

# sonningcommon

magazine

**Triathlon boys**

**'Dirty weekends' in the woods  
for the 'Tough Mudders'**

**Photo de Vie**

**A local photographer is drawn to capture  
the impact made by changes in light**

**Alice's story**

**'We are no longer humans'**

**NDP amenity green space**

**finds favour and agreement on sites  
removed from the next stage**

**Disability access in the village**

**Four wheels, two legs and a  
whole new outlook**

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*pink*



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The editorial group from left to right: Jo Stoves, Joan Grummant, Christine Atkinson and Diana Pearman.

# From the editorial group

“

'Spring is in the air!' Well not actually as I write this but hopefully by the time you read this editorial, it might be. New for this issue are the words on the front cover which refer to the articles inside, known as 'puffs', so I am reliably informed. Please let us know if you like the idea.

This edition, probably in keeping with the hoped for improvement in the weather, focuses more on outdoor activities from the Triathlon 'boys', to the primary schools' cross country and On Your Bike. However getting out and about is less easy for some of us, as Hannah in her wheelchair shows that 'navigating the village' can be a challenge.

Other articles provide news of the many activities in Sonning Common and highlight the lives of two of our residents, Douglas Kedge and Anne Webster. We were very pleased that Anouska received some stories for her writer's competition. Please keep sending them in!

Please take the time to read the feedback from the NDP presentations as the new developments will have an impact on village life. Finally, if you contact any of the businesses advertised in the magazine, please do tell them where you saw their details.

”

**DIANA PEARMAN** Editor

Email: [editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org)

*Diana*

PS...

Sonning Common Magazine is on sale at the village library in Grove Road for £1.50 a copy. Annual subscriptions are available for £15. Contact Geoffrey Adams. Email: [chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org) Phone: 0118 972 2134

Magazine contributions may be posted to:  
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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.

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**Sonning Common in the Pink** by Anne Webster

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## Bravery Award

Kyle Limbrick received a "Bravery" Award on Thursday 21 February at Oxford Town Hall. Kyle was nominated for his outstanding bravery throughout his treatment and continuing illness. Of his illness he says, "I'm glad it has happened to me and not my brothers" showing his bravery and love for others. Kyle said "I was nervous as I walked down the red carpet to receive my glass trophy".

His Mum told us "Kyle is in Year 6 and suffers from a combination of problems. He has coeliac disease, asthma and crones disease. He has only one working kidney and has had major operations to repair it. Kyle also has Keratoconjunctivitis which is a disease in his eyes that eats away at his cornea which has left him partially sighted and very light sensitive. This is why he normally wears glasses and a hat. Thankfully, loads of steroids everyday enable him to attend Sonning Common Primary school". ■

## Sonning Common Primary School news

**Sonning Common Striders** - meet every Thursday morning at 8am for ½ hour of fun and running games. Enthusiastic teachers and parents join in - activities vary according to age.

**Indoor athletics competition** - Oxfordshire hold this competition each year – SCPS years 3 and 4 team came joint first, 5/6 team won the district south Oxfordshire event.

After a VERY tense and exciting Oxfordshire County Sports Final on Tuesday 19 March, between 10 schools from all over the county, Sonning Common Primary School came first for the second year running, and are again County Champions! Kidmore End School came second which was really good news for our area as this shows what fantastic children attend our local schools.

**[Sonningcommonprimary.co.uk](http://Sonningcommonprimary.co.uk)** – check out the fantastic new web site



## Special thanks to the following people and organisations for their ongoing support of The Village Gardeners

**James Watkins of Oak Grove Gardeners, Paul Mullin of Sonning Common Garages, Ru Butler of Peppard Building Supplies, Len at the Hare and Hounds, Sonning Common Parish Council, Sonning Common WI, Davis Tate, The Pharmacy, Carl Woods butchers and Wood Lane Dental practice.**

Our biggest project this spring will be the removal of the old telephone box from Blackmore Lane, its refurbishment and planting and re-siting in the village.

On the 1st Sunday and 3rd Thursday of every month we meet at 10 am at One Stop. Spare an hour, no regular commitment and I can promise you a warm welcome. ■

**CHRISSIE PHILLIPS-TILBURY**





# Club SC

The club has a wide variety of activities to suit the members organised by Becky Jenkins (Youth Leader). Tape Art creations which will be entered in the OAYP (Oxford Association of Young People) competition; Taekwondo, where members thoroughly enjoyed a taster session from a World Champion Coach; a Football Match against Cholsey YC and Club SC team won the game 8-2!

Future ideas for activities include bowling, table tennis, cheerleading, street dance and photography. These activities may not happen due to lack of funds.

Club SC is looking for volunteers to help on Wednesday and/or Thursday evenings. PLEASE HELP. ■



## Zak wins a free bowling trip

A Graphic Designer, Ryan Howe, from OAYP came to help Zak Avery turn his winning poster in to a 'print ready' version so that it can be distributed to all OAYP affiliated clubs.

Zak won the Anti Bullying poster competition and beat fierce competition from 7 other clubs. Zak said 'I felt proud of what I'd done, I've not won anything before.... my art lesson is probably the best subject I do... when I leave school I'd like to do Graphic Design or something to do with art' ■

## Chiltern Edge School news

**SPORT** Lily Stevens Year 9, chosen to represent the Wales girls football team.

Charlie Estcourt, Year 10, already plays for the Under 16 team.

Year 7 girls and boys team took part in a very competitive South Oxfordshire indoor athletics event - 2nd out of seven local secondary schools.

Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award – 18 students completed their Bronze.

Primary cross country events - Chiltern Edge Sport organise these which

continue to grow in popularity every year. 500 children took part in the County event at the school.

**CHELSEA'S CHOICE** – a play performed by Alter Ego Theatre Company and aimed at 12-14 year olds to explain how children can be exploited by adults.

**ALUMNI** – a new area on the website to enable former students to keep in touch with their old school. Or view [www.networks.futurefirst.org.uk/students/chilternedge](http://www.networks.futurefirst.org.uk/students/chilternedge) ■

## Chiltern Edge Squash Club looking for new members

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## What does CECA stand for?

by Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury

They are the initials of the Chiltern Edge Community Association, a small charitable trust formed in 1979. Its principal source of income comes from the Chiltern Edge Squash Club and Johnson Matthey plc.

The committee meet twice a year to allocate surplus income to local organisations and individuals, in accordance with its constitution "for the benefit of the inhabitants of Sonning Common, Kidmore End, Rotherfield Peppard and its neighbourhood, in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare for recreation and leisure time activities with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants".

If you feel that you or your group fill one of the above criteria write to Miss J.Titchener at 19, Sedgefield Close, Sonning Common. ■

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*Sarah Jenner*



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# Neighbourhood Development Plan

## Decision time for consideration of sites

The NDP team held two presentation sessions, on 7 and 9 February attended by 170 residents, to share the information collected from the SON site surveys (123 of them) completed by the villagers. The team collated the information onto a grid of planning criteria. Traffic Light colours were used to capture the information and enable viewers to see the differences between the sites.

Feedback forms were completed at the end of presentations by many who attended. It was assumed that those who did not complete the forms were in general agreement with the proposals. The feedback from villagers, including that from the working parties who met on the Saturday, was collated onto a grid and the comments have been summarised.

*Feedback comments are in italics*

**SON 1** Proposals two-fold: First, the upper half (probably 10 acres) should be considered for use as amenity green space. Secondly, if SON 2 was developed, the lower SE quadrant of SON 1 could be considered for a small area of housing.

- *Amenity green space (AGS), applauded by majority of comments*
- *Ensure AGS is protected land*
- *Consider SON sites 1, 2 & 3 together*

**SON 2** Proposal: SON 2 should be considered as a possible site for housing, acknowledging the challenges to find suitable access routes

- *Respect surrounding AONB – plant more trees*
- *SON sites 1, 2 & 3 to be considered as one*
- *Primary access via SON 3*

**SON 3** Proposal: SON 3 should be included as a possible site for development.

- *Majority support for sports hall / community centre development*
- *Concerns re traffic Reades Lane*
- *Close proximity to village*

**SON 4** Proposal: This site should not be developed for any purpose

- *Land not available for sale*
- *High quality AONB*
- *Natural separation between SC & Kidmore End*
- *Outside the village envelope*

**SON 5** Proposal: The proposal is not to include it in the next design stage of NDP.

- *Back land development, outside the village envelope*

- *Sink holes a complication*
- *Poor access to site*
- *Dangerous precedent to develop towards Kidmore End*

**SON 6** Whole site proposal: Only part should be developed in order to retain the envelope

Part site proposal: A small, mixed, housing ribbon development linking 56-80 Kennylands Road

- *Natural infill between existing housing*
- *Retain trees along road; increase screening*
- *Ensure housing similar in appearance*

**SON 7** Proposal: This site should be included in the next design phase of our NDP and offers scope for housing, a small-company office development, or sports/recreation use

- *Protection of adjoining Hagpits Wood and other trees*
- *Consider proximity to Essex Way (over 55s housing)*



**SON 8** Proposal: Site should be considered for more extensive sports hall and recreation use

- Housing should not be considered
- Gymnasium / recreation usage to be maintained

**SON 9** Proposal: This site has potential for a number of options and consideration should be given to sports/recreation use, a small-company office development, or housing.

- Respect the sensitivities of the site and surrounds, include screening
- Concerns re distance / walking / traffic / parking in village centre
- No bus service on Peppard Road
- Any housing to be mixed and not too dense

**SON 10** Proposal: To set this site aside and not to include it for any purpose.

- Gateway to high quality AONB
- Visible rural character and beauty
- "Complete travesty to develop here"

**SON 11** Proposal: Only part of the site should be considered for development. Potential to develop the strip of land running along the Peppard Road

- Limited housing mirroring developments on opposite side of Peppard Road
- Needs to be screened to protect AONB
- "Consider as a last resort"!

**SON 12** Proposal: SON 12 should not be considered as a site for development of any kind

- Within high quality AONB
- Visible rural character and beauty

**SON 13** Proposal: Withdrawn during the process so is not available for development

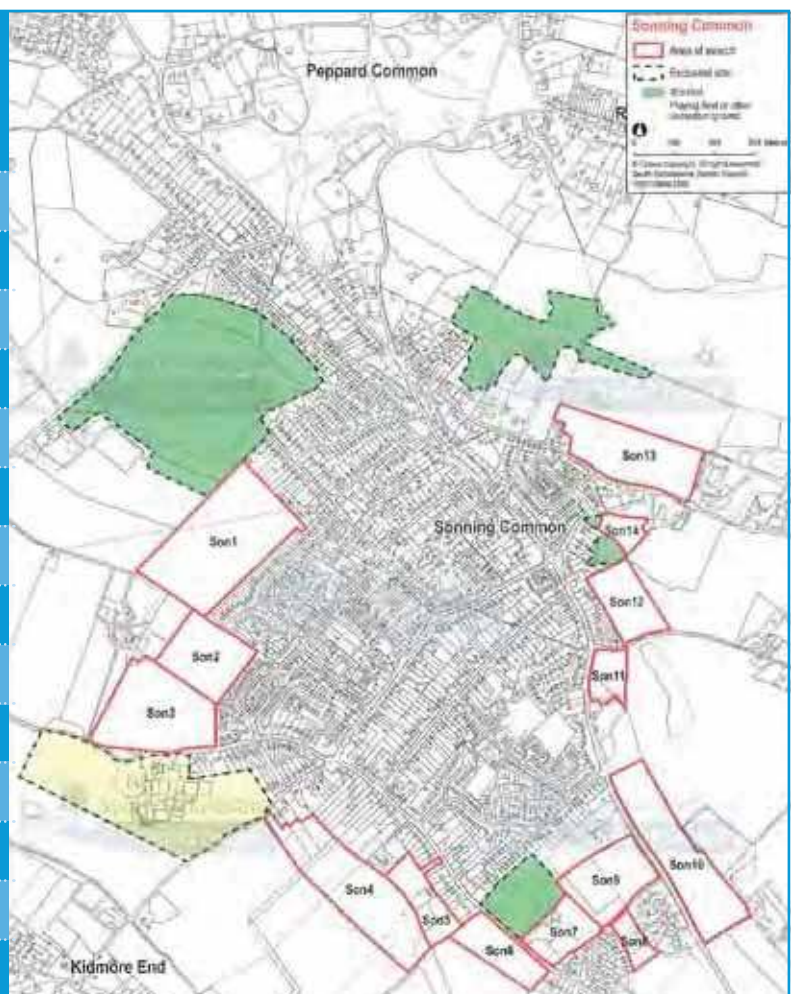
- Land not available for sale
- If became available may have potential

**SON 14** Proposal: This site should not be developed for any purpose

- Land not available for sale
- Too small plus access and gradient issues

With this strong endorsement from our residents we are now ready to move onto the Design Phase when we will be detailing our proposals for the sites that we are taking forward, as well as considering the wider needs of the village for amenities, services and facilities. During this phase we will be consulting the appropriate landowners, local residents and neighbouring Parish Councils in the hope that we can arrive at mutually acceptable proposals for inclusion and publication in our final NDP recommendations later this year. ■

SON sites	Agree with proposals	Disagree with proposals	Not sure	Proposal for NEXT STAGE design process
SON 1	29	3	3	Include
SON 2	30	1	2	Include
SON 3	29		2	Include
SON 4	24	2		Set aside
SON 5	22	2	2	Set aside
SON 6	31	3	1	Part only
SON 7	29	2	2	Include
SON 8	28		2	Include
SON 9	33	1		Include
SON 10	24	1	1	Set aside
SON 11	23	6	3	Part only
SON 12	23	1	2	Set aside
SON 13	18		6	Set aside
SON 14	25			Set aside





# JUST FOR KIDS

## Hi Everyone,

Did you have a good half term? I did! There was so much to do in so little time.

Do you think the skate park will be fun? More importantly, do any of you know how to skate? I don't but I think it'll be fun all the same!

I have found the first winner(s) for my competition, Write, write, write!, but if you have time, I hope you will enter in the future. Send your news and stories to me at [junior\\_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:junior_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org) ■

Anouska XXX



## I found a winner(s)!

Thank you for all the entries to my competition, Write, write, write! I really enjoyed reading them. Three stories were so good, although all very different, that I am going to publish them all.

The first is by Alice Horncastle who is 15 and attends Chiltern Edge School. Her story is very dark and scary, but I hope you enjoy it!

## We are no longer humans by Alice Horncastle

So much has changed since you were last here. You wouldn't recognise it now. Gone, is the buzzing atmosphere. Laughter no longer fills the streets.

In its place a desolate and mournful memory has been forced upon us, but there are some who still won't accept the nightmare we live in.

The vicar was found with a bullet to his head; after all he did for us, I guess it was just too much for him to bear. He left a note, nothing else.

The school has been abandoned, but the children refuse to go anywhere else, staying at home is not an option – their parents sit at tables for hours on end. Paralysed. Waiting. Always waiting, desperate to wake up from this cursed reality. The children crouch under the deserted desks, tracing their fingers against the bullet marks in the wood. I do not go there, screaming still haunts the rooms and I, like everyone else, do not wish to be reminded of the horror.

Food is running out, our bodies ache and starve. Water burns our throats, the contamination seeps underground. Sickness spreads.

We are no longer humans. We have suffered too much.

You wouldn't recognise it now. ■



## TOP TIPS

### for creative writing

#### from Amanda Jennings

Amanda lives near here with her three daughters and lots of pets. She has written a book for adults called 'Sworn Secrets'. Tell your mum about it, as my mum read it with her book group and really enjoyed it.

Amanda's tips for budding writers are, *"Turn off the television and internet every now and then, and write anything you like – for example, poetry, short stories, romance or science fiction. Or read. Writers must read as much as they can. And remember, with hard work and a bit of talent, anything can be achieved."*



## Yummy Easter

What are you doing over Easter? Please send me photos of anything you do. The Kidmore End Pre-School Easter egg hunt is always really good and you get yummy Easter eggs too! It's on Sunday 24 March, 3-5pm, Gallowstree Common Pavilion. Tickets are £3.50. ■



## SKATE PARK

What do you think about the proposed skate park? Did any of you go to the planning meeting? I think I might like it there, although I'll probably fall over a lot! I won't mind falling over as long as you guys don't laugh at me. Will you please email me about it, as your views are very important! ■



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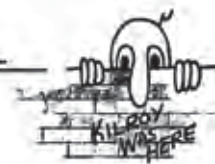
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Come on Sunday 5 May 10 - 2pm

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Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April at 7:30 pm  
PEPPARD MEMORIAL HALL  
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[www.cehs.info](http://www.cehs.info)

## Sonning Common Magazine Annual General Meeting

10 May 2013 at 7.30 pm

Village Hall

Guest speaker: Mel White

who will talk about writing her book on the 100 year history of Sonning Common Primary School.  
Light refreshments from 7. 15pm.

## Sonning Common Village XI Fixtures 2013

DATE OPPONENTS VENUE

### APRIL

28 Ipsden

A

### MAY

5 Nettlebed

A

12 Henley

A

19 Wargrave

A

26 Whitchurch

A

### JUNE

8 Broadwindsor (Tour)

A

9 The Fox, Corscombe (Tour)

A

23 Crowmarsh

A

30 Swyncombe

A

### JULY

7 Peppard

A

21 Holton & Wheatley

A

### AUGUST

4 Harpsden

TBA

11 Kidmore End

A

18 Moultsford

A

### SEPTEMBER

1 Pangbourne

A

8 Highmoor

A

We are a friendly club who play traditional village cricket against other local teams. We are known for our easy going approach and a warm welcome is one of our strong points! If you are interested in a game please contact Keith Davies on 01189 722313.

If you have a free Sunday in the summer, why not follow the 'Common!'



## FANCY A GAME OF SCRABBLE?

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Tea and coffee will be served  
Fun and a lovely way to meet other local residents.

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Please contact Liza Upton on: 07766 356804



## NEW !!! Village Coffee Mornings

SONNING COMMON VILLAGE HALL  
Thursday 4 April, Wednesday 1  
May, Wednesday 5 June

10.30 - 12.00

This event is open to everyone in  
the village

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CELEBRATING

FORTY YEARS

# 40 year anniversary

Rotherfield United FC celebrates its 40th year at the old Bishopswood Camp Ground

By **CHRISTINE ATKINSON**



*In a previous magazine issue, in June/July last year, we told the story of Kennylands School. Another camp existed in the village - Bishopswood Camp School - built as part of the government's evacuee programme.*

Bishopswood was used by the Alexandra School in Surrey from 1940 until the early 1950's. Many children and staff spent their wartime years there and the school website has an area for ex pupils where memories are posted from the time spent in Sonning Common.

***"I still have vivid recollections of the night when we were woken up by the noise of what sounded like hundreds of aircrafts flying overhead and I, like many other boys in the dormitory, rushed outside to stare up into the night sky which seemed to be full of four-engined bombers heading south. Realising they were our aircraft we started cheering and the noise brought the House Master. He promptly ordered us all back to bed."***

**VICTOR R, Kelaher – ex pupil**

Most of the buildings were demolished after

the war and the playing fields were taken over by the council. One building remained in use as a pavilion until its demolition 10 years ago.

The ground was bought in 2007 from the council by a private individual, and subsequently purchased by Rotherfield United FC (RUFC) who use it as their base for all the youth and senior teams.

Rotherfield United was founded in 1973 as Rotherfield Boys and until 2011 played its games on the old school playing field opposite Manor Farm, purchasing it in 1982.

Over those 40 years RUFC has provided the opportunity for thousands of youngsters to play football in a friendly and encouraging environment. Rotherfield today organises football for 24 teams from the Under 5's right through to two adult teams and a dedicated girls' team. The club is also looking to add a ladies team for the start of the 2013/14 season.

The club recently won an FA Community award and on 2 March the FA arranged for ex-Arsenal and England player, Martin Keown, to visit the Bishopswood Ground and meet some of the players and train with some of the teams.

As part of the celebration of the club's fortieth anniversary it is arranging a number of events over the next 12 months.

One of the highlights will be the club's world record attempt at playing a 5-a-side match with the most number of players. The club has recently received approval from the Guinness World Records and the attempt will be made over 24 hours on 18 and 19 May. Each player will play for around 25 minutes and then be substituted off. The club is hoping to involve over 500 players. All funds raised from the event will go towards the construction of a new clubhouse at Bishopswood Sports Ground.

A comprehensive history of the club is to be created and old newspaper clippings, photographs or stories of ex-players would be very welcome. This information will then be used on a club history section on its website. ■

**CONTACT** [info@rotherfieldfc.com](mailto:info@rotherfieldfc.com)



# Four wheels two legs, and a whole new outlook

Pictures by ROS VARNES AND LYDIA SKELHORN



It was quite an eye-opener to assess disability access in the village with wheelchair-using resident Hannah Rice.

I saw pavements and doorways in a whole new light and I realised how excluded Hannah - and residents like her - must feel from some common areas and local businesses.

Undulating pavements, pot-holes, kerbs and shops with narrow aisles and no disabled ramps can make getting around very difficult for wheelchair and mobility scooter users, even parents with pushchairs.

Many of the convenient short-cut alleyways around the village, which many of us use regularly and take for granted, are impassable by wheelchair and mobility scooter.

The Sonning Common Community Plan survey among residents found that 40 per cent of respondents were over 65 and retired, so access around the village for the elderly and the disabled is an important issue.

Hannah, aged 21, has lived in Woodlands Road all her life, aside from three years spent at Falmouth University where she studied Digital Media, graduating last year.

She attended Sonning Common Primary School, and, later, Wallingford School, because Chiltern Edge School was unable to accommodate her at the time. Her condition - cerebral palsy - has meant that Hannah has been using a wheelchair since the age of 10.

We took lots of photographs on our two-hour tour of the village. Some will be given to Sonning Common Parish

Council in the hope that general access around the village can be improved; and some will be passed on to local businesses to highlight specific problems with their premises.

We happened to encounter Douglas Kedge, the chairman of the parish council, on our travels, who promised: "What can be done, should be done." He has asked for a list of issues to be presented to councillors for discussion. So, we'll wait and see what happens. ■

**ROS VARNES**





Hannah Rice and Ros Varnes



A barrier blocking Hannah's way onto Green Lane



## From my perspective...

I have lived in Sonning Common all my life and I really like the friendly atmosphere and sense of community. I do my best to get around, but some areas are very difficult for me to access.

I feel that there are inexpensive solutions to poor access that would make a huge difference to me and those with wheeled vehicles.

There are several public places in the village that I would love to go to but I can't get in!

I want to access these places because they are local to me, but I feel excluded and frustrated that I cannot benefit from the facilities that Sonning Common has to offer. So, I have to travel further afield. All that most places need, is a free-

standing disabled ramp and a correctly positioned bell.

Another big difficulty I face is getting on and off the bus outside the One-Stop. There is not enough room on the pavement for me to manoeuvre my wheelchair around once the ramp is down so I end up scraping the wall. If the bus moves forward to accommodate me, it is then blocking the access for cars. No one has tackled this problem so it continues to be an issue for me.

To be as independent as possible, some simple solutions need to be put in place. Relying on care support staff to open doors promotes dependence, rather than independence and I want to do things for myself. ■

**HANNAH RICE**

### ABOVE from L-R:

Hannah tries to negotiate Woodlands Road on bin day.

The narrow footpath beside the bus stop on Wood Lane makes manoeuvring a wheelchair difficult.

Narrow pathways make access difficult for Hannah.

Stuck between two doors at Sonning Common Health Centre.

An example of good practice - the bell at the library.

A tree makes the alleyway between Wood Lane and Grove Road impassable for wheelchair users.

No bell - access difficulties at the village hall.

Hannah suggests a dropped kerb and disabled access through the parking lay-by would improve access to the Health Centre.




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## AN INTERVIEW WITH...

*Douglas Kedge*

## Manners maketh man

By ROS VARNES

*Douglas Kedge is a well-known face around the village due to his work on the parish council and his participation in other community groups and organisations, both past and present.*

But behind the public persona is an interesting private man with a particular fascination for English social history, particularly of the Georgian era.

The world of late 18th century minor English gentry, so vividly described in the novels of Jane Austen, helped to stimulate his interest in the customs and manners of the period.

He says: "The Georgian era was an age of elegance where there was, 'a right way of doing things'. We saw subtle changes in people's behaviour and in social interaction. People became more sophisticated. In certain circles, for instance, glasses became more than simply drinking vessels but were appreciated as objects of beauty in themselves."

Douglas is a former Head of English at Highdown School in Emmer Green. He is married to Yvonne, a former Head of Science and Technology at Henley College. They have two sons - Stephen, a university lecturer and Philip, a senior police officer.

The family's early days in Sonning Common were eventful, as Douglas recalls. They moved from Sunbury-upon-Thames to a house in the village in 1970 when Douglas took up a position as house master at Highdown,

eventually retiring from the school in 1994.

Says Douglas: "One night in 1973 we returned from a holiday in Devon, with our two young sons, to find that the back of our house had dropped by two to three inches. It turned out that we were living over a swallow-hole and our house was sinking.

"After urgent discussions, the builders put us up in a hotel in Henley for three months while repairs were made to our house. In the end, we decided we did not want to return to the house. We were fortunate that the builders were prepared to buy it from us and sell us our present home in Lea Road instead, where we have lived ever since."

When not at home, Douglas and Yvonne enjoy annual trips in their touring caravan to France - a country they have visited every year since they were married. And, in the last five years, they have started cruising, already visiting the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, the Balearics and the Norwegian fjords.

Douglas still keeps in touch with his educational roots by chairing independent panels in Berkshire, which hear appeals from parents over school places. He was a governor of Chiltern Edge School from 2004 to 2008.

He is also a member of the Village Gardeners, who have done so much to brighten up our village, and has actively campaigned to protect the local library service.

But it is Sonning Common Parish Council, of which he became chairman in January 2012, that takes up most of his time.

Douglas is a great believer in getting the parish council and the local community working together for the benefit of the village

and in improving communication between the two.

"It is not about the parish council doing things for the village. It is about the parish council working with the community to get things done. The snow plan, French twinning, the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the Village Gardeners are all evidence of that," says Douglas.

"Last October councillors held a brainstorming session to come up with ideas on what should be done next in the village.

"We discussed providing pedestrian crossing points in the village centre, disabled parking spaces on Wood Lane, a car park behind Occasions, building a sports hall, financial support for the library and a public tree-planting initiative, among many other things.

"All of our ideas will be put up for discussion at our annual parish meeting in the village hall on 13 May at 7pm. We are hoping for a good turn-out from the community, so that, together, we can draw up a list of priorities for the future." ■



# Sonning Common

## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS...

### New Bus Shelter on Kennylands Road

After 11 months of cajoling we have finally been told that a new bus shelter will be going up at the bus stop on the junction of Essex Way and Kennylands Road in April. £4,500 of the cost is being paid by OCC Highways with any shortfall being made up by the Parish Council who will take on ownership and maintenance responsibility on completion. The narrowness of the pavement means that it has to have an open side onto the road but we hope it will still provide useful shelter for those waiting for the bus to Reading. We should say that Ian Connick, the OCC Highways Marketing and Infrastructure Officer, has been immensely helpful in getting this organised for us. ■

### Hedges and footways

As the growing season approaches we would like to remind all householders that it is your responsibility to ensure that your hedges don't grow out beyond your boundary and over the footpath. When such overgrowth is reported to us we write to the householder giving them notice to cut it back and if they don't we can get it done and charge them for it. Doing this is not a good use of our limited time and funds so can we ask you all to keep your hedges trimmed back. ■

### POTHOLES

We report all new potholes to OCC Highways as soon as we hear about them. You can help by reporting them as well by phone to 0845 3101 111 or by using the online form at <http://publicapps.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/portal/publicapps/applications/reportproblem> ■

### The pledge made by the Parish Council to its allotment plot holders is coming to fruition.

Work started on the new deer and rabbit proof fencing in the last week of February and should be complete by mid-March at a cost of £9,500. When weather permitted this winter, Brian Willis and his son, Martin, worked tirelessly to clear the perimeter ready for the erection of fencing.

The final tidying up of the outside areas will be finished and then, as soon as the ground has dried out a bit, 60 tonnes of road planings will be being put down to improve the car parking area. Work is underway to eliminate the huge and dangerous puddle outside the entrance.

Other promised improvements, in line with the National Allotments Association recommendations are; car park improvements; better access from car park to plots to facilitate deliveries of manure; and an agreement for paths between plots to be maintained by contractors will be undertaken. ■

BY JOHN STOVES



### Skate Park design day

The Skate Park Design Day on Monday 25 February was very successful. Prior to the open session, the Skate Park Working Party supported by the Deputy Parish Clerk, met representatives from the three shortlisted construction firms to discuss the tenders in more detail. From 4 - 7pm over sixty young people and parents viewed the three possible designs. A lot of interest was shown: one group of young people stayed talking to the firms' representatives for more than an hour. All the construction firms commented that the day had been particularly valuable and constructive in terms of feedback.

Visitors were invited to fill in a questionnaire seeking their views on each of the three possible designs for the skate park. These comments will all be carefully considered before a final decision is made by the Parish Council, on the recommendation of the Skate Park Working Party.

We are very fortunate and grateful to them, that four local experts in the field of skate boarding and BMX have generously offered their invaluable support and advice to the Working Party and to the whole project. ■

CAROLE LEWIS

Chairman: Skate Park Working Party





# Boys *will be boys!* *(and some girls too!)*

**When we were kids we had lots of freedom to go off on our own and climb trees, splash about in the mud and make obstacle races over tree trunks. Children today are not so lucky.**

A group of my friends' husbands, who spend time running together and having a couple of drinks now and again, wanted to try and go back to being 'boys' and also to gain fitness in a free and easy way using the wonderful countryside that we are so lucky to have on our doorstep. They started running in the early morning – rain, shine or snow, and also tried open water swimming in a lake south of Reading.

Sebastian Brown was one of them and had already been running through the woods most days with his dogs. He decided to take this a step further and investigated organised muddy runs and roped in some hardy villagers to go too. They needed five for a team so Sebastian, Simon Lusted, Philip Warren and Richard Lawson persuaded a very brave lady - Pam Saker - to join the team. Amazingly there are many of these events ranging

from 5 mile courses to whole weekends of madness. From using an equestrian cross country course to electric wires, streams to cross, walls to climb and a lot of mud!

The first event they entered was called the WOLF run – initials from Woods, Obstacles, Lakes and Fields - held in Warwickshire. The lake part was a big pond that was signposted shallow or deep. The team decided to try the deep and Phil volunteered to go first. He jumped in and went straight down! Much deeper than they had thought – but they all carried on and made it to the end.

They had so much fun that they decided to enter some more. So far they have taken part in 'THE GRIM', SPARTAN and TOUGH MUDDERS (view on internet – all quite barny)! It does seem that the guys enjoy it hugely and have been joined by others too – Calum Sarson and Simon Taphouse.

**The first challenge for 2013 is to be the 'DIRTY WEEKEND' which is held at Burleigh - 200 obstacles over 20 miles! COME AND JOIN THE FUN! ■**

**[sebastianbrown@me.com](mailto:sebastianbrown@me.com)**







## A poor little lamb lost in the computer system

**I showed the receptionist my appointment letter at 09:30. She stared at her screen handed back my letter and said "go and sit on the red chairs!"**

One and a half hours later I queried the delay. "It's not surprising. You're not on our screen so you must have arrived late" she replied. I explained the circumstances but she remarked, "You sat on the wrong chair. You should have sat on a blue one". Somewhat taken aback, my defensive reaction was "I know I'm old but I'm not yet gaga, or colour blind, and if I'm told to sit on a red chair that's where I sit! Furthermore, I've been here many times and I've always been told to sit on red chairs". My explanatory comments had not been well received and she was agitated. "I suppose we'll have to try and fit you in" she groaned. "Go and sit in that small waiting room and don't forget to put antiseptic on your hands!"

I did not get angry at this off-hand treatment but while sitting in the waiting room – another half an hour – my mind ran riot. What if I had been still sitting on a red chair in the evening when the cleaner arrived? "Why are you still here GRANDAD?" In a quavering voice (because by this time I'm weak from lack of nourishment) I'd reply, "I'm still waiting to be seen!" "Well, you can't stay there while we work", says the cleaner. "Go and sit on one of those blue chairs".

What a shame that on this occasion a poor old fella in his dotage was not offered the milk of human kindness and/or some sort of apology

After my appointment I said to the aforementioned nurse "did you solve the mystery of what happened with my appointment?" "Yes" she said. "The receptionist did not enter your name on the computer". I rest my case. ■

**BILL BOWMAN**  
14 Kennylands Road



## Drains, drains, drains and it still rains!

**I live opposite the Pet Barn in Blounts Court Road. Today it is raining, not heavy but persistent. I walked down to the newsagent past the Vauxhall garage and I noticed that every road drain is blocked solid, so the rainwater just runs over and accumulates at Shiplake Bottom forming more of a lake than a puddle. The same has happened in Sedgewell Road. If you stand at the bus stop opposite you would get drenched by passing cars.**

Even when there is dry weather the drains remain full up with mud and debris. I have lived here for over 15 years and I have never seen any cleaning work done to these drains. The water board (or whoever is responsible for drain/sewers) will say 'it's the volume of water the drains can't take' and that's nonsense, because even in the lightest of rainfalls the same problem occurs.

Like most councils there is a need to cut back on spending but even before the crisis there was no work carried out on our drains. ■

**MICK THOMPSON**

## Message from the ex-chairman of the parish Council

**Dear Mrs Varnes**

**Your interview with Carol Viney prompts me to make a plea to the residents of Sonning Common.**

Having been a Parish Councillor for 45 years I found it imperative that any Resolutions of the Parish, concerning development within the village boundary, were conveyed to the relevant committee at the County Council. Therefore, whoever stands for the County Council seat in May should qualify in their address to support the Parish Councils of Sonning Common and Peppard in their policy resolutions. ■

**DON NAISH**



## Bishopswood Recreation Ground

It is a pleasure to see so many young people at Bishopswood Recreation Ground at the weekends. Congratulations to all involved with Rotherfield United Football Club for their efforts.

However the construction of an earth bank in the south east corner of Bishopswood recreation ground and erection of a fence in the north west corner has restricted access for informal recreation and suggests that the owners may be proposing to fence the whole of the boundary. This would restrict informal access to the field. If this is the case the action would conflict with the undertaking given by the Chairman of Rotherfield United Football Club early in 2012 at a public meeting convened by the club. Then the chairman stated that the club did not intend to restrict access to the recreation ground, except on exceptional occasions when there was concern for the safety of visitors. If the boundaries were fenced the land would no longer be available for informal recreation and this would mean a serious loss of amenity for the community as a whole and, in my view, contravene the conditions attached to the purchase of the property.

I know I am not alone in having these concerns so I hope that the Football Club can reassure residents of Sonning Common that they will continue to have free and unfettered access to the whole of the sports ground for the foreseeable future. It is a valued amenity that is enjoyed by many people of all ages throughout the year. ■

**GEOFFREY ADAMS**

## Dogs stolen

Mortimer, Reading

Thames Valley Police is warning dog owners to be vigilant after dogs were stolen in the West Berkshire area.

Dog owners are reminded to take the following precautions to protect their dogs

- Ensure your dogs are micro-chipped
- Keep them secure, especially at night
- If you have kennels consider installing an alarm and security lighting
- If you are buying a dog, check its history carefully, otherwise you might be buying stolen property unwittingly.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**



## Snow plan greatly appreciated

Will you please, through the pages of the S.C. magazine, thank those public spirited people who spread the salt and sand on the pavements during the snowy spell and I'm sure I speak for many other people in the village, thank you all. ■

**ANN CHIVERS**  
Westleigh Drive

# Church news

St John's Church, Kidmore End

Church of Christ the King, Sonning Common

### SERVICES

Christ the King 28 April 10am preceding our Annual Parochial Meeting.

**Third Thursday Drop-In** at Christ the King 2pm

An opportunity for friends, old or new, to meet for a cup of tea or coffee, and a chat Enquiries: Mrs Jenny MacGregor

**Tel: 0118 9472855.**

**Sunday School** fourth Sunday of every month 10.50am

Young children are invited to our friendly and fun Sunday School, in Kidmore End School hall – to join in stories, songs, arts and crafts. Prepare to get messy! Enquiries; Becky Tilney at beekytiley@hotmail.co.uk

**Little Lambs** last Wednesday of each month 9.30 -10.30am

Church group, a short service, craft activity and refreshments – primarily for

children under five and their parents/ carers at St John's church

Enquiries: Felicity Cooper.

**Tel: 0118 9477862**

We hope and pray for a generous collection for Christian Aid, during May.

For more information about our churches, readers are invited to look at our website – [www.lambandflag.org](http://www.lambandflag.org) ■

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# Tom Fort

## GERIATRIC CYCLING

**To my way of thinking there is no form of exercise more suitable for those of – shall we say? – a certain age (rising 62) than cycling. I used to go running but running is terribly boring and anyway my legs won't take it any more. Then I swam, but swimming is even more boring than running, plus you smell of chlorine all day.**

So now I cycle, frequently and quite obsessively. But I am NOT a proper cyclist. I do not wear figure-hugging lycra, padded shorts or – God forbid! – “bib tights”. I do

not slurp high energy drinks from a bottle on my back or suck hydration tablets. I do not hurtle down the lanes looking like an oversize wasp – in fact I confess to being a little lax in the helmet-wearing department. I do not feel morally superior to motorists.

But I do love it. To me travelling on a bike is by far the best way to see and feel and smell and breathe in the countryside. Walking is good too, but the problem with walking is that it is so slow, and if you make a mess of your map-reading you are in trouble. On a bike you can always find another pub if the one you were aiming for is somewhere else or has gone bust.



All this explains why, on 28 April, I and my dear wife and our two daughters will be joining in the Sonning Common On Your Bike for all we are worth. It is a great village occasion, and a great way to set yourself up for lunch. Last year was a disaster for me – my back wheel seized up after three miles (bearings gone) and I had to be brought back by the rescue vehicle which was highly humiliating. This year I shall be flying! ■

# On Your Bike

## launched by Triathlete



**Ironman competitor, channel swimmer and all-round endurance adventurer, Fay Dellimore, inspired pupils at Sonning Common Primary School to get on their bikes and join this year's feel-good family cycle ride.**

Dressed in her signature pink cycle gear, Fay launched on your bike during assembly. She told the children they could achieve anything they wanted to, as long as they had enough determination and practised a lot. When she was ten years old, Fay decided she would swim the English Channel. She didn't achieve her dream until she was in her late forties, but she did it eventually!

“My message to the children was to aim ‘high’ and not be put off by the idea that something is ‘too hard’,” said Fay. “On Your Bike is a great opportunity to get out there and cycle a distance that many other children would say, ‘NO WAY’ to!”

On Your Bike organiser, Penny Snowden, said, “It's a ride, not a race, so people of all ages and abilities can take part. It's about encouraging more families to enjoy healthy activities together.

This year's On Your Bike is on Sunday 28 April at Sonning Common Primary School. If you register before 18 April, you could win a bike, kindly donated by AW Cycles. ■





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# LOCAL PHOTOGRAPHER *Anne Webster*

By JO STOVES

**Caversham Arts Trail 2013 will run over two weekends in May and among the local artists opening their studios will be photographic artist Anne Mackenzie-Webster. In her well-lit garden studio in Widmore Lane. Anne, who has lived in Sonning Common for nearly 20 years, will display a variety of her beautiful, colourful cards, prints and canvasses and is hoping for a fine day and plenty of visitors.**

Anne's interest in photography began when she was a child. During her professional life in PR, marketing and sales her skills proved "useful" but it was not until 1998 that she embarked on a series of photography and film courses including City and Guilds

and a 3 year Diploma at Reading School of Arts and Design. Initially she turned her pictures into handmade cards for sale and about 4 years ago AMW Photo de Vie was born; a serious enterprise and full time job. Among other outlets, Occasions, Brambles and the Herb Farm stock some of her cards depicting views of Henley and the surrounding area. Prints and canvasses for sale are displayed in some local cafes and restaurants.

But not all Anne's work depicts local landscapes. Anne says she "doesn't specialise" but is "particularly drawn to water, sunsets and sunrises: changes in light". Her portfolio also comprises pictures from Scotland and her travels abroad (particularly India) and some quirky eye

catching images. There are birds, butterflies and flowers, rowers on the Thames with rainbow light effects on the water and fun pictures with unusual shapes and vibrant colours. "Deciding which images to sell is the challenge", Anne says.

The Widmore Lane studio is the furthest from the centre of the Caversham Trail and Anne would dearly love to see village artists joining together to create a future Sonning Common Arts Trail. She would be pleased to hear from any local artists who feel similarly.

**Anne's studio and others on the trail will be open from 11.00am to 5.00pm on the 11 and 12 May and again on the 17, 18 and 19 May. ■**

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# April 2013

<b>MONDAY 1</b>	FISH - Garden Centre Visit	1.30pm
<b>TUES - FRI 2 - 5</b>	The Holiday Club @ Chiltern Edge	
<b>MON - FR 8 - 12</b>	The Holiday Club @ Chiltern Edge	
<b>THURSDAY 4</b>	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
<b>FRIDAY 5</b>	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
<b>TUESDAY 9</b>	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "National Trust Plant Introductions" a talk by Christopher Chadwell - Peppard Memorial Hall	7.30pm
<b>THURS - SAT 11 - 13</b>	Chiltern Players present "Curtain Up on Murder". Tickets £7 on door - Peppard Memorial Hall	8pm
<b>FRIDAY 12</b>	Notts group - Village Hall	10.00am - 1pm
<b>THURSDAY 18</b>	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
<b>THURSDAY 18</b>	Sonning Common Women's Institute - "East Enders - social changes from the days of Jack the Ripper" a talk by Bob Odell. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
<b>FRIDAY 19</b>	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
<b>MONDAY 22</b>	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
<b>THURSDAY 25</b>	Sonning Common Society - "Henley Trade & River" a talk by Simon Townley Sonning Common Library	7.30pm
<b>FRIDAY 26</b>	Notts group - Village Hall	10.00am - 1pm
<b>SATURDAY 27</b>	South Chiltern Choral Society - Haydn's "The Creation" - Reading Concert Hall	7.30pm
<b>SUNDAY 28</b>	On Your Bike - Sonning Common Primary School	10.30am
<b>SUNDAY 28</b>	Peppard Bowls Club - Open Afternoon. All welcome - Peppard Memorial Hall	2pm

# May 2013

<b>THURSDAY 4</b>	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
<b>FRIDAY 3</b>	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
<b>FRIDAY 3</b>	Fancy a game of scrabble? Aimed at the more "mature" - Sonning Common Library	10.00am - 12noon
<b>MONDAY 6</b>	FISH - Garden Centre Visit	1.30pm
<b>FRIDAY 10</b>	Notts group - Village Hall	10.00am - 1pm
<b>FRIDAY 10</b>	Sonning Common Magazine AGM. Guest speaker Mel White talking about her book on the 100 year history of Sonning Common Primary School - Village Hall	7.30pm
<b>THURSDAY 16</b>	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
<b>THURSDAY 16</b>	Sonning Common Women's Institute - Resolutions followed by a Beetle Drive. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
<b>FRIDAY 17</b>	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am
<b>FRIDAY 17</b>	Fish & Chips supper supporting Spinal Injuries Association	
<b>MONDAY 20</b>	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
<b>FRIDAY 24</b>	Notts group - Village Hall	10.00am - 1pm
<b>THURSDAY 31</b>	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45 - 11.30am

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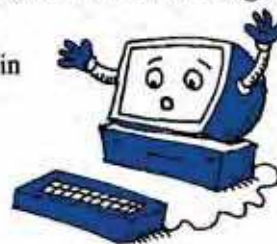


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