Unfortunately, there will be no Parish Council Report in this issue, due to the meeting being held at the end of June after the SAL deadline. Therefore, the August issue of SAL will include PC reports from both the June and July meetings. For further details of PC meetings, please refer to the Parish Council section of Steeple Aston website: [steepleaston.org.uk](http://steepleaston.org.uk)

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## Claire Coysh



**Which village do you live in? How long have you lived here?**

Steeple Aston, 12 years.

**What do you like best about living here?**

Smiling and saying good morning/afternoon/evening to people that you pass on the street.

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

Paines Hill.

**Where do you think of as 'home'?**

Steeple Aston.

**A potted history of yourself in 40 words or less:**

Raised in Hampshire, to Oxford aged 19 for Mental Health Nurse training. 5 years of nursing, moved into dementia and neurodegenerative diseases research. Met husband, two children later, still in research but a managerial role that fits with mum life.

**Early bird or night owl? Cat or dog?**

Night Owl. Two Cats (Rhubarb and Ambrose).

**Optimist or pessimist? Fast-paced or relaxed?**

Optimist. Relaxed.

**Technology – friend or foe?**

Technology is my friend, but it's not my bestie.

**What was the best thing about your childhood?**

The world was my oyster.

**What was your first job? And your current job?**

Care Assistant in a Nursing Home. Now I'm a Programme Manager for the Thames Valley & Surrey Secure Data Environment.

**What's your guilty pleasure?**

'Married at First Sight'.

**Tell us about your hobbies:**

I love people, anyone who knows me knows I love to chat! In the odd moment I'm not nattering, I do enjoy embroidery, cooking and I'm really trying to get back into reading.

**What food do you most enjoy eating?**

Chocolate is everything.

**Do you have a signature dish?**

I make a damn good Cornish Pasty (recipe and method unchanged from my Cornish granny).

**Who do you most admire and why?**

Anyone who has the courage to be different.

**What law would you pass if you could?**

Assisted Dying.

**If you won the lottery, what would you splash out on?**

A holiday home in Mawgan Porth (Cornwall).

**What was your favourite holiday destination & why?**

India. I spent a few months there on my gap year, and returned more recently for a holiday around Rajasthan. I love the people, the colours and the scenery.

**What is your favourite saying or piece of advice?**

"Always be a little kinder than necessary" and also "If you think the grass is greener elsewhere, water your grass."



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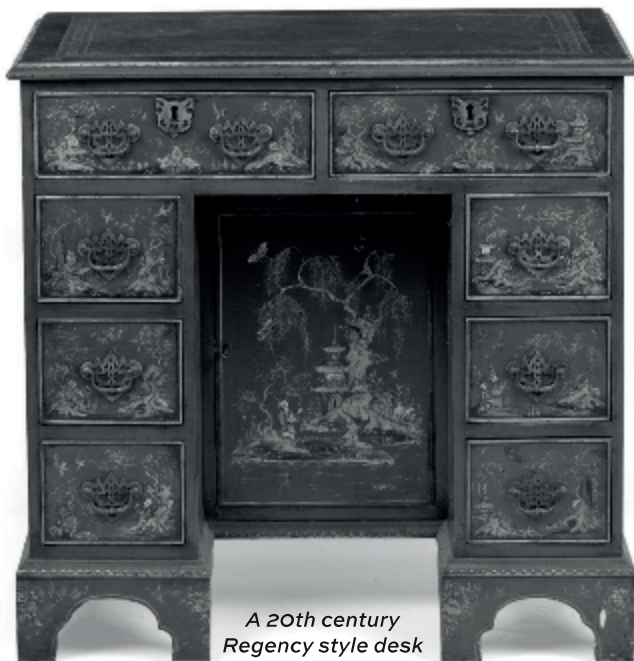
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## THE VALENTINE CLUB

Way back in May (seems like a lifetime ago), we had a very enjoyable, possibly enlightening, talk by Bill King on 'Yesterday's Childhood' rekindling memories of our early days, back as far as the Victorian era. How things have changed, as some decades ago, electricity had only just come to the fore and the idea of playstations or mobile phones were a thing for books of fantasy, or maybe HG Wells. Very noticeably, as Bill came onto toys and pastimes from the 1940s, the audience started to murmur with the talk of, "I had one of those", or "life was simpler in those days".

Only two days later, we were off on the coach to Oakham Treasures in Somerset, and what a treasure this turned out to be. I don't think anyone on the coach had heard of Oakham, let alone visited this amazing place. If you can imagine some very large agricultural barns filled with, well you name it, it was there! Tractors from some of the first to those still being used today. Bridal shops, sweet shops, chemists, haberdashery, grocery and many more, all set out in their original form, with beautiful wooden counters, containers of every description and publicity signs by the hundred, and that is not an exaggeration. To compliment this, there was a superb restaurant serving wonderful, locally produced food at very reasonable cost. All owned and managed by one family, who are responsible for the entire collection.

Our June meeting welcomed Chris, who visited us for the first time and sang songs from the 50s upwards, and later in the month we will have visited The Severn Valley Railway at Kidderminster, starting off with a meal at their restaurant, then boarding a diesel train to Highley, before a return journey by steam.

This month, we are taking a break from the village hall, and will meet at Rousham House for 'high tea' and an opportunity to visit the historic and world-renowned gardens, courtesy of Charles and Angela Cottrell-Dormer. Two days later, we are off again by coach, this time to visit Hatfield House and grounds.

As I pointed out last month, our club is running at capacity of 100 members with a waiting list, but I received this email from a lady a few weeks ago and thought you might like to read this slightly reduced version.

***"My husband died two and half years ago so I am finding it tough. I am 80 now, so travelling to Steeple Aston might be tricky, although sometimes I know a bus used to go that way from Adderbury which, at the moment, I can drive to. I used to belong to the Evergreens at Adderbury, but it could not continue after Covid because the methodist church wanted paying for their hall, so it was no longer viable with falling numbers. Then the chapel closed. In Bloxham, there isn't anything like that. The senior citizens only did bingo which I hate. So, there is nowhere for affordable trips or holidays. So, it is really depressing. The Bloxham school stopped the Xmas party and lunch".***

This rather sad email provides some evidence that Steeple Aston is a pretty good place to live, even if you are getting that bit older! Thank you to all those people who have decided to join The Cherwell Lottery and support the club, raising well over £1,200 in revenue which makes an enormous difference to what we can do with the club. Although we organise six, or more, day trips, and have some amazing entertainers and speakers, the expenses keep rising. A coach is now around £850 each trip, and good speakers and entertainers do not come cheap, so if you feel like supporting us 'oldies', why not subscribe to The Cherwell Lottery? Simply google

***[CherwellLottery.co.uk/support/the-valentine-club](https://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.

To find out more about The Valentine Club, then simply visit our website on ***[valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston](https://valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston)*** (easiest way to log on is go to the village website; go to 'clubs and societies', and find The Valentine Club and click on the link), or keep up to date by looking on the village website ***[steepleaston.org.uk](https://steepleaston.org.uk)*** or use that old-fashioned thing called a telephone and call me on 01869 340512.

Richard Preston – Group organiser (for lack of a better description)

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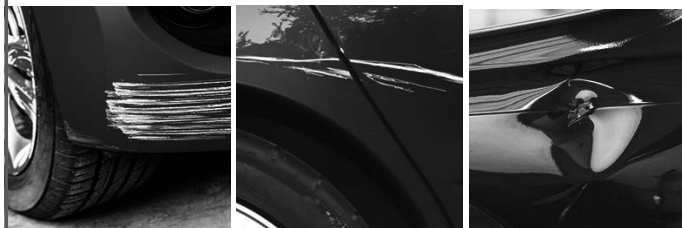
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# Village Hall News



## 2026 Calender - Get on the Front Cover!

The village hall trustees are making a calendar to sell and raise funds for our fabulous facility, but we need your help. In partnership with the horticultural society, we're inviting you to take part and snap a photo for the front cover.

The rules: Photos must be of Steeple Aston; taken in landscape format and max 5" x 7", (Jpeg required if successful). Photos will be judged at the Horticultural Society's Summer Show.

To enter a photo, you'll need to enter the Show as normal for Division 10 Class 140. More details about this in the show schedule, available on [steepleaston.org.uk/](http://steepleaston.org.uk/) or a paper copy will be available from Harris Stores.

## Sponsorship required - Annual bonfire & fireworks evening

It may surprise you to know that the spectacular fireworks display only happens because a few generous businesses sponsor the event. Ticket sales don't cover it all. So, if your business would like to get involved and keep this wonderful village event going, please get in touch with myself or a member of the committee. Every little helps.

**Your hall... it's there to be used!** Do you have a family party coming up? Running a workshop? Need space to practice your drums without upsetting the neighbours? Well, hiring the hall for a few hours may be the answer, and may be cheaper than you think. Check out rates on our website: [savh.org.uk/](http://savh.org.uk/)

## Forthcoming events

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> November: Annual bonfire and firework evening**

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December: Wassail evening**

**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2026: Annual Quiz Night**

Our letting agent is Mrs Angela Smith – 07734 112967.

Please do not call this number between 6.00pm and 8.00pm unless urgent.

Email [steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com](mailto:steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com)

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Victoria Clifton (Chair) [savh.org.uk/](http://savh.org.uk/)

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## Poppy Cascade update

We continue to be thrilled and very grateful that so many people are continuing to work away at producing poppies for the Cascade, which will make its grand appearance on Remembrance Day. Especial thanks to the anonymous poppy makers who quietly add poppies to the box in church! Thanks, too, go to Graham Clifton who hung the 'Poppy Cascade in Progress' for VE Day. Many of you have had the opportunity to glimpse how it looks so far, but there is much work to be done to attach hundreds more poppies to the netting to complete the cascade. Sewing sessions will be held on Thursday mornings and afternoons – please volunteer if you can spare some time. Give either Merrill (01869 347802) or Eileen (01869 340099) a ring if you are able to help. We look forward to seeing you.

**Hildy, Kay, Merrill and Eileen**

## News from your County Councillor – Gareth Epps



A lot has happened in the first month or two since becoming the new County Councillor for The Astons, Deddington and Heyford Park in a redrawn Deddington county division. Thank you to all who took part in the election in whatever way.

The annual meeting of the Council was overshadowed by the terrible news from Bicester of the loss of life of two firefighters and a worker at the Bicester Motion centre. I have signed the book of condolence; the council observed a minute's silence, and there will be opportunities in due course to mark the memory of those involved. The courage and bravery of those who put themselves forward to protect us goes without saying. All our deepest sympathies go to the family and friends of those who didn't make it home after answering the call.

A consultation was launched in June on speed reductions for the A4260 [closing date 4 July]. This forms part of a countywide speed reduction campaign. I am following up on a number of repairs and potential improvements to this as well as repairs to the County's roads. After many years of 'managed decline', every gutter will be cleaned this year, with our area due in the late summer. There is resurfacing scheduled for several locations including by Heyford Station and at Somerton and Heyford Park.

Steeple Aston is one of the luckier villages in the division when it comes to a bus service: the S4 and X4 are well used. A lot of work goes on to try and safeguard and improve bus services, and I have had an early briefing with officers to discuss a number of issues raised during the election. I have been chasing progress on items raised by parish councils and residents.

A recommendation is coming forward to go out to consultation this summer on a time-limited version of the Oxford city traffic filters scheme, using the filter locations as charging points. The main drivers behind the recommendation are to mitigate congestion, as requested very forcefully by the bus companies, and to enhance bus services by the twin benefits of freeing up road space and generating revenue to potentially enhance services further. Additional benefits would include greater safety, more space for walking and cycling, and better air quality. All permits and exemptions are carried over from the approved traffic filters scheme, so that the daily lives of, for example, traders, health workers, blue-badge holders, those with regular medical appointments, etc, will be significantly better.

There is plenty going on that isn't transport. Social care is the biggest spending item; there is interesting work starting on health equality as we look to become a 'Marmot Place'. Efforts continue to address challenges in Special Educational Needs provision, a cause close to my heart.

You can contact me at [gareth.epps@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:gareth.epps@oxfordshire.gov.uk) – and I will report back regularly to the parish council.

**Cllr Gareth Epps**  
Deddington Division



## New Cherwell District Councillor (Deddington Ward): Zoe McLernon

I'm delighted to introduce myself as your new District Councillor, following the recent Cherwell by-election in May. It's a real privilege to represent Steeple Aston. Since the election I've already taken up local casework for the village, raising issues with both Cherwell District and Oxfordshire County councils to help get answers and action where needed. I'm following in the footsteps of your former councillor, Andrew McHugh, who has been a dedicated and tireless advocate for Steeple Aston and the wider area. He has left big shoes to fill, and I'd like to thank him for all he's done for the ward.



I am eager to hear from local residents about the issues that matter to you. I will also do my best to attend as many Parish Council meetings as possible, as I know that they are among the best ways to hear directly from residents and stay connected to the community's concerns and priorities.

A bit about me. After university I worked in politics before moving into transport policy, and I'm now a Communications Consultant for rail infrastructure projects across the UK. I live in Hooky with my fiancé and our dog, Walter. I'll be getting married in September and celebrating nearby at Middle Aston House, which is very exciting!

I will represent the village to the best of my ability, and I will work closely with Cllr Eddie Reeves and Cllr David Rogers to ensure your voice is heard. Please do feel free to get in touch with me via my council email. I'll always try to help.

### Zoe McLernon

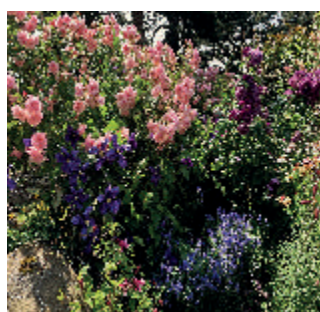
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## Steeple Aston *Garden Club*



### Garden Club visit - Kiftsgate Court Garden



With the clouds gathering and rain beginning to fall, those who were brave enough, commenced their drive to Kiftsgate Court Garden in Gloucestershire for the June meeting of SAGC. On arrival, the rain was still falling, but with the aid of raincoats and umbrellas, we set off to view what can only be described as a magical garden, filled with colour and perfume. But, as the old saying goes, "the sun shines on the righteous," and after a short while we were all bathed in warm sunshine and able to take in the views that presented themselves from just about all angles. We all agreed that the garden was probably in its prime with so many roses in full bloom, and just about every other flowering plant displaying their attributes to full glory. To finish off what can best be described as a glorious afternoon, many of the members indulged in a cream tea from the garden's café before returning home with plants that are very rarely found in garden centres.

For our garden visit in July, we will be visiting Bridewell Gardens on Thursday, 10th July from 6.00pm – 8.00pm. Address is Bridewell Gardens, The Walled Garden, Wilcote, near Chipping Norton OX7 3DT. Cost for members is £10.00 pp which includes a cup of tea or coffee. This garden is focussed on mental health recovery. We had a speaker Ruth Madder, Bridewell's Director, from the garden in February 2024, and she will be hosting us again this time! As always, if you can car share, so much the better. Guests welcome.

**Richard Preston - Steeple Aston Garden Club**



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## All About Sustainable Palm Oil

### What is palm oil?

It's an edible vegetable oil that comes from the fruit of oil palm trees. The scientific name is *Elaeis Guineensis*. Two types of oil can be produced: crude palm oil comes from squeezing the fleshy fruit, and palm kernel, or the stone in the middle of the fruit. Oil palm trees are native to Africa, but were brought to South-East Asia too.

### Why is palm oil bad?

Many products contain unsustainable palm oil, where manufacturers commit acts like deforestation and the destruction of animals' habitats in pursuit of their own wealth. Unsustainable palm oil production not only creates greenhouse gases, which accelerates climate change and can cause wildfires, but can also exploit local farmers and even children. Boycotting palm oil entirely is not the solution, as many workers could lose their jobs and possibly not be able to find another one. It doesn't have to be this way.



### What is sustainable palm oil?

Palm can be farmed sustainably, producing oil using the lowest environmental impact possible by improving farming techniques and treating farmers fairly. Chester zoo, who is running a campaign for sustainable palm oil, say "the average carbon footprint of sustainable palm oil is 36% lower" than for unsustainable palm oil.

### Where can I buy sustainable palm oil?

The Palm oil scan app allows you to scan your favourite products, and learn if they are made using sustainable palm oil.

Examples of products that contain sustainable palm oil are:

- Betty Crocker cake mixes
- Anti Dandruff Caffeine Shampoo
- Divine chocolate




Written and illustrated by Will L, Rufus R, Rayna, Faisal and Tala

Members of the Eco-Committee at Dr Radcliffe's C of E Primary School



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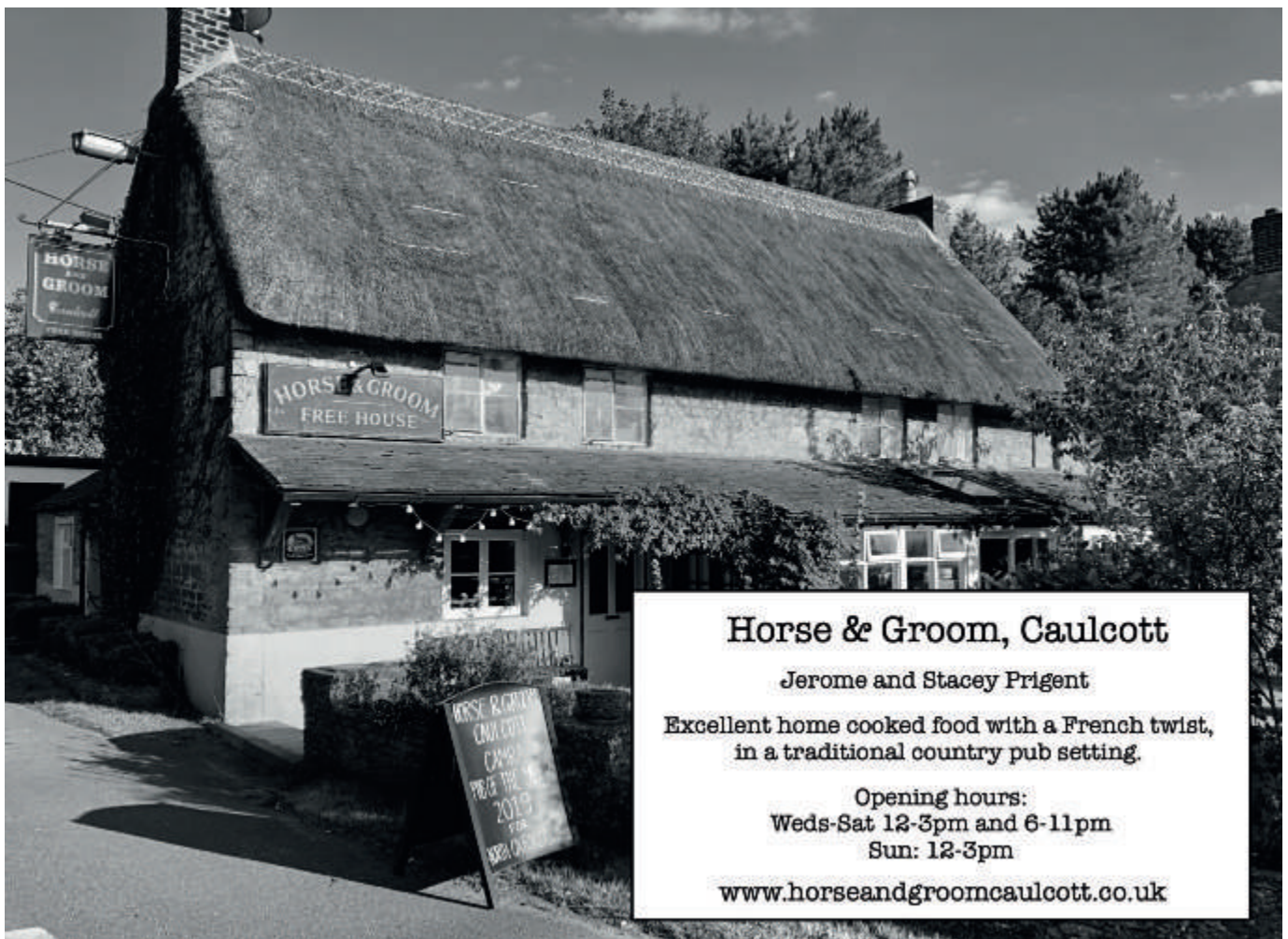
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## Home Generated Renewable Energy

On Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June, Steeple Aston Environmental Committee organised a talk on solar power and heat pumps. It was attended by 37 (mostly villagers), and given with great passion and enthusiasm by Ian Williams. Ian, a former chartered surveyor, works for Forever Green Energy who operate across the Cotswolds.

Hard to distill succinctly 1.5 hours of discussion, but here goes:

- Heat pumps, whether air source or more costly ground source, work best with solar to pay for the electricity, and in modern houses with underfloor heating. So, not appropriate for the majority of houses.
- Solar panels, once an exercise in altruism, are now just common sense. Why?
  - Saving money on your bill (electricity prices likely to double over the next 10 years).
  - Earning money – selling surplus to the Grid.
  - Installations paid for from cash savings earned, in effect, a tax-free return of @10% on your investment. Compared to, say, a 3% taxed return on the cash.
  - A solar power system will raise the value and EPC rating of your house.
- Installation: choose a recommended, local MCS registered supplier. Insist on the latest technology (incorporating AI). Avoid doing your own research (too confusing) and taking up 'special offers'. E/W facing roofs ideal. Installation in 2-3 days including scaffolding.
- Opt for as many panels as possible, and include battery storage of at least 5 kWh capacity.
- Planning permission required for listed buildings. Council has guidelines.
- Get a smart meter and tariff via Octopus.

**Chris Nevile**

chris.nevile@gmail.com

## Join the Big Butterfly Count



The **Big Butterfly Count** is a nationwide citizen science survey aimed at helping us assess the health of our environment. It was launched in 2010 and has rapidly become the world's biggest survey of butterflies. Over 64,000 citizen scientists took part in 2022, submitting 96,257 counts of butterflies and day-flying moths from across the UK. The Big Butterfly Count 2025 reopens on the 1st of July ready for the main event between the 18th of July and 10th of August. For details of how to get involved, visit the website: [bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org](https://bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org)

*Photo: courtesy of Butterfly Conservation*

## Poetry Corner



### Odd Times

Now is not the time to sit on the fence  
as we will find the tip is sharp  
it matters not - trade or defence  
it's not the time to carp  
because  
to bargain we will need some chips  
there is no gain from soundbite quips  
it's hard out there  
now read my lips  
the changes are immense

the enemy is silent now  
contracts broken  
sacred cow  
a virus here a virus there  
we're swatting ghosts  
who do not care  
the rules are broken gloves are off  
it's galling when you have to doff  
your cap at someone mealy-mouthed  
we bend but do not bow

Peter Wild





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What a great opening day on Tuesday 20th May at The Vale Golf Club, Evesham,

For those that feel they didn't play well, they must have enjoyed looking at the pair of oystercatchers, hares, rabbits, deer, pheasants, egyptian and canadian geese, mallards plus the sound of the cuckoo.

The course was as you would expect from a Jack Nicklaus track - beautifully manicured fairways, well-designed bunkers, and greens that were a pleasure to putt on. This was all backed up by a splendid meal, washed down with a cool drink.

In first place was Nigel Mills, who certainly had his Weetabix, as he hasn't lifted a golf club since October, and scored 34 stableford points off a handicap of 20.

Runner up Alan Brewer: 33 points off 15.

N.P. the 5th hole: Nigel Mills.

N.P. in 2: Nigel Mills.

Birdie 2's: Richard Watkin, who chipped in from 25 yards on the 5<sup>th</sup> - he will tell you it was more like 30 yards.



*SAGS Winners:*

*L/R Nigel Mills, Alan Brewer, Richard Watkin.*

Our July meeting is on Friday the 18<sup>th</sup>, being held at The Springs Golf Club, Wallingford OX10 6BE. We meet at 12 noon for a 1.00pm start.

If you're a golfer and have never played this course, then come along and join us. You will not be disappointed, in fact, you will be in for a treat. This parkland course is bordered by the River Thames, and contains three lakes and challenging wetland areas - a very typical American design. I just love the old clubhouse which overlooks the 18th green.

For more information, please call Alan or Chris on 01869 340423/347173.

*Part 3 of the St Mellons Golf and Country Club Monmouthshire during the Battle of Britain in the Second World War. The positions of known delayed-action bombs are marked by red flags at a reasonable, but not guaranteed safe distance. Part 4 A ball moved by enemy action may be replaced, or if lost or destroyed, a ball may be dropped without penalty, not nearer the hole. Find out what happens next month with exploding bombs....*

Happy golfing!

**Alan Brewer**



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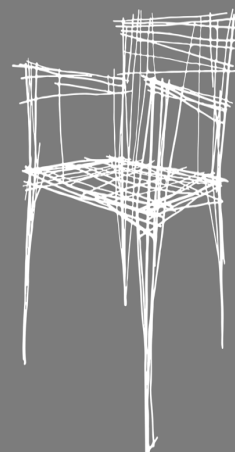
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## Summer Activities

Step into England's story, by visiting **NORTH LEIGH ROMAN VILLA** (English Heritage)

### Mosaic Open Days

Saturday July 19 & Sunday July 20

Saturday July 26 & Sunday July 27

Saturday August 2 & Sunday August 3

Saturday August 16 & Sunday August 17

Saturday August 30 & Sunday August 31

Saturday September 20 & Sunday September 21

Time: 11.00am – 5.00pm

*Join volunteers at North Leigh Roman Villa for a great chance to see the impressive mosaic close up!*



[english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/north-leigh-roman-villa](https://english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/north-leigh-roman-villa)

---

### Alice's Day – Oxford's city-wide extravaganza of all things Alice in Wonderland

**Saturday 5 July 2025** for a fabulous day of delight! This year's theme **Quests and Adventures** will bring together street theatre, talks, storytelling, guided walks and a giant Wonderland Afternoon Tea. Prepare to step through the looking glass and discover the world of Alice brought to life at this very special one-day festival. Around the city, look out for the Red Queen procession, or a life-size pack of cards; you may even spot Alice herself, chasing the White Rabbit. To find out more and view this year's full programme of activities, go to: [storymuseum.org.uk/about-us/alices-day-1](https://storymuseum.org.uk/about-us/alices-day-1) and remember it's half price entry to The Story Museum for all on Alice's Day, so don't forget to book your Museum tickets too. There'll be a chance to go on your own adventure in *Snarks and Riddles* - the boardgame!



### Celebrate all things canine at Blenheim Palace!

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2025, 10.00am-6.00pm**

DogFest is the UK's premier festival for dog lovers, offering live entertainment, interactive activities, expert talks and unique shopping. DogFest has become the must-attend celebration for dog owners, families and pet enthusiasts across the country, providing a fun and welcoming environment for all, including your dog. Whether you have a furry friend or not, you'll love the festival atmosphere, featuring live music, family entertainment, and a bustling marketplace filled with artisan food, crafts and unique shopping stalls. For dog owners, there's even more to enjoy with agility courses, expert training sessions, and thrilling performances.

For further details and to book tickets go to: [blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events/dogfest/](https://blenheimpalace.com/whats-on/events/dogfest/)



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and 2.30pm – 4.30pm on Fridays**

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Our school after school club, 'Night Owls', needs an enthusiastic and caring after school playworker to start in September 2025. This will be to assist with the planning, day to day organisation and operation of the club, providing high quality play opportunities and care for our children.

We are part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust [www.odst.org.uk](http://www.odst.org.uk) and enjoy a rural location in North Oxfordshire.

The successful candidate will:

- Have a true passion for working with children.
- Have previous relevant experience (or a willingness to learn, if not).
- Be committed to working in a school which seeks to meet the needs of each child.

We are looking for a play worker who will enjoy working in our school. Visits to the school are welcomed and encouraged. If you want further details on the role available, including application forms, please call the school on 01869 340204 or email [office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk)

**Please apply as soon as possible for consideration for interview.**

*'Pupils care for and help each other, which builds on the very strong support that staff give pupils.'* (OFSTED March 2022)

**Dr Radcliffe's CE Primary School, as a member of ODST, is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All post holders in regulated activity are subject to appropriate vetting procedures, reference checks and a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced check. Online checks may also be carried out to comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education provisions.**

# Steeple Aston and Middle Aston Horticultural Society

## Summer Show

### Monday 25<sup>th</sup> August



In just 7 or 8 weeks, the school summer holidays will be coming to an end. Hopefully looking back on a lovely sunny growing season, with no drought or hosepipe bans affecting paddling pools for the children. But that also means you have roughly two months to think about your entries for the show.

Open to everyone.... Any age... any ability, to have a go at something. Baking, craft, photography, growing sunflowers and more.

This year sees a change! A new challenge! This is your chance to create something that will last more than a bank holiday weekend. We've added two special classes.

Photo for the new SAVH 2026 Calendar, **FRONT COVER** no less.

Design a logo for our society. This is open to both children and adults. For 133 years we've lacked a brand, so now's the time. It needs to incorporate what we do, what we promote and our heritage as a society of both Steeple Aston and Middle Aston. There will be public choice award for these classes and the official winner, voted for by the committee, following the show.



More details of these two classes, along with the other classes to enter, can be found in our show schedule, on Steeple Aston website:

[steepleaston.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Annual-Show-2025-1.pdf](https://steepleaston.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Annual-Show-2025-1.pdf)

or pick up a paper copy from the village shop from July.

Details of other activities, stalls and games can be found on our poster, or follow us on Facebook for more information.

**Victoria Clifton**

Show Secretary

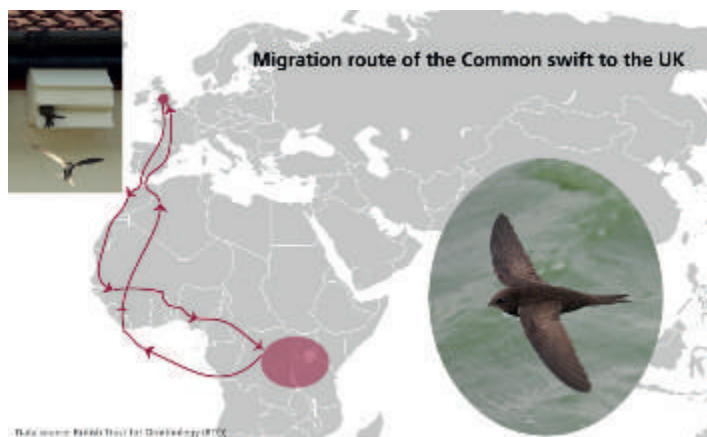
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## Happy Swift Awareness Week!

To celebrate swift awareness week (28<sup>th</sup> June – 6<sup>th</sup> July), here's some interesting facts about swifts. These birds are the Top Gun '*Mavericks*' of the bird world, as they can do almost everything in the air! Swift's feet and legs aren't designed for sitting on the floor or a perch. They can perch vertically but they can't sit like a robin or pigeon, for example, as their wings are far too long. They are perfectly designed for flight and this means they do everything whilst flying - drinking, eating and even mating! True acrobatic flyers.

Swifts have one of the longest migration journeys in the world! Our swifts migrate approximately **14,000 miles** to return to our swift boxes in Oxfordshire every year! What a journey - really makes us think of 'Home sweet home'.



The swifts we see in our towns and villages have overwintered in Africa and come back each summer to nest and raise their chicks. Once the chick(s) leave the nest, they're off - they will never return to the family nest again. Sadly, swifts are endangered and need swift boxes on buildings to nest. Find out more about how you can help them on the Cherwell swift project website:

[cherwell-swifts.org/](http://cherwell-swifts.org/)

### Gardening in July

Heading into the hottest months of the year, we need to be looking out for our local wildlife that could be harmed by the heat. Fortunately, there are lots of easy ways to lend a helping hand. Even the most heat-loving species can suffer without enough to drink, so consider providing a shallow bath of water in your garden. Add some stones around the dish so that bees and butterflies can climb out if they fall in. It's also important to provide some shade in your garden. A small pile of logs can be a great hiding place for insects from the sun. Make sure you're also helping your grass and flowers survive the heat, as grass can reduce surface temperatures by 10<sup>o</sup> C compared to concrete, and flowers are a vital wildlife food source in the hot weather.

*Rhiannon Young – Wild Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Engagement Officer*

[wildoxfordshire.org.uk/](http://wildoxfordshire.org.uk/)

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# The Cricket *Report*



**20<sup>th</sup> Chairman's Match – The Final Reckoning:** After 22 years of playing cricket for Steeple Aston, I played my last game on Saturday – could I achieve a Stuart Broad finish? Skippering the Chairman's XI (average age 63) against the village for the 20<sup>th</sup> and final time. Our mission impossible, which we chose to accept, was to win the game by playing with great passion, bucket loads of effort and almost no ability. And what a game it was!

**Chairman's XI win the toss ....** we were playing on the Great Tew 1<sup>st</sup> XI pitch, a wonderful batting track. I won the toss and made the only sane decision, bat first. If we had had to field for two hours, we would not have been in a fit state to bat! As ever, Alain Michaelis (1-17) and Paul Longman (1-19) kept us tightly pegged back and the pressure was on at 21-2 of 10 overs. Thankfully, Hector Higgins, who was on loan from the village team, retired on 55 not out after timing his innings to perfection, by hitting a 6 on 49 not out. Jonty Renk and Andrew 'Fergie' Ferguson, on debut, bore the brunt of Hector's hitting, but after his departure, my last innings of 4 proved why I must retire – I could barely hit the ball! What a wonderful bowling display though by Raj, playing his second game for SACC, who finished with 3-25. His nagging line was so inviting, and yet so hard to despatch. Hal Holland also bowled with great accuracy to keep the run rate down. I should add, too, that the Steeple Aston fielders, especially Jonty, saved many runs with their excellent fielding, but still the old-timers reached 197-6 off 35 overs - surely a winning total?

**SACC chasing almost 200....for a famous win:** Hal (10) and father Lewis Holland (19) set off at quite a rate, putting on 25 in the first 3 overs, but then an extraordinary thing happened. Lewis was bowled by a beautiful inswinger from my dear friend, Simon, who proceeded to take a hat-trick, with all three being bowled (we had already dropped 5 catches!). Steeple Aston were 52-4 off 11 overs and the game was in the balance. However, there then followed an outstanding, but measured partnership of 112 between Nigel Doggett (51\*) and Arthur Higgins (55\*). They both played with great care, despatching the bad balls, but paying due respect to the good ones. Both retired at 164-4, so 34 runs needed with 11 overs remaining.

**"It's in the bag.... Surely, the game was over"?** The village could not lose, but "it's a funny old game is cricket", as Geoffrey Boycott used to say. 'Fergie', his first innings for SACC, out for nought; Charlie Simmonds-Jones reliving his last ball winning 6 at Middleton Stoney, took an almighty heave, missed it, out for 1; Raj caught by the diving Chairman (what was I thinking?) for 5 and Alain Michaelis, also caught, for 3. 185-8, 13 needed from 4 overs, the pressure on the batters rising; all our fielders around the bat - some jovial sledging; the game was afoot! At the crease: Paul Longman, who has the worst batting average in the history of Steeple Aston cricket, with almost as many ducks to his name as wickets, and Fergie (if you get a duck, you can bat again) feeling the pressure. Surely, the Chairman's XI had won? I mean, how could we lose? What a finish – Paul (10\*) batted with extraordinary confidence hitting some Root-like cover drives and Fergie (8\*) hit the winning boundary with 6 balls to go. What an incredible end to a sparkling match, a victory for Steeple Aston by 2 wickets. A big thank you, too, to Bob Longman for umpiring all day and to Josh Drennan, who did the scoring so accurately.

**Retirement...** I could not possibly have imagined finishing on such a high – a beautiful summer's evening; a climactic finish, surrounded by university and village friends. Cricket surely is the best game? Have no fear, however, I have been asked to continue as Chair and will continue to nag people for subs and match fees as Treasurer, as well as writing for Steeple Aston Life! Other than that, umpiring and scoring beckon; also, the joy of watching my sons, who are infinitely better than their father ever was, continue to play for Steeple Aston Cricket Club.

All the very best,

Peter Higgins - **Chairman SACC**



# Steeple Aston Church Fete

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**SUNDAY 13th JULY**  
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# Steeple Aston Fete Timetable

- 13:00  
Opening with Matt Watson.

- 13:30-14:00  
Brass Band

- 14:00-14:30  
Joanne Mills School of Dance

- 14:30-15:00  
Brass Band

- 15:15-16:00  
Children's races

- 16:00  
Tug of War

- 16:15-16:30  
Raffle

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Welcome to July, and the British summer! So far this year, we haven't had that much rain. However, it is now the grass tennis season and one of my abiding childhood memories is of the 'Rain Stopped Play' television notice. My mum is an avid tennis fan, and life in our household would stop for the four weeks of 'Queens', 'Eastbourne' and 'Wimbledon', as she watched as much tennis as possible. I remember the epic battles between Chris Evert and Martina Navratilova, and John McEnroe and Björn Borg. As spectators, we enjoy watching these terrific tussles, marvelling at the speed that they run around the court, and the power with which they hit the ball. Equipment, rackets and shoes have improved over the years, making tennis faster and more powerful. What hasn't changed is the dedication and perseverance that is required for years behind the scenes, for the players to become as good as they are.

All Sports personalities have got up and trained daily, regardless of the weather, or how they feel. They have made sacrifices over the years, to prioritise their training, like missing parties so they can go to bed early, enabling them to get up and train again in the early morning. Changing their schedule/life to fit around their training. This is not easy, and takes focus and dedication, not just for six months, but for years. Nor does it stop once they have become good enough to turn professional. Their life is one of training and competitions.

My daily reading this morning was about staying sharp, staying focused. Life today is busy, with a hundred and one things to do every day. At times, it can feel like we are being pulled in a thousand different directions. All of us, at times, have known the feeling of running around all day and yet, at the end of the day, thinking that we haven't achieved anything. Like sports personalities, we need to choose and prioritise what we want to do. Their goal might be to win Wimbledon, or an Olympic medal. Our goals may not be as prestigious or famous, but they are still important. Goals help keep us focused, to press on even when life is tough. What is your goal for your life?

Today, as you enjoy watching your favourite sport, take a moment to think about the time they put in to get where they are. Think about how, over the years, they have stayed sharp, kept their focus on their goal. How can you stay sharp and focussed, so that you can reach your goal?

God bless,

**Harriet**

## Churchyard Regulations

At the beginning of 2017 the Diocese of Oxford published new regulations governing how we manage our churchyards. First, may I thank all our village families for the care and compassion with which they help care for our village churchyards. They are places of great beauty and mean an enormous amount to so many people. Thank you for the part you play in keeping them so special. I would, however, like to remind everyone of the regulations, and ask for your help in keeping our rural churchyards special. The revised guidelines reflect changes and habits that are affecting the civic cemeteries. The Diocese's desire is that rural churchyards retain their distinctive feel, and I know that this is appreciated locally, especially as we aim to protect our natural countryside environment.

Please can I point out that the guidelines forbid artificial flowers or any kinds of toys or solar lights being placed in churchyards. Poppies may, of course, be placed in our churchyards at Remembrance time for those who have served in the forces. Also, please do remember not to plant shrubs or the like on graves. Bulbs, however, are always welcome, bringing traditional flowers to the churchyard at the right season of the year. It's lovely to see so many daffodils following the snowdrops in the early spring. Please forgive me passing on this information. The full regulations are on the Oxford Diocese website. If we do have to clear anything away from time to time, we will try to let folk know, or put things carefully away so that they may be collected later. I know lots of families will be tending the churchyards over the summer, and I hope this season of joy and hope will be very special for you and for all those you love. Thank you for your help with keeping our churchyards such wonderful spaces.

God bless,

**Harriet**



# Local Information



## Church Services July 2025

| Date                                                                             | North Aston                                                     | Steeple Aston                                                    | Tackley                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday<br/>6<sup>th</sup> July</b>                                            | <b>9.30am</b><br>Holy Communion<br><i>Book of Common Prayer</i> | <b>11.00am</b><br>Holy Communion<br><i>Book of Common Prayer</i> | <b>5.30pm</b><br>Evensong                                           |
|                                                                                  |                                                                 |                                                                  |                                                                     |
| <b>Sunday<br/>13<sup>th</sup> July</b>                                           | <b>9.30am</b><br>Morning Prayer                                 | <b>11.00am</b><br>No service                                     | <b>5.30pm</b><br>Holy Communion                                     |
|                                                                                  |                                                                 |                                                                  |                                                                     |
| <b>Sunday<br/>20<sup>th</sup> July</b>                                           | <b>9.30am</b><br>Holy Communion                                 | <b>11.00am</b><br>Holy Communion                                 | <b>5.30pm</b><br>Choral Evensong and<br>dedication of the new organ |
|                                                                                  |                                                                 |                                                                  |                                                                     |
| <b>Sunday<br/>27<sup>th</sup> July</b>                                           | <b>9.30am</b><br>Morning Prayer                                 | <b>11.00am</b><br>Morning Prayer                                 | <b>9.30am</b><br>Family Communion                                   |
| Our church buildings are also open every day. Do feel free to visit at any time. |                                                                 |                                                                  |                                                                     |
| www.sntchurch.com                                                                |                                                                 |                                                                  |                                                                     |

## BUS TIMES

### STAGECOACH S4 BUS SERVICE

*This timetable is effective from 10th March 2024*

**From Steeple Aston (outside Post Office) to Oxford (arrival time in italics)**

**Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)**

0619 0721 0831 0931 then hourly to 1531 1645 1754 1849 1937 2037 2216  
0703 0817 0920 1020 1620 1737 1840 1932 2022 2147 2253

**Saturdays**

0721 0821 0931 then hourly to 1531 1641 1746 1849 1937 2037 2216  
0809 0909 1019 1619 1729 1834 1932 2022 2147 2253

**Sundays and most public holidays**

0907 1037 1207 1337 1507 1637 1806  
0953 1123 1253 1423 1553 1723 1852

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

**Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)**

0758 0910 1008 then hourly to 1508 1624 1732 1835 1933 2025 2113 2213 2341  
0837 0947 1045 1545 1703 1809 1909 2006 2053 2142 2242 0009

**Saturdays**

0758 0908 1008 then hourly to 1608 1718 1828 1927 2025 2113 2213 2341  
0837 0945 1045 1645 1755 1905 1958 2053 2142 2242 0009

**Sundays and most public holidays**

0917 1044 1214 1344 1514 1644 1814 1944  
0956 1122 1252 1422 1552 1722 1852 2022

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

### OURBUS BARTONS

OurBus Bartons offers services through Steeple Aston to and from Lower Heyford Station (Monday to Friday), to and from Chipping Norton (Wednesdays) and to and from Bicester (Fridays).  
See <https://ourbusbartons-org-uk.stackstaging.com/> for details and times.



## **Dr Radcliffe's Church of England School**

Fir Lane, Steeple Aston, Bicester, OX25 4SF

T: (01869) 340204

E: [office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk)

[www.dr-radcliffes.org.uk](http://www.dr-radcliffes.org.uk)

## **After School Club Playleader required**

**Term-time only**

**2.15pm – 6.00pm Mondays to Thursdays  
and 2.30pm – 4.30pm on Fridays**

**Pay Grade 6 - £25,992 FTE (£10,013 actual)**

Our school after school club, 'Night Owls', needs an enthusiastic and caring after school playleader to start in September 2025. This will be to lead the planning, day to day organisation and operation of the club, providing high quality play opportunities and care for our children.

We are part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust [www.odst.org.uk](http://www.odst.org.uk) and enjoy a rural location in North Oxfordshire.

The successful candidate will:

- Have a true passion for working with children.
- Have previous relevant experience,
- Be committed to working in a school which seeks to meet the needs of each child.

We are looking for a playleader who will enjoy working in our school. Visits to the school are welcomed and encouraged. If you want further details on the role available, including application forms, please call the school on 01869 340204 or email [office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk)

**Please apply as soon as possible for consideration for interview.**

*'Pupils care for and help each other, which builds on the very strong support that staff give pupils.'* (OFSTED March 2022)

**Dr Radcliffe's CE Primary School, as a member of ODST, is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All post holders in regulated activity are subject to appropriate vetting procedures, reference checks and a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced check. Online checks may also be carried out to comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education provisions.**

## Local Info



### STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL

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

#### Our hall is available to hire:

- Ideal site for parties, receptions, seminars, exhibitions and workshops
- Full width raised stage and well-equipped kitchen
- Main hall can seat around 100
- HD projector and retractable screen
- Meeting Room to seat 20, with separate access
- Off-Road Car parking

**For hire charges and bookings** see our website or call Angela on 07734 112967

#### Steeple and Middle Aston rubbish bin collection day Is Thursday

##### July 2025

3<sup>rd</sup> Green  
10<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown  
17<sup>th</sup> Green  
24<sup>th</sup> Blue and brown  
31<sup>st</sup> Green

##### August 2025

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



#### Food caddy is collected weekly

Batteries and small electrical items packed in clear plastic bags and placed on the top of any bin lid are collected weekly.

## Steeple Aston Sport & Recreation Centre and Field

| Letting charges                                                                                        |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Social Function peak times<br>(Daily up to 6 hours from 6pm)                                           | £55          |
| Social Function off-peak times<br>(Daily up to 5 hours before 6pm)                                     | £27.50       |
| Meeting of represented clubs<br>(Daily per session up to 2 hours)                                      | £11          |
| Caution money for private lettings                                                                     | £100         |
| Block bookings for social events<br>15% discount for 6 or more bookings in advance                     |              |
| Contact us if you wish to hire the field or use the changing facilities                                |              |
| Letting Agent – Angela Smith<br><a href="mailto:rec.trust@googlemail.com">rec.trust@googlemail.com</a> | 07734 112967 |
| Chair – Torquil McLusky                                                                                | 01869 347914 |
| Treasurer – Chris Cooper                                                                               | 01869 347173 |

- The Sport & Rec is available to hire
- The "Friendly" space - the ideal venue for smaller parties, children's parties and get togethers
- Need more space? Hire the Sport & Rec and Village Hall together
- Fantastic playground just outside
- Internet
- Full disabled access, toilets, showers and changing rooms
- High quality grass playing field with power supply for football, marquees, events etc. (contact us for details and availability)
- Small kitchen and separate bar
- Room for around 50 seated
- Brand-new projector with retractable screen
- Car Parking
- Regular events include Home Education, Babies & Toddlers, Brownies, After School Club, Bridge and of course the Football Club (it's been going since 1898!)
- Next event Race Night  
...more details to follow!





# Steeple Aston *Calendar*

Check the village website at [steepleaston.org.uk/home/calendar](http://steepleaston.org.uk/home/calendar) for any changes.

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

| Month                       | Event                                            | Venue                    | Time              |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>July</b>                 |                                                  |                          |                   |
| Sunday 6th July             | SACC-v-Blenheim Park                             | Blenheim                 | 2.00pm            |
| Tuesday 8th July            | WI: Brewing in Oxford                            | Village Hall             | 7.00pm            |
| Thursday 10th July          | Garden Club Visit: Bridewell Garden              | Wilcote, Chipping Norton | 6.00pm - 8.00pm   |
| Sunday 13th July            | Steeple Aston Church Fete                        | Robinsons Close          | 1.00pm - 4.30pm   |
| <b>Monday 14th July</b>     | <b>SAL August copy &amp; advert deadlines</b>    |                          |                   |
| Tuesday 15th July           | Valentines: Tea and grounds visit to Rousham     | Rousham                  | 2.30pm            |
| Thursday 17th July          | Valentines: Coach trip to Hatfield House         | Hatfield House           |                   |
| Friday 18th July            | SAGS match: The Springs, Wallingford             | Wallingford              | 12 noon           |
| Saturday 19th July          | Tribute Music Festival                           | Middle Aston House       | 2.00pm - 9.00pm   |
| Monday 21st July            | Parish Council Meeting                           | S & R Building           | 7.30pm            |
| Saturday 26th July          | Farmers' Market                                  | Deddington               | 9.00am-12.30pm    |
| Sunday 27th July            | SACC-v-Strollers                                 | Great Tew CC             | 2.00pm            |
| <b>August</b>               |                                                  |                          |                   |
| Sunday 3rd August           | SACC-v-Great & Little Tew                        | Great Tew CC             | 2.00pm            |
| Tuesday 5th August          | Garden Club visit - Middle Aston                 | Middle Aston             |                   |
| Wed 6th August              | Valentines: Coach trip and river cruise          | Caversham                |                   |
| <b>Thursday 14th August</b> | <b>SAL September copy &amp; advert deadlines</b> |                          |                   |
| Sunday 17th August          | Steeple Aston Open Allotments                    | Steeple Aston            | 2.00pm - 6.00pm   |
| Tuesday 19th August         | Valentines: Tony Hetherington sings              | Village Hall             | 2.30pm            |
| Saturday 23rd August        | Farmers' Market                                  | Deddington               | 9.00am - 12.30pm  |
| Monday 25th August          | Summer Horticultural Show & Fun Dog Show         | Robinsons Close          | Gates open 2.00pm |

**Choral Society Rehearsals.** Village Hall - 7.45pm - Mondays  
**Badminton.** Village Hall - 10am -12.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Bell Ringing practice.** Church Tower - 7.30pm - Tuesdays  
**Walking Netball.** Village Hall - 10.15am - Wednesdays  
**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 - 12 noon - Saturdays

Steeple Aston Life is published by Steeple Aston Life Committee

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*The views expressed are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the Committee.  
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# Home-made food

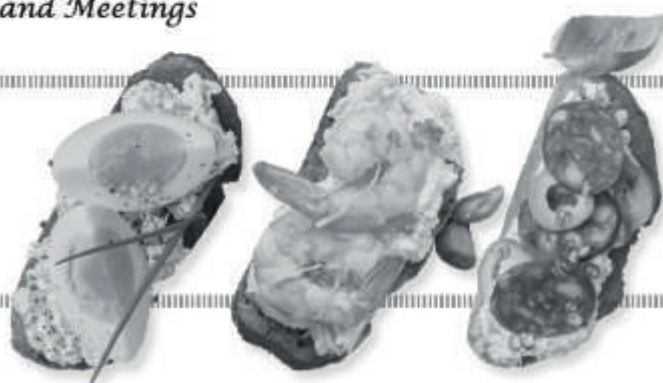
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[www.nicholsonsgb.com](http://www.nicholsonsgb.com) | 01869 340342 | The Park, North Aston, OX25 6HL



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