Steeple Aston
September 2025 Issue No. 625



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Contributions are welcome. Please email editorsalife@gmail.com

Cover photo: Heroes and Villains Photo by Nigel Francis

Steeple Aston Life

COPY

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

COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline for the October 2025 issue is Sunday 14th September

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

ADVERTISING

All adverts, and all advertising queries (availability, prices, dimensions, suitability of illustrations, etc.) to Zazi Barrell salife.advertising@gmail.com

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ADVERTISING RATES

 1 /4 page - £10 1 /2 page - £18 Full page (village events only) - £20.00

Steeple Aston *Directory*

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Badminton (Thursday - eve)		Alison Moran	01869 347033
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Cherwell District Councillor: Deddington Ward		Cllr Zoe McLernon	Zoe.mclernon@cherwell-dc.gov.uk
Oxfordshire County Councillor: Deddington Ward		Cllr Gareth Epps	Gareth.epps@oxfordshire.gov.uk
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Village Website	Editor	Jenny Bell-steepleaston.org.uk	01869 943573
Volunteer Driver Service (North Oxfordshire)		https://livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk/services/2561	0300 303 0125



"....folly is not always folly."

Jane Austen

Steeple Aston Life

September 2025 Issue No.625

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Editorial

As we welcome the new season, I invite you to pause for a moment's reflection as summer fades and new beginnings await. My heartfelt thanks for all the kind words and support following the recent loss of my beloved Mum. Although she had been suffering from dementia for some years, nothing can prepare you for the impact of losing a parent. Steeple has also lost a much-loved member of the community in Stuart Walton, who played a key part of village life for so long. Sincere condolences to his family and friends on their loss.

Mid-summer saw the staging of the fun-filled Middle Aston-bury Music Festival, so do read all about it and see the fantastic time had by all. Many thanks to Helen Wright and the team for putting on a great show. By the time you read this, the annual Summer Horticultural & Fun Dog Show will have taken place, to be featured in the October issue. If past events are anything to go by, it will have been very well attended and enjoyed. Blast from the Past features images from this fun event in 1925.

Driving Ukraine are continuing their amazing work sending vehicles to help on the frontline, and you may well have seen them parked behind The Hatchery, off Fir Lane. They are always looking for volunteers and donations, so do take a look at their website.

Make the most of those late summer rays – before you know it, it will be Christmas!

Carol

Photo: Steeple Barton Abbey reflections, photo by Carol Neville



Steeple Aston *Noticeboard*



News from Deddington Health Centre

As a group learning more about the workings of the Health Centre, it is becoming evident what a complex organisation it is. At our last meeting we discovered the difference between a retail pharmacy and a dispensary and how important distance can be. If you live more than a mile away from a retail pharmacy, prescriptions can be fulfilled by Deddington Health Centre's Dispensary; any closer and it is a retail pharmacy that issues the items. All prescriptions are the responsibility of GPs because there is not a dispensing pharmacist onsite. The dispensary issues to 60% of the Practice population which can be 14,000 items per month. As you are probably aware, the dispensary does not sell any proprietary items that you might find in a high street pharmacy.

The storage robot used for all the drugs held in the dispensary is linked to software, so prescriptions dispensed are picked by the robot, ready for dispensing and labelling. This allows for great traceability because all the record of stock in and out is captured electronically and is reviewed by staff. All prescriptions are electronically checked rather than being printed when they are reconciled each month. It is estimated all this saves one and a half person's time. Only complete prescriptions are being loaded into the vending machine outside the dispensary, so that repeat journeys are minimised (previously partially complete prescriptions were being loaded). A PIN is needed to access the machine, for non-refrigerated prescription items, which can be picked up 24 hours a day. There is also a delivery service, for dispensing patients, for free or prepaid prescriptions, on Thursday and Friday each week, for patients who are housebound or unable to collect.

The Pharmacy team record and update patient information from secondary care (hospital), such as changes to medication for long term conditions and discharge letters after inpatient care. Anyone discharged from hospital should be issued with two weeks medication. It takes up to seven days to update a patient's record due to the number of discharge letters being received. It is not possible to supply any new medication straight after discharge, so a patient will be referred to the hospital, should that arise. The dedicated team also complete annual medication reviews, ensure NICE and in-house protocols are followed for drugs, in agreement with GPs, as well as high risk drugs monitoring. This frees up capacity for GPs as the administration is completed by Pharmacy Technicians. Medication reviews for patients are very important and can often be ignored, triggering the need for reminders. So, if invited for a review, please do complete it.

Our next deep dive will be with the Patient Services team.

Anne Hunsley, Patient Participation Group

New SAL Secretary Needed

The SAL Committee is seeking a new secretary following the resignation of Jenny Taylor, who has been doing the job for more years than anyone can remember. Jenny first joined the SAL committee some time in the mid-1980s. She has been an extremely reliable and efficient secretary, but much more than that, she has been a valued member of the SAL community. We will be very sad to see her leave the role, but understand that she deserves a rest after all this time. We hope she will stay on the SAL committee, so we can continue to benefit from her long experience.

The Secretary has two main tasks:

- To prepare the agenda for the monthly meeting and circulate it by email with reports from the editor and others.
- To take the minutes at the meeting which may be held in person or by Zoom. If you're interested in this role, please email the editor initially editorsalife@gmail.com
 Jenny will be very happy to discuss further and, of course, to provide support during the handover.

Steeple Aston *Noticeboard*



Mr Stuart Pirie Walton: 29th May 1942 - 21st July 2025

We are very sorry to report the death of Stuart Walton. He died on 21st July 2025 in the Horton Hospital, Banbury. Stuart is pictured here in the Church Allotments where he spent much of his time. His funeral took place on Tuesday, 19th August at 11.30am in St Peter & St Paul Church, North Side, Steeple Aston, followed by a wake in the Village Hall. Donations may be made to Katharine House Hospice in Stuart's memory. dignityfunerals.co.uk/funeral-notices/21-07-2025-stuart-pirie-walton/





Editor's Letterbox



Dear Editor

The OCC's plans to reduce night-time street lighting should have little impact in rural areas. Some villages have no street lighting installed, and in the Chilterns and Cotswolds AONBs it is very strictly controlled. In Steeple Aston, most street lights in the village are already switched off between 00.30 and 05.30 GMT, and have been for a number of years. Every lamp post affected has this notice attached:



Light pollution is insidious. Individual changes are so small that they are not immediately obvious and therefore tend to be overlooked. But since moving to the village in 2019, and despite improvements made to the street lights, we have noticed a slight but measurable drop in sky quality. Moving the switch-off to an hour earlier would be a modest positive change, environmentally and financially, although anyone returning on the last bus from Oxford would arrive back in darkness. Another simple saving that isn't mentioned would be for OCC to adjust the switch-off time to account for Daylight Saving. Currently the village streetlights only switch off at 01.30am (GMT+1) which does seem a needless waste. I look forward to listening to the Parish Council's deliberations in September.

Anne Haymes, South Side



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Letter from Westminster



SAL's regular epistle from our MP, Sean Woodcock

July marked one year since I became the MP for Banbury, Chipping Norton, Charlbury and the North Oxfordshire villages. It's been a privilege to serve our communities over the past 12 months, and this month has been no exception.

Engaging with the community

I have been out and about across the constituency, holding coffee mornings in Banbury, Chipping Norton and Charlbury. These have been great opportunities for residents to raise policy concerns or queries, and I am always grateful for the constructive conversations. Alongside these, I have also held more formal advice surgeries to support constituents facing individual issues, making sure local voices are heard and acted upon. I also held a lively Q&A session with the Banbury Business Breakfast Club. We covered a range of topics from trade and procurement to local investment. Conversations like this are essential to ensure our local economy continues to thrive.

Championing Local Cases

I have also been escalating cases to colleagues and ministers where additional support is needed. For example, I had a surgery with Maria Eagle MP, who is the Minister of State for Defence, Procurement and Industry to discuss a constituent's issue securing contracts for his defence small enterprise due to administrative delays. I am pleased that action will now be taken to assist in this issue.

Visiting Schools and Local Organisations

I've had the pleasure of visiting local schools including Frank Wise School, and Bloxham C of E Primary School, speaking to staff and students. It was helpful to speak with the Deputy Head of Bloxham Primary School about pressures facing the school, and I will be raising the matters discussed with both the Secretary of State for Education and His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools. I have also visited Banbury Mosque, the local Job Centre and Fine Lady Bakery, hearing directly from residents, staff and community leaders about what matters most to them.

In Parliament

In Westminster, I've been keeping North Oxfordshire's concerns front and centre. I attended a reception on tackling racism and improving access to housing and joined discussions with the Living Standards Coalition about how we can bring down energy bills, which I know is a key concern for many households locally.

Delegation to Jordan

Finally, I spent part of the month on an insightful Parliamentary delegation to Jordan. I met with Jordanian leaders and visited Palestinian and Syrian refugee camps, speaking to refugees and representatives from UNICEF who provide residents with essentials. I was able to see first-hand the life-saving impact of international humanitarian efforts. These experiences will deeply inform my work on foreign affairs and ensure I can bring a more informed perspective to constituent matters in this area.

As always, I will continue to champion the needs of local people in all that I do, and I welcome people to contact me at sean.woodcock.casework@parliament.uk if they have any issues they would like me to help with.

Sean Woodcock



Are you at a loose end and in search of some relaxed fun and exercise? Look no further than a game of badminton at Steeple Aston village hall on Tuesday morning between 10.00am - 12 noon; or Thursday evening between 8.00pm - 10.00pm. Our friendly groups meet every week (apart from school holidays) for a few games and a chat. We normally play doubles and mix up the pairings during the sessions, so that everyone gets a turn. There is no age limit, but children (up to 16 years) need to be accompanied by an adult. No previous experience required, as we are all of differing abilities and tend to learn as we play!

The cost is £2.00 per session and there's no need to sign up in advance, plus you can attend as little or often as you please. Wear trainers and comfortable clothing, and we can lend you a racquet at first to see if you like it. We look forward to welcoming you in September. Simply turn up on a Tuesday morning or Thursday evening, or telephone in advance for more details as follows:

Tuesday morning badminton: Barbara Brewer - 01869 340423 (restarts 16th September)

Thursday evening badminton*: Alison Moran - 01869 347033



*Please consult the Village Hall calendar at savh.org.uk regarding dates





NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The first annual general meeting (AGM) of Steeple and Middle Aston Community Land Trust will be held in Steeple Aston Village Hall

at 7:30pm on Tuesday 16th September 2025.

All residents are welcome - non-members as well as members.

Come and hear about progress made in the Trust's first year, and ask questions.

www.steepleandmiddleastonclt.org.uk

Driving Ukraine

You may have wondered why there are so many commercial vehicles, including ambulances, parked on the land behind The Hatchery off Fir Lane between Steeple and Middle Aston.

It turns out they're parked there for a very good reason. Charles Sandy, one of the owners of The Hatchery, explains: "The vehicles are awaiting to be driven out to Ukraine as a charitable donation, which we are supporting. Driving Ukraine *drivingukraine.org/* will be temporarily parking suitable vehicles on our site until they number 12, at which point a convoy of volunteers drives them over to Ukraine, where they're camouflaged etc. before heading to the front. The process then restarts."

Charles and co-owner Patrick Bradshaw will be joining one of the convoys in the coming months. They will be posting information on the charity and putting up flags next to the vehicles. Fynn Watt from Deddington is one of the founders of the organisation, which began its work in 2022. Since then, more than 1,400 dedicated volunteers from 30+ countries have got involved. They now have convoys of at least five vehicles (min 10 people) that depart at the end of every month from Oxfordshire.

The end-users of the donated vehicles and aid include: foreign volunteer medics and paramedics working on Ukraine's frontline, Ukrainian volunteer medics and paramedics, bomb disposal teams, combat medics and Ukrainian hospitals. They are always looking for more volunteers and, of course, donations. Details on their website *drivingukraine.org/*





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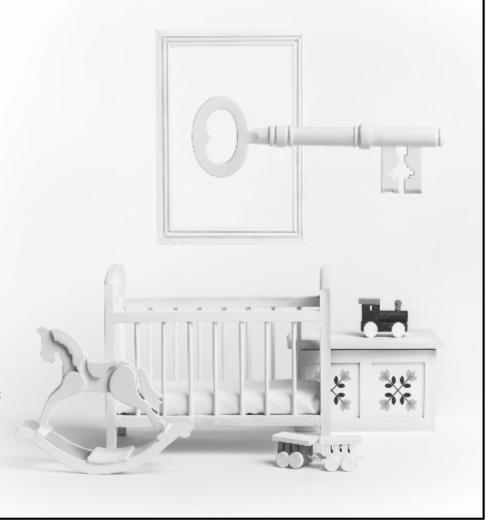
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Heroes & Villains at the Allotment Open Day!

As part of the National Allotment Week, Steeple Aston Church Allotment Association (SACAA) held their first open day on Sunday 17th August. The weather was glorious and over 140 people came to join in the festivities! The village scarecrow competition winners were announced - Best Villain 'Cruella de Vil' (Hill House Lodge) and Hero, 'Rainbow Warrior' (Grange Park), both receiving Yurt vouchers graciously donated by Nicholsons. A lot of hard work (and baking) was done to make this event happen, and particular thanks go to Marie O'Connor for managing all the wonderful refreshments; Kay Francis and Catherine Crook for running the produce stall; Eleanor O'Connor for Face Painting and Amanda Rodgers for kids' activities. Given its successful outcome, might this become an annual event? Watch this space!

Stuart Cummins, SACAA Chair



Pictured below are winners of the scarecrow competition: Best Hero – Rainbow Warrior; Best Villain - Cruella de Vil (Photos: Nigel Francis). Compare with the scarecrow from Steeple Aston Feast 1923 (Photo courtesy of SAVA).







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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Poetry Corner



Mars Rocks

a piece of Mars that landed on the earth in Niger years ago has sold for millions at a sale the news has told us so

its special attribute we're told its size (it is the biggest piece) inflates the price by several noughts will wonders never cease

the odds appear to be quite small astronomically so its rated in direct contrast to its odds the price has been inflated.

Peter Wild

Oxford Open Doors - 13th & 14th September 2025

A firm favourite in the Oxford calendar, Oxford Preservation Trust has run Oxford Open Doors since 2007. Every September, a weekend is dedicated to opening historic buildings, community spaces and all kinds of places that are not usually accessible to the public, giving you the opportunity to enjoy the city's rich heritage and culture for free.

oxfordpreservation.org.uk/oxford-open-doors



'Swalcliffe Barn, near Banbury' by John Steane; image courtesy of Elaine Steane.

The Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock is hosting a display of watercolour paintings of Oxfordshire barn interiors by archaeologist and artist John Steane, MA FSA (1931-2024).

Steane was County Archaeologist for Oxfordshire from 1978 to 1990, based in the Oxfordshire Museum at Fletcher's House, Woodstock. He was involved in protecting and studying some of the county's most interesting sites, and he took a particular interest in historic barns, painting a series of their interiors on his travels around the county. The exhibition continues until Sunday 28th September, free and open to all.

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WI Report

The WI take a summer break and do not have a meeting in August, so there is little to report this month. We had a stall at the church fete (*see photos*), and competitions to name the secret cake ingredient (pesto!), to guess the number of sweets in a jar and to guess the weight of a fruit cake, which together raised a good total for WI funds. This will go towards the ever-increasing cost of hiring speakers. Proceeds from the sale of bric-a-brac and home-made jams, chutneys and cakes at the Horticultural Society Summer Show added further to our funds. Many thanks to everyone who visited the stall.

WI members continue to be involved in the poppy cascade. Having contributed to the many hundreds of knitted and crocheted poppies, members are now busy sewing them onto a netting backing. Work is slowly but surely progressing, and the finished cascade should look stunning when it is in place in November.

Finally, two dates for your diaries:

Tuesday 9th September 2025, 7.00pm, Village Hall: Reflexology: Talk and demonstration by Beth Astle

Tuesday 21st October 2025, 7.00pm, Village Hall: North Ploughley Group Meeting Willow Weaving Craft evening with Lynn Humberstone

Cathy Lawday







Heyford Station: Parking Charges from September

From 1st September, there will be a daily parking tariff of £3.00 at Heyford Station car park. Off peak will be £2.00 from 12 noon onwards, and you will be able to park for up to 20 minutes for free to pick up and drop off. For further details: visit *gwr.com* or *apcoa.co.uk*

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Steeple People



Which village do you live in? How long have you lived here? Steeple Aston, since 1998.

Carol Neville

Where did you move from, and what brought you here? Moved from Carterton, due to a job move to Bicester.

What do you like best about living here?

Being part of a vibrant, friendly community, surrounded by beautiful countryside.

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

Rowdy motor vehicles speeding through the village.

How has the village changed since you came?

Too many cars clogging up the village streets!

Where do you think of as 'home'?

I'm an Oxonian - born in south Oxfordshire, moved to the west and now in the north.

Early bird or night owl? Cat or dog?

Early bird. Both cat & dog, but am owned by a Tuxedo diva called Kizzy!

Town or countryside? Gym or ramble?

Countryside. Ramble every time.

Optimist or pessimist? Fast-paced or relaxed?

Optimist. Aim for a relaxed pace, which sometimes fails.

What was the best thing about your childhood?

Freedom to play in fields and explore the surrounding countryside without any worries.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

Anything animal-related.

What was your first job?

Sadly, nothing to do with animals. Worked for the Probation Service.

And your current job?

Governance Professional at Dr Radcliffe's, SAVA Secretary and Editor of SAL.

What is the best/worst job you have had?

Freelance writing the best job; have erased the worst job from my memory.

Who would you most like to have dinner with?

Naturalists Sir David Attenborough or Chris Packham for their vast knowledge of nature.

What was your favourite holiday destination & why?

Norway for its amazing scenery, friendly people and interesting culture.

What makes you feel grumpy/angry?

People who think it's okay to bully others.

What is your favourite saying or piece of advice?

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail (Ralph Waldo Emerson).



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THE VALENTINE CLUB

Just slipping back to July and the club's visit to Hatfield House. If you have never been, and it is only about 90 minutes away, you should. It is a wonderful house with an equally wonderful story but apart from that, it has some superb grounds and lots of other attractions that, to be honest, you simply can't see in a day.

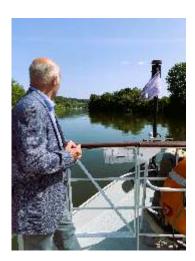
Moving onto August. At the beginning of the month, we took 68 members to Caversham near Reading, to join a cruise boat that sailed along the Thames for three hours. Combined with a super ploughman's lunch and perfect weather, everyone had a great time, enhanced by the wonderful company that is The Valentine Club. Thanks must go to both Cheney travel with their 57-seater coach and Our Bus Barton with their 16-seater minibus, otherwise we would have simply had to walk or limit numbers as this trip was obviously very popular.

With the unavoidable need to move our August meeting to a Wednesday (must be a first), we welcomed back to The Valentines Tony Hatherington, who sang songs that we all remembered and, in a few cases, joined in.

This month we are travelling to Wells and The Bishops Palace and cathedral, before bringing back Cheryl Harrison to give us all more advice on scams that plague us all at times. For all the wonderful people who shop at Bicester Village, we are very pleased to thank the management of Bicester Village for their financial support of the club to the tune of £1,000. Like all other clubs and societies, funding is always at the top of the list and for this sort of support we are very grateful. Although I am writing this in the middle of a heatwave, I have just realised that I need to give in final numbers to the organisers of our Christmas meal at Stratford, and start organising our own Christmas celebrations here in Steeple Aston. As my dear old mother used to say, "as you get older, time goes faster", and never a truer word was spoken.

To find out more about The Valentine Club, then simply visit our own website on *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* 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) Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com – Tel: 01869 340512



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Village Hall News



The start of the school term beckons, with Autumn festivities and Winter parties. If you think your house is a bit too small for everyone to squash into, then look at hiring the village hall. It really is cheaper than you think.

The other excitement is the launch of the new SAVH Calendar for 2026. It will be available in both portrait A4 size or slimline kitchen style. Copies are limited, so act quickly once you see them on sale.

Lastly, get those mittens, scarves and hats at the ready, because our next big event is the Annual Bonfire and Fireworks evening. Tickets go on sale soon...... REMEMBER, with Bodicote event cancelled this year, our tickets may sell out sooner. Don't delay! Full details in the October life.

Forthcoming events:

Wednesday 5th November - Annual bonfire and firework evening

Sunday 7th December - Wassail evening

Saturday 17th 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

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

Victoria Clifton (Chair) savh.org.uk/



Album Review

The Kinks: The Journey - Part 3

Banned by the 'American Federation of Television and Recording Artists' from performing in the United States for a period of 4 years, 1965 – 1969 'The Kinks' were unable to be part of 'The British invasion' just as their musical creativity was really developing. This didn't thwart the band's creativity or desire to perform in America.

Disc 1:

In the final part of 'The Kinks' 60th Anniversary Anthology series, 'The Journey - Part 3' covers the period from 1977 to 1984 when their long-awaited big break in America finally comes to fruition. The band return to a classic formula of songwriting which draws on a pop/rock vibe fitting in perfectly with the music scene of that time. Long gone is the 60's pop sound and their experimental phase. Although aiming at the American market, you can take 'The Kinks' out of England, but you can't take England out of 'The Kinks', which is clearly evident in such songs as 'Living on A Thin Line' and 'Come Dancing'. Strangely, it's the Englishness of 'The Kinks' that endeared them so much to their American audience!

Disc 2:

We find 'The Kinks' playing live at the 'Royal Albert Hall' on the 11th July 1993, with the recording taken direct from the mixing desk. This provides a clarion sounding performance with the usual crowd noises almost completely muted. The energy from the band, which by this time had been performing for thirty years, could put a lot of younger bands to shame and this is a real credit to the 'Dedicated Followers Of Fashion'.

Available on Sanctuary Records – Part of the BMG Group Reviewed by *Marshall Stacks*

'Middle Aston-bury'



When Dan and I came up with the idea of putting on a Tribute Music Festival, it was borne of the frustrations at the huge cost of tickets to most festivals, and also of the love of bringing our wonderful community together in person.

What felt like the first rain we'd had all year decided to fall on the morning of the festival, Saturday 19th July. Thankfully it had passed by the time the gates opened at 1.00pm, and we welcomed hundreds into the grounds of Middle Aston House to enjoy an afternoon and evening of music. A young and talented 'Death Warmed Up' got the crowd going with their 80s rock covers, followed by the popular local band 'Whiff of Horse' (who brought many Whiffers along with them)! 'The Ariana Grande Experience' dazzled the crowd, 'Utmost Elton' was *the* rocket man, 'Oasus' took us back to BritPop and 'Rule the World' made us all shine and remember how much we love Take That!

We had wood-fired pizzas, gourmet burgers, candy floss and bubble tea; Liam & Noel masks, bars, glitter and face-painting. Not to mention deckchairs, haybales and eventually even a little bit of sunshine!

Thank you so much to everyone who supported this idea – its success was down to those who came along and gave it a try!

Same time next year?

Helen Wright



All photos by Nigel Francis









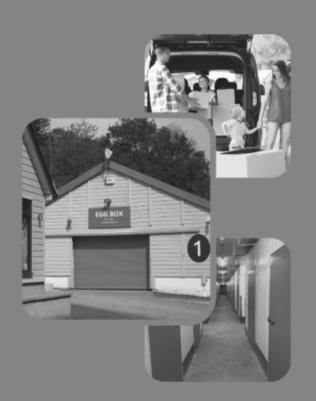




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RED TOOTH POKER CHAMPION

Simon Bailey was one our first players to join our Weekly Monday evening Red Tooth Pub Poker Texas Hold 'em tournaments at the Red Lion.

There are hundreds of other pubs all around the country holding such weekly tournaments too. Every player has the ultimate aim of winning a trip to play for the title UK Pub Poker Champion in Las Vegas. In addition, Red Tooth holds a tour around the country every year and the first tournament of 2025/26 was held at Grosvenor Casino on Sunday 3rd of August. It was a team of four event. The members of the winning team would all be invited to go to Vegas next May. Sadly, Simon's team did not win BUT there was an individual prize to aim for.

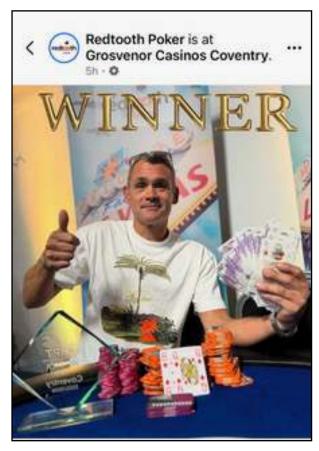
There were 200 entries in the tournament and I am delighted to announce that 199 players were knocked out leaving Simon with all the poker chips in play and he was crowned a Red Tooth Poker Champion. Sadly not a trip to Vegas but a substantial cash sum and a trophy.

We celebrated his victory at the Pub on 4th August with a wonderful cake made by one of our players, Chris Evans, coupled with a lot of fun and laughter whilst Simon, for the first time in two days, was knocked out!

I know we have had a number of families move to our village since we started and they may not be aware of our game. If you would like to play or learn how to play give me a call 07802 837237 for more details.

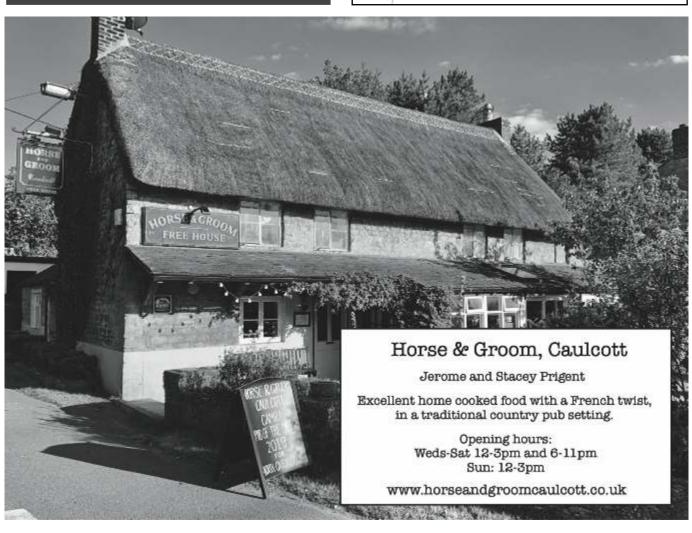
Andy King











Steeple Aston Golf Society



Our third game of the season was at The Springs, where the weather was hot, humid and very dry and the course was in good condition considering the dryness and parched fairways. The greens were lush, although a little slow which made it more challenging. The food was excellent, as were the staff. Mike Brown was our winner of the Jubilee Cup with an excellent 37 points playing off 20. Runner up was Robbie Robinson with 36 points off 28.

Our visitor prize went to Ross Carroll with 38 points playing off a remarkable 5 handicap. Nearest the pin at the second hole was Mike Brown, and nearest the pin in two at the 17th was Tony Walton. The attached winners are pictured (Left to Right): Robbie, Mike & Tony.

On Friday 12th September, we shall be revisiting Wrag Barn Golf & Country Club, which is situated near Highworth SN6 7QQ. The course is parkland in character, with stunning views across the Berkshire Downs. Designed by Hawtree & Son in 1989, the layout is an exciting prospect for all levels of golfer. Beginners and high handicappers will find it forgiving, while low handicappers will enjoy the challenges of water and well-placed bunkers. The course is located eight miles from Swindon. We shall meet up at 12 noon for a 13.00 tee start. As always, if you would like to join us, then please contact Alan or Chris on 01869 340423/347173.

They say every glass of wine you drink shortens your life by five minutes. I've done the maths and it seems I died in 1844!

Happy golfing

Alan Brewer (chair)



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

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The Cricket Report



A narrow loss in the sun and rain at Blenheim Palace

Losing the toss, Steeple batted first on an uneven wicket and interesting outfield.... Top three Richard Churchill, Alain Michaelis and skipper Nigel Doggett added 65 between them. When Richard was out for an excellent 38, Steeple capitulated from 65-1 to 66-5 with a string of three ducks.

Phil Chesser was next in and was advised by Nige to play sensibly. Three balls later, the captain himself was clean bowled trying to smash a straight ball into the top bedroom of the palace! 72-6, but then the tail wagged – 14 leg side runs from Phil, a beautiful (in so many ways) partnership of 31 from Ben Woods (33 not out) and Jonty Renk (14), plus a valuable 16 from Paul Longman. 152 all out felt competitive.

The ever-reliable Alain (1 for 27 off 7 overs) picked up an interesting early wicket caught behind. Jonty bowled bravely with an injured knee, and Paul Longman (2 for 28 off 7) had an excellent spell with two big wickets both clean bowled. Richard Churchill also took two wickets and Raj bowled tightly (1 for 16 from 4).

When Ben clean bowled Blenheim's number 8 to make it 98-7, the game looked in the bag. But Blenheim's lower middle order hit big, winning by 3 wickets with 4 balls remaining. A disappointing result, but a good game with a truly great tea!!

Cricket from a different planet

We welcomed Surrey Optimists (on their 76th annual tour) to Tew. A pre-match presentation for new caps revealed players from Sydney, Adelaide and Durban! Amongst their number was also former West Indian quick, Colin Croft (fortunately not playing).

Fielding first, Steeple made a decent start - a great catch from Nigel Doggett off Jonty Renk (a tidy 1 for 40 off 6) making it 22-1. Enter the man from Sydney, greeted by Steeple's gobby keeper with quips about the previous day's rugby and Jac Morgan's clear-out. A bad idea – a rapid 58 followed, including two extraordinary sixes over extra cover off the unlucky Ronnie Orr-Ewing. Another Aussie hit 62, and even their number nine nonchalantly drove his first ball through the covers.

Seven catches were held, including three excellent ones from Richard Churchill (he dropped a fourth – the easiest!). Olly Doggett completed a great spell of 2 for 19 from 4 overs restricting them to 258-7 off 30 overs – less than 10 an over!

Looking to avoid humiliation, Olly and Nick Foster opened positively until Olly fell for 13, quickly followed by his father and Ronnie. Nick then followed for a classy 33 to make it 64-4. Whilst Richard briefly held on bravely, 83-5 rapidly became 83-9!! Despite glorious boundaries from Paul and Jonty, we were dismissed for 91, losing narrowly by 167 runs!

We were totally thumped (even their manager hadn't realised how good some of them were), but a fun game nonetheless, followed by a few beers before the Optimists set off for Worcester.

Phil Chesser



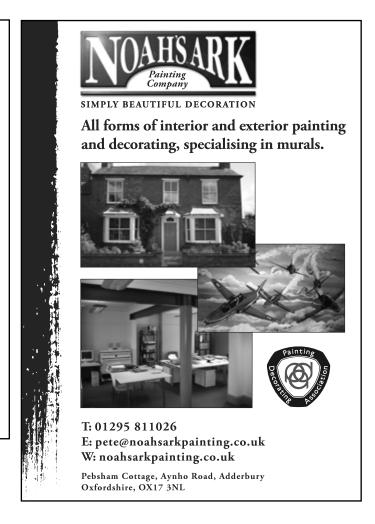
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Steeple Aston Garden Club



Visit to Middle Aston

This was a nice change, as we didn't need to travel far to visit the garden of Tim and Caroline Edwards at Middle Aston. Having moved from Steeple Aston a few years ago, a new garden was always going to present a challenge, but on visiting this surprisingly large garden, there was no need to worry as it looked amazing despite the very dry weather in recent months! Caroline's gardening design skills showed through in spades, which fits perfectly into the space and is mostly hidden from the main street, with an abundance of flowers, shrubs and trees adorning this village garden. Tim also spoke to us about his contribution to the design, especially the many trees they have planted, so it is a real team effort. Of particular interest was the flower border just above the patio area, which Caroline has created and was full of colour. Many were also envious of the vegetable beds and the produce.

It might have been the proximity of the garden, the pleasant summer's evening or curiosity, but we welcomed record numbers coming to visit with a glass of wine or softer drink and some homemade nibbles, all of which had an ingredient sourced from the garden! It was with some reluctance that we had to drag ourselves away from the garden, the superb hosts and equally fantastic refreshments.

If you would like to know more about how Caroline designed her garden and other projects she has taken on, please come and hear her talk on Wednesday 15th October in the village hall which is the first of our monthly talks through the winter months (please note it is a Wednesday evening rather than the usual Tuesday in October!).

Our next summer visit is on Monday 15th September to The Grange, Chalgrove OX44 7RQ and also Mill Barn OX44 7SL starting at 2.00pm, where we have the opportunity to visit two more amazing garden styles and enjoy tea at the same time. The cost will be £17 to include both gardens. For more details, please contact Alison Llewellyn at alisonlew.home@gmail.com or Richard Preston at Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com

Alison Llewellyn & Richard Preston Steeple Aston Garden Club

Steeple Aston & Middle Aston Horticultural Society

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 24th September 2025

7.45pm

At Steeple Aston Village Hall

Everyone is welcome, and we always encourage visitors to the meeting and hopefully they become new members. The society only delivers the two shows with the help of our committee.

What's involved? Five meetings a year and two show days are all we ask.

Everyone: young or old, new to the village or resident of 40 years, long time exhibitor or not yet had a go – everyone has something to offer. I have been in my current role for 10 years, and am seeking someone to take it over. I've loved it and have seen many modernisations, and scope for many more. If that could be you, please get in touch.

Summer show: as the copy date is a few weeks before the Annual summer show, we are unable to include the results in this month SAL. They will be published on the village website and printed in the October edition. With fingers crossed, I hope to write that we had a lovely sunny day, with lots of entries and everyone had a great time. If you didn't, even more reason to join us on the committee and make some changes.

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APPLE PICKING & PRESSING

The heatwave means an early harvest. Apples need picking much earlier than usual this year.

If you have apples in your garden, please don't let them go to waste! Just pick them, and we will get them made into delicious apple juice, pasteurised and bottled for sale in aid of the Community Orchard.

If you can help:

Join our apple picking gangs on 7th & 20th September. It is fun harvesting the apples, and children are welcome to join in.

Contact Annie at annie.stogdale@gmail.com or 07740 290291.

If you have apples that need picking, tell Annie!

Better still, drop off your picked apples at Grange Cottage on South Side any time.

(No windfalls please because bruised apples go off too quickly).

If you'd like to press your own apples by hand and keep the juice:
The Steeple Aston and Middle Aston community Apple Press will be
available at the Community Orchard, Water Lane on the same dates

from 2:00pm until 4:00pm.

Fun for all the family! No booking required. Bring along your apples, a chopping board, a knife, and bottles. We supply the crusher, apple press, and a helping hand. A steriliser is also available. All free of charge although donations are always welcome!

The equipment is also available for private use at other times. Contact Annie if you would like to borrow it.



Deddington Guides Report

We finished the summer term with three outdoor meetings. The shooting activity at Horley scout campsite with our very experienced instructor was a great experience, and we enjoyed games in the woods and on the field afterwards ... a popular site!

Our two favourite evenings, at the end of term, were Backwoodsman Cooking and Stream Walking. In an open fire, we made tea in our home-made billy cans, and cooked all sorts of delights in our foil parcels ... a lovely evening!

Thank you to Vicky and family for their hospitality - the girls loved the stream walking - a great adventure and a perfect way to cool off on a warm evening. The rain whilst we tucked into chocolate brownies (thank you, Charlotte) and lemonade afterwards didn't dampen our end of term spirits.

We meet again on Tuesday 9th September from 7.00pm to 9.00 pm. All girls 10 years and over are

We meet again on Tuesday 9th September from 7.00pm to 9.00 pm. All girls 10 years and over ar welcome. Come along and see what we do... give us a try.

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PICNIC IN THE COMMUNITY ORCHARD

'There are few things so pleasant as a picnic eaten in perfect comfort'. So said Somerset Maugham, and there are few places so pleasant as a community orchard for a picnic, he might have added. The proof of the pudding is in the eating, he did not say. Exactly who was the first to say that is lost in the mists of time, although Cervantes popularised the phrase in his novel, Don Quixote, where he used it to mean that the true quality of something could only be judged by experiencing it. Especially the true quality of a savoury sausage known in his day as a pudding – which was perfect for a picnic, incidentally.





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BLAST from the past



These photos from 1925 show how the popularity of the village flower show was as great a century ago as it is today.

Details and photographs from this year's Horticultural Show will be published in the October issue of SAL.





Photos courtesy of Steeple Aston Village Archive (SAVA).

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SAVA'S annual exhibition in the Village Hall will be on the theme of the Village in Wartime, on the weekend of November 8th and 9th.



DR RADCLIFFE'S TRUST ANNUAL AWARDS

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The Dr Radcliffe's Trust invites applications from young people who:

are 16 (post GCSE) - 25 years old

are studying at school, college, university or are in an apprenticeship 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^{th} 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/ZkB8XSiXZtEv9fqz7



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

Church *Matters*



The sun is shining, and the cows are munching luscious green grass in the field next to our motor home, as we relax on holiday in France. Yesterday 'A' level exam results were announced, changing lives across the country.

Change is a part of life. Often it happens incrementally, in tiny steps and we adapt slowly with it. The days have been slowly shortening ever since the summer solstice at the end of June. Despite this change happening every year, come September, the shorter cooler days seem to surprise us. To manage the changing seasons, we have summer and winter duvets, which simply require swapping at the appropriate time.

Change can also happen suddenly and dramatically, such as with exam results, and leaving home for the first time. Seeing the change approaching, enables us to begin to prepare for the change. We can talk it through, put things in place, including beginning to prepare a 'bottom drawer' with extra bed linen, cutlery and crockery for when we leave home. We may also need to learn new things to help us adapt, like learning to cook.

Sometimes change comes out of the blue, and when it does it can take longer to adapt and cope with the change, especially if the change is unwelcome and difficult. Faith is what helps me in these situations, as I believe that God holds us even as we go through difficult times. I think of Peter, as he saw Jesus walking across the lake; faith enabled Peter to climb out of the boat when Jesus called him. When Peter began to sink (having looked at the storm), 'immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him' (Matthew 14:31).

As we face changes, be they big, small, welcome or unwelcome, we need to adapt, so that we can move forward living our best life. This will involve some level of letting go. The more we cling to the past and resist the change, the harder accepting and adapting to the change is. Throughout this process, we can lean into God trusting him to hold us, knowing he loves us and wants the best for us.

This autumn as the seasons turn and change, I invite you to think about what changes are happening for you, and how are you growing and adapting to them. Are there changes you are resisting? Are there things you need to let go of? Can you give these to God, lean into him, trust him and step out of the boat into your future?

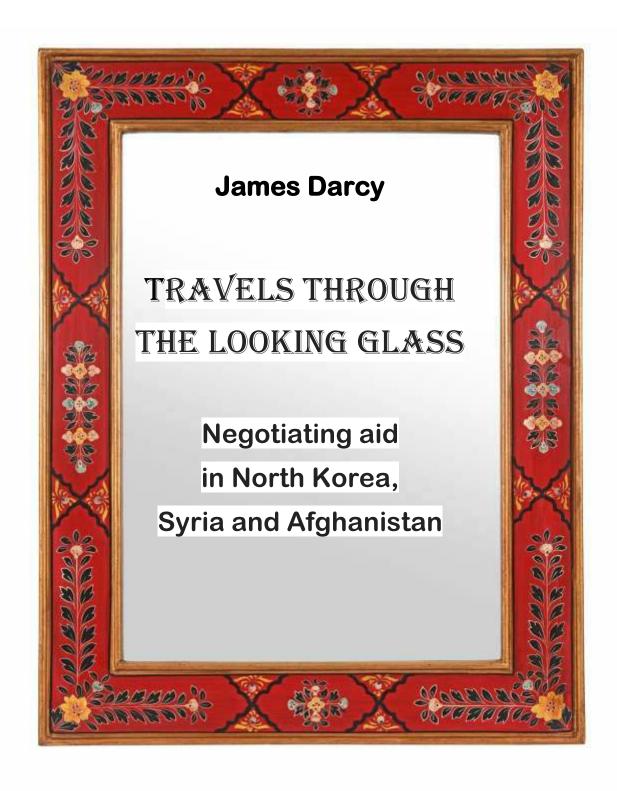
God, You know which direction my life is headed. Guide my path and heart as I continue to trust You through this change in my life. Help me depend on You as I navigate this change. Amen.

God bless,

Harriet



Steeple Talks 18th September In the Church – 7.15pm for 7.30pm



Refreshments from 7.15pm

Donations are welcomed for church funds.

All Welcome

Local Information

Church Services September 2025

Date	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley	
Sunday 7 th September	9.30am Holy Communion BCP	11.00am Holy Communion BCP	5.30pm Evensong & Baptism	
Sunday 14 th September	9.30am Morning Prayer	11.00am Family Worship	5.30pm Holy Communion	
Sunday 21 st September	9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Holy Communion	5.30pm Evensong	
Sunday 28 th September	10.30am Harvest Festival	5.30pm Harvest Festival & Supper	9.30am Family Communion	
			www.sntchurch.com	

Our church buildings are also open every day. Do feel free to visit at any time.

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 1531 1645 1754 1849 1937 2037 2216 1620 1737 1840 1932 2022 2147 2253

Saturdays

0721 0821 0931 then hourly to 1531 1641 1746 1849 1937 2037 2216 0809 0909 1019 1531 1641 1746 1849 1937 2037 2216 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 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.

The Night Sky in Late Summer

With the days now getting shorter, the sky is darkening and the stars gleaming more brightly. I measure the sky darkness on most good nights using a Sky Quality Meter. If Oxfordshire County Council approve a general 'Part-night street lights policy', then I look forward to an improvement in dark sky quality, even though the street lights here in Steeple have been switched off between 00.30 and 05.30 GMT for a number of years already.

As twilight gives way to darker evenings, there is an improvement in the visibility of the Milky Way. August and September nights are particularly comfortable in a deck chair as Cygnus (Swan) flies overhead, and star clouds in Aquila (Eagle) become more prominent. A keen eye can possibly make out a darker band running through Cygnus, caused by dust clouds obscuring the stars behind. This is a property of spiral galaxies (like our own), where dust and gas lurk in large quantities.

The Andromeda galaxy (the Milky Way's 'twin') is now up in the sky, and rightly claimed to be the furthest object visible to the unassisted eye at a distance of 2.5 million light years. It can be found if the sky is dark enough, e.g. at new moon or after moon set. In binoculars the galaxy looks like an elongated hazy smear; in a telescope it's bigger and brighter, but with no detail.

Near the Andromeda galaxy are two smaller satellite galaxies. If you have travelled to the Southern Hemisphere and seen the Magellanic Clouds, then you will have seen satellite galaxies to the Milky Way. They are cosmic neighbours at 150,000 light years distant.

Not to forget the planets, there is another 'alignment' in September, that is to say, they are spread out along the ecliptic in the Eastern quarter. First is Saturn in the South/SE at midnight with Neptune nearby, both in Pisces (you'll need a star map to identify Neptune with binoculars). Looking towards Taurus in the East/SE, Uranus is located roughly halfway between the Pleiades cluster and the V-head of Taurus. The planet can be mistaken for a star, so a map will help guide you in. Continuing Eastwards in the early morning, and towards the horizon is Jupiter (in Gemini) and finally Venus. Venus will change position visibly from night to night. Mercury is also there, but too close to the Sun to be seen easily.

At the start of September between say 05.00 to 05.30 am BST, Jupiter, Venus, and Mercury will be aligned, with the Sun below the horizon. It will be interesting to watch their relative positions change from day to day.

Diary Dates:

Total Lunar Eclipse: Sept 07 19.45 BST. Moon rises in eclipse. Ends at 21.00 BST.

Orionid Meteor shower: Best Oct 20-22. Fast meteors, many with persistent trains*.

*A meteor *train* arises when the column of ionised gas left behind by a bright trail is large enough and bright enough to remain visible after the trail has subsided. It may even appear to distort or break up before it disappears.

Tim Haymes
tvh.observatory@btinternet.com
britastro.org/observations/user.php?user=1288

Local Info



STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL www.savh.org.uk

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- Ideal site for parties, receptions, seminars, exhibitions and workshops
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- Off-Road Car parking

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

Steeple Aston and Middle Aston Rubbish bin collection day is THURSDAY.

September 2025

4th Blue and brown

11th Green

18th Blue and brown

25th Green

October 2025

2nd Blue and brown

9th Green

16th Blue and brown

23rd Green

30th Blue and brown



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 (Daily up to 6 hours from 6pm)	£55			
Social Function off-peak times (Daily up to 5 hours before 6pm)	£27.50			
Meeting of represented clubs (Daily per session up to 2 hours)	£11			
Caution money for private lettings	£100			
Block bookings for social events 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 rec.trust@googlemail.com	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** for any changes.

Please send details of events for October and November to **editorsalife@gmail.com**

Month	Event	Venue	Time
Contombor			
September Tuesday 9th	WI: Reflexology - talk and demo from Beth Astle	Villago Hall	7.00nm
Wednesday 10th		Village Hall	7.00pm
•	Valentines: Coach trip to Wells Cathedral & Bishop's Palace	Mass Dans Curinden	12
Friday 12th	SAGS match	Wrag Barn, Swindon	12 noon
Sunday 14th	SAL October copy & advert deadlines		
Monday 15th	Garden Club Visit	Chalgrove	2.00pm
Monday 15th	Parish Council meeting	S&R Building	7.30pm
Tuesday 16th	Valentines: Advice on scams	Village Hall	2.30pm
Thursday 18th	Steeple Church Talk: James Darcy - Travels Through the	SA Church	7.15pm
	Looking Glass		
Wednesday 24th	Horticultural Society's AGM	Village Hall	7.45pm
Saturday 27th	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9.00am - 12.30pm
October			
Friday 10th	SAGS match	Olton Solihull	
Tuesday 14th	WI: Being a drone pilot	Village Hall	7.00pm
Tuesday 14th	SAL November copy & advert deadlines		
Monday 20th	Parish Council meeting	S & R Building	7.30pm
Tuesday 21st	Valentines: Fish and Chips	Village Hall	
Tuesday 21st	North Ploughley Group: Willow Weaving with Lynn	Village Hall	7.00pm
•	Humberstone	•	•
Saturday 25th	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9.00am - 12.30pm
-	Valentines holiday	Studley Castle	,
		- /	

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

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e-mail: print@joshuahorgan.co.uk

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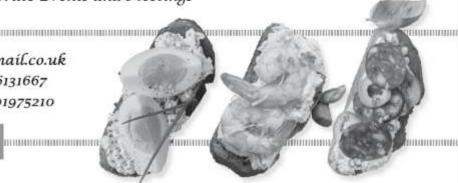
Home-made food

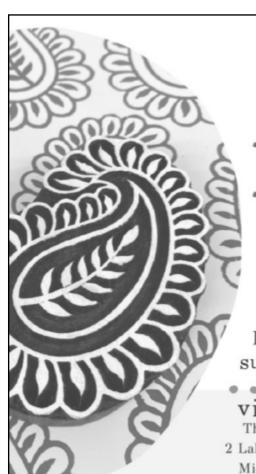


- > Weddings and Family Celebrations
- > Dinner Parties
- > Afternoon Tea
- > Drinks Party Canapes
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