

SC

SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Yet another Christmas looms – I love it but it does come around rather too quickly!

Kids page has been renamed the Edge to reflect the age of our teenage editor Leah Tilley. The editorial team are very pleased to welcome her and we hope that more youngsters will read her page. The book review on the same page is from a new young author in the village and we have had a work experience student, Becky Gilroy producing articles for this issue.

Two amazing women feature in interesting stories and our dentist is looking outwards – just to prove he is not only interested in the insides of mouths (I joke) ... The church news is full of extra special events and services and with Christmas in mind there is a craft page to keep the children occupied.

'The village that never was' written almost 50 years ago, has been reprinted by Fred's daughters and is available for purchase. His life is profiled and there is a further extract from the book in this issue. A good time to re-visit the history of the village as it is poised to grow again.

Our best wishes to you all at this Christmas time – enjoy it. We also hope for good health for 2017 for us all. ●



Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org



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While every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information printed in this magazine, the editor and the publisher cannot accept any responsibility for the consequences of errors that occur.

**SC SONNING COMMON
MAGAZINE**

MEET THE TEAM ...



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FIRST RESPONDERS LAUNCH THEIR ORANGE AND GREEN LIVERIED VEHICLE

Sonning Common's car is the first in the country to have the new national livery (marked up in orange and green) and the team are very proud of their new vehicle which they hope will enable them to reach their destination even more quickly. They do not have a claxon or any right to travel above speed but it is likely that other road users will give way when they see it is an 'emergency' vehicle.

The Launch was held at the Vauxhall garage on the Peppard Road on 30 September 2016, where Paul Mullin handed over the Atara Diamond car, which had been supplied by them at a favourable rate. The garage will also provide free servicing and hosted the event to thank all the sponsors.

This purchase has been made possible by the generosity of the village community. "We are so thrilled that the village have supported us so well and this has enabled us to purchase the car in the relatively short time of 15 months" an excited Chris Brook added to her comment that the Fleming family had made a particularly generous donation. Large and small gifts which made the difference came from a range of people and they are all heartily thanked.

Total raised £15,940

Carole Lewis and Alan Gibbon
Nottakwire
Chiltern Edge Sports Association
Persimmon Homes Thames Valley
Community Champions
Chrissie P-T & Jill Vallis Charity lunch
Red Lion Peppard Common
Hare and Hounds Sonning Common
Rotherfield Peppard Parish Council
Jill Vallis
Sonning Common Garage
Kidmore End Parish Council
Sonning Common Parish Council
Lennox Hannay Charitable Trust
Sonning Common Quiz night
Mr & Mrs J Fowler
Sonning Common WI
Mr D Major
Tom Fort
Mrs M Jones
Waitrose Community Champions
Caversham
Mrs S Hunt
Waitrose Community Champions Henley



There are currently 3 First Responders in the village, Chris Brook, Sue Abbott and Adam Negus. Their training is supported by Dave Hamer who is the officer for South Central Ambulance service and is an accredited paramedic. He has trained 140 first responders across his area which spans several counties from Hungerford to Bracknell. The training and updating is quite a commitment but in the words of Sue Abbott "I like doing things for other people" which she additionally demonstrates by driving cars for FISH and being a contributing committee member. Adam is also a valued member of the community with his work with Club SC.

These three people would welcome further volunteers. The average number of calls are about 10 per month and their arrival at the scene of an accident is always before the ambulance. That precious time saves many lives. ●

Please email chris.brook@sonningcommonfirstresponders.co.uk or phone 0118 924 2515

'ALL THINKS GREEK' RAISES £700

This was the theme of the event. Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury, Jill Vallis and their team of loyal volunteers held their eighth annual community meal in September. The hall was dressed accordingly in Greek colours and guests dressed in appropriate costumes.

The three course meal consisted of three traditional Greek dishes, meze, lamb stifado and baklava with coffee and wine to accompany. First and foremost this annual event is a community get together and the

focus is not on fund raising. However any money raised is shared among local charities and organizations. This year the whole proceeds, over £700, was donated to the Sue Ryder hospice at Nettlebed.

The hospice needs a staggering £8000 per day to run the hospice and support its community team.

Chrissie and Jill are most grateful to all the volunteers who give their time so willingly and also to Waitrose, Tesco and the Co-op for their support.

The next event is CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH



HEADS UP FOR A CHRISTMAS CHORAL CRACKER!!

The 100 member strong South Chiltern Choral Society, conducted by Paul Burke and accompanied on the piano by Ian Westley will be performing 'Mass of the Children' by John Rutter with the wonderful Hawkedon Primary School Choir. After the interval, there will be a selection of favourite carols and songs for choir and audience.

Premiered in 2003, John Rutter's Mass of the Children displays the melodic invention, immaculate craft, and consolatory tone that have become the hallmarks of this most renowned of living British composers. The extensive resources required - mixed choir, children's

choir, two soloists, and piano - are combined with a wide variety of texts to form a work that, in its forty-minute duration, offers a kaleidoscopic range of moods and textures.

The concerts will be held on Saturday 10 December at 7.30pm and Sunday 11 December at 2pm at Chiltern Edge School, Reades Lane, Sonning Common, RG4 9LN where there is free parking and wheelchair access. Tickets will cost £12 (under 21s £6) including interval refreshments and will be available via the choir's website www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk or the box office on 07500 032840 nearer the concert date. ●

£1285.13 RAISED FOR MACMILLAN NURSES – AMAZING!!

Year 9 of fund raising for Macmillan the annual coffee morning was held on 9th October. Having tried various days Sunday was the day more people supported us.

As always we are very apprehensive on the day worrying whether it would be worthwhile. Well, you didn't let us down!! We had an amazing turnout of people, in fact several times during the morning I did think we wouldn't get any more people in the hall. The ladies in the kitchen did a great job of making sure everyone had their tea and coffee as well as washing up in between times.

The cake table was groaning under the weight as usual. You do make some lovely cakes in this village!

This year we had a Christmas table which created a lot of interest.

The stage area and tables in front held bric-a-brac, locally made draught excluders, books, jigsaw puzzles for adults and children, cd's and dvd's. A new

addition this year was a tombola. This was very popular and was soon sold out. The raffle was very successful. The ladies on the table worked flat out all morning and the prizes were fantastic.

Outside the hall John was brandishing his bucket and encouraging people to part with their money and he did a very good job. He raised £141.

June Fisher and I would like to thank you all for your part in making this the most successful coffee morning we have held so far. From the people who put 50p in the bucket to the ones who gave us five or ten pound notes whilst we were out walking and the organisations who donated £50 from their funds, you were all very generous. I cannot name everyone individually for their help as there are too many but I would say that this village community knows how to come together for a very worthwhile cause and without you all it wouldn't be possible. Many thanks.

Linda Webb

That is a fantastic achievement! Please pass on my congratulations to all those involved in making the day such a success.

John Howell OBE MP - Member of Parliament for Henley



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE VILLAGE HALL MANAGEMENT TEAM

May I congratulate you on the upkeep of the village hall and especially the new kitchen.

It is at this point I must mention the missing pictures. They were obviously taken down for re-decoration earlier this year, where are they now? One, in particular that I miss is the old Congregational Hall painted I think by George Coggins, our local police officer at that time.

I started school in that hall in 1940 as did many other people. Please put it back.

Thank you
C. A Pryke

APOLOGIES MR PRYKE

I do apologise to Mr Pryke for the delay in rehanging the pictures and photos in the village hall. In the upheaval and work involved in planning, decision making and fund raising for the new kitchen, the memorabilia for the village hall was overlooked.

I will ensure that it is on the agenda to be discussed at the next committee meeting and a decision will be made as to where the various works will be hung.

Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury

Chairwoman

Sonning Common Village
Management Committee

TO LIGHT OR NOT TO LIGHT?

As a parent of teenagers I would like to address the recent news that there should be a light put into the bus stop near the Chinese to 'discourage youngsters from congregating there'.

I doubt that this will make any difference at all as the young people will always gather near to the centre of the village where there are lit areas and therefore would appreciate some more light! The youngsters of Sonning Common are members of the village community as well as all the 'grown ups' and should be respected and catered for. Why not be able to meet friends and chat - if there isn't anywhere else to do it. They are the future parishioners of the village and not all teenagers are trouble makers. Most of them study hard and have a lot of pressure put on them from us parents!

There was a recent facebook conversation about this particular issue which included comments like these ... some great ideas and they are all from young, and not so young, members of the community.

'Why aren't there ever any discos or similar in the village hall?'

'As a young person in the community, we have nowhere to go. We're technically not allowed in the park- which, by the way, is unlit and scary when it gets darker. There is indeed a skatepark- this again isn't lit and the only way to get there is through the woods, a field, or a dark road with no pavements.'

'What is 'youth behaviour'? The phrase makes it sound bad. Is it meeting friends/chatting/having a laugh? Maybe a youth evening at a pub, like Magoos do in Henley. Young local singers/ musicians go along and socialise/perform their music with no alcohol served.'

Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury's personal response

There are two different problems with young people gathering in the village;

We have a group of young people who want somewhere to 'hang out' with their friends and the parish council are very aware of that. In an ideal world and with unlimited funds it would be marvellous to provide say an Internet cafe. Currently a skate park and considerable funds for Club SC have been provided.

I understand that for a certain age group the youth club is no longer cool and the alternative is the bus shelter. Nothing wrong with that apart from the incredible amount of litter, noise and very anti- social behaviour. Residents driven mad with scooters revving up and screaming and swearing late at night. There are children as young as 14 out until 1am and despite repeated written warnings ASBOs and children being escorted home by the police after midnight there is little else that the police can do.

Having said that they are stepping up patrols and talking regularly to the young people.

The second problem is that this group is being targeted by criminals coming in by car from Reading to encourage drug taking and irresponsible and anti- social behaviour.

We have documented evidence of this and the repercussions of possible life-long drug addiction are taken very seriously.

Editor: There will be a follow up article on this subject in the next issue. ●

Christine Atkinson

SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL NEWS

FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

A combined year five and six boys team represented the school at the annual Chiltern Edge Partnership Football Tournament, held at Rotherfield Football Club. Ten teams representing the Partnership's different primary schools took part. With all the matches played in an excellent spirit (often between good friends at different schools), the school are pleased to report that their team finished first and brought the trophy back to Sonning Common.

Congratulations to all the boys involved and many thanks to the parents who came to lend their support to them.

GRANDPARENTS WEEK

During October SCPS hosted their now traditional annual Grandparents week when all the children can invite a grandparent in for an activity in the school hall, whilst enjoying a cup of tea and a biscuit. This year the children played various card games with their visitors and then took them for a tour of the school to

show off their classrooms and work. Every afternoon was very busy with a full hall, and enjoyed by all! ●

Christine Atkinson



Meet Club SC's new leader!

Georgie Bird is wasting no time getting stuck in to her new role as Club SC leader. She already has plenty of events planned for the club following the success of an animal show visitor and professional makeup session recently. Georgie loves her new role and says 'it's a very rewarding job, they are all lovely kids and there's a huge variety of children'

Active Peppard local, Georgie is very comfortable working with young people as she previously ran sports sessions and is involved in kids' sports camp 'Hotshots'. The club leader role appealed to her as

she feels she can relate to the kids more as a younger person.

Since getting involved she says that years 6-8 members have increased in numbers, but she is keen to get years 9-11 interested. Reading this, if you know of anyone in those year groups who might be interested, encourage them to go along. Georgie has a visit from Reading FC planned along with ice skating, a karate lesson, another make up session and a photo shoot for the young people in the coming months. She is also looking for volunteers who could help out. If you're interested go along on a Tuesday evening for years

9-11 and Wednesday evening for years 6-8 and speak to Georgie. The Club runs from 7 to 9pm. Hire of the Sports Hall is planned and the move from Thursday is to accommodate this and also so it does not clash with the Scout group meeting. ●

HANNAH RICE



CHILTERN EDGE NEWS

Careers Fair

The school recently held their third annual Careers Fair for year 9, 10 and 11 students. Lots of local schools and colleges attended to talk to students about A-level and Btec choices available for those in Year 11 moving on after GCSE's next summer, and also to help those in year 9 make their GCSE choices.

There were various exhibitors from local colleges, businesses and training providers ranging from retail to rail, hairdressing to hospitality, The Forces to civil aviation. Microsoft, Jacobs Engineering and Johnson Matthey were amongst the stalls and with over 30 stalls to visit students were given a wide range

of opportunities to explore. Having apprentices from BMW, Orchard Day Nursery and student ambassadors from Reading and Oxford Brookes University also generated interest.

Angela Adamson and Clare Biddis organised the event again this year and were very pleased with how the evening was attended. This year's careers fair has attracted 20 more stall holders than its inaugural in 2014, and hopefully the school can build on this again for 2017. ●



Sponsored Walk

The traditional whole school sponsored walk took place, as usual, on the last day before the October half term. The money raised by the students will go to the chosen house charities. This is the 17th year that the walk has taken place and all students in Years 7 to 11 take part. The route is planned by the PE Department and uses local, well-established footpaths, crossing a minimum number of roads and is marshalled throughout by staff, parent volunteers and governors.

Starting from the school fields, the walk took the students through some of the glorious countryside of South Oxfordshire via Busgrove Woods and Stoke Row. The weather was not as bright as it has been in previous years, but it was dry and mild and not too muddy underfoot!

Daniel Sadler, Headteacher, said 'This great annual event is not possible without teamwork, and grateful thanks go out to everyone involved, and especially to all of the students who were a credit to the school, and (mostly) enjoyed it!' ●





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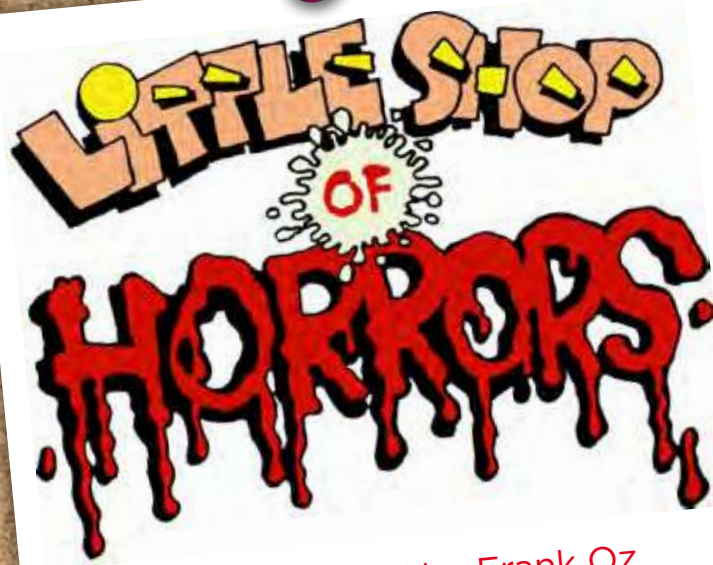
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WEDNESDAY 7 DECEMBER 2016

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You are very welcome to join us for

Christmas Lunch

When?

Christmas Day

Where?

Sonning Common Village Hall

What time?

12.30 for 1 o'clock Lunch

Who's invited?

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Tickets £12 a head for a Full Christmas Lunch with all the trimmings, including crackers with guaranteed awful jokes!

Limited numbers so book your seat now

Tickets on sale at Occasions from 12th November

or call Chrissie on 0118 9721058

SONNING COMMON ANNUAL VILLAGE QUIZ

FRIDAY 17 MARCH 2017

at

SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL
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Start time: 7.30 p.m.

Teams of up to 6 players
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VILLAGE HALL:

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LIBRARY NEWS

There will be special Christmas Storytimes with crafts and home-made cakes for sale on 10 and 17 December. The library will close for Christmas/New Year on Saturday 24 at 12.30pm and open again on Wednesday 4 January 2017. There will be a storytime on Christmas Eve!

The Gadget Drop-in sessions (run by volunteers) which take place in the library every Thursday morning from 10am - 12noon are proving to be very popular - booking is advisable

We have an audio CD of 'The Village that never was' by Fred Richens, read by members of the Chiltern Players, which is available to borrow from the library (£1.00 for 3 weeks)

Mass of the Children

John Rutter

Christmas favourites for Choir and Audience

South Chiltern Choral Society

Paul Burke - Conductor
Jan Westley - Piano

Hawkesden Primary School Choir

Sat 10th December 2016 at 7.30 pm
Sun 11th December 2016 at 2 pm
Chiltern Edge School, Wood Lane,
Sonning Common RG4 9LN

Tickets: £12 (0216 161) including interval refreshments!
www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk
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Health Walks

Health Walks will continue till Saturday 17 December then a Christmas break

New routes start from Tuesday 3 January

Timetables available from the library, Health Centre and Herb Farm

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THE AUTHOR OF 'THE VILLAGE THAT NEVER WAS'

By BECKY GILROY

In the past two issues the magazine has published selections from Fred Richens' work *The Village That Never Was*. His daughters, Ann Thiam and Jenny Campbell, graciously sat down with *Sonning Common Magazine* to reveal more about their father and his contribution to the community.

Fred Richens was born and raised in Swindon and he followed his father's career working for Great Western Railway. He moved from Swindon to Windsor and then, in 1939, to Sonning Common with his wife Helen and their eldest daughter.

His career eventually took him to the GWR office in Paddington – which meant he would work a very long day, leaving early around 7am and not returning until 7pm. He rose through the ranks and eventually became assistant general manager.

Fred and Helen were very devoted to each other; Helen stayed at home taking care of their two daughters and, during war time, Fred spent a lot of time growing a large amount of fruit and vegetables which Helen would bottle and preserve. At the weekends, the family would enjoy walking and cycling and even tobogganing in winter.

Before long Fred became involved in the local community and particularly enjoyed starting and running a local youth club connected to Peppard church; Helen also contributed by bringing along sandwiches and tea. Fred was also a dedicated member of the Liberal Society and local debating club.

Yet whilst his railway career remained successful, Fred always had ambitions

of becoming a writer. He managed to write here and there throughout his career, most notably by winning an essay competition within Great Western Railway Magazine when he was just nineteen years old. However, he never attempted to do it properly until his early retirement at the age of 62.

With more time on his hands, Fred wrote two children's books, *Lightening Boy* (1979) and *The Steam Gang* (1984). His daughters have fond memories of their father's boundless imagination; "He used to do a lot more with us than I think a lot of parents tended to do, he used to tell us marvellous stories and it's a shame he never attempted to publish so many of them."

Ann recalls saying to her father "seeing as you know Sonning Common going quite far back you really ought to write about what it was like when you first came here". And so *The Village That Never Was* became a passion project:

"he said he enjoyed doing this more than anything else he had written."

Following considerable research in the Bodleian Library and Public Records Office, Fred revealed the development of housing in the parish as well as the interesting characters who dwelled in the village. The final result was an endearing account of early life in Sonning Common and we have much to thank him for. Published first in 1977 in five separate booklets it has since been combined into a book. For anyone living in Sonning Common it is a fascinating read.

It is now being published again and will be available in the library and village market held on the 12 December. For residents who have only been in the area for a few years, *The Village That Never Was* is more than a worthwhile read and you will likely discover something you never knew just around the corner. ●



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DRINKING IN SONNING COMMON

The present Hare and Hounds, at the junction of Woodlands Road and Sedgewell Road, was built in 1907. The original inn was in the old premises on the opposite side of the road and in the 1970s, when this article was written, was occupied by squatters!

The age of the old Hare and Hounds is uncertain. It appears on a map dated 1797 as being set back from Hog Lane, there being no Sedgewell Road at that time.

The licensing laws in the early days were very different from today's. In 1911, for instance, opening hours were from 6.00am to 10.00pm, modified to 10.00am to 2.00pm and 5.00pm to 10.00pm at the time of the first war. Then, as now, the Hare and Hounds was mainly a local house where dominoes, draughts, darts and later, billiards could be played.

Regulars were allowed to chalk up their drinks and square up on pay day. They could also renew their clay pipes 'on the house', whilst to others the charge was 1/2d. The Sunday newspaper man from Reading could claim a free beer as a traveller, having covered more than the statutory three miles.

In common with many other public houses, the Hare and Hounds had a slate club with an elected chairman and secretary with the landlord as treasurer. A fixed contribution of 7d a week was made on Monday evenings in a separate room. A month in arrears and you were out. The share-out of the balance in the club was made just before Christmas and was, predictably, a convivial occasion.

The membership averaged around 50 and included women, hence the need for a separate room for paying contributions. In those days no respectable woman would be seen in the bar.

Another local public house to run a slate club was the original Butchers Arms, the handsome old inn tucked into the bank opposite Widmore Pond. This was demolished when the current pub was built in 1940. The pub had a skittle alley and in the lean-to were the stables and a urinal. It also kept pigs. There was no proper disposal system and everything from the pub, lean-to and pig sties drained into the pond. The quality of the water didn't stop the local boys from regarding the pond as a real recreation spot where they could swim and fish

for carp, gudgeon and sticklebacks with their standard tackle of stick, cotton and bent pin with a worm attached. Pike were introduced at the time of the last war and are thought to be responsible for the few fish there now.

There have been other interests at Widmore. A wooden building at the far end of the pond, first used as a cart shed, was taken over by a butcher, who reportedly sold goat as prime lamb. The shed was also used from time to time as a forge, just once as a mortuary when a man drowned in the pond, and as a workshop by the local authorities who were the last occupants before it was pulled down. ●

Ralph Peedell



The Butchers Arms, Widmore, before the 1914-1918 war. In the background is the old forge; and, nearest it, the baker's cart driven by Dan'el Kew.

DENTISTRY PATIENT FORUM

THE WAY FORWARD

By JOAN GRUMMANT

There are many changes happening at the Wood Lane Dentistry in Sonning Common and some are not visible to the eye but are just as important to patients and staff. Vikram Chugani, owner of the practice, is very keen for patients to have the opportunity to feedback their ideas and thoughts based upon their experience of the work of the practice. A Patient Forum has emerged to achieve this. It is hoped that the Forum will establish the necessary link that can help the practice stay in touch with community needs as well as disseminating appropriate information. The Forum consists of a representative group of villagers that meets 3-4 times a year and patients can make contact via patientforum@woodlanedentistry.co.uk

When Vik took over the practice in 2010 he decided that minimal intervention should be its main focus and has since developed a wide prevention programme. This includes the already established Smile Day, when the practice closes for the day and local school children are encouraged to visit and learn about correct brushing and play games that hopefully establish good habits for life and normalise good practice. Sonning Common Primary School and Peppard School have been participants in this ongoing venture.

Another vital development has been the free training offered to staff in local care homes. This enables care staff to monitor and manage, with greater confidence, the oral hygiene of vulnerable patients, particularly those with dementia. This illness can be particularly distressing because often long established good habits can be neglected and, unless the necessary support is given, can lead to deterioration and the need for intervention. Maria Bean, practice

oral hygiene educator, and hygienist Sharon, are responsible for this aspect of community care.

The considerable contribution the practice makes to our local community can also be found in the emphasis it places on supporting local charities. The practice is run on a type of not for profit basis so while Vik is salaried, any profit that is accrued is reinvested back into the practice. Profit made from sales of tooth brushes etc is donated to three charities and also funds 'prevention in the community projects'. Currently Oxfam, UNICEF and Cancer Research are the supported charities but next year the practice hope to have a local charity included as one of the three.

Much work has been done on keeping the practice up to date and improving the facilities. Input from patients will be very welcome and by using the forum website you can be assured that your views will be given serious thought and consideration. ●



REFERENDUM: PAST



By DIANA PEARMAN

Smiles all round for the Neighbourhood Plan team when they heard the resounding referendum result

**YES VOTE 94%
(1344 VOTES)**

After 4 years of endless meetings, re-writes and negotiations we must say a huge THANK YOU to the residents for the turnout at the referendum and the vote on 29 September 2016.

This extract from the Examiner's Report illustrates how extensive and detailed the consultation has been with residents and landowners/developers.

"A series of well-attended public meetings were then held from 2013 onwards, with much focus on land allocations. I note that a total of 170 site, landscape and character surveys were completed in relation to the assessment of possible land allocations.

It is also worthy of note that a total of 37 meetings, plus one conference call, with landowners/agents/developers,

took place between 2012 and 2015. I find this indicative of the significant lengths that plan-makers went to in order to consider the allocation of land through the neighbourhood planning process. Furthermore, nine meetings were held with residents living close to land identified as potential development sites.

It is clear that plan-makers went well beyond legislative requirements to actively engage with local people."

Examiner's Report Nigel McGurk
May 2016

The support from local people has been highly valued by the Team and it has not ended. As many of you will be aware the developers are submitting planning applications with increased numbers of homes which are not as agreed in the PLAN.

Our request to you ALL is to oppose these developers who are submitting planning applications which have significantly increased the number of homes. Protest to SODC in the strongest way. Our PLAN is now made and should be enforced by SODC. ●

SITE NAME	HOMES	DEVELOPER	
SON 1	Old Copse Field	Local Green Space	
SON 2	Bishopswood Middle Field	50	Linden
SON 3	Memorial Hall Field	Recreation	
SON 5	Kennylands Paddock	22 (wants 30)	Fisher
SON 6	Kennylands Infill	26 (wants 95)	Gallagher
SON 9	Lea Meadow	60	Bewley
SON 15a	Chiltern Edge Top	37	tba
SON 7	Hagpits House	25 (reserve)	
SON 7a	Hagpits Orchard	5 (reserve)	
SON 8	Kennylands Gymnastics	4 + 10 (Phase 2) (reserve)	

THE FUTURE FOR SPORT AND RECREATION

THE Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan is not just about new homes. One of the most significant benefits is that the village has acquired some land for the provision of exciting new sport, recreation and community facilities.

The field, known as SON 3, sits behind the Kidmore End War Memorial Hall opposite Chiltern Edge School on Reade's Lane. Developer Linden Homes has undertaken to transfer SON 3 to the Parish Council for £1 when its application to build 50 homes on the neighbouring SON 2 site is agreed.

A task group has been set up to manage the transformation of this field into a fully-functioning and modern sports and recreation ground. The group currently has 12 members, representative of local parish councils, residents and Chiltern Edge School.

Of prime importance is the plan to develop the new facilities in partnership with Chiltern Edge School. Both the school and the parish council plan to develop new sport and recreation facilities on their sites. They have agreed to work together to ensure that provision on each side of the road is complementary for the benefit of both the village and school communities.

Among the new facilities currently being considered for SON 3 are a community hall/sports pavilion, a multi-use games area, cricket pitches and a cycle/running track. In addition, the school is planning to construct a full-size multi-use games area and upgrade its sports hall and changing areas using monies gained from the sale of its site, SON 15a, currently a playing field.



Task group member Penny Snowden is gathering views from clubs and activity groups in the village about the proposed new facilities and there will be an open meeting for the wider community in future. Email surveys and consultation via social media are also planned.

Consultants, LK2, have been engaged to research into the feasibility and sustainability of the project. They have extensive knowledge of grants available and how to apply for matched funding to maximise our provision and ensure that we have a fully functioning recreation ground.

The diagram of the SON 3 field shows the possible layout of the recreation field - a large square outlined in red, roughly 175m x 150m, where the pitches might be - and the area below will be the site of the community hall and car park. The access from Reades Lane will be via the current car park of Kidmore End War Memorial hall. The top priority now is to level the field, which will probably mean

terracing. This levelling must be achieved before any grant funding will become available. Working with Linden Homes and a soil engineering firm we are hoping to move forward on this joint project by Spring 2017 at the latest.

In addition to the hoped-for grant funding, the parish council plans to use levies which developers are required to pay to support the building of new homes in the village. These contributions will go towards improving the village's infrastructure. ●

VILLAGE CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS

In response to the frequently-expressed concerns from residents about traffic and parking problems in the village centre, a new working party has been set up to identify potential solutions.

The parish council plans to move forward on this work in consultation with residents. More news will follow.

JACKIE'S CRAFT

Reindeer Footprint Christmas Card

THIS SIMPLE CARD MAKES A GREAT CHRISTMAS KEEPSAKE FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

Age: 2 years+

What you'll need:

- 1 X A4 sheet of card (light colours work best)
- Brown poster paint
- 2 X paint brushes & plate or palette
- PVA glue
- 1 X red pompom
- 2 X pipe cleaners
- 2 X novelty eyes
- Wet wipes
- Old newspaper/wipe clean tablecloth

Instructions:

- 1) Before you begin, lay an old newspaper or wipe clean cloth on the floor
- 2) Fold your A4 sheet of card in half, making sure the edges line up neatly, and place on the paper/cloth.
- 3) Pour a small amount of brown paint on the plate/palette, then using a paintbrush coat the bottom of one foot with paint (you might want to ask an adult for help)
- 4) Place your painted foot in the middle of the folded card to leave a footprint.
- 5) Using the wet wipes, clean any remaining paint from your foot and let the card dry.
- 6) Once dry, use a clean paintbrush to put a small amount of glue on the pompom and novelty eyes. Add them to the footprint to create a face.

7) Bend the pipe cleaners into the shape of antlers then, using a small amount of PVA glue, stick them onto the reindeer's head (if you need to cut the pipe cleaners make sure you ask an adult for help).

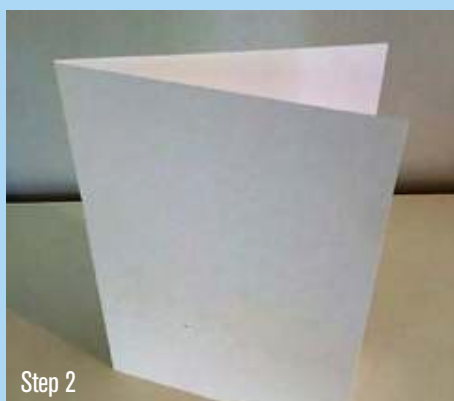
8) Once the glue is dry, open your card and write your Christmas message.

Alternatives:

- Why not use buttons for the eyes and nose?
- Twigs could be used to make antlers
- Instead of a card, why not print onto gift tags or even a bauble?



What you'll need:



Step 2



Step 3/4



Step 6



Step 7



Finished item

COLUMN

Sock Snowman

THIS SNOWMAN MAKES A GREAT CHRISTMAS GIFT OR FIREPLACE ORNAMENT – AND YOU'D NEVER GUESS IT STARTED LIFE AS A PAIR OF SOCKS!

Age: 7+

What you'll need:

- 1 X white sock
- Scissors
- 3 X rubber bands
- Uncooked rice
- Scrap material
- 2 X novelty eyes
- 4 X buttons

- PVA glue, paintbrush and palette
- Needle and white thread

Instructions:

- 1) Cut the top from the foot of the sock
- 2) Turn the top of the sock inside out, secure the bottom with an elastic band, then turn back the right way.
- 3) Fill the top of the sock generously with rice then secure the top with a second elastic band.
- 4) Take the final elastic band and tie $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up the rice filled sock to create a head and body for your snowman. Mould the rice to get a good shape.
- 5) Using PVA glue and a paintbrush, add eyes and button detail to your snowman.

- 6) Using a strip of scrap fabric, create a scarf and tie around your snowman's neck – why not also add a nose?

- 7) Now take the toe of the sock. Tuck under the cut edge and position on top of the snowman's head to create a hat. Sew in place using the needle and thread (make sure you ask an adult to supervise.)

Alternatives:

- Buttons and eye detail could be drawn on using a marker pen
- Why not use toy/cushion stuffing to fill your snowman?
- Use a different coloured or patterned sock to create a matching hat and scarf

Jackie Stoffels



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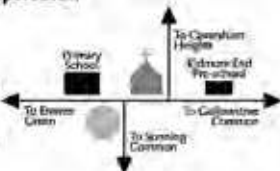
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Parish news

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WELCOME TO TWO NEW MEMBERS

The parish council welcomes two new faces - Stuart Howe, of Woodlands Road, and Anthony l'Anson, of Horsepond Road.

The new councillors were co-opted on to the council to fill vacancies left by the resignations of former members Colin Reynolds and David Richens.

Stuart first moved to Sonning Common from Rotherfield Peppard three years ago as his son was attending the Grove Road primary school. Since he already knew the area fairly well, the family move made a great deal of sense.

Stuart, who is involved with several organisations through his son, such as Scouts and Rotherfield United Football Club, saw how others gave so much time to the community and began looking for ways to give back something too.

Recognising how Sonning Common is on the cusp of significant change with planned, new housing development on the horizon, Stuart wanted to lend a hand. He describes himself as: "Non-political, working in the best interests of everybody, regardless of whether that's my personal belief or not."

A frequenter of local pubs, especially the Unicorn at Peppard, Stuart is also an avid long-distance mountain biker, recently competing in a 130-mile off-road race in Austria. He said: "A ferocious appetite for beer and food makes mountain biking a good equilibrium."

Anthony and his family first moved to Sonning Common more than four years ago. After a great deal of house hunting they have enjoyed their time here ever since. Said Anthony "We have been made to feel really welcome and have enjoyed moving into the area."

A chance conversation with parish clerk, Philip Collings, who mentioned the possibility of new sports' facilities being developed in the village, amongst other things, inspired Anthony to get involved with the parish council.

Anthony sits on other club committees, and given his previous work with central and local government, he thought his experience might be useful.

He said: "It was a combination of having a bit of an understanding of the public sector, knowing that this was an exciting time for the village, combined with a personal interest in sport, that

inspired me to become a councillor."

A passionate sportsman throughout his life, whether it's cricket, rugby, swimming, tennis, or golf, Anthony enjoys being physically active. Both of his children love sport too and the family plays a lot of tennis together.

Said Anthony: "We just enjoy being outside in the open air and what a nice part of the world to be able to enjoy that!" ●



Above right: Stuart Howe
Above left: Anthony l'Anson

EARLY WARNING OF TEMPORARY CO-OP CLOSURE

The Co-operative store, on Wood Lane, is due to be extended and refurbished early next year.

The parish council has been advised that the building of the extension will take six weeks from 9 January until 20 February. The store will remain open

but we can expect new parking problems relating to the construction work during that period.

The store is then due to be completely closed for six weeks until 30 March for an internal refit. In addition to the inconvenience of the closure, this will cause further parking problems.

There will also be some works on the car park itself.

The Co-operative team is looking at bringing in a 'pop-up' store in a trailer for essentials only.

The Parish Council will be working with the contractors to try to minimise problems from this project. ●



Church news

St Michael's Sonning Common

2016 has been a challenging year for St Michael's

Last Christmas we said goodbye to Fr Paul Rowan who had been with us for three years and hoped that a new parish priest would be with us around February time. However this was not to be and a new appointment was announced towards the end of October and the parishioners of St Michael's are looking forward to welcoming their new priest, Fr Michael Sharkey very soon. In the meantime the parish was served by a number of visiting priests and recently we have enjoyed the ministry of Fr Alejandro Olayo-Mendez, a Mexican Jesuit priest researching for his doctorate in Oxford.

The parish community was deeply saddened in September Deacon Francis Andrews died unexpectedly. Francis had been a parishioner of St Michael's for many years and a deacon for just over 20.

He served the parish faithfully during this time and is very much missed. His funeral Mass was celebrated by the area bishop in the presence of many and he was laid to rest in Kidmore End cemetery with his wife Mary. Despite the difficulties the parish has continued to thrive and many people have given generously of their time to support us and contribute to our weekly services.

This year the Catholic Church worldwide has been celebrating a Jubilee of Mercy. As part of the jubilee parishioners made a pilgrimage to St Anne's, Caversham, an ancient pilgrimage centre, using footpaths and country lanes. Those unable to walk joined for a service reflecting on the mercy offered by God to all. Over the last year our main charitable activities have supported Mary's Meals and the Readifood food bank. We also participated in the 'Spend a Penny' initiative to provide toilets for African villages and schools.

Our thoughts are now turned to Advent

and Christmas. If you are new to the area please come along and introduce yourself to us. You will receive a warm welcome. Our future events – including a Christmas Concert with the Pangbourne Silver band – and regular service times can be found in the parish diary on the website <http://www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk/page12.asp?diarycatid=2> ●

Our Christmas Masses will be held:

24 December 5.00pm for families with young children

24 December 8.30pm carols followed by 'midnight' Mass at 9pm

25 December 10.30am

Contact details: phone 0118 972 3418, email stmichaels.rc@hotmail.co.uk, website www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk

Christmas Services

Sunday 4 December

4.30pm Christingle Service, at St John's

Friday 16 December

7.30pm Service of Carols and Readings, at St John's

Saturday 24 December

4.30pm Christingle Service, at Christ the King, Sonning Common

Christingle originates from Hungary and the christingle is a symbolic representation of Christ's love for the world: it is an orange to represent the world, which has been decorated with red tape, fruit, usually grapes and sweets and a candle, each element having a specific meaning which is explained to the children during the short service. The collection at the end is to raise funds for the Children's Society which aims to fight child poverty and neglect and help all children have a better chance in life. 3.9 million children in the UK still live in poverty? (Joan Lamprell)

Christmas Eve

11.00pm Midnight Mass, at St John's

Christmas Day

9.30am Family Eucharist, with Carols, at Christ the King, Sonning Common

10.30am

Family Eucharist with Carols, at St John's



What one thing, if I had it, would make me completely happy?

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Through the medium of short films and Bible passages, Life Explored charts a course through some of the challenging issues of our human experience, to the story of God and his incredible love.

Martin Seccombe from Sonning Common Free Church will be leading the course.

Martin says 'Approaching Christmas and New Year again has really made me

think about what I'm living for and where lasting happiness is to be found. In all our celebrations I wonder whether we've progressively pushed God out of our lives and replaced him with other things to make us feel good. The Life Explored course gives us a great opportunity to reconsider life and the source of happiness in a relaxed and non-threatening way. I'm looking forward to welcoming friends and neighbours.'

Life Explored runs on Thursdays from 12 January 7.30 – 9pm @ Sonning Common Free Church. ●

Enquiries to Martin Seccombe (life.explored@cec.uk.net) or 0118 972 3822 – or just come along!



Springwater Church Peppard

At Springwater Church on Blounts Court Road, Kevin & Linsey Potter are coming up to the completion of their first year as ministers at the church.

They had previously lived in India, down the road in Reading and in the USA & Mexico assisting border communities impacted by the US/Mexico drug trade. Immediately before becoming part of the Springwater family, they worked against Human Trafficking supporting survivors in the greater Los Angeles area and completing studies at Fuller Seminary in Pasadena CA. For more details see www.potterabout.com

Over the last ten months the Church has journeyed through a transition phase and currently there are several activities ongoing during the week.

- Tuesday morning at 9.45am; ASPIRE, a women's group, meet to share life and discuss a topical book.
- Wednesday morning at 10.00am; THE ARK provides a safe, warm, friendly and welcoming environment for parents with babies & toddlers aged 0 - 3 (specifically up to the term after the child's 3rd birthday)
- Various prayer and bible studies are ongoing. Plus there is also early morning prayer available on Friday mornings between 6.30 - 7.30am.
- The church community regularly meets on Sunday mornings from 10.30am till noon and services vary in style. All are welcome and prayer is available for anyone who would like us to pray for them.

Springwater also periodically undertakes various workshops such as raising

awareness on Human Trafficking, Prophetic Art and Film nights. In early November; we will run a bread-making workshop in partnership with Compassionate Loaf.

Over the Christmas period we will be holding a CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE at the church on Christmas Eve (Dec 24th) from 4.30pm and on New Years Day (Jan 1st 2017) Springwater will host a NEW YEARS DAY BRUNCH at the church beginning at 11.00am. This will be in place of the service and there will be NO service on Christmas Day.

You can be kept informed on any additional workshops and get the details of all the gatherings at Springwater by checking out the new website www.springwaterchurch.org.uk, by emailing contactspringwater@gmail.com or by phoning 0118 972 4519. ●

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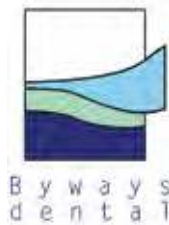
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CUT TEENAGERS SOME SLACK...

by LEAH TILLEY

All parents and children probably go over the same fight every week about whose turn it is to clean the dishes. Of course, as a teen myself I try every possible method there is to avoid emptying the dishwasher in the mornings; from loitering in my room for the extra 5 minutes, to pretending that I had in fact done it the previous day (most likely a lie). Despite my best efforts of avoiding this, I do agree with the morals of parents attempting to train their children for their later life. For, yes you do need to know how to turn on a dishwasher in life-as I recently found out.

However, have you, as a parent, ever told the story, or you as a child ever listened to the story, about how you spent your many afternoons picking up the grass cuttings from the

lawn mower, or had to prepare the lunches for your five or six brothers- because I sure have listened to it and more than once too! I think parents compare too much about what they did 'back in the day' to help their folks, to what us teens do now. Personally, I think that it's a bit unfair to make such comparisons when we are in a modern-day society where children aren't actually needed to help so much, due to the advance in technology.

Also, you parents wouldn't have liked it if your parents had asked you to do the laundry when you were about to play football with your friends, or when you had a ton of homework to do. I mean this is exactly what it is like for us. And although we understand that you're trying to help us learn key life skills (unless of

course you're just being plain lazy) sometimes we just don't have the time to achieve everything you want us to. And as energetic, growing children we need a little time to relax and let loose as we don't quite have the freedom that you old 'uns had when you were little. Just to be clear that means when we are sat in our pjs watching TV it doesn't necessarily mean we are being lazy.

So please mums and dads, in the future, try to understand why we have left for school leaving our empty bowl sat on the table or why we have bribed our younger siblings to clean the dishes for us for the next week. We aren't always necessarily being lazy, despite what you may think.

Dedicated to my mum.... ●

Book launch by young local writer Crownless Kings by William Potter

Crownless Kings is a thought-provoking journey into the life of Nick, your typical graduate from university, seeking to make it big in a world that is very different to the one we know. In Nick's world, homelessness is the height to which the young aspire. The goal is to live on the streets but not many make it, unwilling to work hard enough to make it big and succumbing to the temptations of giving up. You go through the highs and lows of the choices that Nick makes; at times you smile with him, at other times you want

to sit him down and knock some sense into him.

Potter's style is descriptive and relational. He writes as if you were sitting having a coffee with him. And by the end of the book, you know Nick as if he was a young friend of yours. A fun quirk to the book is that Nick is writing his own book, a Robinson Crusoe type adventure novel. The whole thing is a good read. ●

Linsey Potter



TOM FORT BUILDERS

After three months of crashing and banging and drilling and sawing, the builders have almost finished and will soon be on the way – thank God! Not that I have anything against Steve and James. In fact it would be hard to imagine two more delightful fellows – hard-working, courteous, and blessedly unaddicted to the horrors of Radio 1, Heart FM or, worst of all, the nightmare of Jeremy Vine at maximum volume asking halfwits to elucidate their views on Brexit and immigration.

But it will be a relief to have the house quiet, and not to have to endure the dog (fine thanks, unfortunately) going demented every two minutes at the sound of heavy boots on the stairs.

So I'm looking forward to our new bedroom. And what a pleasure to have it all done for you, and by blokes who know what they're doing – and that includes the painting. I think I may have referred before in this magazine to my own inglorious career in DIY. I've done a good deal in my time – none of it better than mediocre, and plenty worse than that.

There was the bookshelf that collapsed on me, owing to faulty raw-plugging into a crumbling wall. There was the shower control given an encouraging tap with a hammer to stop it sticking, which shattered before my eyes. And there was the catastrophe of the lining paper.

Put briefly, I decided to paper a ceiling without taking the elementary precaution of finding out how it should be done. To me it was obvious: cut the

paper, slap on the glue, stick it up. I needed arms twelve feet long to do it my way, and I ended up with glue in my hair, ears and just about everywhere else, and the paper everywhere except on the ceiling.

So, for me the age of DIY is finished, and has been replaced by the golden age of GSETDIFY – Get Someone Else To Do It For You. ●



COOKS CORNER

GIVE US OUR DAILY BREAD By SANDY ONOFRIO

Homemade bread is much easier to produce than you may think, it just requires a little time. These are two well tried, tested and very popular breads.

FOCACCIA - serves 8

450 g (1 lb) strong white (bread) flour
1 tsp salt
1 sachet easy-blend dried yeast
4 tbsp olive oil
300 ml warm water
½ tsp coarse sea salt



Put the flour into a large bowl and stir in the salt and yeast. Make a well in the centre and pour in 3 tbsp of the oil and the water. Gradually mix the flour into the oil and water, using a wooden spoon at first, then by hand, to make a soft, slightly sticky dough. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead for about 10 minutes. Sprinkle the surface with a little extra flour if necessary. Shape the dough into a ball and place on a greased baking sheet, push it out with your hands into a round about 21 cm diameter and 2 cm thick. Cover loosely with a clean tea towel and leave in a warm place for about 45 minutes (until the dough has doubled in thickness). Preheat the oven to 230°C/Gas 8. Pour a little hand-hot water into a cup, then dip your fingers into the water and press into the risen dough to make deep dents all over the top & leave the top of the loaf moist. Brush the remaining oil over the bread and sprinkle with the coarse salt. Bake the focaccia for 15 minutes (until golden) and allow to cool on a rack for a further 15. ●

BRAIDED CHALLAH - makes 2 good sized loaves

4 tbsp caster sugar
1 tbsp salt
4 tbsp vegetable oil
300 ml warm water
1 sachet dried active yeast
3 eggs, slightly beaten
750g plain flour
1 egg, beaten for glazing
Poppy/Sesame seeds (optional)



Place sugar, salt & oil in mixing bowl. Add hot water & stir to dissolve. Add the yeast & mix in the eggs. Add the flour and turn out onto a floured surface. Knead for a minimum of 5 minutes, until soft & smooth. Shape into a ball, place in a greased bowl and turn to coat the surface. Cover with a damp towel and let rise until doubled. Punch down & allow to rise a second time. (If pushed for time you can get away with proving it once). Divide dough in half and divide each half into 3 equal sections. Make 2 plaited braids, place both on a greased baking sheet. Cover and let rise until doubled in size. Brush with egg and sprinkle with seeds (if using). Bake a 180/Gas 4 for 35 minutes until golden brown. Cool on a wire rack. ●

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and the one I find most amazing is the height, that is lost and gained, the equivalent of three ascents of Mount Everest.

I started this walk, June 2006 and finished in September 2016, a day after my 81st Birthday. Staying in 12 different guesthouses/hotels or pubs and 18 self-catering cottages.

The South West Coast Path (SWCP) is the longest long distance path in Britain. It starts at Minehead in Somerset and finally reaches South Haven Point at Poole Harbour – a staggering 630 miles! The path quickly moves along the North Devon coastline and around the Cornish coast including the dramatic cliffs of Lands End and continues along the red clays of South Devon before entering Dorset with the Jurassic heights (and lows) and restricted access of the military ranges.

The path is graded into 'easy, moderate, strenuous and severe' (the latter being too much for me now, but I was determined to complete the route. Coming downhill is so much harder than going up (more pressure on your knees!))

In the early days, at the start of our walk, we booked our accommodation through an organised tour/group who kindly transported the luggage from one b&b to the next. But Hilary and I felt rushed and wanted to enjoy and have time to explore a little. We decided to walk the path at our own pace, in our own company and opted to book self

catering accommodation for 3-6 nights at a time. Sometimes, 3-4 times each year. We could therefore relax, unpack and take turns to cook. Taking two cars helped (one at the start of the days walk, the other at the end after much scrutiny of the Orange Explorer maps. The distance often covered of around 10 miles each day. Although perhaps more in Somerset and less in Dorset, for obvious reasons!

I have been walking the SWCP with my close-friend, Hilary Townsend of 25 years and we met whilst we were both nursing at Townlands Hospital. The SWCP is my 18th long distance path of the British Isles and by far the hardest! However, it has also been a real privilege to witness the scenic splendour, the fascinating history and heritage and a tremendous achievement. I have been to enchanting villages that I'd never heard of, crossed many rivers by ferry (and some we've had to wade through, (timing the tides just right), which all adds to the excitement.

The weather and people we have met along the way, often played an eventful part of our walking the SWCP. From Ernest, the ferryman at Looe, re-telling us his wartime exploits, with a twinkle in his eye, to the Canadian couple carrying a small baby and everything they needed on their backs. They had started the route when baby Eleanor was just 12 weeks old. When Hilary and I met up with them she was 6 months old and gave us a broad beaming smile.

The section of the path along Levant, famous for its tin mines (as shown on Poldark), became extremely hazardous when a torrent of red water from the clay soaked ground came raging along our route, making every step slow and difficult. The sudden change in cloud colour to dark blue in the middle of

the afternoon, then a loud crack of thunder, and the sky lit up so bright for a split second. It was so frightening and nowhere to take shelter. Every bit of our bodies got soaked with the downpour with each step becoming heavier and heavier as more red clay stuck to our boots!

Much later, in Dorset this last September we were caught in a really violent thunderstorm. Thank goodness for the tiny chapel of St Aldhelm's on the top of the headland – a chance to take breath and dry out.

Hilary and I are aiming to complete the Test Way in Hampshire in the next year. ●



FREDA'S 'BABY' ...

THE SONNING COMMON LUNCH CLUB

By ROSEMARY HOUSE

It's unusual to buy your house twice. But that's what Freda Buckner did when she moved to Sonning Common for the second time: once in 1968, just married to her local sweetheart, Brian, and then again in 1996 after a 12 year spell in Gallowstree Common. When the house came up for sale again Freda and Brian acted quickly and bought back their house which they are still lovingly modernising.



Born in Neasden, North London, Freda moved to leafy Stoke Row when she was 10, where her family had bought the village shop. She remembers with affection Rotherfield Greys School, now a big house, opposite what is now Greenshoots. "I didn't want to leave school", she says "I loved it so much". How many of us can say that? But leave she did: joining her father in the shop before working for a jeweller in Reading.

After her three children had grown up and her beloved 12 Persian cats had died one by one, Freda was looking for a new challenge. Her energy and commitment to the Sonning Common Lunch Club is well known in the village: a role she took over in April 1990 from Christine Bussell, who started the club in January 1985. Freda remembers when she was asked by Christine to join other ladies to cook: "With much trepidation we did our first lunch which went down very well. From that day onwards the Lunch Club has run regularly"

A debilitating lung disease 23 years ago left Freda with severe asthma even after years of steroids, but with excellent medical care from Dr Thompson at the Health Centre, she has outwitted the illness, pouring copious energy into her gardening, charity events at Christ the King church, where she regularly worships, and -her baby- the Sonning Common Lunch Club.

Once a month - every second Wednesday - except August - the

ladies shop for and cook lunch for anything between 30 and 45 elderly people at the Sonning Common Village hall. "I couldn't do it without my lovely ladies, who freely give their time to cook, lay tables and do anything else asked of them" she says. "People think it's difficult for a lot of women to work together but we get on so well. We never argue. My daughter, Karen, is also a great help. She can do everything so much more quickly!"

The Club has enjoyed several homes: after leaving Chiltern Edge there were fears it would close but, thanks to the Henley Standard, ex-Head Philip Marple, came up trumps with the old SC primary school library, after which they moved on to the Village hall. With its swish, recently updated kitchen, which Freda is looking forward to using. It is the perfect place in the centre of the village and accessible to all. Much more than just a lunch, it's a chance to chat, socialise and have a good laugh.

Very few things have prevented the Lunch Club from feeding its members over the last 31 years. Freda recalls one or two, "We did have to cancel a January meeting in a severe winter some years ago when the weather was bad with ice and snow and we decided it wasn't safe for our members to come out, so the fish pies went in the freezer and we had it the next month"

Responsibility for the people the team feeds is a big consideration.

She remembers a Christmas dinner which could have gone badly wrong. All members are provided with a free Christmas dinner every year. Freda recalls: "A good few years ago we had bought turkey breast from a large supermarket and one of them didn't smell right after cooking. I went to the office and phoned the supermarket and I was told to throw all the turkey away.

Luckily for us the staff were due their Christmas dinner that day, so the chef came out in his whites and carved this very large turkey in front of our members which went down very well. A few days later I was given a box of chocolates and a bottle of wine for each member and all the helpers". Nobody went hungry that day and nobody was poorly either!

Although Freda is the kingpin of the Lunch Club, she is quick to

acknowledge the contribution made by FISH who provide the bus and the private car drivers transporting members to the Village Hall for their monthly feast. "We couldn't carry on without these wonderful people" she says. And as well as being appreciative of all those who make the Club possible, she is more than happy with her lot.

"I have a lot to thank God for," she says "a lovely mum and dad, a lovely husband, three lovely children and six grandchildren. I'm a very lucky woman".

There are currently vacancies for others to join the Lunch Club which is held at 12.30 every 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Village Hall Sonning Common. If anyone is interested please contact Freda Buckner on 0118 972 2924 ●



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DIARY DATES

DECEMBER

Monday 5 - 14:30

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Monday 5 - 14:30

Royal British Legion Women's Section - Christmas Party
Batten House

Tuesday 6 - Thursday 8

Chiltern Edge School presents
"Little Shop of Horrors"

Wednesday 7 - 10:30 - 12:00

Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute. Open to all. Raising funds for local community projects. Village Hall

Wednesday 7 - 14:30 - 16:00

SCHC workshop "Bereavement, Grief, Family support & Befriending services"

Saturday 10 - 16:30

Nottakwire - Come and sing carols. Village Hall

Saturday 10 - 19:30

South Chiltern Choral Society - Christmas concert. Chiltern Edge School

Sunday 11 - 14:00

South Chiltern Choral Society - Christmas concert. Chiltern Edge School

Monday 12 - 20:00

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Tuesday 13 - 19:15

Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - AGM
Peppard Memorial Hall

Thursday 15 - 19:30

Sonning Common Women's Institute - Christmas party. Village Hall

Thursday 22 - 09:00

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

JANUARY

Monday 9 - 14:30

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Thursday 12 - 19:30 - 21:30

Life Explored course starts
Sonning Common Free Church

Monday 16 - 20:00

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Wednesday 18 - 14:30 - 16:00

SCHC workshop "Advance Care Planning". Health Centre

Thursday 19 - 11:30

FISH - Pub lunch

Thursday 19 - 19:30

Sonning Common Women's Institute - Social evening with fish & chips and bingo. Visitors welcome Village Hall

Thursday 26 - 09:00

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

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The FISH Volunteer Centre runs regular door-to-door shopping trips to Tesco in Henley every Monday morning and to Henley Waitrose, Henley Farmers Market, Morrisons in Reading and Reading Town Centre every month.

The programme of shopping and leisure trips for each month is published and distributed on 20th of the preceding month and bookings are taken from that date. Copies of the programme are available the FISH Volunteer Centre, Sonning Common Library, the Christian Community Action shop, Pet Country Supplies and on request from Carson's Chemist. The monthly programme of trips is posted on noticeboards in both Peppard and Sonning Common.

Details of all minibus trips can also be found on the FISH website www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk

For more information and to book any trip call **0118 972 3986** any weekday between 09.30 and 11.30 a.m. ●

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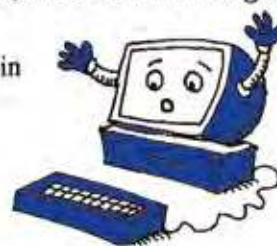
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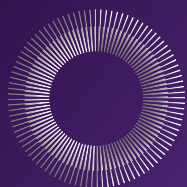
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