

AUG/SEP 2024

MECE OPEN EVENING

SEE PAGE 4

IN THIS ISSUE

GORDON POUND

The highs and lows of one evening
P18-19

PARISH NEWS

Fun and games at the Village Day
P22

JANET THAKE

Party celebration on her retirement
P26



 MAIDEN ERLEGH
CHILTERN EDGE

Open Evening

Thursday 03 October
5:30pm until 7:30pm

This event will be an exciting opportunity for you to visit the school, talk to students, staff and subject leaders.

There will be lots to do and see including a presentation by the **Headteacher, Mrs Briony Bowers**, subject and enrichment information, hands-on activities and tours of the school led by students.

Headteacher Presentations

Presentations by Mrs Briony Bowers will take place in the Main School Hall at 5.30pm and 7.00pm.

Prospectus 2023-24



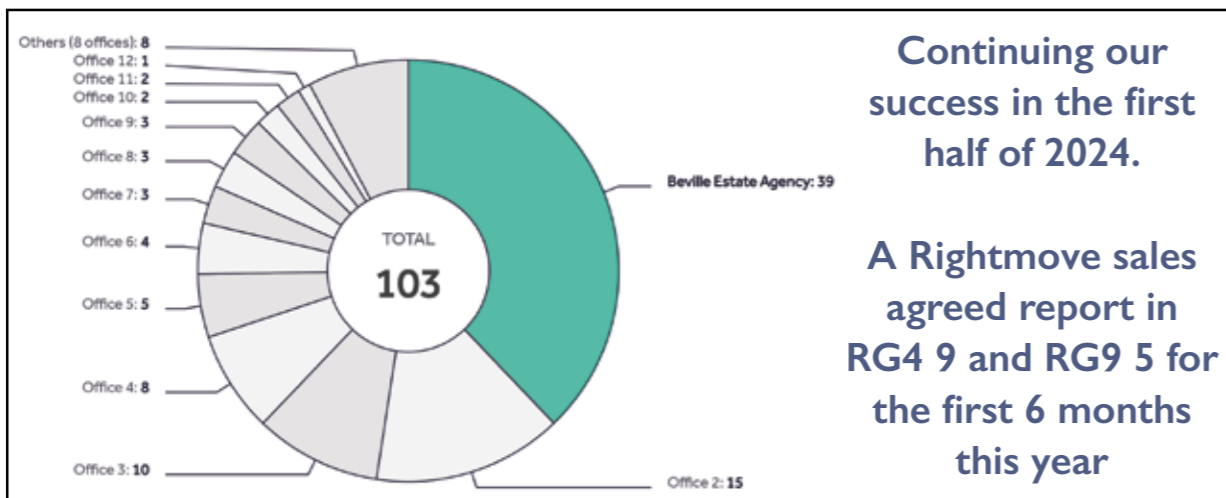

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Recently confirmed in Rightmove's annual statistics, Beville Estate Agency sold the most properties in Sonning Common in 2023.



Continuing our success in the first half of 2024.

A Rightmove sales agreed report in RG4 9 and RG9 5 for the first 6 months this year



Sonning Common £240,000

Two bedroom first floor apartment, presented in good order, with garage in a block, set in a quiet cul de sac on the edge of the village. EPC: C



Peppard Common £1,550,000

Spacious single storey detached residence, set at the end of a sweeping drive, occupying an approx. 2 acre plot, comprising gardens & paddock, with 2 box stable, situated on the edge of this sought after village, with views over the driveway, gardens and neighbouring countryside. EPC D



Gallowstree Common £1,450,000

A brand new, cottage style detached home, built by highly regarded award winning builders M Glynn. The property is finished to an exacting standard benefitting from four bedrooms, three reception rooms and situated in a highly sought after location "The Hamlet". EPC: tbc

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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Having endured a very wet and grey summer so far, I am hopeful that it will change to sun and blue skies in the next few weeks. In the past it has always been that summer weather seemed to end as soon as the schools closed and the children were on holiday. Wouldn't it be lovely if the sun shone from the end of July right through whole of August?

On Friday 12 July I will attend the Investiture ceremony to collect my British Empire Medal at the County Hall Oxford. I will then believe it is for real even though we have already attended a garden party at Buckingham Palace. My sincere thanks to those of you who have sent me congratulations, flowers and cards.

Back in the day as a youngster, aged 21, I collected my Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award from the palace handed to me by the Duke himself. He asked me what I would be doing in future and told him teaching. He thought this was a very worthy career. I absolutely agree with him having done so. In those days you could drive and park in the palace grounds. It had never occurred to me that I should be awarded again, not even a wildest dream.

Enough of me. This magazine has lots of events and activities, as well as interesting articles and I hope you will enjoy some of them.

Wishing you all the best of holidays. ●

Diana Pearman

FUTURE DEADLINE DATES FOR MAGAZINE COPY

1 September, 1 November, 1 January, 1 March

We would love to receive your articles! 😊

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



Diana Pearman



Christine Atkinson



Joan Grummant

CONTENTS

- 4-7 Community News
- 10 Eco Soco
- 12-13 Noticeboard
- 16 RUFC
- 18-19 In Focus - Gordon Pound
- 20-21 Library
- 22 Parish news
- 24-25 Health matters
- 26 Janet Thake
- 28 Kennylands gymnastics
- 32-33 Church news
- 34 Tom Fort / Advertisers directory

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MECE NEWS

The importance of community



As we enter the final weeks of the school year we have been reflecting on the meaning of 'community' within and beyond our school gates.

Our discussions have drawn in a wide range of stakeholders including student voice panels, discussions with teachers, governors and invited community guests. It has been lovely to feel the warm support and pride in the school and the number of people invested in our success. It is my aspiration as headteacher that we build our connections with the Sonning Common Community even more strongly so that we become the school of choice for all the students in the village.

We have had great feedback from the visitors to our open mornings, I had a lovely time at the primary school summer fete at the end of June and we have welcomed all of the year 5 students from Sonning Common Primary School to experience some secondary school subjects and to get to know the school. Mrs Salmons and I share a belief that children should be able to go to their local school and that school should be so good that they wouldn't want to go anywhere else!

The words alongside show what MECE

students value about their school – a small, inclusive community which is friendly and welcoming and where everyone belongs.

MECE is also part of the family of schools in the Maiden Erlegh Trust, giving us a wider community to draw on in terms of expertise, resources and support. I'm delighted that the school is now fully staffed with teachers for September and we will also host two of the Trust subject leaders in English and Science for two days a week. The experience of these leaders will enable us to continue to develop our curriculum and the quality of teaching in two important core subjects.



MECE really comes into its own in the summer term when we can make use of the luxurious amount of green space which surrounds the school. A plethora of sporting events to celebrate this Olympic year have been running every lunch time with students having the opportunity to try out archery, trampolining and gymnastics amongst others. We have also been running our own Euro football tournament with tutor groups representing different countries from the draw. The House music competition was, as usual, a fiercely contested highlight and auditions are already underway for the



annual Christmas show. Before the end of term, the Duke of Edinburgh group will also undertake their final assessed expedition.

Students are also looking forward to next year's international trips with visits to Ypres, Iceland and the annual trust ski trip taking place in 2024/25. I'm really proud of the amazing opportunities we offer at MECE and I look forward to welcoming prospective students and their families to our Open Evening on Thursday 3rd October.

Best wishes to you all for a wonderful summer. ●

BRIONY BOWERS
Headteacher Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge



SCPS NEWS

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON

New head at SCPS - introducing Rachel Salmons



Mrs Salmons (Rachel) has been part of Sonning Common Primary School for 20 years and is delighted to be taking over the headship in September this year. Many readers will know her from their own children being at SCPS and the many roles she has already had at school over the years – teaching different ages, helping with the successes in athletics, setting up the running club for the children, and most recently as deputy head. Rachel told us a bit about herself and her hopes for this new and challenging role.

'I was employed by previous head Pip Marples in September 2004, apparently telling him the first time we met that what I really wanted was his job. I don't remember this, but he does, and reminded me of this when I accepted the headship!

After graduating in European Studies from Loughborough University in

1990, I spent several years living abroad in Quebec, Canada and Indonesia, whilst teaching English, and, before entering the primary teaching profession, I managed teams in the electronics industry, worked for Yellow Pages and was a General Manager in a live events business.

In 2004, as a Newly Qualified Teacher I started at Sonning Common and was mentored in that first year by Val Harris, with Sue Tyldesley as head of KS2 and Mel Choules (then White) as Deputy Head. Many local ex pupils will remember Lynda Hanks, Jill Pound, Paula Humm, Lynne Hems and Marion Mills, who were all

great colleagues and of course, Rachelle Bartlett who is still here! My colleagues remain a great source of friendship – never a day goes past without us having a big belly-laugh about something, and I am sure that this sense of fun and enjoyment can be felt by our pupils.

Outside school, I have 3 children, aged 16, 22 and 24, all of them having attended SCPS. I feel very privileged that I got to see them in a way that most parents can't – standing up in assembly, getting certificates, playing with their friends – although I am sure that sometimes they would all have preferred not to be at school with "Mrs Mum"! For hobbies, I have been a very slow runner for many years. I have completed lots of local races, up to ultra-marathons. Last year I competed in Race to the Stones and proudly hobbled around school with nice blisters to celebrate! My favourite race recently was called Fortitude, with a 5-km lap on the hour

every hour for 10 hours. Turns out I am quite talented at this event which seems to involve little bits of running interspersed with eating! I am known for my love of very colourful clothes, particularly leggings, and my running hobby gives me plenty of opportunity to justify more purchases.

As I take up the headship, I am excited to be taking my place in the long line of guardians of this great school. I believe that in the 111 years of existence (since January 6th 1913), I am the 10th headteacher and the first headmistress! I cannot predict what challenges and changes my tenure will see, but I march towards them surrounded by a great team of staff and a fantastic community of governors, pupils and parents!

We all wish Rachel the very best as she begins a new school year as the first headmistress – quite an honour – of SCPS! ●

BELOW:
Portrait of Rachel by Years 1 and 2



SONNING COMMON PRESCHOOL NEWS



you all enjoyed it even though the sun was hiding!

The children have been experiencing walks around the village to visit the Library and Heath and Watkins. They are all brightly visible in our hi-vis jackets donated by Beville estate Agents – do wave and say hello if you see us in the Autumn!

The first week of Summer Camp 2024 has been great. A variety of activities are ongoing including, arts and crafts, painting, music, dance and outdoor games.

It was really nice to see lots of familiar faces at the village day in June. We hope

Do you know we have extended opening times during the week? There is early drop off from 8:30 am, and children can stay after their pre school session on Monday to Thursday until 4pm. All enquiries for future places to the office on **0118 972 4760** or email info@sonningcommonpreschool.co.uk

'HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES' AT BASSET MANOR

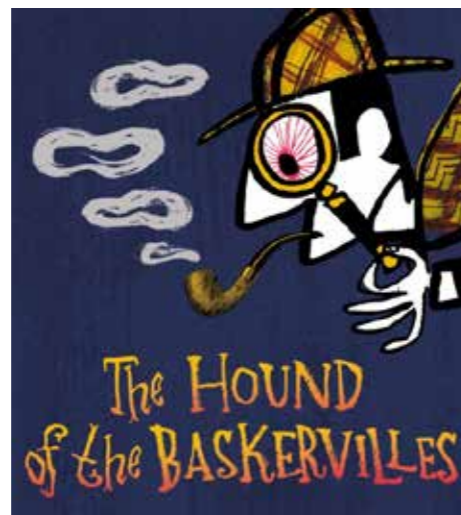
citizens advice

From the eerie moonlit landscapes of Dartmoor to cryptic clues, this gripping adaptation, performed outdoors, promises an irresistible blend of tension and wit. Prepare for an unforgettable evening of mystery and intrigue!

to our community. This generosity ensures that we can empower individuals with the guidance and resources they need to navigate life's challenges."

The show will run for 2 hours and 20 minutes, including a 20-minute intermission. Suitable for ages 8 and over. Bring seating, a rug, folding camp chair etc, suitable clothing and a picnic. Tickets can be obtained from TicketSource.

It's a night not to miss. ●



Now you can enjoy the famous Sherlock Holmes story of the Hound of the Baskervilles in an inspired and irreverent adaptation by the Illyria theatre company, in a special fund-raising performance in aid of Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale.

The show will take place at Basset Manor in Stoke Row, hosted by Baroness Sheehan and family, on Saturday 27 July 2024 at 7.30 pm.

Debbie Watts, chief officer of Citizens Advice Oxfordshire South and Vale, says:

"We are profoundly grateful to Baroness Sheehan and her family for continuing to support Citizens Advice South Oxfordshire and Vale. Proceeds from this wonderful production will enable Citizens Advice to continue providing invaluable assistance

10K RETURNS



We are thrilled to announce the return of Sonning Common 10k, a fundraiser for Sonning Common Primary School taking place on Sunday 6th October at 9:30am. This is a great opportunity to support our wonderful school whilst also participating in a chip-timed 10k around Sonning Common and the surrounding countryside.

Starting and finishing at the primary school, all proceeds from this event will go towards supporting Sonning Common Primary School.

Entrants need to be 15 or over on the day of the event. Younger children need to be accompanied by their family. To secure your spot, please go to: www.SoCo10k.co.uk and to find out more. Early registration is recommended as this event sold out in 2023!

If you are on social media, please follow our pages to be kept up to date with news:

Instagram: [Sonningcommon10k](https://www.instagram.com/Sonningcommon10k)
Facebook: [Sonning Common 10k](https://www.facebook.com/SonningCommon10k)

We are immensely grateful to our sponsors: Badgemore Park and Shiplake College. Without their support, it simply would not be possible to stage the race and raise money for the school. A special thanks to Beville Estate Agent who are continuing to support this event by providing all the signage and advertising.

Finally, to put on this event, we require an army of volunteers, so if you can help us on the day, please get in touch for further information:

sonningcommon10k@outlook.com

Many thanks and look forward to seeing many of you on Sunday 6th October. ●

Cate Sturgess

STAY ACTIVE

You may never have heard of it before but Walking Football is similar to regular football but is a small sided game played at a slower pace with it's own rules. It is the perfect fit for anyone who wants to play the game, make new friends, stay active and have fun; in a friendly, supportive environment.

Rotherfield United Walking Football Club is a thriving club providing regular exercise, a great sense of community and lively social activities for over 60 members aged between 58 and 79 who live locally in Caversham, Sonning Common, Peppard and other villages. The club formally came into being in 2017 following a discussion with one of the GP's at Sonning Common Health centre.

We play twice a week for 60 - 90 minutes and usually have around 25 at each session. Teams are selected so they are well balanced with a mix of skills and abilities in each team. Walking Football is ideal for anyone who wants to continue playing football, or who wants to return to the game, or who has not played football before. Also, we have an active social calendar, as building a strong community among the group is an important element



as well as the physical activity of actually playing. For example, this year we have been to the racing at Newbury, played crazy golf in Henley, been on a history walk around central Reading, had a Greek dinner in Caversham as well as regular meetups at the Loddon Brewery.

Each year we choose a local charity or two that have helped our members and for which we want to raise money. We raise money through our match fees and our numerous social events, for example we each donated our first winnings while at the horse racing.

Last year we raised over £3200 which was donated to Sue Ryder Palliative Care and Mesothelioma UK. This year our chosen charities are the British Heart Foundation and the Cardiac Rehab Unit at Royal Berks - both charities helped several of our club members last year and we want to give something back to them. We made our first presentation on May 30th to Claire and Ali from RBH prior to our normal Thursday session.

For further info on the club see and walking football please see <https://rotherfieldfc.com/team/walking-football/> or contact wf@rotherfieldfc.com ●

IT IS MORE THAN JUST GARDENING

Discover Cane End Allotments in Sonning Common, where gardening meets community spirit. Nestled in a picturesque setting, our allotments offer fertile soil and ample space for growing a wide variety of fresh vegetables and vibrant flowers. But what truly sets us apart is our vibrant, supportive community. Here, seasoned gardeners and beginners alike come together, sharing tips, resources, and a love for the outdoors. From communal events to friendly advice, you'll find a welcoming atmosphere that fosters friendships and mutual growth. Secure your plot today and join a thriving community dedicated to cultivating not just plants, but lasting connections and a sense of belonging. ●

Laurie



Widmore Park - a new retirement community for Sonning Common

An update from the Project Team

About

Building and civil engineering contractor, **Farrans Construction**, is delivering the first phase of a new retirement community located on Blounts Court Road, for client **Inspired Villages**. Farrans' first phase of works will include 73 high-quality, age-appropriate, sustainable homes for over 65s and a state-of-the-art wellness suite within the retirement community centre.

If you have any queries regarding the project, please contact the Farrans Construction team by emailing sonningcommon@farrans.com or calling the project helpline - **01483 717 321**.

Social Value

Delivering Social Value is at our core vision, mission, and company values. To ensure that we leave a lasting legacy to the local community, we've developed a social value plan to be delivered over the duration of the project. Over our time in Sonning Common, we will arrange events within the community, engage in volunteering opportunities, site visits, and facilitate work placements.

Our educational outreach programme commenced in May – where we delivered a bespoke construction workshop to 70 year 10 students from Maiden Erlegh CE school. We

also donated 10 decommissioned company laptops and equipment that will be used in their Special Education Needs Department to help those with severe dyslexia.

We have also volunteered at 1st Sonning Common scout hall, where 6 members of Farrans/Inspired Villages helped clear their storage areas that had accumulated over 40 years. We were also able to identify surplus equipment that will be offered to a local homeless charity.

August will see the first of our sponsored Age UK coffee mornings which will be held at the Village Hall. A great social morning with a chance to meet your local community link worker, along with colleagues at dementia Oxfordshire and careers Oxfordshire.

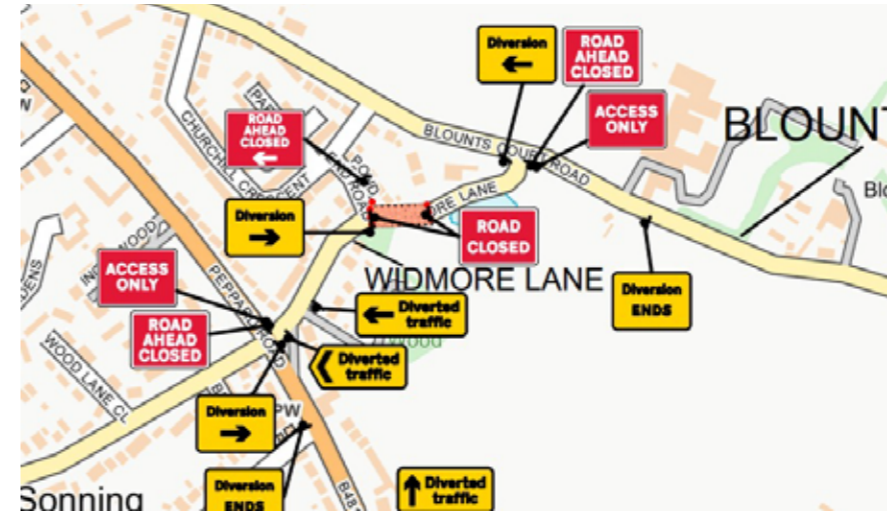
Recent Site Activity

Within the last couple of months, we have now delivered the raft slabs for the 4 residential blocks and have begun to erect the timber frame on the first 2 blocks. We've completed the majority off the main village core services, raft slab and started the reinforced concrete rising elements. We've also removed most of the earth that was planned to come off site.



Design Impression - Inspired Villages

This advertorial has been commissioned by Farrans Construction



Look ahead - July to September

Looking ahead over the summer months we will continue with the timber frame erection along with their associated envelope works on all 4 blocks with the aim of getting them watertight by the end of the summer. You should also notice the rising structure of the main village core beginning to present itself. This will be an

accumulation of reinforced concrete and steel structures.

Due to some drainage works needing to be undertaken, we will be closing Widmore Lane for a period of 2 weeks from Monday 5th August 2024. There will be no through route to Blount's Court Rd and Peppard Rd will be access only.

Inspired Villages

FARRANS
A CRH COMPANY

Stay in Touch

If you would like to continue to receive digital updates from Farrans on the Project's progress, please email into sonningcommon@farrans.com to be added to our e-mailing list.



Images from the Volunteer Day at the Scout's Hall



HELLO EVERYONE,



Something a little different this month, as all of us at Eco SoCo would like to say a big thank you Sonning Common, you supported our Great Big Green Week events with gusto!

The village hall was brimming with enthusiastic villagers for both our specialist talks; 'Hedgehogs & Hedgehog Highways' by retired vet, environmentalist and wildlife photographer Stephen Powles and 'Climate Friendly Gardening' by Biodynamic Gardener



and Waltham Place Estate Manager, Andre Tranquilini.

At Village Day children loved building their very own free, bird boxes. 30 bird boxes are now finding new homes around the village and beyond, with all the children very excited to see what new families will use them in the Spring!

SC Library ran eco crafts and story time as well as setting up a fantastic display board, Brambles and Christian Community Action created green window displays – who didn't love the giant green hedgehog?! And the Herb Farm, Forresters, Heath & Watkins, Brambles, the Pet Barn and the Co-Op supported with raffle prizes, tea and coffee.

By the time you read this, we will have had our first Repair Café based at Springwater Church, it's a free community service (donations welcome) repairing small electrical items, jewellery, textiles, bikes, clocks and PCs. Hopefully many delicious cakes, teas and coffees will have been enjoyed at the Revive Café at the same time! Look out for the next date on Facebook and village noticeboards.



In late August, check the Eco SoCo Facebook page for the Free Garden Tree Giveaway! 2 free garden trees for every household, on a first come, first served basis. Autumn/Winter will see us verge planting – lovely plants for pollinators, our first heritage orchard and preparations for the Eco SoCo community veg garden!

To get involved in any of the projects, please email ecosoco24@gmail.com, for more info.

Not sure about what you have to offer, only so much time to give...remember...

'If you think you are too small to make a difference, try sleeping with a mosquito.'

Dalai Lama ●

Julie



Eco SoCo is supporting a FREE Garden Tree Giveaway in Sonning Common

Sound good? Want to make your garden beautiful and help wildlife?

All the free trees on offer are native UK trees and you can usually choose from:

- Spindle
- Wayfaring tree
- Guelder rose
- Crab apple
- Mountain ash
- Hawthorn
- Hazel
- Field maple
- Wild cherry
- Silver birch

The trees will be in the form of 'bare-root whips' between 60-90 cm high and they're limited to two per household. You can order just one tree if that's all you have room for.

Which trees are best for your garden?

Small gardens are generally suitable for one or two small trees, usually near the boundary but be careful not to plant your tree too close to yours or your neighbour's houses. Spindle, Wayfaring Tree and Guelder rose are best for smaller gardens. Whilst Crab Apple, Mountain Ash, Hawthorn, Hazel and Silver Birch are all great options for a medium garden.

How can you protect your trees?

In most gardens, you won't need to protect your tree but if your garden is open to the countryside, a spiral and a cane can help protect from rabbit damage. If muntjac are regular visitors, you'll need a 1.2m guard and stake to protect your tree. These are readily available to order online or through local tree nurseries.

How can you order my trees?

Applications open for you to apply online for your free trees in August. Check www.internationaltreefoundation.org/garden-tree-giveaway and Eco SoCo Facebook Group posts for release date. In October you'll hear more details from 'The International Tree Foundation' on collecting your trees. In December you can collect your free trees from Eco SoCo at Abbey Crest, Sonning Common and plant them in your garden. Please keep a record of your confirmation email for when you collect your tree.

Trees will be available on a first come, first served basis, so to secure your trees the best advice is to order early. ●

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Wed 31st July in the Library
10am 1-5 year olds
11am 5-7 year olds

Register a place
Come in or call 0118 9722448
sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.co.uk



VILLAGE COFFEE MORNING
Sonning Common Village Hall
WEDNESDAY 4th SEPTEMBER
10.30 a.m. - 12 Noon

All Welcome - Please join us for a Cup of Coffee/Tea and Biscuits



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Hosted by: **Sonning Common** **theWI**


CHILTERN EDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

AUTUMN SHOW SATURDAY 7th SEPTEMBER 2024
2.00PM - 4.00PM
Refreshments, Plant Stall, & Raffle

Everybody is very welcome to attend
New Members Welcome
FREE ADMISSION

SONNING COMMON VILLAGE HALL
Wood Lane Sonning Common
www.cehs.co.uk

SONNING COMMON LIBRARY AUTHOR EVENING



MICHAEL SMITH
BLETCHLEY PARK TALK
6th August 7:30pm
Tickets £5 from library
or friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk

A FOSCL PRODUCTION

The Big Bear Hunt



August 2024

Track down the bears around the village.
Entry form from the library or
friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk



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Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

We need volunteers, with time and a safe home, to care for and help train our puppies to become life-changing hearing dogs.

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hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteer



Registered charity in England and Wales no. 293358 and in Scotland no. SC040495 • Royal Patron HRH The Princess Royal

Chance2dance4charity



Friday 13 September, 2024 7.30pm - 9.30pm
Peppard Memorial Hall, Gallowstree Road RG9 5JA

Love to dance but never get the chance? Not keen on night clubs and late nights? Have a good old boogie to all kinds of music at a friendly social evening with all profits to good causes (Amnesty International & Sport In Mind). Two optional fun short taster sessions by local dance teacher, Kayleigh Rixon @DanceFitFun. No dance partner required. Come with family & friends or alone, no problem!

Bring your own refreshments - **NO FOOD OR DRINK ON SALE**
Tickets £8 on the door, or online (+15p booking fee): <https://www.trybooking.com/uk/DQVR>
or QR code below






A SOCIAL DANCE
SATURDAY 10th AUGUST
with **DAVE ANDERSON**

Dave is a well known Country and popular 60's/70's singer and will be on stage for an enjoyable evening. 8pm until 11pm. The Nettled Club RG9 5DD. We are a "not for profit" group of friends but do ask for a donation of just £10pp on the door. Free local parking. Disability facilities. Good size dance floor. Bar also sells tea and coffee. Always a very friendly atmosphere. Bring your friends with you and have a good night out. Should you have any queries, please do call Keith on 07752 374 610.

Let's dance



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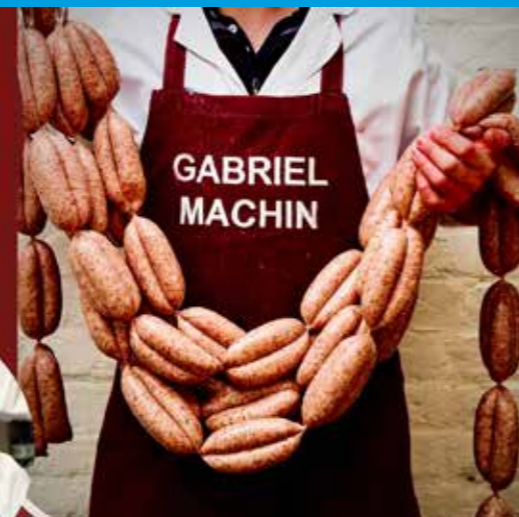
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ROTHERFIELD UNITED FC NEWS UPDATE - SUMMER 2024



make a difference every single day to these young footballers!

Behind the scenes a committee of volunteers run the membership, finances and the grounds at Bishopswood as well as a separate group of trustees who oversee and maintain the 'back office'. As a growing club we have a number of volunteering opportunities within the committee including treasurer, events team and Bishopswood site working group. If you'd like to join our friendly team of volunteers we'd love to hear from you!

hello@rotherfieldfc.com or via facebook and instagram



Our local football club has grown and grown over the last two years. The number of parents and players now involved enabled the club to host it's first ever tournament this year on a sunny and hot weekend in May. There were teams from under 7s to under 14s, girls' teams and women's. It was really great to have so many volunteers helping out and it was very successful. Hopefully it will become an annual event.

Many of the youth teams are also looking for additional players for next season – including the under 13s, 14s, 15s, the under 9/10 girls and the under 14 girls' teams. Please do get in touch via the website or Facebook page if any of your children would like to join in or attend a training session.

It has been a hugely successful season for Rotherfield United with lots of teams winning their divisions, cups and trophies. The Presentation Day, usually held at the home ground, was held this year at the Village Day in June. Fantastic to see all the happy young faces collecting medals and trophies from their coaches. The club would like to say a big THANK YOU to each of our fantastic volunteers for all that you do. You give your time so generously and

The new men's teams are already in training and have lots of interested players. They are actively looking for a team sponsor, so if you would like your company name on the shirts, please contact them.

Cerebrospinal Fluid Leak

One of the under 15 team has started fundraising for a charity close to him. Matthew Boden recently had been experiencing headaches that got better when lying down, a burning metallic

taste and smell and was having clear fluid leaking from his left nostril. It was diagnosed as Cerebrospinal Fluid Leak (CSF leak) so he needs to be very careful and if it reoccurs go to hospital.

He is raising funds for the charity that supports sufferers. If you would like to donate he has a justgiving page with more information. •

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GORDON POUND

Printed in the 1974 magazine

In 1974 Gordon Pound wrote to the editor of the Sonning Common magazine. Major Gordon and his Australian wife were living at that time in Barracks in Darwin Australia. Gordon was born in Sonning Common and clearly has a great affection for the village. His parents Stan and Mary Pound lived in Green Road (he refuses to call it Green Lane). At this time Gordon still feels 'it is home' and Sonning Common is the place he has lived in for the greater part of his life to date. His view is that the magazine's publication brings some small measure of satisfaction to know that on the other side of the world, in a completely

different environment, it manages to involve a most pleasant mixture of surprise and nostalgia.

In his letter Gordon has written an article which he says may or may not be published by the editor at the time. (I found it in a 1974 magazine stored in the library). So even if the following request of printing the article does not happen would she include the following. This message for the residents is that Gordon and his wife would be arriving in the UK for a holiday on 23 December 1974. He explains that he has lost contact with so many old friends and acquaintances. So, through the illustrious medium of the

magazine spread the word that Lorraine and Gordon will be in the lounge Bar of the Hare and Hounds and that they would be delighted to meet the aforesaid friends and acquaintances asking them to drop in after 7.30 on the night of Friday 27 December 1974.

In his parting words he wishes the people in the village every success in the future. He adds a message for Dave Brewer which is that if he attends the reunion, he may yet get that sub for the scout group.

What happens next is recorded in the local press at the time. ●

The highs and lows of one evening ... and what happened afterwards

Dear madam Editor

First may I congratulate you on your award of the BEM and then on the success of the Sonning Common Magazine, an asset to the community and I'm sure widely appreciated.

I note that the Feb/Mar issue was the fiftieth (year) issue - I assume of the magazine in its present form - and on that note I have taken the liberty of drawing your attention to a newspaper article (attached) that was a direct result of an article in an issue of the magazine in 1974, a mere half century ago!

I was born and brought up in Sonning Common but in 1974 I was a major in the Australian Army serving in Darwin. Having recently married an Australian girl I brought her to the UK at Christmas 1974 both to meet my parents, then living in Green Road (as it was) and to experience a Northern hemisphere Christmas.

Via the medium of the SCM I advised

that my wife and I would be in the Hare and Hounds on the evening of the 29th of December and would be delighted to share a seasonal drink with any old friends in the area. It was a joy when about fifty turned up though the event lost some of its splendour because we had just learned that our house had been destroyed by Cyclone Tracy on Christmas Eve. (Hence the article's headline.)

I have returned to the UK now and visit the village periodically and, though finding it much changed, there are still a couple of friends of yore. One is David Summers, on the left of the picture, sadly, Ken Peedell, second from left, passed away recently.

All the foregoing aside, I have another item that may be of interest.

My mother, a loving Christian soul, took in the daughter of one of her sisters and she and dad raised the little girl as her own. Joan was the baby's name, and she joined my sister, Sylvia, always known as

'Bunny', and the pair became big sisters to me. They were born in 1926 and 1921 respectively and I did not come along until 1939.

In 1949 Joan married a Frenchman and went to live in France where she had a family of her own. Sadly, she died recently but her dying wish was that her ashes be interred in the grave of those she had always regarded as her 'mum and dad' - also my parents of course.

Stanley and Mary Pound are laid to rest in the graveyard of what was once the Peppard Congregational Chapel in Blounts Court Road, Peppard, now the Springwater Congregational church.

Joan's daughter, Christine, has brought her mother's ashes to England and she and I came to refurbish the grave and lay Joan's remains to rest with those to whom she owed so much. ●

Gordon Pound

Words from the antipodes

By Gordon Pound

As I sit here in front of the typewriter, clad in just a pair of shorts, the perspiration is already starting to gather in spite of the ceiling fan turning in a valiant effort to dispel the humidity. Behind me through the wall composed entirely of louvres, the remnants of the last shower are still dripping from the frangipani tree and the heavy scent wafts gently through the air. Beyond the tree Darwin harbour lies like a sheet of stainless steel in the bright moonlight that is taking the opportunity to shine before the next storm, now being collected by the North West Monsoon

sweeping the sodden clouds together over Timor, moves inexorably down across the "Top End" and deposits another deluge to beat thunderously on the iron roof of our "house on stilts". The moisture condenses on the outside of the can of Victoria Bitter on the table, and on the wall a gecko has one eye on me and the other on some small example of the myriad crawling things that emerge during a tropic night. Outside another gecko calls for he/her mate while they prowl the wire gauze shielding the louvres and keeping the worst of the insects at bay. ●



NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

Hello from the Library! We have been super busy starting our Summer Fun programme with the local youngsters including an author visit by children's writer Fiona Barker. Of course, we are also running our usual Summer Reading Challenge for children this year. For the 4 years and older you will be given a poster, and you can receive stickers and rewards as you borrow books and visit the Library

over the summer. The ultimate goal is a certificate and medal. For the under 4s there is a Mini Challenge with a special card and stickers.

The theme of this year's challenge is "Marvellous Makers" and during the five Saturdays in August from 10am there will be special story times with crafts, a cake sale and stories on that week's theme. From Dancing to Drawing, Junk Modelling to Mini-Books, there will be something for everyone. We are also having an

Author and Illustrator visit on 17th August from the creators of Maximus the Mouse and Frederick the Fox. No need to book, just turn up.

Of course, we won't forget our adult customers as we will be having an Author talk on 6th August by Michael Smith about Bletchley Park. More details available in the Library or phone us at the Library on: 0118 972 2448 •

JULIET LEGG
LIBRARIAN

HALF-TERM AT THE LIBRARY

A visit from poet and author A. F. Harrold

I booked a ticket for my 8 year old grandson with some hesitation. He has always loved the Lego Masters and Zoolab events, but he is not a keen writer, can be a bit of a fidget and I wondered if he would enjoy the session.

I needn't have worried, from the very first A. F. Harrold held our attention. The poems he chose to read were captivating and funny. Thomas spent most of the morning doubled over with laughter, totally engaged in everything this larger-than-life

character both performed and read to us. As we neared the end of the session, he begged Mr. Harrold to continue, he was enjoying it so much.

Juliet had organised a display of books in the library. We borrowed "Wild" and had read almost all of the poems by the end of the afternoon – and wonder of wonders Thomas asked to write a poem. (With a little help from Yours Truly).

Thank you to the Friends of Sonning Common Library for organising such an entertaining morning. •

JILL HUTCHINSON



WHO AM I? TODAY IS TOMORROWS HISTORY

I think it's human nature to wonder where we come from, who our forefathers were, and where they lived. What was life like for them? What mattered to them?

If you are interested in tracing your family tree, you can log in to ancestry.co.uk and findmypast.co.uk for free on the computers in Sonning Common Library in Grove Road. This is a great place to start. You can also get details of where to find other genealogy resources in Oxfordshire.

Perhaps when you're walking around the village you wonder what life used to be like for people living in the houses that you pass. There is a Local History Section in the library with all sorts of books and booklets about the local area. Some of these can be borrowed, but some rarer ones are for reference only. Why not put aside an hour one day to come in and have a browse? There's a settee strategically placed near to them and, if it happens to be a Friday when the Social Morning is on, you'll even be offered a drink and biscuit.

I've lived in Sonning Common for 28 years so I'm a relative new-comer! However, I love to visit the library to flick through the old copies of the village magazine and get a glimpse of life here in the 1970s. The magazine celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, and it's strange to think that in another 50 years people might look at this very issue and believe they know what was important to us and how we lived. I sincerely hope the village still has a library then and that generations to come will be able to hold a paper copy of the magazine

in their hands just as I do now. It somehow makes the link to the past seem so much more real.

There is also a General History Section in the library so, if your passion is for the history of faraway places, you too are catered for. If there is a particular book you would like to read which doesn't happen to be on the shelf in Sonning Common Library, you can order it in for a small fee. Perhaps you are intrigued by the codebreakers who worked at Bletchley Park during the war. If so, not only does the library have books on the subject, but one of the authors, Michael Smith, will be giving a talk about it on 6th August. To always be in the know about upcoming events at the library, follow Friends of Sonning Common Library on Facebook or on the website friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk

Another window into the past is biographies. My favourites are not

about celebrities but about people who lived a more normal life. There is also a wide selection of these available to borrow.

In July, the library hosted a talk by Dr James Wright. His book, "Historic Building Mythbusting", delves into the history of buildings, and tales that have been repeated about them so often that they are now held to be true. It's made me all the more curious about the bricks and mortar that make up our village. So, if you see a middle-aged woman wandering around staring intently at walls, don't worry, it's probably me imagining what life was like behind them hundreds of years ago! •

ALISON SMITH
FoSCL



PARISH NEWS

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Village Day

Saturday the 9th June 2024, in complete contrast to the searing heat of Village Day 2023, started with the very grey skies but at least managed not to rain. The day was very well attended and the RUFC presentation of awards, which was held for the first time in Memorial Park, meant the whole 10 acres were buzzing with activity. I do hope that the same joint event will take place next year.

The general impression was that villagers were enjoying themselves and stayed for a while despite the chilly day. At one point a quick headcount suggested 400 people on the site. The photos used on this page were provided by the Henley Standard so many thanks to them.

The feedback we received has suggested a number of possible additions. The list includes more food vans with a variety of offer, lots more activities for the children, stalls selling creative items and others. The team will work on and include these ideas. A hog roast is proposed for next year, and the tractor runs should continue as they were a very popular feature.

If you have any further ideas, please email me at the magazine and I will pass them onto the organising group.

editor.sonningcommonmagazine@gmail.com •



SC Youth Club



The Youth Club received funding from The National Lottery Community Fund so we are able to offer a week of FREE sessions for anyone aged 10 to 16 years old. They don't have

to be a member of youth club, everyone within the age range is welcome. We are running the events daily from 19th August to the 23rd August where we will be offering food for those families who are struggling, toasties and fruit. We will have our tuck shop open as normal too. These sessions will run from 11am till 1.30pm and 3 days will be from the MECE site above the sports hall and the 2 other days are in Henley and Reading. We encourage parents to lift share on those 2 days to ensure everyone gets the chance to join in.

There will be lots of fun things like crafts, baking and activities such as zorbing, a bouncy hungry hippo, bell boating at the Eynot Centre, Lagoon

park which is on the water assault course so there's a range of fun things to do for free. Why not join us??? If you don't like one thing you may like something else and it changes each day. But if you want to come and just hang out that's absolutely fine too. Email youthleader@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk for more info. Places are filling up fast so get in touch to secure your space. •

SUNNY



Opening Times

New parish office opening times are now Tuesday and Thursday 10.00am to 12.00pm, telephone 01189723616, and give the dates of the Parish Council meeting dates for the rest of the year - Monday 9th September, 14th October, 11th November, 9th December and our web address - www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk

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HEALTHIER LIVES PREVENTION BETTER THAN CURE

The old saying has got some truths to it. Whilst many things in health can come out of the blue and surprise us, there are some things where the science is increasingly showing us where we can make small changes early to prevent disease developing as quickly.

The team at Sonning Common Health Centre are trying to make sure that we don't overlook this vital aspect of care encouraging you to try to keep as active as possible, with both body and mind, through activities such as the Health Walks, walking football, the green gym or other active volunteering and Chess, scrabble, Sudoku or mind games, or learn a language. Take a look at 'Healthy Activities for all ages' booklet available at SCHC, Day Lewis or the Library.

Over the last few years, we have learned that you can reduce your risk of developing disease by reducing the factors we can control. Our care-coordinator team are spearheading these projects, sharing information, so you can make informed choices about what health prevention steps you want to take – examples below.

- 1. Keep off the Pressure campaign - follows the science that the blood pressure you take at home is more representative of "normal for you", and that an average of a week's readings gives us a good picture if your control is good or not.**
- 2. Cholesterol - give you options in terms of diet and medication, to reduce your cholesterol. By reducing it to below a target, it can reduce your risk of getting a heart attack.**

3. Pre-diabetes – trying to stop people developing type 2 diabetes. If blood sugar is high they can help with dietary advice and tips and encourage annual checks.

4. Health Checks - like having an 'MOT', a free NHS health check is designed to check all the above, in one convenient appointment.

In addition they can refer you to sponsored weight loss programmes, give you details of the nearest stop smoking service, or ask one of our social prescribers to help find and support you to start an activity you'd enjoy doing. You can contact them by phone or email the team at occg.schc_care_coordinators@nhs.net ●



SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PATIENTS SURVEY 2024 FINDINGS

In March this year, with the support of the Sonning Common Health Centre team, the Patients Participation Group (PPG) carried out a survey of the Health Centre's patients. We are delighted that over 200 patients completed the survey. On behalf of the PPG a big thank you to all who made the effort to complete the survey on-line or were kind enough to take time while waiting for their appointments. As promised, we are sharing a summary of the results.

The results clearly show that SCHC continues to provide exceptional services which is greatly valued by the patients with over 96% of patients describing their experience of the GP practice as good or very good. Patients commented that "the surgery provided services of

exceptional quality" and "it has been consistently good over many years and well managed".

There is a high level of satisfaction with booking appointments. 67% of patients prefer to book the appointments by phone, most patients (76%) find it easy to get through to the reception and almost everyone found the receptionists helpful.

Over 90% of patients have either a very positive or good experience of the appointments in terms of being given enough time, being listened to and treated with care and concern. Several patients commented on not feeling rushed and described the GPs as being "helpful", "supportive", "very kind and understanding" and "showing empathy".

Almost all patients have confidence in the healthcare professional they saw at the last appointment and most patients (97%) claim that their needs were met at the appointment.

Patients commented that they would like shorter waiting times and to be able to see their own GP without waiting too long for an appointment. The overall experience of the services provided by Sonning Common Health Centre is very positive and this is reflected in comments made by the patients such as: "medical care has always been excellent", "Health Centre is first class" and "incredibly good" ●

SCHC PPG

CHILDHOOD VACCINATIONS



When children start nursery or start at a new school/college they will be learning and socialising with more children. If they are not up to date with their age relevant vaccinations, they could be at risk of catching preventable diseases.

Evidence shows that delivering immunisations in schools means access to vaccines is easier for all. Parents don't need to take time off work to book immunisation appointments and children who are not registered with a GP are included.

The offer of the adolescent vaccines in school is an important opportunity to check that children are up to date with all their routine immunisations. Education and childcare settings have a vital role to play and support the routine immunisation programme through sharing of information with parents and caregivers. You may wish to speak to your health visitor, school nurse or other specific health care worker about the support they can offer.

Pre-School vaccinations are usually given in the health centre:

Measles, mumps and rubella vaccine (MMR) first dose given at aged one year, followed by a second dose at aged 3 years 4 months

Vaccines offered in schools from the NHS:

Flu – given annually up to year 11

Tetanus/Diphtheria/Polio – booster given around year 9

Meningococcal groups A, C, W and Y – Year 9

HPV – now given to all in year 8/9 ●

SUE LITCHFIELD
Health Champion for SCHC

MOVE IT OR LOSE IT

A fitness class for older adults

Diane Freeman is a very popular leader of these classes. She encourages attendees to go at their own pace and to stop an exercise if there is pain. There are full instructions along with a demo. The work is designed to improve stamina and endurance. Exercises are explained as to why they are important and the warmup session leads into a more aerobic section. Getting up from a chair exercise is recommended to be done every day

Participants were asked to say why they enjoyed attending these sessions.

Barbara "it is very sociable with people I know. There is no lycra involved and it helps my strength."

Pam "I am able to go at my own pace."

Sue "It is at the right level. Diane is a lovely teacher and encourages us"

Val "She is brilliant. There is a mixed age range and there is challenge at one's own pace."

Janet "She is a super teacher, it is a friendly group and the music is good."

Theresa "Fantastic, a happy place to be."

I enjoyed it too so why not come along for the first session (free). Tuesday mornings 10 to 11 am in the village hall. ●

DIANA PEARMAN



MEET JANET THAKE

Always there to help and listen

By JOAN GRUMMANT



Janet has worked in Day Lewis, our local pharmacy for twenty-three years and has enjoyed every minute of getting to know the people of Sonning Common and the local community. She retired at the end of May and many people will miss her familiar face and calm and steady presence. Although sad to leave, she recognises the real strength and team spirit at the shop and knows it will thrive in the future. Working there through the covid epidemic helped the team bond together and support each other at a challenging and tough time. It was a strange and often frightening time for all, but especially for the vulnerable in the community. Janet will therefore be missed by many, including colleagues and friends for her steadiness, good advice and her listening ear. She always took the time to get to know people and was often instrumental in helping during stressful and anxious moments.

Janet was born in a village called Warfield and enjoyed the freedom

of a rural childhood with her parents and two brothers. Her ambition was always to be a hairdresser and she completed an apprenticeship when she left school. She never did get the opportunity to work in the industry because she had already met her husband Tony and they got married when she was eighteen. Her hairdressing skills proved especially useful when her family arrived and of course for Tony. They set up an electrical shop and business in Caversham before she started her family and she stayed at home when her two daughters were born and thoroughly enjoyed that experience. When she was able, she then went to work in her local primary school and following this in a Pre school for ten years eventually becoming the supervisor.

In 2001 Janet started working in Sonning Common's chemist which was then called Carsons and privately owned. She remembers her first day there with great fondness. The very friendly staff warmly welcomed her, and she was also welcomed in the nearby shops and by her customers. She says it felt just like the village where she had spent such a happy childhood. There have been numerous changes in the pharmacy since then of course, including the ownership of the shop, staff, and the introduction of technology. Janet has very vivid memories of the day the

electronic till arrived and the many challenges that accompanied it! Her unflappable, efficient, and calm disposition embraced the changes with good humour.

After 23 years, Janet knows it is the right time for her to retire and enjoy a different pace of life that will include meeting friends, supporting her family, rejoining Sonning Common WI and the Keep Fit class in the Village Hall. She has been preparing for the change by cutting down her working days so the change will not seem so great. One of her daughters lives in Sonning Common as do her grandchildren, so she will still be a familiar face in the village. Above all, she has been looking forward to spending more time tending her beloved garden and also dropping in to visit her friends and colleagues in the Day Lewis pharmacy.

This remarkably busy lady has certainly earned a well-deserved retirement and we can only give her our thanks and good wishes for the future. ●



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KENNYLANDS GYMNASTICS SQUAD

Earlier this year, Kennylands Gymnastics hosted its own in-house Club Championships for both our Recreational and Squad members.

The competition was a great success, and we are very proud of our members who competed. We enlisted volunteers for coaches, judges, scorers, runners and many other jobs!

Our AA champions were as follows:

- 2019 Girls: Priscilla Herrod-Taylor
- 2018 & 2019 Boys: Sully Sleath
- 2018 Girls: Ivy Di Rosa
- 2017 Jr Girls: Mimi Carter
- 2017 Sr Girls: Tabitha Russell
- 2016 Jr Girls: Lyra Henderson
- 2016 Sr Girls: Freya May
- 2016 & 2017 Boys: Fergus Mcgurk
- 2015 Jr Girls: Eleanor Hooker
- 2015 Sr Girls: Sophie Rogers
- 2014 & 2015 Boys: Marcus Ford
- 2014 Jr Girls: Frieda Jones

- 2014 Sr Girls: Yasmin
- 2013 Girls: Seren Amphlett
- 2011 & 2012 Girls: Amy Wilson
- 2008, 2009 & 2010 Girls: Eleanor Lovegrove
- Tumbling: Isabella Jones
- Advanced Rec: Isha Pinder
- Freestyle: Albie Carter
- Squad 8s and Under: Betsy Kendall
- Squad Jr age group: Melia Drummond
- Squad Sr age group: Hollie Mackin

We had many categories, and were able to award lots of medals, trophies & certificates to our participants. This was thanks to our competition sponsor, Caffyn Engineering. ●

PHIL SWATRIDGE
Head of Artistic, Kennylands Gymnastics



L-R: Jack Taylor, Marcus Ford, Gabriel Herrod-Taylor



L-R: Amy Telling, Freya May, Vivienne Roscoe-Hudson



L-R: Mia Rowlands, Isabella Jones, Summer Bishop

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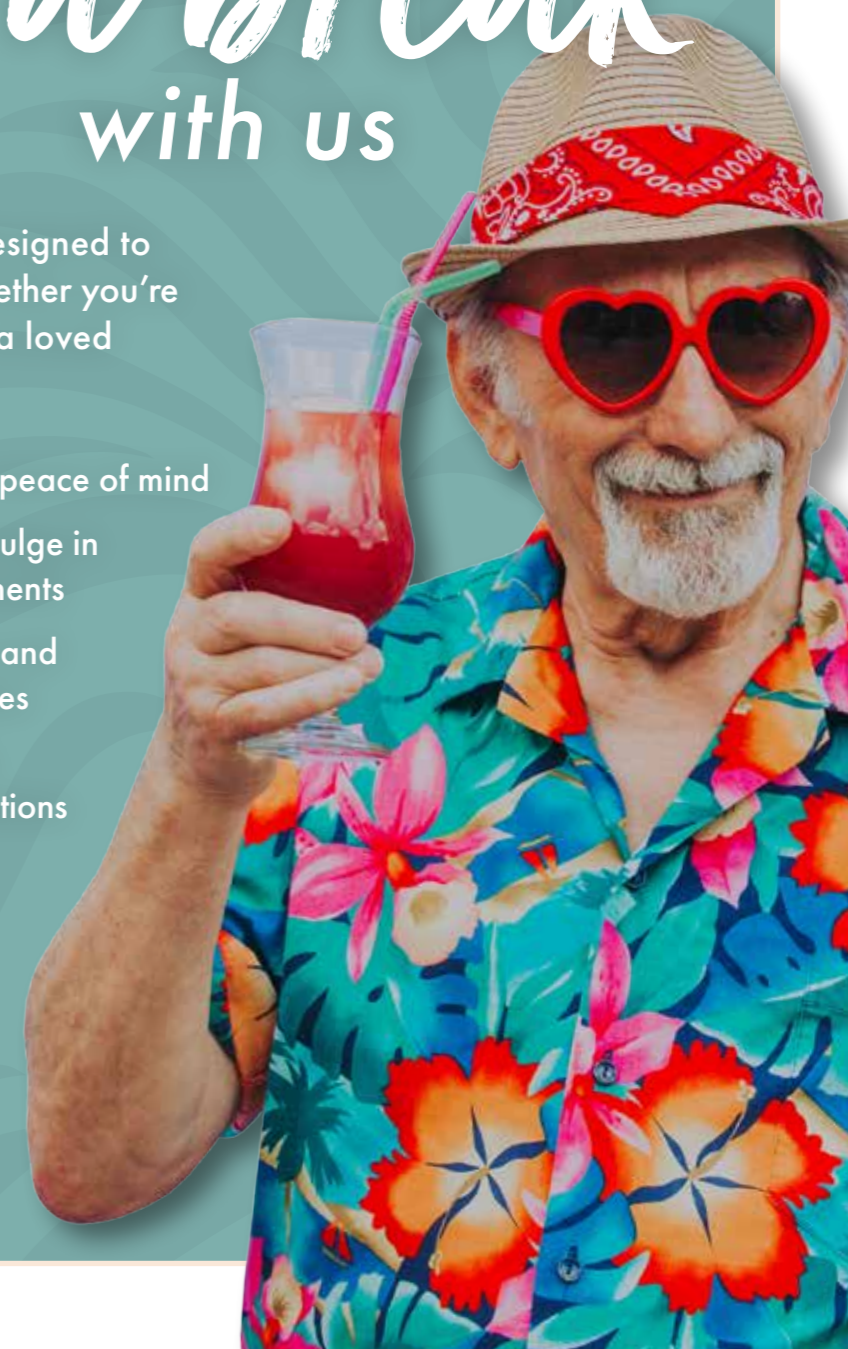
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SARAH KIDD-MAY
Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common - March 2024



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Kennylands Road, Sonning Common - March 2024

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Tori Yates, Google Review



CHURCH NEWS



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST THE KING

June was an exciting month for the Parish churches of St John the Baptist, Kidmore End and Christ the King, Sonning Common. A month of concerts and special events were held to raise funds for the Parish Fundraising Appeal, set up to fund vital improvements and extensions to both churches.

The month kicked off with a splendid concert titled 'A Choral Bouquet', which included separate contributions from the Parish choir and the choir of Kidmore End School, as well as a number of joint items. The Parish choir even donned bear ears for an enthusiastic rendition of 'The Bear Necessities'!

'Colours of the Rainbow' was the theme for the Flower Festival held on Saturday, 8th June. The event was managed by Moira Lawrie, with help from the church flower team and St John's churchyard tidy team. Talented local flower arrangers were also invited to contribute arrangements and the church was filled with colour. Every grave in the churchyard also had its own floral arrangement and a splendidly

decorated bicycle adorned the village well. Many people from the Parish and beyond called in throughout the day to admire the decorations and also to enjoy refreshments. The event was blessed with fine weather, which added to the beauty and splendour.

On Sunday, 16th June a number of talented local individuals and groups performed in a concert titled, 'A Variety of Folk Music'. Styles of folk music from many different countries and cultures were included and it was wonderful to experience such a range of music performed by experienced instrumentalists and vocalists.

To celebrate the Patronal Feast of St John the Baptist, a choral Evensong was held on Sunday, 23rd June. The Parish choir, augmented by visiting choristers, and led by Musical Director, Frances Brewitt-Taylor, enhanced the worship with beautiful choral singing and a moving anthem.

The last concert of the month took place on Sunday, 30th June. This was 'A Garland of Solo and Ensemble Music' performed by Parish musicians. The concert was full of fun and huge variety: pieces were played on the oboe, piano, trombone and recorder, songs from several musicals featured, among them 'Shrek' and 'Hamilton', and

a talented pair sang a couple of popular songs with ukulele accompaniment.

The concerts and events were well-attended and supported by many from the Parish and beyond. Monies donated have added substantially to the on-going fundraising, but there is still some way to go to realise the plans for St John's so do look out for further fundraising events in the future. Christ the King church's plans are more advanced, and funding is now secured. It is hoped that building work to replace the roof, fit solar panels and build a small extension to allow for a separate entrance into the church, will begin in the autumn and finish early next year.

With thanks to everyone in the Parish who has supported the churches. Progress updates will feature in future editions of the Sonning Common magazine. Donations to the Parish Fundraising Appeal can still be made in person at either church or via the Parish website:

<https://givealittle.co/campaigns/80b9b652-122d-4cb3-b09c-be2147340d13>

Services at both churches will continue throughout August and September – all welcome! Full details of service dates and times can be found at www.achurchnearyou.com



ST MICHAEL'S

Praise be to you

In 2015 Pope Francis wrote a letter to the Catholic Church and the world called 'Laudato Si' – 'Praise be to you.' This title is taken from the opening words of the 'Canticle of the Creatures' by St Francis of Assisi extolling the wonders of the natural world. The thrust of the letter was an invitation to take stock of what we are doing to our 'Sister Mother Earth,' and what steps we can take to reduce its exploitation and how we can help those in poverty. Since then, many initiatives have been undertaken around the world. Recently a 'Thoughtful Living Group' was established in our parish. Its main focus is to encourage the parish to: live simply, live in solidarity with those in poverty, live sustainably with creation. This initiative has been ongoing for a couple of years, and has just been rewarded by the parish receiving the 'LiveSimply Award' from the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD). Some of the initiatives undertaken include: supporting the local food bank, the homeless through CIRDIC, unemployed women through Smart Works, recycling difficult to recycle plastics, helping with litter collecting, encouraging the use of the EcoSoCo Repair Café at Springwater Church.

A highlight in the annual life of the parish is when our young people receive their First Holy Communion or are Confirmed. These events both took place in June. After many months of preparation, it was wonderful to see them engage with such dignity and reverence, and beautifully attired. Much appreciation is owed to the parish catechists and parish school. This year two adults were also confirmed by the bishop.

In July we are looking forward to celebrating our second International Mass where we give thanks for the rich diversity of our parish community. We will celebrate our St Michael's Weekend at the end of September. During October

we hope to celebrate two special Masses, one for the sick and frail and the other for those celebrating a significant wedding anniversary.

If you want to find out more about the Catholic faith or parish ring the parish office and talk to Fr Michael. See our website for contact information: www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk

SPRINGWATER CONTINUES TO GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

We have recently been blessed by some folks asking for adult baptism, for which we have a facility within Springwater. Also, in the near future, we have a group going on a mission trip to Romania, this is in conjunction with an organisation called 'Big Love', they will be visiting children at the various support centres.

The Revive Cafe provides great barista coffee and homemade cakes, legendary flapjacks, and other scrumptious goodies, it is open on Thursdays from 10am till midday. The church and cafe also host a 'Repair Cafe' every other month, on a Saturday, so you can get various items repaired for free (phone for details).

There are other things that take place on a regular basis. including: The Community Food Bank, Compassionate Loaf, the Toddler and baby group, Aspire woman's group, a weekly bible study, The Steering Wheel Fellowship, and much more. Hopefully something of interest for everyone.

We meet at 10.30 on a Sunday morning to worship Jesus and pray, followed by refreshments and a chat, we would love for you to join us.

CHRIS GIRDLER

Springwater Tel no: 0118 972 4519, or email: contactspringwaterchurch@gmail.com www.springwaterchurch.org

A WAY OF LIFE

We so easily drift into damaging patterns of behaviour simply because we took a wrong first step.

In the Bible, the first psalm describes how this happens and warns against it: 'Blessed is the person who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers'.

There is a progression: walking, standing, sitting. Some new behaviour starts by dabbling, confident that we can walk on by. But we don't; we become involved. Then we settle into it, until it becomes a way of life.

Psalm 1 then gives us another way: 'Blessed is the person whose delight is in the law of God ... In all that s/he does, s/he prospers'.

Where do we find God's word? Recorded in the Bible. How do we delight in it? Read it and think about it. Why should we find it delightful? Because it keeps us from harm and leads us in ways that are stable, productive and healthy.

You can read the Bible for yourself. But, if you would like someone to read and discuss it with you, please drop us a line at info@cecuk.church

CAROLYN JENKINS

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TOM FORT AU REVOIR

Last week I said farewell to two favourite females, but I am not too sad about it.

The first was to our daughter, who has left home at the age of 23 to take up a new job in Bath and live in Bristol. She'd been at home for the best part of a year after leaving university and it's been lovely having her. But – as with any such situation – there were ups and downs.

One of the downs concerned my washing-up bowl, to which she developed a violent antipathy – so violent that one day I found it half-way down the garden, where she'd thrown it in a fit of rage. She demanded that I get rid of it; but

since I did and do 90 percent of the washing up and she did possibly 5 percent, I refused to give way. And now I won't have to listen to her fulminations on the subject, which is good. But I do miss her.

The second farewell was to a very different girl – 15-and-a-half feet long, flat-ended with sleek, elegant lines, painted a fetching olive green. My boat. I had her made for me the best part of twenty years ago and together we went down the River Trent so that I could write a book about it (and later make a BBC film called River of Dreams which you can find on YouTube if the urge takes you).

I loved and love that boat, and have

continued to use her for fishing at various spots on the Thames. But I'm now getting on and heaving her in and out of the water has become a bit much for me, so I have been looking for a new home where she'll be happy. Now I've found one and it's not far away and the bloke who has adopted her will look after her so that's all good.

Which of the two will I miss the most? That would be telling ●



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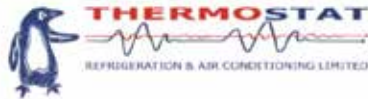
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