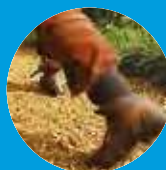


# SC

# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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### THE SECRET OF GOOD HEALTH

A REGULAR WALK  
P15



### THE CHANGED FACE OF OUR VILLAGE

THEN AND NOW  
P16-19



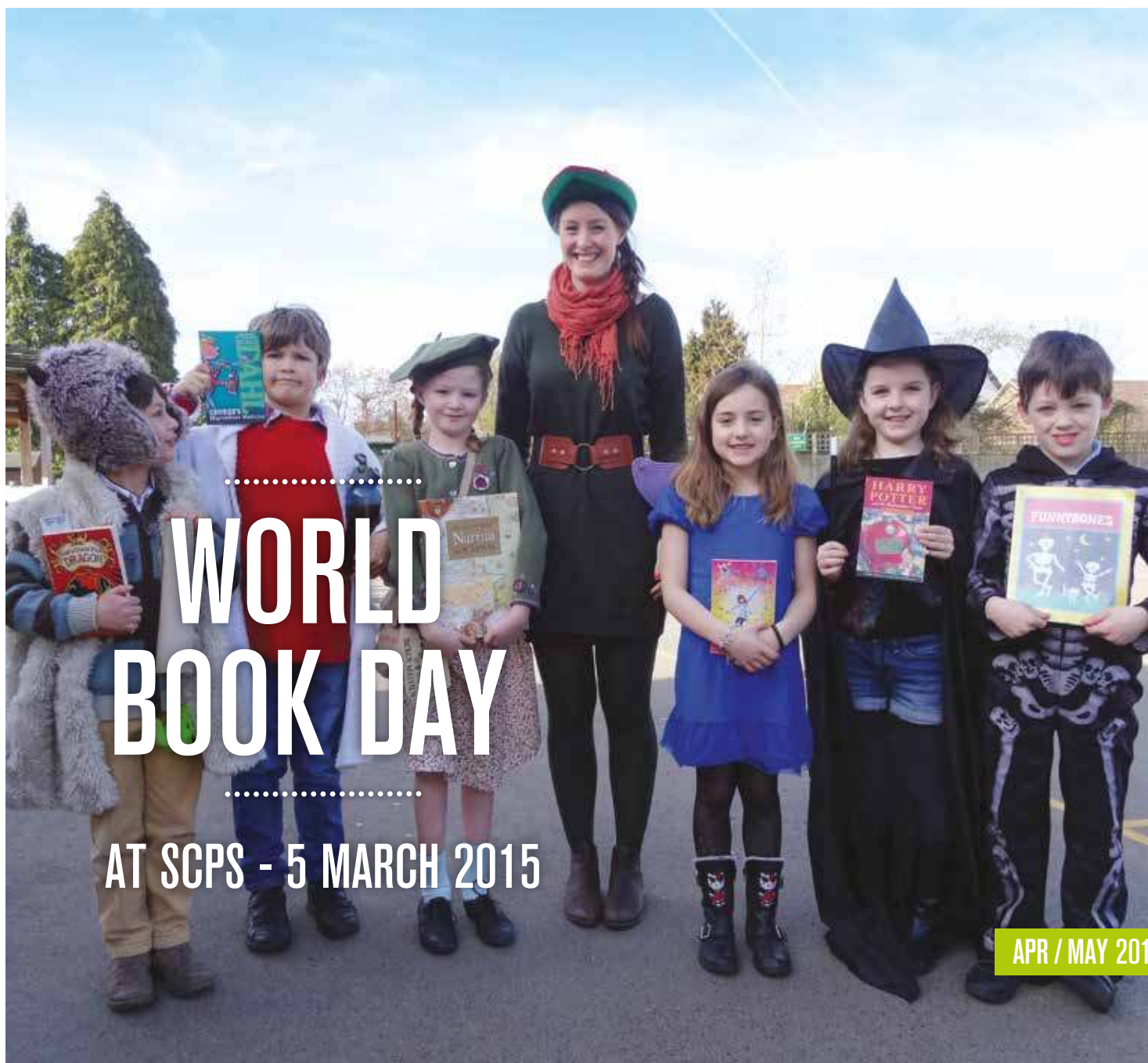
### COOKS' CORNER

OUR NEW  
REGULAR FEATURE  
P25

# WORLD BOOK DAY

AT SCPS - 5 MARCH 2015

APR / MAY 2015



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# FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

It never ceases to surprise and fascinate me how often the production of each issue of the magazine develops its own links. It happens partly through the editorial team picking up items of current interest and then 'out of the blue' I am emailed other articles about the same topic. It becomes a jigsaw which meshes together and I hope provides a sense of coherence for the reader.

In this edition the library update was identified by the editorial team, which was written in the same week as World Book Day. A piece of research by Dr Harris and published in the Health Centre news, stressing the importance of walking, was matched with an email sent in for Sonning Common Health walks Spring programme. On the theme of health, the guest speaker for the magazine AGM is Dr Burnett. Concerns over parking in the village centre, highlighted again at the NDP meetings, was also the content of a PCSO report to the Parish Council and a copy was provided for this magazine. As Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury receives her award for services to the community the In Focus feature for April May demonstrates how the village centre looked before and after the work of the village gardeners.

It is an interesting process being the editor of this magazine, especially because of the many contributions made by residents. Please keep emailing ...



**Diana Pearman** Editor

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



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

**SC** SONNING COMMON  
MAGAZINE

## MEET THE TEAM ...



**Christine Atkinson**



**Hannah Rice**



**Jo Stoves**



**Joan Grummant**



**Ros Varnes**

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## LIONS GIVE TO HELEN AND DOUGLAS HOUSE HOSPICES

A donation of £250 towards the cost of music therapy sessions



## NDP PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

The period of consultation on the pre-submission draft of SCND Plan commenced with exhibitions on 6 and 7 February and 5 March. Measured by the number of residents attending, it was a great success - 376 registering over the 3 sessions. This was also underlined by the large number of visitors commenting on the high quality of the presentation of the Plan; the amount of work to complete it; the depth and breadth of public consultation and resident's involvement in the Plan.

Copies of the Plan (and feedback forms) are available for public scrutiny and comment in the Parish Clerk's Office, the Library and on the NDP website [www.sc-ndp.co.uk](http://www.sc-ndp.co.uk)

It is vital that as many feedback forms are completed as possible so that these can be taken into consideration and amendments made, before the Plan is scrutinised by SODC. ●

# GREEKS FOR THE DAY

The year was 490 BC. The setting was the Agora, or central market-place, in Athens. And the traders, craftsmen, citizens and slaves were Year Five children.

Amanda Ling, from History Off the Page, explained: "The workshops are all about bringing history to life for children through hands-on learning, storytelling and drama. Doing things in a practical way helps them to remember and cements their learning."

The children came to school in Greek dress and had great fun playing the part of Ancient Greeks in craft-making, religious worship, trading and feasting. The workshops were organized and the hall became the Athenian Agora. Tables were set up to allow children to have a go at clay lamp, wax tablet, mosaic and candle-making as well as fresco-painting and potion-mixing.

In the afternoon they experienced Greek theatre at a special feast to celebrate the victory of the Athenians over the Persians in the Battle of Marathon.

The children heard about the legend of Greek soldier Pheidippides, who ran from Athens to Sparta and back again to ask for help when the Persians threatened Athens. He then fought in the Battle of Marathon and returned to Athens to announce victory - a total journey of 352 miles - before dying of heart failure/exhaustion. His epic journey gave rise to the modern marathon run. ●



## ASIAN WEEK AT THE PRIMARY SCHOOL

The school recently celebrated Asian week where the children learnt about culture and traditions from various countries in the region. They tasted food, practised some Japanese writing and learnt some Asian dances.

SCPS also has plenty of after school activities and clubs including sport, chess, coding (great for problem solving, logical and lateral thinking, and for general computer literacy) and art.

The afterschool Art Club for KS2 students is thriving and the students talents are nurtured by Liz Steele one of the teaching assistants.

For one of their projects this term they have been making "Superheroes" to enter a local Reading competition and also entered pieces to the Henley Youth Festival. ●





# CO-OP SUPPORTS THE COMMUNITY



Lindsay Cramer, who has worked at the Co-op for 9 years, discussed her ideas for raising money for the community with the manager 'I felt that it was time that the shop did something to help the Youth Club and suggested a cake sale and raffle'. Many of the employees made cakes and raffle prizes were donated by the local shops; Pet shop, Brambles, Flemings, Connoisseur, Chemist and Intensions.

£270 was donated to Club SC for 13 children and 3 adults to visit a theme park and over £400 was raised. The rest will go to this year's On Your Bike together with the 200 bars of chocolate donated by the Co-op. ●

# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 14 May 2015, Village Hall



Dr Andrew Burnett, Senior Partner at Sonning Common Health Centre will talk about the history of the health centre, the services now available and how the centre is meeting the continuing demands made upon it.

**7.15 pm** Light refreshments

**7.45 pm** Talk by Dr Burnett followed by question and answer

**8.15 pm** Annual General Meeting

This will include election of the officers and committee and an opportunity for suggestions and volunteers to help take our very successful magazine into the next five years and beyond.

If you have any questions about the meeting please contact Geoff Adams, Chairman. ●

**Tel 0118 972 2134**

**e-mail. chairman@**

**sonningcommonmagazine.org**

## Chrissie's High Sheriff Award

Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury has been given an award for service to the community. The award ceremony, involving the High Sheriff, the Under Sheriff, the Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire and the Dean of Christ Church took place on Monday 2nd March at Christ Church College. Chrissie was nominated by a number of residents, including myself as Chairman of the Parish Council, for her sterling contribution to the life of the village - Village Gardeners, Christmas lunch for residents in the village hall, reading to younger children in the library and a number of other contributions over the years. In particular, the Village Gardeners, as you know, have not only radically improved the appearance of the village centre but have also lifted the tone of the village, and this is appreciated across the board. Vandalism and graffiti have virtually disappeared!

DOUGLAS KEDGE



## LOST!

A photo album has been found inside a bag of children's toys donated to the village Christian Charity shop at the end of 2014? The album is full of holiday pictures taken in Ireland in 2013. Words inside the cover are Memories of Phil, Denis and Ted's return to their native land July 2013. The people visited Holy Well by their old home in Dremore and had breakfast at the Lansdown hotel in Kenmare

Please collect from the shop in Wood Lane, as the volunteers think it belongs to a local family. ●





## OYB KITCHEN

Urgent help needed on Sunday 26 April.  
Hungry cyclists need bacon/sausage butties and other snacks.

Food preparation, serving, clearing tables and washing up between 8am and 2pm - please contact Tina Micallef on 07969 483987 or email: [tina\\_micallef@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tina_micallef@yahoo.co.uk)

## CHERRY BLOSSOM IN 2016?

On a beautiful Sunday morning in February there was a lot of activity outside the school when the Village Gardeners planted six new cherry trees, under the watchful eye of local garden designer, Gail Noble. The trees, three white and three pink, have been donated to the school to replace those which have sadly died in recent years. The Village Gardeners were joined by representatives of the school staff and Governing Body to ensure the trees were in place in good time for pupils to plant donated snowdrops around them during the week following.

Accompanied by staff from the Curriculum Support Department, pupils took time out from working on the Youth Award Scheme to brave the cold and plant the 1500 snowdrops. The school are extremely grateful to Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury and her enthusiastic team from the Village Gardeners for their generosity, and the support offered to the school. It was lovely to learn that some of the Village Gardeners consist of past pupils and staff from Chiltern Edge. ●



# ON YOUR BIKE 2015!

Help to make On Your Bike the biggest ever. It's a ride, not a race so any one can join in. It's a chance to get some fresh air and exercise and boost the wonderful community spirit we already enjoy here in Sonning Common.

**On Your Bike 2015**

**Sunday 26 April**

**10.30am at SC Primary**

**WIN a bike**

**(donated by AW Cycles)**

**in a free draw if registered before 9pm on 12 April**

Half of the money raised will provide new equipment at the primary school and the other half to the much needed children's orthopaedic unit at Royal Berkshire hospital.

Last summer Charlotte Ely, 12, broke her wrist. "All the nurses and doctors were brilliant and my arm is back-to-new now. But it's still not nice to have to go to hospital. It was a real shock. So a nice area especially for teenagers and kids would make it less scary." ●



# LOCAL MAN EXCELS IN WORLD OF SCIENCE

Congratulations to local man David Liptrot who has been named in a list of the top scientists in the world under the age of thirty. David is the only UK candidate named as one of Forbes Magazine's thirty (under thirty) top scientists for 2015. The list recognises some of the high achieving young scientists from around the world and is a great achievement. Educated at Peppard and Sonning Common Primary he went on to Reading School and his PhD in Chemistry at the University of Bath. An exceptional young scientist with an exciting future, who now works in the USA. ●





## THE POWER GROUP

The Power Group at Chiltern Edge focuses on anti-bullying throughout the school and has had such a big influence that instances of bullying are very rare indeed. They recently entered a fundraising competition from the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) and have won! The focus of the entry was the Power Group's Christmas Card which was designed by Josh Saker. In awarding the prize of a selection of books to the school the ABA said...

*"We were particularly impressed by the longevity of your school's anti-bullying and special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) work, how well this is integrated into school life, the involvement of students across the school from beginning to end and the SEND focus that chimed perfectly with last year's Anti-Bullying Week theme."*



## CHILTERN EDGE STUDENTS SUCCEED IN WORLD OF SPORT

All three started playing at the age of 4 for the local girls and boys club Rotherfield United FC.

Dan Bayliss (16) has been selected to play for the Year 11 Oxfordshire County team.

In a year of great news for girls in sport with a campaign by Sport England [www.thisgirlcan.co.uk](http://www.thisgirlcan.co.uk), current year 11 student Lily Stevens has signed her first contract and will be playing for the reserve team alongside studying for her GCSEs this summer. Lily is following in the footsteps of Charlie Estcourt who has transferred from Chelsea to play for Reading FC ladies senior team at just 16. Both girls also play for Wales and have played internationally for the team.

Best of luck to all three in their future careers! ●



## SONNING COMMON IS NOW ON TWITTER!

**Sonning Common already has an excellent community spirit, supported by this great magazine but was missing its own Twitter account, so I thought it was time to set one up!**

If you don't know what it is, Twitter is a free social networking tool that lets people stay connected by sending short messages up to 140 characters in length on any subject.

It's a great way to share thoughts, information on upcoming events and meetings, make people aware of local news as it happens as well as notify people in the village of services that may be available.

The account is called '@CommonSonning' and if you follow the account you'll be able to see all of the regular updates as well as contribute yourselves.

At time of writing the account has over 400 followers made up of people both inside and outside of the village. So far it's been put to good use reminding people of the local SCNDP meetings that

have been taking place as well as promoting local businesses and even speaking to Mike Read regarding a BBC radio show!

If you are on Twitter and live in the village, please take a moment to follow the @CommonSonning account and I look forward to chatting with you and seeing what you are all sharing on there soon! If you are close to your phone, laptop, tablet or PC now, get on Twitter and start following @CommonSonning to join in the conversation! ●

JAMES COX



## DID YOU KNOW?

Chiltern Edge has an extensive selection of facilities for hire, suitable for a wide variety of events. There is a fantastic mirrored Dance Studio with a sprung floor and a Drama Studio next door. The Main Hall with Stage (seats up to 250 persons), indoor and outdoor Sports Facilities and grounds, an Audio Visual Theatre (seats up to 132 persons) and a Small Conference Room (seats up to 70 persons).

For further information and to arrange a visit please contact the Premises Manager, Simon Guest: [sguest@chilternedge.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:sguest@chilternedge.oxon.sch.uk)



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## Fish Volunteer Centre Annual General Meeting



**Thursday 23 April At Sonning Common Village Hall**  
Do come and join us for a light lunch and an informal  
chat and also to register your interest if you would  
like to volunteer. Refreshments at 12 noon and then  
the formal meeting at 1.30 p.m.

SAVE THE DATE

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Village Hall, 2pm

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WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL 2015, 2.30-4PM  
MONDAY 18 MAY 2015, 2.30-4PM

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Medical  
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## Peppard Bowls Club Taster Days

18 AND 26 APRIL 2PM

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FORTHCOMING PRODUCTION

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Thursday 23rd, Friday 24th and  
Saturday 25th April 2015 at 8pm

at Peppard Memorial Hall, Gallowstree Rd,  
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Grumpy old man Stephen Febble unwillingly hosts a weekend  
with his dysfunctional family, their dog and a few close  
friends. What could possibly go wrong? Honestly?



## NOTICEBOARD

South Chiltern Choral Society  
Paul Burke - Conductor



Purcell

## Dido & Aeneas

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# PARKING, PARKING, PARKING...

This is a topic often mentioned in Sonning Common. How much is this really a problem? Should we really be talking about the consequences of inconsiderate parking? Views of Wood Lane often reveal parking on pavements, across entrances to houses and facilities as the prime objective seems to be to park as close as possible to the retail or service outlet.

The car park is only 32 spaces but often there are a number of vacant places while Wood Lane is packed with parked cars!

The village centre serves the practical needs of our residents and many neighbouring parishes. The traffic task group, led by local resident Craig Henderson, said in its report that it was clear from talking to residents that "there was a will to reclaim the village from car drivers and to make the village more pedestrian and cycle friendly."

This report is available on [www.sc-ndp.co.uk](http://www.sc-ndp.co.uk)

## So how do we kick start the process?

- Marked parking bays along Wood Lane to provide a slalom course to help larger vehicles such as buses navigate a smooth passage?
- More yellow lines?
- Encourage people to walk and cycle?

There are yellow lines painted on the road outside the Co-op which do not appear to deter drivers from parking there. Is it unlikely therefore, that more yellow lines would provide a solution?

Will the number of new residents from the additional housing make a difference to the amount of traffic in the village centre? Some of the sites chosen are close enough for residents to walk or cycle to the shops. How can we encourage

more people to walk or cycle?

Parking policies are in the pre-submission Neighbourhood Development Plan on pages 59 to 61 and specific reference is made to congestion in the village centre on pages 49 to 51.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a large number of cars are parked all day in the car park and on Wood Lane. The owners then catch the bus into Reading in order, presumably, to avoid the high parking charges in the town. One of the NDP policies makes reference to a 'park and ride' facility. This has caused some concern that it may lead to a huge scheme to alleviate the traffic congestion into Reading.

The working party are suggesting that a landowner might make a piece of land available alongside the bus route for an all-day parking site. There would be two positive spin offs from this proposal:

- A reduction in all day parking in Wood Lane
- Potentially increased usage of the bus service into Reading

The challenges of resolving both the traffic and parking problems are complex and likely to be expensive. Easy solutions do not exist but what happens in the centre has consequences for the entire village. Your comments please to [editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org) ●

## PCSO REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

By COLIN BOYES



Once again this month there has been a great deal of concern from the community focusing upon parking. The 2 main areas of concern are the junction of Wood Lane and Woodlands Road, and the junction of Grove Road and Lea Road.

With regards to the first area the neighbourhood team has been given explicit instruction to ticket - there are no more second chances. I believe this is an approach that will be supported heavily by the parish council and community alike.

During school drop-off and collection, the second junction experiences a similar bottle neck to the one along Wood Lane and Woodlands Road. I received a suggestion to make Wood Lane and Grove Road one -way which as radical as it sounded, makes sense to me. TVP Traffic Management has already explored this option and formulated a report, which was submitted to the Parish Council. ●

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MR A HARDING  
Kennylands Road, Sonning Common



# OUR LIBRARY SERVES OUR COMMUNITY WELL

By DIANA PEARMAN

**What is a community library? In one sense, in Sonning Common, it means that it has lots of volunteers working with a qualified Library Manager. In other senses it is developing into a place where lots of activities take place while maintaining its core function, which is and always has been, providing a remarkable collection of new books on a weekly basis.**

So how has this development been supported? The library staff are enthusiastic and work with the 30 regular volunteers who do one 2 hour session per fortnight. They are ably co-ordinated and timetabled by Jenny Jones and Helen Fort. Three of the volunteers were asked about why they became volunteers and their views about their new role.

Sue Litchfield told me: "I tried to volunteer way back when the library was under threat of closure because I wanted it to keep open. I attended the training offered by the County in August and felt I was prepared for the task. It will help me to use my brain more as it is stimulating and there is a need".

Theresa Jones felt "the library is a cradle to grave service, really important with its offer of free books. It is vital for Mums and Toddlers and then on through all the ages. It is so important to keep libraries going."

Marion Bayliss said "I have always had a passion about books and reading and would like to see the library open for longer hours". Other suggestions from the 3 included more use by book groups and societies, and maybe the inclusion of a café.

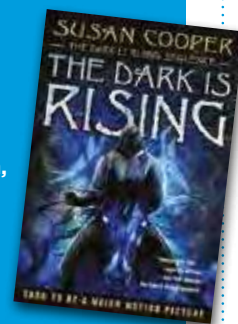
Currently there is a wide variety of activities going on: primary age children's book groups, researchers of family history, Saturday story times at 10am, and Rhyme times for under 5s, run in liaison with the Children's Centre, on 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month at 10am.

On Friday mornings there are Scrabble players, as well as a Knit and Natter group. The internet is available and help on how to use it is on offer. A book box is regularly delivered to Abbeycrest home so the residents have access to a variety of reading.

The library is a vibrant and well used facility but it would be unwise to become complacent. Some of the other community libraries in Oxfordshire are struggling - many are not as fortunate as Sonning Common in being able to recruit an army of volunteers! Helen Fort reminds us: "There are more cuts to the county's budget on the way and a new government will be in place in May. The library could be vulnerable in the future SO USE IT OR LOSE IT might be the message for us all". ●

## JUNIOR BOOK REVIEW

Written by the Chubby Chocolate Bunnies year 6 reading group (Tom Booth, Annabel Davis, Emma Dixon, Daisy Green and Eddie Handley)



### The Dark is Rising

By SUSAN COOPER

The story is about a boy called Will who is the last person to be born with the power of the 'Old Ones'. On his 11th birthday he finds out that he is the Sign-Seeker, and it is his task to collect a series of 'Signs of the Light' which will help to vanquish the power of the Dark.

Tom says: I liked the adventure part, and the magic, and some of it was really scary

Annabel says: It is based in this area of the Chilterns, which makes it very interesting

Emma says: I really liked it, and I've now read the rest of the books in the series

Daisy says: It's full of magic and mystery and it ends on a cliff hanger....

Eddie says: I felt many different emotions when reading it, and was in suspense for most of the book, and keen to read on

The Dark is Rising is the second book in a sequence of five by Susan Cooper. Although set in our world, the author makes us aware of the constant battle between good and evil down the ages as the 'Old Ones' move through Time.

All of the books in the series are available to borrow from the library



# WALKING REGULARLY

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**There is increasing evidence about the value of physical activity at all ages from childhood to older age.**

Being active can reduce the risk and the complications of around 20 different conditions (including heart disease, stroke, diabetes, breast and bowel cancer, back pain, depression and dementia). Yet despite knowing that physical activity is good for us most of us do not do enough. Guidelines from the Department of Health advise that adults and older adults do at least 2 hours per week of at least moderate intensity activity (enough to make us warm and a bit breathless e.g. brisk walking).

The PACE-lift trial was funded by the National Institute of Health Research (NIHR) (Department of Health), organised by St George's University of London and was carried out in three practices, including Sonning Common Health Centre. The 298 participants aged 60-75 years were encouraged

to increase their walking by giving them a pedometer (to measure steps) and an accelerometer (to check the intensity of physical activity). Over four appointments, our nurses explained the trial and equipment, and encouraged increased walking at a moderate intensity by building motivation and confidence and helping people to overcome barriers and cope with relapses. We had a great response! 30% of those invited took part and 92% stayed until the 12 month follow-up. We found that the intervention group increased their average daily step-count by around 1,000 steps per day at 3 months and 600 steps per day at 12 months, compared to the control group. This group also increased the time they spent walking at moderate intensity by over an hour per week at 3 months and by over 40 minutes per week at 12 months. The increases we saw at 12 months are important for long-term health benefits and should reduce the risk of diabetes and heart disease, as well

as reducing other health risks.

These findings are impressive. This is the first study in this age group to show objective changes in physical activity from an intervention, maintained at a year. We also had very positive feedback about the trial from participants and practice nurses. The results created a lot of interest at the primary care and public health conferences where we presented them and we have just had them accepted for publication in a prestigious journal (PLOS Medicine). We have also applied for more funding from NIHR to try and follow up participants from October 2014 and we will find out if we have been successful in March 2015.

**In the words of a PACE-lift trial participant "If you carry on walking, it becomes part of your life". ●**

**DR TESS HARRIS** GP at Sonning Common

Reader in Primary Health Care at St George's University of London

## HEALTH WALKS

**With Spring now here (we hope!) it's good to get out into the beautiful local countryside for a brisk walk to banish any lingering winter blues. I know there is still a lot of mud around, but I'm sure it will start to dry out soon, and the Health Walk timetable provides a programme of walks (10 in all, and all free!) to suit all levels of fitness and ability.**

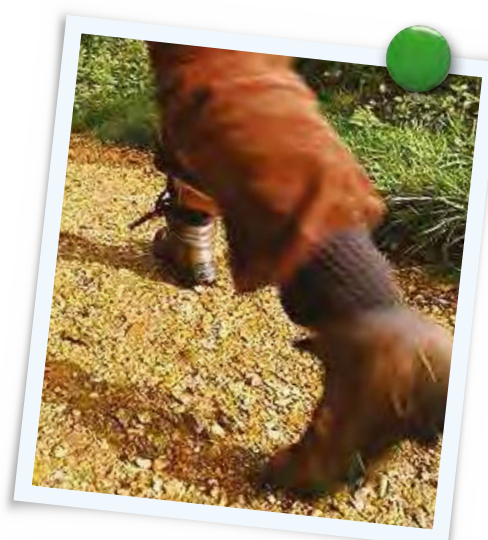
After Easter the timetable will have new starting places, and we hope to include as many 'bluebell routes' as possible to take advantage of the natural beauty around

us. The Wednesday evening walk has been re-graded as a 'B' walk to attract those who want a midweek break from the daily routine – so come along and give it a try!

The timetable is available from the library, the Health Centre and the Herb Farm, or on the website:

**[www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable](http://www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable)**. If you'd like to talk to someone about the health walks, phone Colin Davies on 0118 9722527 ●

**ROSEMARY DUNSTAN**





# Sonning Common THEN AND NOW



By **STAN RUST**



It was only when I was compiling a portfolio of photographs for the Britain in Bloom judges last summer that I realised just how much the environment of the village has improved during the thirty five years that I have lived here. The previously rather bland open area in front of the Village Hall is now alive with trees and flowers in the planters, tubs and wall flower baskets that have been added.



A herb bed and troughs of flowers have replaced waste containers as the focus of attention by the supermarket. The car park behind it has flowers, rather than rubbish and weeds. Troughs and

tubs containing a variety of coloured plants brighten up the areas in front of shops and offices, and an old red telephone box filled with evergreen plants is the focal point of an open area opposite the Health Centre. Even the long established flower beds in front of the Chemist's shop and Occasions have a much greater variety and number of shrubs these days, and the replacement of either end of the hedge outside Heath and Watkins with a raised flower bed has had a major impact on the appearance of that area. Increasing numbers of snowdrops and daffodils now appear in grass verges around the village during the springtime.



## THEN AND NOW ...

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# THE FUTURE?

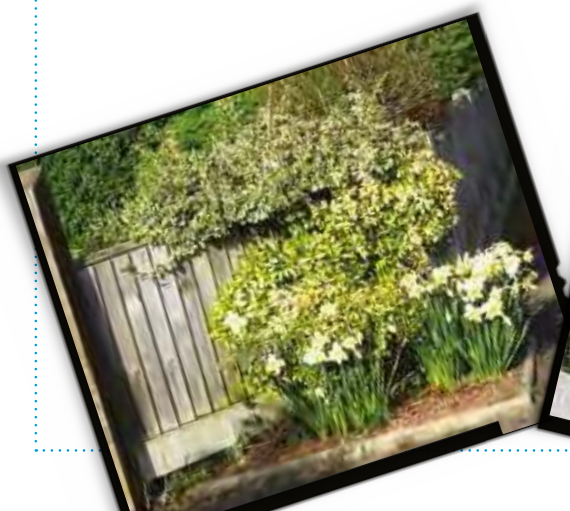
The aforementioned improvements do make Sonning Common a very pleasant place to travel around. However, in order to maintain it in its current state, and to make further improvements, help is vital from residents.

Some new volunteers are needed to join the Village Gardeners, who meet on the first Sunday and the third Thursday of each month to maintain the flower beds and containers around the village. Attendance at every session is not compulsory! Members turn up when they have time to spare. Sessions last up to an hour, are very informal, not too onerous, and have a variety of activities. Occasionally they focus on a particular task, such as the

recent planting of the six cherry trees outside Chiltern Edge School. Some people prefer to adopt a tub, trough, wheelbarrow or a small area near their property, or, where their front garden is clearly visible from the pavement, to fill it with attractive plants for passers-by to enjoy. However, historically, a significant number of properties lie behind tall fences or hedges, or may, for convenience, have front gardens that consist simply of tiles or gravel. In such cases even a small tub or pot of flowers placed somewhere near the entrance can very effectively brighten up the area for those walking or driving past, as the examples show. The placing of attractive, easily-maintained groundcover plants in the narrow 'wild' areas between the pavement and the front fence or hedge can have a similar effect. ●

The Village Gardeners would be happy to give advice on suitable plants for such situations. Contact 972 2451.

STAN RUST  
Photographer for the Village Gardeners





By PETER DAYTON

# THE ROAD FROM MANDALAY

We never thought of going to Burma (or Myanmar as it is now called) but when the chance came we grabbed it, only later considering that one of us was over 80, the other on crutches and that we knew nothing about it.

Still, we survived the flights and arrived safely at Mandalay and our boat for a trip down the Irrawaddy. True we had to scramble down a steep sandy bank but the crew lined up and passed us and our bags hand to hand and at every stop. This being winter with a temperature of 34 C the river was at its lowest and just about navigable. It rises 20-30 feet in summer so even the houses high on the banks were on stilts and there was no real possibility of building quays. This river which bisects Burma was the true "Road to Mandalay", as in Imperial times roads were effectively non-existent and they are still rare.

Burma is run by a Military junta who have until recently kept Daw Aung San Suu Kyi the leader of the movement for democracy, Nobel Prize winner, and known throughout the East as "The Lady" under house arrest, but we saw very few soldiers and were never hassled, possibly as they were trying to build a tourist

industry. The "In" joke was the General Election - whatever the outcome they said a General would still win.

Enough of politics. Burma was crowded with temples and monasteries from all ages and all in the florid oriental style. One tenet of Buddhism is reincarnation; Kings and rich citizens built innumerable shrines to accumulate 'brownie points'. Most had a central "Stupa", a massive bell like structure usually gilded and sometimes actually covered in gold. You could watch as further donations of gold leaf were raised up and applied. As one travelled south the temples became bigger and more complex up to the daddy of them all, the Shwedagon Pagoda in Yangon (Rangoon) which was 326 feet high. And all around were myriad statues of the Buddha in his various manifestations, minute to enormous, painted, white, terracotta, jade and of course gold. We were shown a photograph of one such statue as carved, now with every detail obliterated by the layers of bullion. One would think enough to pay off a national debt or precipitate a crime wave but not here.

Despite their mineral wealth (Gold, Jade, Rubies, Sapphires, Oil) the rural

community appeared poor but well fed. There was an immense range of fruit and vegetables, much growing wild and the fields yielded two and sometimes three crops a year. We ate mainly the local vegetarian cuisine. Rural houses were built of timber, bamboo and thatch. Sadly if a family prospered, they exchanged the thatch for corrugated iron which was more practical but less picturesque. No television, no piped water but I did see a mobile 'phone being charged with a photoelectric cell!

We were impressed by the children. At one school they put on a show of traditional dancing. Their discipline and talent and indeed the girls' beauty (which Kipling enthused) was astounding and I wished I could bring them to the Kenton Theatre for a display. The people were very friendly and the local handicrafts were worth studying and even purchasing. The ladies in our group went wild over the textiles and the basketwork, lacquer, and woodcarving were excellent although frequently in sizes too large for our limited luggage allowance.

A fascinating country and we had a whale of a time. ●





## HI! IT'S ZACK HERE.

I am really looking forward to Easter, which is my favourite time of year because I love chocolate! I also love Easter because the weather gets warmer and I can spend more time playing outside. What do you like about Easter?

Email me at [junioreditor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:junioreditor@sonningcommonmagazine.org) and let me know. Until next time,



**ZACK**



## ROBLOX

Recently, I have been playing a new game I found called Roblox. It turns out that on Roblox anything is possible! You can make pizza, become a wolf, build and play mini games, fight dragons and other monsters, and even earn coins to spend on your player!!! Roblox is free and if you like playing Minecraft, I recommend you give Roblox a go. ●



## HENLEY YOUTH FESTIVAL

The theme for this year's Henley youth festival is 'Me in my world'. I have entered the art competition and done a painting of dinosaurs, then stuck my name on it made out of some of my favourite things. It is my imaginary world! I have also done a film with my brother where we turn into Lego people. Good luck if you enter. ●

## CUBS

I have recently joined cubs and it is great fun. I haven't got any badges yet but I have done lots of other stuff like geocaching, a show at the Kenton and even played 'Capture the flag' in the dark in the woods. Maybe you do Beavers or Scouts or Brownies or Guides? Let me know what your favourite activity is with your group. ●



## EASTER

## WORDSEARCH

T	E	K	S	A	B	H	O	R	H	F	O
Q	G	I	K	F	A	E	M	E	A	Z	I
U	K	G	C	P	A	Z	Z	T	P	I	H
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# ADAM WAS FIRST TO RESPOND

Having read with interest the Interview with Adam Negus, First Responder, in the last edition, I put him to the test on 3rd February.

Following a visit to the Royal Berks that morning to investigate pains in the chest area - where I was put on a treadmill and wired up for tests - a date was to be made for an angiogram and I returned home. I was advised to call 999 if I needed to.

I wasn't feeling too great after lunch. When I continued to feel worse I called 999 and was told to chew four aspirins and wait for an ambulance.

You've guessed it. Adam was on the doorstep - it could only have been four to five minutes. Just as he was about to do a few tests the ambulance arrived and two paramedics plus a trainee took over. I felt a bit sorry for Adam.

After a few phone calls it was decided to ferry me to the Royal Berks again. More tests, wires everywhere and an angiogram was booked for the next day. Thankfully no problems were found with my heart and I went home the following day.

It turns out that I had Costochondritis - aches in the rib area - which is difficult to diagnose as the symptoms of a heart problem are similar.

We are very lucky to have Adam and the Royal Berks to look after us. ●

ROGER PARKER Woodlands Road

## LUNCH CLUB CELEBRATES 30TH ANNIVERSARY THANKS TO FREDA

I wanted to thank all the members of Sonning Common Lunch Club for the lovely gift that you gave me to celebrate our 30th Anniversary, it was very unexpected and very much appreciated.

I cannot believe that we have been running for this length of time, I really enjoyed doing it as it is lovely to see you all enjoying the lunches and meeting your friends.

As you know we have a wonderful team of ladies that cook, lay tables and wash up and we also enjoy the meetings.

I hope that God willing I will be able to carry on for a good few years to come. ●

FREDA BUCKNER

(Lunch Club Organiser)

## WHEN ARE WE GOING TO STOP CUTTING DOWN TREES TO SUIT OUR PURPOSES?

**Until recently two majestically beautiful beech trees stood in my road. These trees were approximately 250 years old. They were there before the houses were built, when the road was a dirt track.**

The reason given for felling them was squirrel damage. Of course, squirrels damage trees, but these trees were sound to all appearance.

The trees had a preservation order on them. Should we now, therefore, assume that a preservation order is not worth the paper it's written on? That if light, for instance, is interrupted by a tree then it's fine to cut it down?

Rather, I would think, buy a house where light is no problem or develop a frame of mind that appreciates a tree.

Do you remember when Pages Orchard was an orchard? My dad made wine from the apples, rose hips and blackberries. Perhaps you remember the trees that lined Crowsley Way with their blossom in season? Or the orchards in Orchard Avenue?

When are we going to stop cutting down trees to suit our purposes? Trees that, after all, are the only difference between countryside and town.

The face of Sonning/Peppard Common has changed and I, for one, think for the worse. ●

MICHAELA GRIFFIN Shiplake Bottom

## THE TREE HAD COME TO THE END OF ITS LIFE

**We understand Ms Griffins' concerns to which we respond as the owners of the land where one beech tree was felled.**

As longstanding supporters of the Woodland Wildlife Trust, Peppard Common's natural surroundings and copses attracted us.

When we bought our property we noted how roots from the beech tree, at the entrance to our driveway, had pushed up the driveway and adjacent footpath surface, preventing vehicular access to the property and causing health and safety concerns for pavement users.

No Tree Protection Order (TPO) existed; a temporary TPO was issued by the district council days before the beech's initial felling date.

Prior to arranging the felling, we consulted with immediate neighbours and were informed of their concerns over the tree's branches, which were entangled in telephone and electric cables. Some branches had fallen recently, narrowly avoiding injuring passers-by.

The tree was unsafe. From closer inspection, it was clear that it had to be reduced significantly and it was unlikely to survive (it had been neglected for years and had suffered severe squirrel damage). The council agreed to the beech's removal.

Beech trees have a 150 to 200-year lifespan. If the tree was 250 years old, it had outlived most others and had clearly come to the end of its life.

Our intention is to improve the kerb appeal of Shiplake Bottom so that we, and our successors, can enjoy many years of other, beautiful, appropriately-sized and well-maintained trees. ●

MIKA RINTA-SUKSI Shiplake Bottom

### COMMENT FROM THE EDITOR:

Should we have a policy in Sonning Common which requires residents who fell trees to plant another one??

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# TOM FORT BOOK

I have a new book coming out in May (no, this is not a plug for it – though if anyone did feel inclined to buy a copy I'd be deeply, almost pathetically grateful). It's an anxious time.

Writing books is a strange, solitary, anti-social business. The fun part – if, like me, you write non-fiction – is the research: digging around in libraries (God bless Reading University Library and the library at the Museum of Rural Life) and mooching around the country drinking beer, asking questions, peering at old churchyards and blue plaques.

I confess that the writing of it becomes increasingly arduous as I get older. It's a daily slog – best done in winter, I think, when the lure of competing attractions such as going fishing and tending the veg is less – which cuts you

off from the rest of the world and tends to make you both obsessive and tetchy.

You send it to the publishers. There is a long silence, then – assuming they like it – a very long period of revision, checking proofs, dealing with corrections and much tedious nit-picking. Then another gap before the damn thing comes out.

That is when the anxiety levels build up. By then you have come to detest the thing anyway. You wonder why you ever bothered, why anyone ever bothers – as if there weren't enough books in the world already. For me, the actual publication is a mixture of excitement and horror. If any writer tells you they don't read reviews, assume they are lying. But the thing about reviews is that one bad one cancels out all the good ones. I got one stinker for my

A303 book and the memory of it still rankles.

So, should you see me about the village at that time looking uncharacteristically careworn and morose – spare me a comforting word. Even better, tell me you've ordered the wretched thing, preferably from the bookshop, but Amazon will do. I need all the help I can get. ●



## COOKS CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

### NO BAKE CHOCOLATE CAKE

Easter is here (and for those that did it so is the end of Lent) so let's celebrate the 'chocolate season' with a very simple but exceedingly delicious cheesecake

150g digestive biscuits\*  
45g butter  
110g caster sugar, divided  
120ml double cream  
150g plain chocolate, melted and cooled

2 tablespoons cocoa powder mixed with a little hot water  
1 (200g) tub cream cheese

\*Don't spend a fortune on McVities – Aldi's and Coop are just as good

Place biscuits and 1 tablespoon of caster sugar in a plastic bag. Cover with a clean tea towel and crush with a rolling pin. Mix with the melted butter. Press firmly into a 18cm (7 in) cake tin (loose bottomed if available) and refrigerate.

Melt chocolate in a bowl over a pan of boiling water or in a microwave in a suitable container for short bursts of 30 seconds. Allow to cool. Whip cream until folding softly. Add the chocolate and the cocoa powder mix. Mix thoroughly.

In a separate bowl beat together the cream cheese and remaining sugar. Fold in cream/chocolate mixture until thoroughly blended.

Spread over the chilled crushed biscuits. Freeze for one hour and then transfer to the fridge for a minimum of 30 minutes. ●



### GRANOLA BARS

When I made these bars recently at school they were an instant hit. Great for breakfast with a smoothie or ideal for a lunchbox snack – why not give them a try

200g oats  
60g plain flour  
4 spoons dark brown soft sugar  
1tsp baking powder

90g raisins  
70g desiccated coconut  
75 ml honey  
70g melted butter

Preheat oven to 190/Gas 5. Grease and line a 20cmx20cm baking tray

Combine oats, flour, sugar & baking powder. Mix well and add raisins, coconut, honey & melted butter. Stir until combined and press into baking tray.

Bake for 15 minutes, allow to cool, cut into squares.

(PS – For variety try substituting the raisins for dried cranberries, banana slices or apricots)

Store in an air-tight container. ●



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HMRC have advised that from April 2015, people over the age of 55 will be given the flexibility of taking a number of smaller lump sum pension pots. 25% of the sum will be tax-free, with the remaining pension fund charged at marginal rate of income tax.

Avoid losing your hard-earned cash:

- Do not invest with companies which cold call you, offering extremely high returns. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.
- Seek financial advice from the Citizens Advice Bureau, who work alongside the Treasury delivering the 'Pension Wise' service. Further information can be found at [www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/news/treasury-minister-unveils-pension-wise](http://www.pensionsadvisoryservice.org.uk/news/treasury-minister-unveils-pension-wise)
- If you wish to invest your savings in a company, please ensure you seek advice from an FCA registered and authorised advisor.
- Be aware of callers offering a free pension review service by phone call, email and text message and do not invest in unregulated markets such as overseas property developments, storage units or forestry. ●

## GUIDE PACK RE-OPENS



1st Peppard Guides, based at the Sonning Common Scout and Guide Hall in Baskerville Road, re-opened at the beginning of January and already the girls are working hard on their challenges and badges.

So far we have made face masks, body scrubs and lotions as well as experimenting with invisible ink, Malteasers and a tornado in a bottle. We have made (and eaten), pitta pizzas, pancakes and biscuits. We also do arts and crafts and have a lot more fun activities arranged throughout the term.

The girls have already planned their first outing, a "dine out" to Cosmo Restaurant in Reading in February

as well as our first adventure day, climbing and caving in June.

Guides is open to all girls aged between 10-14. We encourage independence, decision making and self-governing and always have lots of fun.

We also welcome young people who are working on their Duke of Edinburgh's award to come along and "help" out as well adults who are looking to volunteer as a "helper".

If your daughter would like to come along to a "trial" session, if you are interested in volunteering or for more information on joining Guides email [onepeppardguides@outlook.com](mailto:onepeppardguides@outlook.com) ●

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- In patients at high risk of diabetes: coupled with other lifestyle interventions, saw reduced progression to frank diabetes by 58%
- In post menopausal women: 4 hours each week saw 41% reduction in risk of hip fracture
- Anxiety: reduced by 48%.
- Depression: 30% got relief with low dose, 47% got relief when dose increased.
- A study of 10,000 students over 12 years, saw a 23% lower risk of death.
- This treatment is the best for fatigue and the best for improving quality of life.

Read page 15 to find out HOW



## APPEAL FOR HELEN & DOUGLAS HOUSE HOME VOLUNTEERS

Families in Sonning Common use the hospice in Oxford for support in looking after a child with a life limiting condition. This includes nursing support and also a Home Volunteer Service helping families with gardening, ironing or shopping with mum so that she can care for her child who will usually use a wheelchair.

Each volunteer is asked to commit to a single family for three hours a week for at least a year. At the moment help with gardening is urgently sought in Sonning Common.

If you are able to help email [Kbarklie@helenanddouglas.org.uk](mailto:Kbarklie@helenanddouglas.org.uk) or call 01865 799150

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# Parish news

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## SKATEPARK GETS THE GO-AHEAD



**The parish council is delighted to announce that construction is underway on a new £100,000 skatepark for Sonning Common.**

It is expected that work on the skatepark – in the bottom corner of the Bishopswood Recreation Ground – will be completed by the summer.

Fundraising for Sonning Common Skatepark began in earnest after the parish council acquired a site within the Rotherfield United Football Club ground at Bishopswood.

To date around £85,000 has been pledged – the majority from a grant from Lafarge Tarmac – leaving just £15,000 to raise.

The skatepark will be built by Wheelscape, a leading provider of skateparks. Wheelscape director Duncan Holley said: “We are very

excited about beginning work on Sonning Common Skatepark. It is going to be a great addition to the area.”

Since the outset of the project, the skatepark working party has held a series of consultations with young people, including one at the village’s youth club last year where the plans were very well received.

The skatepark’s designer, Russell Heideman, from Wheelscape, explained that the skatepark was designed to appeal to everyone – boarders, scooter and BMX riders alike.

He said: “The overall size of the park will be 37m long by 13m wide. We have designed a large, standing platform at one end so that there is plenty of room for users to wait their turn. It helps to create a friendly atmosphere.

“There are aspects of all styles of

skatepark in the design, from the low-level start, to the plaza-style features in the middle, to the level changes with space for making transitions at the end. We have incorporated real street-inspired features in the design, like the handrail and stairs, because they are very popular with riders.”

Further information will be posted on parish noticeboards in due course.



Sonning Common Parish Council  
Parish Office, Village Hall, Wood Lane, Sonning Common RG4 9SL  
T: 0118 972 3616

E: [clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk) (Philip Collings)  
[deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk) (Ros Varnes)  
W: [www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk)



# Church *news*

## FATHER GRAHAM RETIRES

**At the end of November, Father Graham, our Rector, announced that he would be retiring in September 2015.** After 25 years at Kidmore End and Sonning Common, and nearly 13 at Peppard, his last service as Rector will be a Benefice Service, on 20 September. He will be much missed, but we have the consolation of knowing that the Bishop of Dorchester intends to appoint a full-time stipendiary priest in his stead.

During the Interregnum, or Vacancy, the Parochial Church Councils and Churchwardens from both parishes will work with advisers from Oxford Diocese to find a new Rector for the Benefice.



## YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!

**Wednesday 3 June 2015 Consultation meeting, 7.30pm Kidmore End School Hall.**

We hope that many people from the Parishes will attend a consultation meeting at which we will consider the future challenges faced by the parishes and the qualities that a new Rector might have.

Please put the date in your diary now – these are your churches, come and let us know what you think!

# *Easter Services*

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES

### Good Friday 3 April

10am Morning Prayer and Litany,  
All Saints' Church, Rotherfield Peppard

2pm Devotional Hour of Music &  
Readings, St. John the Baptist,  
Kidmore End

### Sunday 5 April Easter Day

9am Holy Communion  
All Saints' Church, Rotherfield Peppard

9.30am Eucharist  
Christ the King Church,  
Sonning Common

10.30am Sung Eucharist,  
All Saints' Church, Rotherfield Peppard

11am Sung Eucharist,  
St John's Church, Kidmore End

6.30pm Festal Evensong,  
All Saints' Church, Rotherfield Peppard

### Sunday 26 April

10am Christ the King Church  
Annual Parochial Church Meeting  
will be held after the service

### Thursday 14 May Ascension Day

8pm Christ the King Church

[www.lambandflag.org](http://www.lambandflag.org) for more details



# APRIL 2015

WEDNESDAY 1	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute. Open to all. Raising funds for local community projects - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
MONDAY 13	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
TUESDAY 14	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - "Summer Sensations" - a talk by John Negus - Peppard Memorial Hall	7.30pm
THURSDAY 16	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 16	Sonning Common Women's Institute - "Mapledurham Watermill" - a talk by Corry Starling - Village Hall	7.30pm
SATURDAY 18	Peppard Bowls Club - Taster Day - Peppard Memorial Hall	2pm
MONDAY 20	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 23	Chiltern Players - "The Weekend" by Michael Palin - Peppard Memorial Hall	8pm
FRIDAY 24	Chiltern Players - "The Weekend" by Michael Palin - Peppard Memorial Hall	8pm
SATURDAY 25	Chiltern Players - "The Weekend" by Michael Palin - Peppard Memorial Hall	8pm
SUNDAY 26	Peppard Bowls Club - Taster Day - Peppard Memorial Hall	2pm

# MAY 2015

WEDNESDAY 6	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute. Open to all. Raising funds for local community projects - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
THURSDAY 14	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
MONDAY 18	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
THURSDAY 21	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 21	Sonning Common Women's Institute - Resolutions followed by Beetle Drive. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
SATURDAY 23	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - Plant and table top sale - Village Hall	10am - 12.30pm
THURSDAY 28	FISH - Henley Farmers' Market	

**The FISH Volunteer Centre** runs regular 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.

Details of all minibus trips can also be found on the FISH website [www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk](http://www.fishvolunteercentre.co.uk). For more information and to book any trip call **0118 972 3986** any weekday between 09.30 and 11.30 a.m. ●





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