

SC SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

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Zack & Anouska Hawkes
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SEASON OF MISTS AND MELLOW FRUITFULNESS...

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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness...

As I write this editorial the children are going back to school and the holidays are over for most of the readers. Fortunately, there was some summer weather so our vitamin D will have been 'topped up' and will support us through the winter months to come, we hope.

Yet again the magazine has developed a theme by happenstance. This time it is about horticulture, gardens, flowers and shows. The centre pages reveal an exquisitely beautiful garden. The editorial team were delighted to receive some entries for the photo competition which revealed the talents of young people. The GCSE results at Chiltern Edge produced further outstanding achievements.

We are sad to lose our Junior editor and we hope another budding journalist will volunteer to compose a Just for Kids or a page with a new name. Many will miss the Associate Priest Susan Cooper as she leaves to take up a promoted post. Our librarian tells the story of another of her fund raising treks, this time to Mongolia and again to raise money for Cancer Research.

As ever I am always very pleased to receive written and photographic contributions which makes it such an interesting magazine, celebrating the talents of the people of Sonning Common. As the village is set to grow I am reminded that it may be the 'village that never was.....' with the most unprepossessing buildings, but it is the community who live here that make it so special. ●

Diana

Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org



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SC SONNING COMMON
MAGAZINE

MEET THE TEAM ...



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PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE – OUR JUNIOR EDITORS RETIRE

by DIANA PEARMAN

Zack Hawkes has produced the Just for Kid's page in the magazine for the last two and a half years, and his elder sister Anouska introduced and edited the page from 2012 to 2013. Some of you may recall that I was acting editor at the beginning of 2012 and was looking for a volunteer to take over. At 9 years old the remarkable Anouska asked if she could become the editor – I was delighted and we compromised with her becoming the junior editor.

And so this amazing relationship between the magazine and this family began and every two months, as the deadline date loomed, they would produce a whole page of information about their activities, far flung holidays, visits to interesting local places, crosswords/word searches and book/film reviews. Anouska's speciality was the Secret Village competition which awarded a prize, and she also organised a writing competition. Zack's enthusiasm for Minecraft and his extensive digital input has gained him a following from other similar minded youngsters.

Giving time to producing their input to the magazine, every two months, has not detracted from their other interests. Anouska is now 14 and a student at

Kendrick school. She has just gained her Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze award having previously been a guide and brownie. She has graduated through all of the swimming levels and is now working towards her life saving award. From being a member of the Henley Children's Theatre group, she moved on to Caversham's Theatre Train and recently achieved her level 5 LAMDA and is working towards level 6. Kick boxing classes are another of her enthusiasms.

GCSE courses start for her in September and she is a little nervous about the amount of coursework, especially with her choice of Art and Textiles. At school she is involved in house drama performances and lacrosse club. When asked about her memories of involvement in the magazine she said "it was so nice to get feedback" and what of the future "to be a lawyer having gone to Oxford University".

Zack has just started at Reading Blue Coat School, which he chose because he thought "it looked a bit like Hogwarts". His great passion is coding (he belonged to the Kidmore End school club) and it consumes much of his home time too. On the computer his favourites games

are Minecraft, and Slither.io and Agar.io and he posts tips about these on his YouTube channel. Also a past member of Henley theatre club he has played a variety of parts on stage and achieved a grade 4 in LAMDA. He has been a cub and is now a scout. He is learning to play hockey and tennis at Peppard and has competed in some friendly games. When asked about his page he said "it was a fun thing to do, I enjoyed it especially the bit of feedback. It took about 1 hour 45 minutes each issue to produce but it was relatively easy as it was based on things I like to do". His future ambition is "to become a programmer and if this is not possible, then a computer animator or artist".

Both Anouska and Zack have contributed a great deal to the Sonning Common magazine with one whole page produced for each edition, quite a task and commitment. The magazine committee wished to recognise their achievement by presenting them each with a 'Good Citizen Award' and a voucher with our thanks.

I am sure we all wish them well in their future life, which looks likely to be very successful. ●

FOXES IN SONNING COMMON

As the Chair of Thames Valley Animal Welfare, I have been made aware, over the past two years, that cats have been attacked, or killed and taken by foxes. YES, it happens! Obviously it is a very distressing experience for someone to see their beloved cat being taken by these animals. Just recently, I have sadly been in this position myself, when my small, timid black and white cat was heard screaming in the garden one evening. Although we reacted very quickly no sign has ever been found of her and one can only presume that this was also her fate.

I am therefore, concerned with the apparent increase in the numbers of these animals in the area. On walking down Kennylands road in the dark last week,

I saw three foxes running along the opposite pavement, only to turn into Westleigh and be confronted by a vixen screeching her head off, as another answered her from the woods! Is there to be no control on these apparently increasing numbers?

In the mean time I would urge residents with pets to shut them in at night. ●

Ann Butler-Smith



CHILTERN EDGE GCSE RESULTS 2016

Results day is one of the most memorable in a young person's life. The wait through the summer is over and the envelopes arrive at school to be collected by nervous students.

There were again many individual success stories at Chiltern Edge School this year. Amongst the highest scoring students were;

Corin Miles	7A* and 4A
Bethan Rees	6A* 4A
Grace Johnson	7A* 3A 1B
Charlotte Williams	6A* 5A 1B
Millie Williams	3A* 6A 1B
Scott Barnett	4A* 4A 2B 1C
Jessica O'Farrelly	4A* 5A 2B 1C

Science, Geography, PE and Product Design were the top subjects for progress and results in Performing Arts and Drama were again spectacularly good.

Daniel Sadler Headteacher said, "Again we have had a high proportion of students hit their targets and will be heading off to their chosen Sixth Form places and apprenticeships in September. Government are now measuring schools on the progress scores for students from entry at year 7 to GCSE over their 8 best subjects, and we are expecting this measurement to reflect the hard work staff and students put in."

Chiltern Edge School wish all our ex students the very best in the future and hope to see them at the annual Presentation Evening in November. ●

SEASON'S GREETINGS

A short summary of the plot

Neville and Belinda are hosting Christmas with family and friends, but as rifts appear and old wounds re-open it is soon evident that it might not be a very merry one. Petty and not so petty squabbles break out. Christmas pressies are plundered, musical toys are set off at a most inappropriate time and things go generally awry. Highlights include an inept puppet show, a midnight tryst that goes wrong, and a shocking denouement! ●



COMA AND JOIN US - WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The South Chiltern Choral Society, based in Sonning Common, is looking for new members.

Under the direction of their new Director of Music, Paul Burke, the choir sings a varied and challenging repertoire, including classical masterpieces, 20th century music and also newly commissioned works.

Rehearsals are held at Chiltern Edge School on Monday evenings, and 3 public concerts are held every year.

The choir is particularly looking for new men to join the tenor and bass sections.

If you are interested in singing in the choir or just want more information please contact Richard Larkin on 07557 049092 or contact the choir via the website: www.southchilternchoralsociety.org.uk

Sonning Common Best Front Garden Competition Summer 2016



There are so many lovely gardens in the village and all have been set out by the owners making the best use of the space available. Sixteen gardens were nominated and judged by the usual points system.

First prize

Anthony Horne, Ashford Avenue

An absolute burst of colour in a red brick "courtyard" garden. Very clever planting in tubs, planters and a basket. Most of the flowers were annuals – geraniums, fuchsias, petunias, and a frothy mass of lobelia. A great credit to all the family.

Second prize

Roger and Carol Parker, Woodlands Road

An immaculate garden in front of a Victorian house. Colourful borders and planters, small topiary hedge and a very well kept lawn.

Third prize

Margaret Moola and Elaine Williams, Sedgfield Close

A lovely cottage style garden with an excellent choice of shrubs and colourful pots, hanging baskets and tubs of clever colour coordination. ●



The Cultural Revolution – a speaker's offer

2016 marks the 50 anniversary of the launch of the Cultural Revolution in China. A mass rally was followed by the persecution of intellectuals. I have been giving successful talks on the subject related to my recently published novel *Brushstrokes in Time*. (Claret Press). My fictional Chinese Romeo and Juliet's story is set against real events including that of the Stars Art Movement 1979 (where Ai Weiwei's career started). *Brushstrokes in Time* is getting good reviews and an emotional reaction from young people of Chinese ancestry. See my website. Essential Audiobooks is currently turning it into a young adult audio book. I am an experienced WI and U3 A speaker. This year I was a speaker at the Stratford upon Avon Literary Festival and in the festival marquee in Oxford. I am happy to talk at library events for no charge.

Sylvia Vetta - 07809 054969

<https://www.sylviavetta.co.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/OxfordCastaways>



Successful show

The Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society held their Autumn Show at the Chiltern Edge School on 3 September. There were the usual displays of garden produce, domestic products, flowers, arts, crafts, and photography. A niche floral presentation by Mrs Sue Hedges, using only the shades of white and red, gained an early "First" with her floral interpretation of the tragic circumstances and death of "Romeo and Juliet" in Shakespeare's play of that name. Her son, Martin Hedges, who is also a gifted gardener, won 5 silver cups.

The classes for Under 5's was for imaginatively constructed bugs, bees or butterflies displayed on a plate. Two sisters aged 3 and 5 years came top. The tiny tots handled their stage appearance with aplomb as the Headteacher at Chiltern Edge School presented them, and all winners, with their prizes. The Primary School joins in the Shows, leading to some 40 brightly crayoned clowns making a cheerful block of colour along one wall, and three winners selected. Watch out for our Plant Stall at the School Fete in 2017. ●

Julia Perry



MATTERS OF LIFE AND DEATH

After our Matters of Life and Death Open Day in May we decided to build on the positive response and feedback and have arranged four further Special Workshops, with guest speakers to elaborate on their area of expertise.

Dates, subjects and speakers of these sessions are:

MONDAY 24/10/2016 2.30 - 4PM

'First Aid for older People and issues around Do Not Resuscitate' ' Message in Bottle Scheme'

Community Responders and South Central Ambulance Service

WEDNESDAY 16/11/2016 2.30 -4PM

'Funerals: 'What are my choices?' ' Where do I start?'

Tomalin Funeral Director,

Andy Chanter Woodlands Burial Custodian and Chrissie Phillips Tilbury.

WEDNESDAY 7/12/2016 2.30 - 4PM

'Bereavement, Grief, Family support & Befriending services'

Ken Blanton, Sue Ryder Chaplain and Alison Clements

Sue Ryder Befriending Co-ordinator, Sue Nickson 'FISH Home Visiting'

The plan is to have a short reminder of the importance of Advanced Care Planning, after which the speaker(s) can take the stage for about 1 hour, allowing for Q&A's.

All sessions are FREE for everyone, no need to be a registered patient at SC Health Centre.

If there is a lot of interest for any of the sessions, we can use the Sonning Common Village Hall.

You may come for any one session or if you wish to all four, but it would be very helpful if you book a place and leave your contact details.



1. Email schcreception@nhs.net
2. Telephone 0118 9722188
3. Drop in a note at SC Health Centre reception.

There will be one more workshop just dedicated to Advance Care Planning on:

**MONDAY 10/10/2016
2.30-4PM AT THE SC HEALTH CENTRE.**

Some thoughts for Autumn



This summer many of you have walked your dog over the fields around Peppard and Sonning Common. This area is a beautiful part of Oxfordshire and we are away from the hustle of city life.

Have you ever asked yourself? Did this vast and complicated world just happen, or was it created by God?

Each of us is a ship sailing over the seas of life. Sometimes the conditions can be difficult but we must stay afloat and steer the way ahead as best we can. But there is, available for us all, a powerful radar system. Ask God to make it available to you, He can

do so and no money is needed. To be given this radar just go into your room, close the door and pray.

God - if you exist - please show yourself to me.

Don't just dismiss this as nonsense, but give it real thought. With this priceless gift, you will be aware every minute of every day that there is a God.

He loves you and has the power to help your voyage for evermore.

God bless you!

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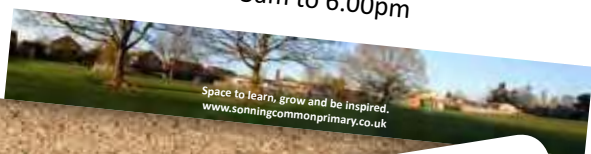
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Tuesday 11th October
2.00pm ~ 3.00pm

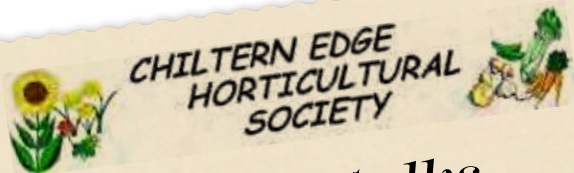
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Autumn talks

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TALKS

Tuesday 11 October

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Tuesday 8 November

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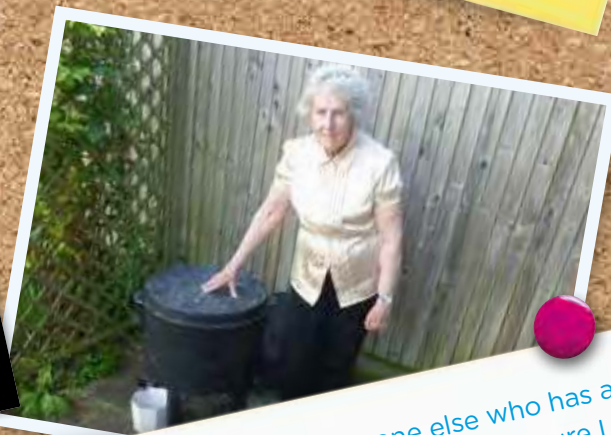
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CARL WOOD CATCHING CARP

By ROS VARNES

Outwitting 'monsters of the lakes' is a challenge that keeps village butcher and accomplished angler, Carl Wood, returning to fish for carp time and time again.

Carl, who has been fishing since he was five years old, caught a 58-pound carp in France in June and his achievement was filmed by TV cameras for the Pursuit angling series on Sky Discovery Channel and Sky Sports 3.

Although a huge carp, it wasn't Carl's biggest catch ever - that weighed in at 68-pounds!

"To catch any fish for the programme is good but to catch a monster of the lake while the crew was filming was an achievement in itself. The programme-makers were over the moon!" said Carl.

Our friendly butcher leads a double life. He is sponsored by UK-based carp fishing tackle company, Nash Tackle, as a field tester and consultant.

Many anglers, who fish at Carl's level, do it professionally but for Carl it is a part-time passion which he pursues alongside the demands of running his Wood Lane business.

Every week he usually manages to escape for 24 hours - a day and a night - to fish. For him it is an opportunity to relax, switch off and enjoy the wildlife in and around the water.

"Fishing is a massive passion for me," said Carl. "When you fish for carp you have to have immeasurable patience. They are adept at getting away and not getting caught!"

Fishing for carp successfully relies on lots of elements coming together at

once, Carl explained. Temperature, light, rainfall and wind direction all play their part in determining how the fish move about and feed.

"Carp fishing is very technical. I have to fish at different depths of water using a range of tackle to catch carp depending on the conditions at the time."

When Carl caught his 58 pounder at Etang Meunier, a picturesque stream-fed lake at Bonnac-la-Cote, Limoges, the conditions were stormy - conditions favoured by carp, Carl said, as they become more active.

"When you catch such a big fish you have to treat it with respect. They can be more than 40-years-old and are real survivors. It is important to get the hook out of their mouths and return them to the water as quickly as possible, after treating with antiseptic any minor cuts and abrasions.

"The aim is always to return the carp to the water as healthy as it was when it came out," said Carl.

Carl enjoys basing his business in Sonning Common where he has eight staff, some of whom have been with him for many years.

One of the team, Russell, gave Carl his first job as a Saturday boy at a butcher's shop in Wallingford! Carl went on to own and run the business, from the age of 24. He was based first in Wallingford and then in Sonning Common for the past 13 years.

Carl describes himself as, "a quiet family man". His wife Lyn supports him by keeping the books for the business and is a regular water-side companion. The pair have two grown-up children, Robbie and Rachel. ●

The TV programme featuring Carl is due to be aired on Sky Discovery Channel at the end of the year and on Sky Sports 3 later.

Butcher Carl Wood with his 58-pound carp.



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THE VILLAGE THAT NEVER WAS

Ralph Peedell suggested that readers might be interested in a series of books that were written by Fred Richens in the 1970's. This is the second in his choice of three to feature. If any resident would like to borrow one of these books 30 pages each one, to read in more detail then please contact the editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

Although neighbouring village, Kidmore End, had had a school since 1860, it wasn't until much later that the County Council decided to build a school in the fast-growing village of Sonning Common. Originally called the Eye and Dunsden Sonning Common County School, the initial 69 pupils joined the school on Grove Road on January 6th 1913 and at the outset there were 4 classrooms in all, two of them divided by a folding screen, a covered play area - in which boys and girls were kept apart - and a school house and yard. (The original school could still be recognized in 1977 when Mr Richens wrote these articles)

Within three years the number of pupils had doubled and new classrooms had been added, and, by 1919, there were 5 teachers. The 200 mark was reached in 1929 and following further extensions, pupil numbers had increased to 250 by 1939.

Then came the evacuation and in September 1939 nearly 200 children arrived from Ealing on the outskirts of London to escape the war. Because of the increased numbers local children attended school in the morning and the

evacuees in the afternoon. This continued for a few months until 65 children were moved into the Congregational Hall in Wood Lane and 88 into the Kidmore End Memorial Hall.

For the most part the Ealing children settled happily into their new surroundings, but they began to return to their homes towards the end of the war and by June 1945, Sonning Common School was back to its pre-war strength. With normal conditions prevailing, numbers increased steadily, and in 1947-48 more classrooms were added as well as a canteen and playing fields.

By 1956 350 children were at the school but with the opening of Chiltern Edge in September 1957, Sonning Common became a primary school. The new headmaster, Mr R B Johnson, arrived to find 250 children between 5 and 11 years old waiting to be organised into 6 junior and 2 infants classes. They included a daily coachload of Polish children from Checkendon who, like their parents, spoke little English.

From 1964 onwards, with the rapid growth of the village and the high proportion of young families, the numbers at the school increased dramatically and by 1974 had reached the peak - 682 in 21 classes.

Meantime additional land had been obtained in 1967 to provide for a new infants department and the attractive Dobinson Paddock with its 100 or more trees.

In later years, evening classes were run at the school in such subjects as, woodwork, dressmaking and typing and the County Library was accommodated for a time.

From its early days in 1913 until this article was written in 1977 there were only 4 headmasters:

F W Woodward 1913 - 1922

P S Forder 1922 - 1947

A G Miller 1947 - 1956

R B Johnson 1957 - and in 1977 is in his 20th year as Head.

The quartet of headmasters have built up an excellent reputation for the school, both academically and for its activities. It has also done much to foster a spirit of human concern - for instance, in its efforts for charity. ●

Ralph Peedell



SUPERCARGE YOUR HEALTH

With the summer adventures coming to an end and we are back to school and work, looking after your health and the health of your family is especially important.

As a nutritional scientist and specialist pilates instructor I often get asked how to supercharge your health and fight off the nasty bugs that so often creep up on us as the temperature drops and the sunshine dips.

One of the best ways to give your health a real boost is to ditch the calorie counting and crash dieting and instead cram your meals with essential nutrients to support metabolism, balance hormones, support digestion and regulate blood sugar levels. When you give your organs and cells within the body the raw materials they need for optimal function we not only give our metabolism a boost but we also supercharge our health from the inside.

An easy way to optimally nourish your body is to include a wide range of fresh, and preferably organic, fruit and vegetables. Think about eating a rainbow and ensure you have something from each colour, each day. Green leafy vegetables are one of my top favourites, as we know the majority

of our diet should be plant based, so making sure you always have a supply of items such as kale, broccoli, brussel sprouts, and cabbage which are all great sources of phytonutrients, providing a life source for our cells and assist in keeping the immune system strong thereby avoiding those nasty coughs and colds.

I also want to mention the importance of good quality animal protein. It is extremely important to know where the source is reared and where it came from. Applying the same principle to fish is key too, avoid farmed fish where possible and aim to eat plenty of healthy oily fish each week.

The nutrients gained from rich and wholesome foods often work in synergy, which means they work better when combined and are able to benefit the entire body, helping to restore balance and function. The beauty of eating fresh produce also means that your meals are packed with a vast array of nutrients, antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, fats and proteins that can bring about deep nourishment.

So ditch the ready meals and pre-packaged foods and feed you and your family with wholesome nourishing foods as we head into the autumn months. ●

RUTH GREEN



COURGETTE MUFFINS

INGREDIENTS

- 200g gluten free flour
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 3 eggs beaten
- 50g coconut syrup
- 30g coconut oil
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 pinch of salt
- zest of 1 lemon
- 100g courgette finely grated
- 1 apple cored and diced finely

METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 180c
- Place muffin cases in muffin tin.
- Combine the flour, cinnamon, baking powder, bicarbonate of soda and salt.
- Add the eggs to the mixture nice and slowly.
- Then add the coconut syrup, lemon juice and zest, add the courgette slowly and stir.
- Finally add the apples, and spoon the mixture into tins.
- Place in the oven for 20-25 minutes until golden brown.



AN URBAN JUNGLE ... IN SONNING COMMON

Imagine being somewhere exotic, sitting under towering bamboos, huge floppy banana leaves, and rustling tree ferns, colours so bold and bright that you need your sunglasses on, open your eyes and you're transported to ... the lovely South Oxfordshire village of Sonning Common.

Having moved to Oxfordshire three years ago, I missed living and working abroad, experiencing the smells, tastes and sites of foreign

lands. So the deserts of Afghanistan or the sand dunes of Namibia may be somewhat difficult to reproduce in my small back garden, but some of the plants that I have seen ...well, would they grow here in the UK, there was only one way to find out, so two and a half years ago I started experimenting and was pleasantly pleased with the results.

To date this small plot has three types of bananas, green, black and golden bamboos, T Rex or Tetrapanax to please the serious horticulturists, Cordylines, Tree ferns, Paulownias, Gunnera, Melianthus

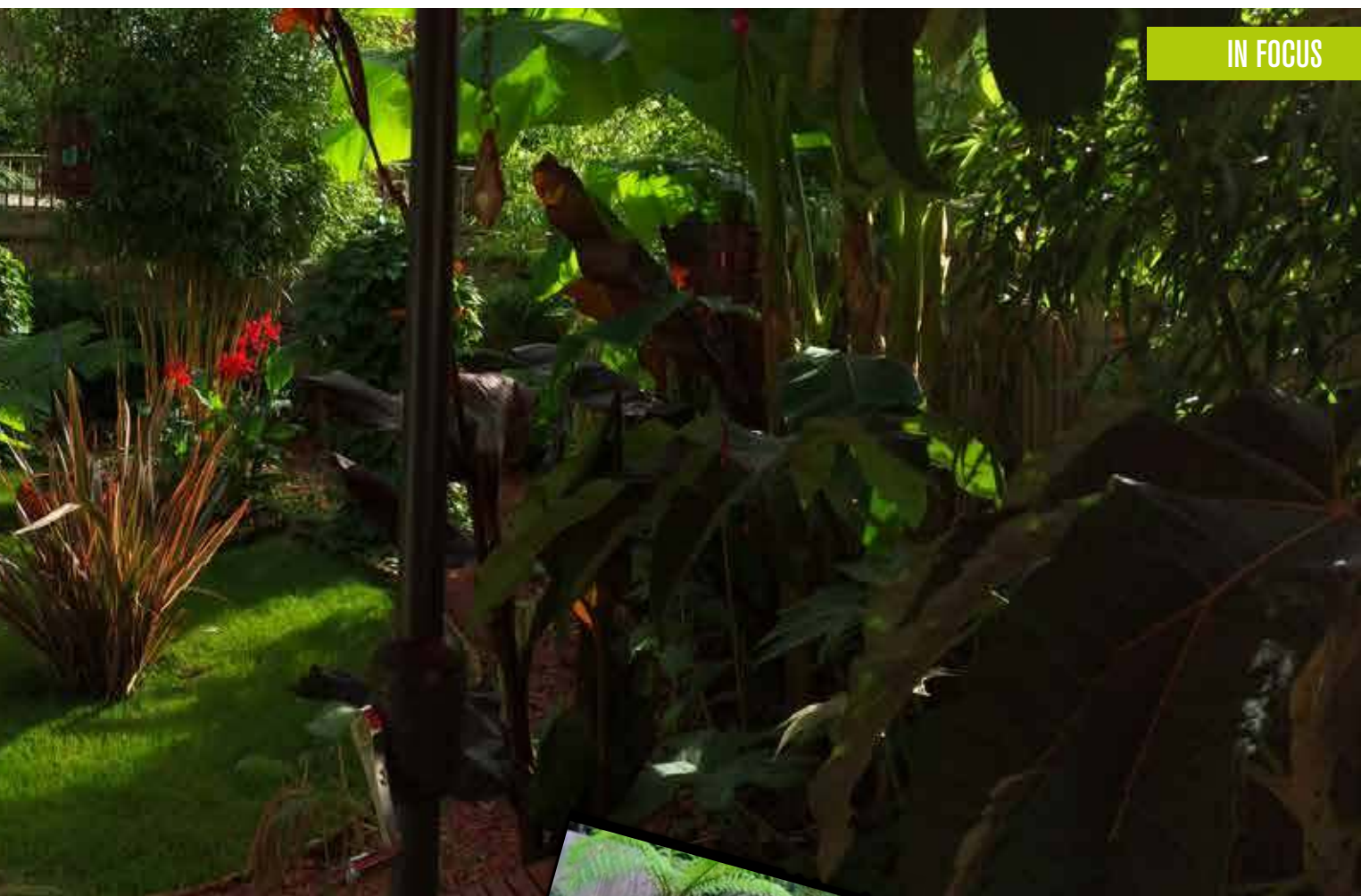
major (smells of peanut butter), grasses, and Cannas by the cart load.

If that was not enough, there are the normal staples of, Figs, Vines, Sweetcorn, Tomatoes etc.

It is truly incredible to think that these plants originate from, Africa, Asia, China, Taiwan, New Zealand, Tasmania, Brazil, South Africa, Australia, and all survive here and seem to like it.

So back to the deck chair, close my eyes and ...

Mick Stanyer





Winner

Harbour reflections – by Scott Barnett

MY HOLIDAYS ...

YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER COMPETITION

By **CHRISTINE ATKINSON**

We launched our inaugural junior photo competition in the August issue and are pleased to report that we have had a number of entries.

All of them were within the Under 18 category which is fantastic, although a shame that some of the younger members of the village didn't get involved.maybe next time?

The photos are all really fabulous and we think there is some talent amongst you! It was very hard to pick a winner from them, but Scott's composed reflection photo just pipped the rest and is magnificent! Runner up is Lucinda's cheetahs at dusk.



Runner up

Cheetahs at dusk – by Lulu Elwell



Fetch – by Martin Elwell



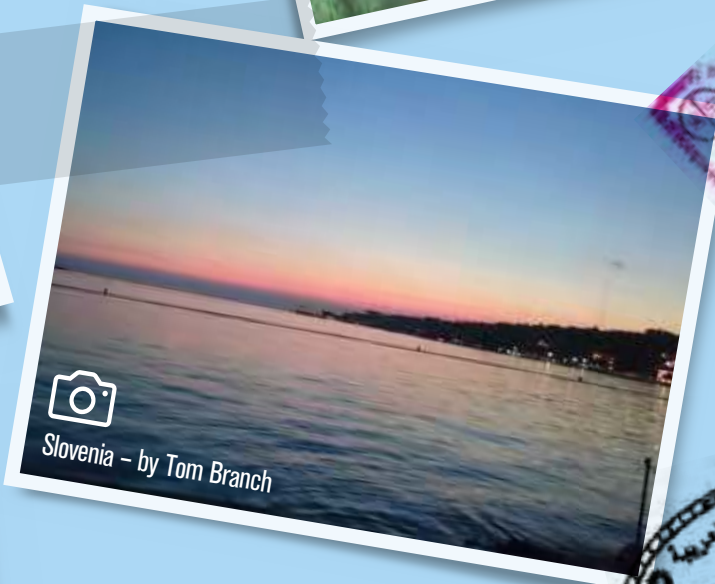
Rhodes – by Ellen Fearnside



Majestic onlooker – by Martin Elwell



Slovenia – by Tom Branch



Madeline's cousin – by Lucinda Elwell



Lonely leopard – by Lucinda Elwell



Sunset Giraffe – by Lucinda Elwell



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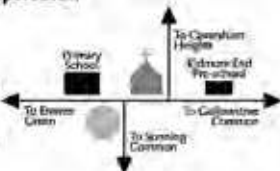
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Parish news

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NEW YELLOW LINES IN GROVE ROAD

A solution to a long-standing traffic problem – parking in Grove Road – has been offered.

Numerous complaints have been made by residents about parking on Grove Road at the beginning and end of the school day. The parish council has consulted with residents, the primary school, the police and the county council's Highways department to try to find an acceptable solution to the parking problem.

Both Highways and the police have recommended that there should be new, single yellow lines along the north side of the road (opposite the school) and yellow lining on the corners of the

Lea Road/Grove Road junction.

The yellow lines along Grove Road would provide enforceable No Parking zones that would apply only during specific times. The restrictions would be situated across existing accesses both to prevent driveways from being blocked and to allow the maximum amount of on-street parking.

Grove Road residents were overwhelmingly supportive of the proposed £4,500 yellow lining project, which will now go ahead.

The parish council is grateful for all of the responses received from residents and has worked with the police and Highways department to address any specific concerns. ●



SKATEPARK SAFETY

With the continuing popularity of the skatepark, particularly over the summer months, the parish council wishes to remind users about what to do in an emergency.

The ambulance service has been notified of all the combination codes on access gate and could use force via bolt cutters to gain entry to Bishopswood Sports Ground if required.



ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The parish council and local police are joining forces to crack down on some problems with anti-social behaviour in the village.

Incidents of anti-social behaviour, including cannabis abuse and excessive noise, have been reported.

Police community support officers are stepping up their patrols around the village during days, evenings and weekends.

Anyone who witnesses anti-social behaviour is being encouraged to report it immediately by phoning Thames Valley Police on 101. This gives the police the opportunity to deal with the situation on the spot.

The parish council is helping the police by providing CCTV evidence of issues arising around the village hall, including the car park, and is passing on any information provided to it.

Parish council chairman Douglas Kedge said: "We are enormously grateful to PC Sue Bradshaw and her colleagues for all of their work in tackling this situation."

Sonning Common Parish Council
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T: 0118 972 3616

E: clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk (Philip Collings)
deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk (Ros Varnes)
W: www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk

TOM FORT THE THINGS WE DO

A few years back, we – myself, my dear wife, our two girls – were on our way to that jewel of the Dorset coast, Lyme Regis, for a few days fun and games in a smartish hotel. As we neared our destination, my wife was stimulating girlish excitement by reading out the attractions of the place, and mentioned kayaking.

Knowing the stream that goes through Lyme to be about three feet wide and six inches deep, I expressed scepticism. There was a lengthy pause, followed by an imprecation. It turned out that she had booked us into a hotel with the same name in North Yorkshire. It was a bad moment.

There was another this summer. We were in Corsica for a week's blissful beach lounging, and I was in charge of the hire car and the car keys. Actually, not keys, but one of those key pad things that old fogeys with failing faculties like me tend to moan about.

Anyway we left the car near the beach and I had the keys – let's call them keys – in the pocket of my swimming trunks. Not a good place; at least not when you then go swimming. At the end of the afternoon I was unable, unsurprisingly, to find the damn thing. A search was started, which was extended after a time to the bed of the sea. Amazingly the elder daughter found them, or it, on the sand with three feet of warm Mediterranean sea above it.

What, I wondered as I trudged in a state of considerable foreboding back to the car, would be the chances of it working after a couple of hours immersion in salt water? Pretty small was my guess. Wrong again, as it turned out. I stood by the car, took a very deep breath, pressed the button and – beep beep it went. Amazing, eh? ●



COOKS CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING (serves 12)

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 125g plain flour | 1 tspn bicarbonate of soda |
| 1 tsp baking powder | 1 tspn vanilla |
| 1 tbsp plain flour | 300 ml boiling water |
| 150g pitted dates, finely chopped | 5 tbsp soft dark brown sugar |
| 7 tbsp butter | 2 tbsp double cream |
| 150g granulated sugar | |
| 1 egg, beaten | |

Heat oven to 180/Gas 4. Grease a loaf tin. Sift 125g plain flour & baking powder into a bowl. Coat dates in the 1 tbsp of flour. In a separate bowl beat 4 tbsp butter and sugar together until light & fluffy, add egg with a little flour and then add all remaining flour. Add dates, bicarbonate of soda & vanilla to boiling water, mix well and add to flour mix. Beat well and tip into prepared tin. Bake for 40 minutes. Turn the grill on. Heat remaining butter, brown sugar and cream in small pan. Simmer for 3 mins until thickened. Pour over top of pudding and place under grill for 1 minute. Cool slightly before serving. ●



BAKED APPLES WITH BROWN SUGAR (serves 8)

- 4 large apples, washed and pat dried
- 115g dark brown soft sugar
- Half teaspoon cinnamon
- 250 ml Apple juice
- 1 tsp vanilla

Remove cores from apples and place in shallow dish. Sprinkle inside and out with sugar and cinnamon. Mix apple juice with vanilla and pour into bottom of the dish. Bake until tender (45-50 minutes), baste occasionally. Serve with cream, ice cream or custard. ●



BLUE SKY COUNTRY

(MONGOLIA, JULY 2016)

I was prepared to be amazed by the miles of rolling grassland. I was prepared to be stunned by endless blue sky. I was prepared to be in awe of a traditional way of life followed by friendly hard-working herder families living in gers. What I was not expecting was the acres and acres of wild flowers, stretching in places as far as the eye could see. There were familiar varieties: cranesbill (in three different colours), rosebay willowherb, scabious and vetch, some of which I've pulled up from my own garden. But there were also many unexpected or unfamiliar varieties: chives, larkspur, betony, dianthus and edelweiss. I had to buy a book at the airport to look some of them up!

Walking/trekking for pleasure is not a common occupation in Mongolia. If a herder wants to get somewhere he will either drive, or ride a horse, tractor, motorbike or quad bike. So there are no footpaths as such and we were simply following 'roads' – rough dirt tracks going as straight as possible between two points. If the track was not going in the right direction, our guide just led us off it. I remember one particular day as being the day of wet feet: we crossed one bog and four rivers. (After the bog, the rivers were welcome, to clean my feet and boots!)



There are very few signposts in Mongolia, and if the guide wasn't sure of the way (which happened quite often), she would have to find someone to ask. So we stopped passing motorcyclists or riders, or called in at a ger.

We were invited into four gers: I had a go at milking a cow, watched milk being churned, handed out smiley stickers to a family with eight children/grandchildren, and tried the local alcoholic drink 'airag' (yuck!) Everyone was very friendly and welcoming, but few spoke English, so our guide was essential.



We stayed in a ger camp for one night (like a holiday camp but with gers to stay in, rather than chalets), which was excellent, with clean facilities, but the rest of the time we camped. We were rough camping. We had to collect & boil water, (although we also had some bottled water with us), the toilet had to be dug each evening & the hole filled in when we left. But I was very impressed – all you could see when we left the site where we camped was flattened grass and flowers...

Our cook and van driver were hard-working and helpful, but spoke little English. Food was plentiful – especially mutton!



Every day except one was hot (about 30 °C) and dry, and the odd one was hot and wet. We walked between 10 and 15 miles a day, taking up to 7 hours. We didn't stop very often, unless there was shade to sit in, but the track tended to avoid the trees so there wasn't much shade around. And then there were the flies, lots of them – and mosquitoes. There's a character in the Charlie Brown cartoons called Pigpen, who always has a crowd of flies round his head: I felt like him!

Of course I did all this to raise money for the Institute of Cancer Research, based at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London, which is working hard to find the causes of, and cure for, cancer. I set myself the target of £2,500, and I'm about half way – so donate now, while you're thinking about it. (www.justgiving.com/RosemaryDunstan60). ●



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THEATRE GROUP CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

By JO STOVES

Back in the mid-1980's Jane Arch was talking with friends when a Theatre Club in another part of the country was mentioned. Jane started thinking that a similar group in Sonning Common might prove popular and that's how it all started. Purely by word of mouth, and with Jane organising tickets and transport, a group of 44 (each paying £6.50) visited the Redgrave Theatre in Farnham in February 1986 to see a performance of Michael Frayn's Benefactors.

In the 30 years since, the club has snowballed. With Jane the driving force and without advertising the club now numbers some 265 active members living in Sonning Common, Henley and the surrounding villages, and has a waiting list. They have visited more than 80 theatres including most of the London ones.

I met Jane recently in her organised office surrounded by files of members' names, newsletters, receipts and theatre flyers. From here this meticulous wizard of administration runs the club singlehandedly. "It just happens" she says modestly. "I think it fulfils a real need. Lots of our members are widow or widowers and it gives them

the opportunity to make friends and have fun."

She has arranged some 500 trips (basically one a month). She chooses the plays, making sure the programme is well balanced with something to appeal to everyone from Shakespeare and Chekov to Ayckbourn and Alan Bennet by way of Rogers and Hammerstein and the odd opera. She books the transport, arranging pickups in both Sonning Common and Henley when appropriate. Booking the tickets directly with the theatre, only rarely having to pay a booking fee and she usually managing to get a group discount. A ballot day is set in the case of over subscription, ensuring those disappointed are given priority next time, issues a regular newsletter, collects subscriptions, pays the bills and has attended pretty much every performance she has arranged. Jane admits it takes a lot of time but says she is "not good at relaxing".

As if this wasn't enough to keep her occupied Jane also arranges an annual weekend trip. The first was to Chichester in 1992. This proved very successful and the club has visited several other festivals since including

Edinburgh, Stratford, Dublin and the Passion Plays at Oberammergau.

Over the years, things have changed little, but journey times have increased and the club attends more matinee performances.

On only one occasion have club members got lost in London and missed the coach home. However, initiative triumphed and they were back home in Sonning Common before the coach! ●



"Neighbourhood Alert" steals a march on latest scams SCAMS!

A very up-to-date type of crime which has followed us into the modern age along with all of the improvements in our communication systems - the telephone, the Internet, email and texting. Because of their efficiency and ruthlessness, scams pose a major threat to our security and peace of mind.

A new helpful resource is the "Neighbourhood Alert" scheme, whose website provides email alerts tailored to your local area. The alerts are very up-to-date, timely and issued frequently by local police and tip-offs.

To sign up for free email alerts, go to <https://neighbourhoodalert.co.uk> and follow the simple registration process. On the home page, click on JOIN at the upper left. Answering the few simple questions on the online form takes about two minutes.

Citizens Advice can also help you if you have had recent experience of a scam or think you might have been conned recently. Do seek advice early, dropping in to your nearest Citizens Advice (for Oxfordshire South and the Vale, visit www.caox.org.uk for addresses and opening hours) or call Advice line on 03444 111444. ●

VOLUNTEER FOR OXFORDSHIRE'S WATER-BLITZ

Volunteers needed for one day only! Schools, local groups and individuals are invited to take part in the county wide water blitz. Check the water quality of your local stream, pond, ditch or river and help build a water quality picture for Oxfordshire. For your free sampling pack register today by emailing hilary@wildoxfordshire.org. uk and join in on 3rd October. Earth Watch have volunteered to handle the data and map all results on their global water-hub with the resulting data available to everyone involved. ●

DANGER AWARE ...

WHAT IS A MONEY MULE?

A money mule is someone who is recruited by those needing to launder money obtained illegally. Criminals advertise fake jobs in newspapers and on the internet in a number of ways, usually offering opportunities to make money quickly, in order to lure potential money mule recruits. These include:

Social media posts

Copying genuine company's websites to create impression of legitimacy

Sending mass emails offering employment

Targeting individuals that have posted their CVs on employment websites

Students are particularly susceptible and for someone in full-time education, the opportunity for making money quickly can understandably be an attractive one. The mule will accept money into their bank account and be given instructions on transferring the money into another account. The mule is generally paid a small percentage of the funds as they pass through their account.

Money Laundering is a criminal offence which can lead to prosecution and a custodial sentence. Furthermore, it can lead to the mule being unable to obtain credit in the UK and prevented from holding a bank account. Never give bank details to someone unless trusted, and check that companies and emails are valid. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

If it seems too good to be true – then it probably isn't! ●

UNDER 17 CAR CLUB

I am an instructor and venue co-ordinator with the Under 17 Car Club and am a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) green badge, albeit on 2 wheels.

If you aren't already aware of our club, our volunteer instructors take 11 - 17 year old members from mastering basic car control all the way through to advanced driving under the Roadcraft system of car control. By the time our members take to the roads they can have hundreds of hours of mixed driving experience under their belt, having driven everything from their family cars to articulated lorries, off road vehicles, sports cars and everything in between. We are celebrating our 40th year of operations by expanding the venues we use, and hold regular open days.

Some of our members go on to join their local advanced driving groups once they pass their car tests, and we like to encourage them to think about that at an early stage.

Some more general information is available here <http://under17-carclub.co.uk/#u17cc> or please feel free to email or call me if you would like to know more or discuss this further.

derek.austin@under17-carclub.co.uk
07931 557646



BARBADOS

COLOURS AND CACOPHONY

Some 20 years ago Henley operated "Showboat" which is all about slavery and colour prejudice on the Mississippi and not wishing to use "blackened up" whites the director imported a West Indian gospel choir from Reading. They were delightful people, "made" the show. They were mainly Barbadian or "Bajan" and persuaded us to visit their homeland. I had always preferred more active holidays but somehow the atmosphere there was so laid back one could spend days on the beach without the ennui which usually overtakes me

Now being older and stiffer this was one place to which we really wanted to return –so we did, to a massive apartment in an "old colonial" style hotel where we were cosseted for two weeks.

This being the most easterly of the islands one side is exposed directly to the Atlantic and a little rough, but westward is the milk warm Caribbean inviting you in. Its position means that it normally misses the hurricanes prevalent in the area although we did catch the tail end of one that whipped up horizontal rain and removed (and replaced) the beach under our window overnight.

Another advantage is that it is not in the direct chain of islands between the US and South America and is less likely to be a jumping off point for the drug traffic which is blighting parts of the Caribbean.

Unlike most of the other islands this one rose slowly from the sea and not by violent volcanic activity. This results in less mountainous scenery but enables the laying down of limestone and the formation of an impressive set of deep caverns around which one is taken in a sort of jointed tram.

The British of course exploited the island for the cultivation of sugar cane, and it is still grown, but most of it disappears into Mount Gay rum. Little rum shops abound but usually next to a church with an extravagant name. The fertility of the soil allows the creation of some marvellous gardens. The colours are so flagrant they make a mockery of my English attempts especially against the brilliant green background and add the hummingbirds for good measure. One Mr Hunte has the most amazing we saw, cultivated in the sides of a declivity under a circle of towering palms.

Somehow the Bajans, despite being extremely helpful seem to have a penchant for getting things slightly wrong. Thus when we arrived, despite the fact that our hotel had sent a car to fetch us from the airport, they had also booked us in for a week later and had to shuffle the rooms. Then when we booked an evening cruise, our coach somehow arrived at the wrong beach, but one forgives them. My wife spent much time in her wheelchair and we were assured that all entrances were compatible: this proved untrue but if the path would not accommodate it there was always someone to lift her over.

The local entertainment included steel bands, limbo dancing and fire eating, all very noisy and colourful. I despite my age and decrepitude was still dragged in. Fire tastes terrible.

One odd incident sticks in my mind. The handle came apart from the toilet and we reported it. Minutes later a tall, beautiful lady in an immaculate uniform with knife edge creases appeared and announced that she was the plumber. Very efficient she was too.

As seems to be true everywhere, places revisited are more commercial than before. Food was available in many of the worldwide cuisines (there was a local fish fry party every Friday). More international tourists were visiting and one pleasing factor, many ex-pat Bajans returning with their families. But I loved it before and I loved it again. ●

Peter Dayton



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25 SUCCESSFUL YEARS

Matthew Davis and David Tate individually brought different skills sets to their very successful partnership. The company name says it all, a combination of both their surnames – with both still involved in the day to day running of the company.

Estate Agency in 1991 was the same as it is today, a personal and intense process, but the way it which it works has taken on some major changes since. It is the ability to adapt and react, but also predict these changes, that has allowed the company to go from strength to strength over the years.

Matthew Davis says 'I remember the early days, when we knew the detail of each sale and let. As we have grown, I have taken care of the 'back room' function, and David inspires our ever growing customer facing staff base. We've grown our services, selling houses; over 2000 homes are let and

managed based in over 65 countries as well as financial services and conveyancing.'

David Tate agrees 'Things are very different now with technology. Most things are more immediate with mobile phones, email, internet, and property websites, but we still find that our clients need and appreciate our expertise in all property matters.'

The company involve themselves and their staff in their local community, sponsorships for local sporting venues, clubs, schools, charities and causes close to not only their hearts, but to the areas they cover.

From the first office in Goring-on-Thames, the two have steadily and organically grown the company through the years and now are able to offer a truly networked local estate agent with 13 high street offices throughout Berkshire and Oxfordshire. 80 likeminded staff continue their

ethos of being a local, knowledgeable team offering a professional service to home owners in the area whilst continuing to evolve with the times. ●



Matthew Davis & David Tate at Goring/Midland House in 2016



FUN AND GAMES AT STORY TIME IN THE LIBRARY

As has become an annual habit, on every Saturday in August there is a special storytime with crafts, and sale of home-made cakes (the money raised from this pays for the craft materials).

As the theme of the Summer Reading Challenge this year was the 'Big Friendly Read' (to celebrate the centenary of the birth of Roald Dahl), all the storytimes were loosely based on Roald Dahl stories: we had stories about giants and made giant ears to wear; we had stories about crocodiles and made crocodile models; we had stories

about dreams and made dream jars and dream catchers; we had stories about insects and made bug head-bands and butterflies.

I'd like to mention one of our volunteers in particular: Lyn Smurthwaite, who came up with most of the craft ideas and made the prototypes, and also thank all the volunteers who did all the preparatory cutting out for me. And of course thanks to all the cake making volunteers! ●

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friendsofsonningcommonlibrary@gmail.com ●

Church news

OUR THREE ANGLICAN CHURCHES GET A NEW RECTOR:-

IT'S FAREWELL TO SUSAN ...

Sadly, it's time to say goodbye to our Associate Priest, Susan Cooper, and wish her all the best in her future role as Priest in Charge of the Parish of Purleigh in Essex, where she hopes to spend more time with her family. She will be licensed and installed on Tuesday 4 October in All Saints church.

Church warden Karen Broadbent recalls "It only seems a short while ago that she was appointed back on a dark cold rainy night in November 2013" Interviewed by a Skype panel, in her warm sunny home in Rotorua, New Zealand.

"It didn't take us long", says Karen, "for us all to realise we had appointed a very able, practical person. Susan immersed

herself in the work of the Benefice, became very much part of the Parish and church and village life".

With Graham Foulis-Brown's retirement last September Susan's loyalty and true devotion to duty became very evident. Supported by our lay readers Morris and Stewart, she enabled the pattern of services to continue seamlessly, showing calm support and quiet presence and carrying out the hatch, match and dispatch elements of a priest's work with efficiency and sensitivity. Susan gave us so much, far more than was expected of her; friendship, advice, care, fun and time. She has quietly built good relations with the community, and visited schools, care homes and people in need.

So from all of us in Sonning Common and our neighbouring villages thank you, Susan for your time with us. We wish you all the very best for your future post and hope you will enjoy your new life in Essex. ●



... AND WELCOME TO JAMES

Dear friends,

I've been asked to write a short piece about myself so that when I take up my role as new Rector at the end of September, you'll have at least a bit of a notion of who I am!

The first thing you may notice about me is that I have an accent that's very difficult to place. I was born in Canada and lived in various countries as a child, before settling in England (my father is originally from Kent) at the age of seventeen. I read History at university and also did a lot of singing as a choral scholar in my college choir. Just after university I married Gillian; early in our marriage we spent three years living and working in Ghana, where she was born and brought up. Our daughter, Judith, was born in 2003, whilst I was a teacher at Bradfield College, just west of Reading.

It was at Bradfield that I started to act on the niggling feeling that I should explore the possibility of ordination. To cut a long story short, we eventually moved to Ripon College Cuddesdon, near Oxford, for my

theological training and I was ordained deacon in 2012 and priest in 2013. My curacy was at Holy Trinity, Headington Quarry, famous for being C.S. Lewis' parish church.

But of course there's more to me than a list of dates! I enjoy cooking elaborate and complicated meals (but the cleaning up less so). Music (mainly classical and jazz, but I'm open to any good music) is deeply important to me. (One of my favourite quotes is by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche: "Without music, life would be a mistake") I like to read modern fiction, history and poetry and I enjoy watching sport and going for long walks.

Maybe the most relevant thing about me, though, in terms of my new role as Rector, is that I am passionate about commending the richness and integrity of the Christian way to our world, and also about providing a warm welcome to any and all who want to explore it with us. I'm also convinced that the Church has an important role to play in serving local communities.

I hope this will give you some idea of who I am. Gillian, Judith and I look forward to getting to know you over the weeks, months and years to come and I'm very excited about serving the parishes of Rotherfield Peppard, Kidmore End and Sonning Common as Rector.

God bless, James



DIARY DATES

OCTOBER

Sunday 2 - 10:00 - 16:00

Felt makers get together. Bring lunch and a project to work on. Village Hall

Wednesday 5 - 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

Monday 10 - 14:30

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Monday 10 - 20:00

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Tuesday 11 - 14:00 - 15:00

New Parents' Open Day
Sonning Common Primary School

Wednesday 19 - 10.30-11.30

Mess Around messy play party
Village Hall

Thursday 20 - 11:30

FISH - Pub lunch

Thursday 20 - 19:30

Sonning Common Women's Institute - "Understanding your energy costs & Smart Meters", a talk by Neil Richardson. Visitors welcome. Village Hall

Monday 24 - 14:30 - 16:00

SCHC workshop "First Aid for older people", "Do not resuscitate", "Message in a bottle"

Thursday 27 - 09:00

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

NOVEMBER

Wednesday 2 - 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

Thursday 3 - 14:00 - 15:00

New Parents' Open Day
Sonning Common Primary School

Sunday 6 - 10:00 - 16:00

Felt makers get together. Bring lunch and a project to work on. Village Hall

Monday 7 - 14:30

Royal British Legion Women's Section - Group meeting.
Harpden visiting Batten House

Thursday 10 - 19:45

Chiltern Players - "Seasons Greetings" by Alan Ayckbourn
Peppard Memorial Hall

Friday 11 & Saturday 12 - 19:45

Chiltern Players - "Seasons Greetings" by Alan Ayckbourn
Peppard Memorial Hall

Monday 14 - 14:30

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Monday 14 - 20:00

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Wednesday 16 - 14:30 - 16:00

SCHC workshop "Funerals: What are my choices?, Where to I start?"

Thursday 17 - 11:30

FISH - Pub lunch

Thursday 17 - 19:30

Sonning Common Women's Institute - "What is it?" An antique objects quiz presented by Richard Anderson. Visitors welcome. Village Hall

Thursday 24 - 09:00

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

Saturday 26 & Sunday 27 - 10:00 - 16:00

Felt makers Exhibition - "Seasons". Free entry - refreshments available
Village Hall

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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

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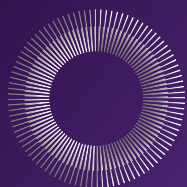
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