

# SC

# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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JUNE / JULY 2017



sonningcommonmagazine

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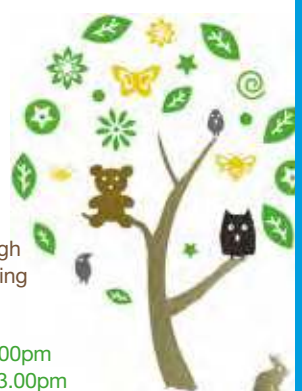
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# FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

The magazine does not start on a happy note this time. The news of the potential closure of Chiltern Edge has shocked us all. The first Community page provides an explanation and campaign information to save the school. Please register your views.

Since the last issue there have been two community events which yet again demonstrate the strength of residents' participation in local events. We saw it earlier in the year with the campaign against the extra homes on SON 6 that were not in the Neighbourhood Plan. At the 'What makes a Village' evening, the strength of our community was the main feature of the discussions and the On Your Bike ride 2017 attracted the largest number of participants and raised the most money so far.

An opportunity to find out more about the work at Johnson Matthey appears in this magazine. Some of this information is revealed in an interview with Dr Liz Rowsell and more in an article on the archaeological dig taking place near the original house.

The library support group FoSCL are running a story competition - try to encourage your children and grandchildren to write an entry. The increasing activities in the library are also included as well as the summer reading challenge. If parents are looking for a distraction to get their children outside and away from their electronic screens there are some local, affordable, outdoor sporting activities listed on the Noticeboard.

I have only mentioned a few of the articles in this issue but our regular contributors continue with their interesting reads. Articles from new contributors are always welcome. Have a good summer. ●



**Diana Pearman** Editor

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



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On Your Bike 2017 by Nikki Hampton

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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# CHILTERN EDGE: SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST A SCHOOL

Most of you reading this magazine will, by now, most likely be aware of the recent turn of events surrounding Chiltern Edge school due to the extensive media coverage. The school has two paths now standing before it: the first is that of a bright and successful future as an Academy; the second that of permanent closure and a strong possibility of all its land being sold off for housing development. These two options can be the only outcomes under the current Government policies.

On the face of it, if the school were to close and alternative places at other schools could be found for all the students, then it would seem things would carry on as normal again. Unfortunately, this is far from the truth. There would be a very significant impact to the students and the whole of Sonning Common and surrounding areas.

In the case of students, based on current numbers, there are not enough places in the surrounding local schools to accommodate them all. Even if there were, it would mean either bussing them or many more additional car journeys to get them to school. This would also make it harder for our students to participate in after school activities.

You will no doubt also be aware via the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan, that the village will be expanding its housing for the coming years (and this is true for Henley, Woodcote, Eye and Dunsden, pretty much all towns and villages in Oxfordshire) which is expected to put further pressure on school places provision in the future. The neighbourhood plan had at its core the assumption that Chiltern Edge would exist as one of the central facilities, and this is what the village came together, and agreed on, by voting to approve the plan.

The school has for the last 60 years sat at the heart of our local village, as generations of children and parents have come together through the community it has generated. In addition to education, the school has been a thriving hub for

many other community organisations and activities which use its facilities. For example, there are many local sporting activities that use the extensive facilities, pitches, courts and fields which cater for all ages. There are also many other activities that run from the school such as dance classes and theatre skills clubs, children's holiday clubs, youth clubs etc. It is this wide range of activities that

strongly contribute to the quality of life for all residents in the village and surrounding area. The loss of the school would leave a huge gap that would be difficult to fill and our lives would all be the poorer for it. Finally, let us not forget the school is an important local employer.

So, how can we all make our voices heard? Follow the three steps and take action. ●

**Save Our Edge Committee**

## Save Our Edge

Chiltern Edge School

[www.saveouredge.co.uk](http://www.saveouredge.co.uk)



### Three steps you can take to fight for the future of our community school...

1

#### Consultation Feedback

Provide your feedback to the OCC consultation process by 15<sup>th</sup> June electronically or in writing.

Find all the details here:  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/chilternedge](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/chilternedge)



Scan me

2

#### Contact Your Politicians...

Write or email to our local MP and County Councillor to object:

*John Howell MP for Henley*  
email: [howelljm@parliament.uk](mailto:howelljm@parliament.uk)

*Rob Wilson MP for Reading East*  
email: [robwilsonmp@parliament.uk](mailto:robwilsonmp@parliament.uk)

*Steve Harrod OCC Education Cabinet Member*  
email: [steve.harrod@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:steve.harrod@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

3

#### ...and Object To The Closure!

**Chiltern Edge has been a vital part of the community for 60 years.** It is home to many local organisation and sporting activities, **orchestra, dance, youth club, upholstery, holiday club, cross country, squash, badminton, football for all ages** to name a few. Also the community joins in fund raisers such as bingo and quiz nights.

Parents value the smaller community school feel for their children enabling many to walk to school or have a short simple bus journey. This is a school where staff ensure every child matters.

There are no immediate places at other suitable schools and requirements will increase with the development of the counties building programme and expected bulge years in Caversham schools. This makes a sponsored academy vital for the students.

All local primary schools are full and still growing, therefore Chiltern Edge School needs to remain open to service these pupils.



# RECORD RIDER NUMBERS & RECORD AMOUNT RAISED!



**On Your Bike raised more than £6,000 for local good causes this year; more than any previous year.**

"It was a stunning turn-out on a beautiful spring morning," said On Your Bike founder, Penny Snowden, who cycled 20 miles against this year.

"The enthusiasm of all who took part, and the fantastic crew who organised, marshalled and cooked, ensured it was the best event we have ever staged."

"Our sponsors and supporters have enabled an immense result. "said Penny. "I feel truly thrilled that what began 11 years ago as a one-off cycle ride for the family, has become an annual event, cherished by our community."

The number of riders hit a record high this year, with 599 people cycling one of the three 6, 12 or 20 mile long routes, plus dozens more little ones joining in the playground cycle. The event was attended by well over 700 people in total.

Bronwyn Stoves, who's 7, has ridden numerous times in a child seat or on a tag-a-long towed by her Mum or Dad. But this year she cycled six miles on her own bike for the first time. "It wasn't that hard," she said, "It was fun."

One of the oldest riders, 76 year old, Peter Woolsey, was persuaded to take part by one of the organisers, Dr Andrew Burnett. "It was a gorgeous ride," said Peter, "and if you go cycling, you're probably less likely to need a doctor!"

One Dad, Christopher Eames, ran the six mile route with his daughter, Chloe, 6, pedalling along side him. He told us "I ran so I could help push her up the hills." Chloe said "It was good. I wanted to beat my sister and I did."

This year 100% of all entry fees and monies raised in 2017 will be shared between Sonning Common Primary School, Sue Ryder and the Emergency Dept at the Royal Berks. ●

**Nikki Hampton**



## A GREAT PLEASURE - NOT A CHORE

by Joan Grumman

Joan Bawden has just retired after nearly fourteen years as a volunteer at the Sonning Common Charity Shop for Christian Community Action. She started working there two days a week in 2003 and was upgraded to supervisor after three years.

She has seen many changes during her time at the shop and her dedication and hard work has encouraged many to join her, including her husband John who worked in the Book Room for five years. She has



seen the shop develop and grow and has enjoyed every minute of the challenges encountered in the very busy working environment. Joan was a familiar and much loved figure at the shop and found it an ideal place to make friends with volunteers and customers. Her fourteen years of service was a source of great pleasure to her and we hope she enjoys a well -earned happy retirement. ●



Many thanks to all the teams who took part in the Sonning Common Village Quiz on 17 March. Around £650 was raised for primary school projects. The winning team were 'Comets' comprising Janice Burnett, Trish Rockell, Chris Bickerton, Steve Rockell, Joan Lamprell and Andrew Burnett.

Results were as follows: Comets 116 points, Mongooses 114½, Book Group 112½, On the Tiles 111, followed by Two Hoots, Between the Covers, Kelly's Heroes, The Fossils, Antipenultimates, P and O's, The Common People, Comedy of Errors, Bee Gees, Wishful Thinkers, Green's Gremlins and Jam and Jerusalem. ●

**Mel White**

# NEWS FROM THE LIBRARY

Following the demise of the Children's Centre at Chiltern Edge, local health visitors are now holding their Baby Clinics in the library on Thursdays from 1 – 2.30pm. (The library is officially closed between 1 and 2pm, but the doors are open for those with babies, and for anyone who wishes to use the library self-service)

Our gadget sessions on Thursday mornings from 10am (for those with queries/problems with lap-tops, Macs, androids and Smartphones) are proving increasingly popular – it's a good idea to book a slot in advance, to make sure there's a volunteer on hand to help with your particular query:

phone (0118) 9722448.

On the 3rd Thursday of every month an expert from Age UK visits the library to offer help and advice on age-related problems – come for a chat! (from 10.45am – 12 noon)

For younger children (under 8s) we have storytimes every Saturday morning at 10am. Our next special storytime will be on 17 June to celebrate Fathers' Day. There will be a craft session after the storytime, aimed at 3 – 8 year olds, and home-made cakes will be on sale.

We have rhymetimes for the under-3s on the first and third Mondays of the month at 10 – 10.30am, run with the help of able volunteers.

The theme of the Summer Reading Challenge for children this year is 'Animal Agents'. It will be launched in July, and there will be special story sessions with crafts and home-made cakes for sale, starting at 10am every Saturday morning in August.

Our local PCSO Will Pomroy is hoping to hold regular 'Have your say' drop-in sessions at the library on Saturday mornings from 10.30am. These are for people who have any comments or concerns about policing in the locality. Check with the library for dates. ●

**Rosemary Dunstan**  
Library manager

## SHORT STORY COMPETITION



**Fancy your hand as a writer? Are you the next J.K Rowling, Anthony Horowitz or Jeff Kinney?**

If you've got a great story in your head or had a real life adventure, put pen to paper and turn your hand to story-telling. Friends of Sonning Common Library invites all budding young authors to take part in a short story competition on a topic of your choice.

Get writing during the summer holidays and submit your story by September 1st.

The competition opens on June 1st and the winners will be announced on Saturday the

14th October. Gift tokens will be presented as prizes up to the value of £75 for the best stories submitted in three categories: Seven and under, Eleven and under and Sixteen and under. (Prizes will vary depending on the age group)

Entrants should live or go to school in Sonning Common or the local area and submit their typed stories of no more than 750 words ATTACHED to an email to [friendsofsonningcommonlibrary@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofsonningcommonlibrary@gmail.com)

Please indicate your name, age, address and telephone number when submitting your story. More details can be obtained at Sonning Common Library, where computers are available for those who need them. Please ask a member of staff or volunteer for help.

**Friends of Sonning Common Library** would like to give special thanks to **Peppard Building Supplies, Sonning Common Vauxhall, Bewley Homes and Johnson Matthey** for agreeing to support the competition. ●



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# RALLY ROUND: A NEW AND FREE SUPPORT NETWORK FOR CARERS

by Joan Grummant

Rally Round is a new online system that is brilliant at creating networks around people who need or would like help. It is a really useful service for a carer and is backed by Oxford Clinical Commissioning Group and Carers Oxfordshire. It is free to people living in, or caring for someone living in Oxfordshire. It brings together carers to help their loved ones stay safe and well at home.

It works by someone, a carer or person needing support, creating a network around themselves and sharing tasks that need doing with people they know and trust to help them out. It shares the burden that one person may take on as a carer and helps prevent burn out. It also enables the person who needs support to become less isolated and lessens medical

or social care support. Some examples of its use might be:

- Helping with shopping or gardening
- Getting to appointments
- Changing a light bulb or small jobs
- A parent who is ill can organise school and activities on less well days
- To help plan and support someone coming home from hospital and aftercare
- A visit for a chat and cup of tea.

We all may need a little extra help at some time and this is usually where family or friends come in. Rally Round is a simple online system that can help. You start by inviting trusted friends, family or professionals to form a support network. They can all add things that need doing,

discuss details and volunteer to help. Texts and emails enable everyone to know what is happening, who is doing what and when things are done. The people in the network can decide what they can do to help and are kept fully informed as to what is happening.

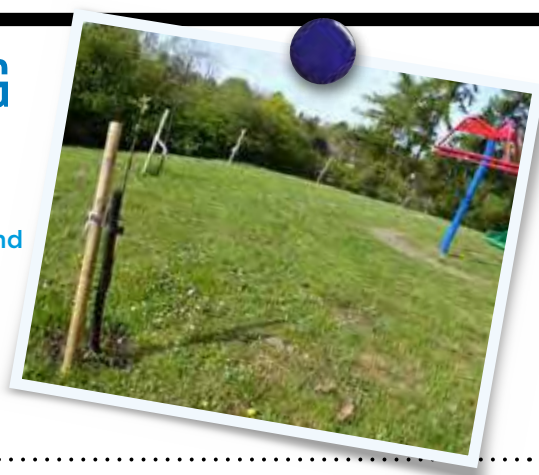
Your local support group meets at FISH in Kennylands Road RG4 9JT on the second Wednesday of the month from 2 to 3.30pm. Just turn up.

Rally Round is FREE and getting started is easy. Go to [www.rallyroundme.com/carersoxfordshire](http://www.rallyroundme.com/carersoxfordshire) and click 'get started'. Enter your details 'start a support network' and follow the on screen instructions. If you require any further information or have any concerns please contact Michelle on 01235 849470 or email [michelleevans@carersoxfordshire.org.uk](mailto:michelleevans@carersoxfordshire.org.uk) ●

## VILLAGE TREE PLANTING

The Parish Council Tree Group have been planting in the village; deciduous apple, elm and cherry starting to sprout green leaves and the evergreen bushes in the Lea Road play area add colour to the area more effectively in the springtime. ●

Stan Reed



## Bluebells nestling in Old Copse

Unexpectedly, after looking all over the nearby woods, I found a small swathe of bluebells in Old Copse. They are probably not the native species - possibly invaders from a nearby garden - but nice to see anyway.

DAVID TYLDESLEY



## THANKS TO ONE STOP STAFF

During the closure of the Co-op, the staff at One Stop helped me, were always polite and friendly and nothing was too much trouble. I was helped by Suraj, Frances, DC and Rasif. We are very lucky in Sonning Common to have such good staff and well stocked shop. ●

Barbara Butler

### STOP PRESS ...STOP PRESS ...

The parish council has temporarily removed two swings from the Baskerville Road play area. They will be reinstated once resurfacing work has been completed.





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AT  
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**SATURDAY 17TH JUNE**

**12-3PM**

SONNING COMMON  
PRIMARY SCHOOL

**GROVE ROAD, SONNING COMMON**

**CHILTERN EDGE SCHOOL**

SAVE THE DATE

SUMMER FESTIVAL

13 JULY 2017 @ 6.30PM

Chiltern Edge School

**SC SONNING COMMON**  
**MAGAZINE**

**Annual General Meeting**

8.15 pm on 19th June 2016 at FISH offices,  
Springhill, Kennylands Road,  
Sonning Common RG4 9JT

All are invited to have a say on what you  
would like for the Magazine.

**AGENDA**

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of the 2016 AGM
3. Matters Arising
4. Chairman's Report
5. Treasurer's Report; Chair to sign accounts
6. Distribution Manager's Report
7. Editor's Report – Diana Pearman
8. Advertising Manager's Report
9. Election of Officers and Committee
- Chairman: **Geoffrey Adams**
- Treasurer: **Jill West**
- Secretary: **TBD**
- Distribution manager: **Helen Gavin**
- Advertising manager: **John Pearman**
- Diary secretary: **Helen Barker**
- Members: **Colleen Paviour**
10. Date of next meeting – to be arranged
11. Any other business

N.B. While all are welcome only residents of  
Sonning Common are eligible to vote

**"Those Were The Days".**

Nottakwire sings "The Sixties."

Sonning Common Village Hall

Saturday 24 June at 3pm

Sunday 25 June at 2.30pm

Doors open 30mins before Concert times

Tickets from Occasions Wood Lane.

Refreshments included in Ticket Price.

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- 1 x clean empty juice carton
- Felt tipped pen
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Paint
- Paintbrush
- PVA glue
- Sticks/twigs
- Embellishments
- String/ribbon
- Bird seed

Instructions:

- 1) Using the felt tipped pen, mark the position of two holes at the top of the carton – you will thread the string through these holes to hang your bird feeder. You will also need to draw an opening so the birds can reach the food.
- 2) Use the hole punch to make the holes at the top of the carton. Ask an adult to help you cut the opening out of the carton.
- 3) Mix the paint with PVA glue – this will help it to stick to the shiny surface of the carton. Alternatively you can cover the carton with coloured paper or sticky back plastic.
- 4) Paint the carton in your chosen colour. You may need more than one coat of paint, allow the carton to dry before applying the next layer of paint.
- 5) When the carton is dry, stick the twigs/branches along the top of the carton to create a roof.
- 6) Decorate the bird feeder with your embellishments, buttons, beads, gems, use your imagination!
- 7) Ask an adult to make a hole just below the opening of the bird feeder. Glue a stick into the hole so the birds can use it as a perch.
- 8) Tie a piece of string/ribbon through the holes at the top of the feeder.
- 9) Fill your bird feeder with bird seed.
- 10) Hang your bird feeder from a tree in your garden and watch as your feathered visitors arrive.

Please send in pictures of your creations,  
we would love to see them.

What you'll need:



Step 1



Step 2



Step 4



Step 5



Step 6



Step 7&8



Step 9



Step 10





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# BLOUNTS COURT

## 2017

I started working for Johnson Matthey in 1995, and retired in 2013. I had always had an interest in history and the house at Blounts Court was of particular interest, so I spent 3 years researching its history. From a small Tudor style building, to the large Georgian building that you see today it had been extended in three separate phases, from 1431 to 1773.

When I retired in 2013, having previously joined both The Berkshire Archaeological Society and The Berkshire Archaeological Research Group and with their help the geophysics on the front lawn of the house was started in that year. There was a great deal of interest as to what this survey showed, large structures and walls beneath the lawn. The first excavation was carried out in 2014 and has been ongoing for 2 or 3 weeks every year since, to reveal Medieval, Georgian and Roman archaeology.

During three weeks from 3 -20 April 2017 a team from the Berkshire Archaeological Society excavated five trenches at Blounts Court. The objective of this work was to gain dating evidence for a building with its chalk floor and chalk block foundation and for the mortared flint wall with its

radio carbon dates of 40 BC to AD 27, AD 125, AD 305 to 406 and AD 887 to 1013, found in last year's excavation.

Another trench was then excavated to find dating evidence. This was successful insofar as we found more pottery and a knife which confirmed that it was a medieval building. A review of manors dating to this period suggests that this was a manorial hall probably contemporary with Blounts Court house which has a dendro-chronology date, from a floor joist, of 1431.

Two more trenches were dug to elongate the Roman flint wall, either side of the previously revealed wall structure again investigating any possible dating evidence and to learn about the structure techniques used in building this mortared flint wall.

A careful analysis of the radio carbon dates showed that these were dates where either when the mortar used to build the wall first dried out and absorbed carbon dioxide or at a later date when the in-situ mortar got wet, which then reset the carbon dioxide clock.

The excavations revealed a 4m length of the wall which showed that it had been built in sections each of about 4 Roman feet. There is no evidence of this wall being part of building so, for

now, it is thought to be a boundary wall. Many villa sites are surrounded by walls like this. To the east of the wall was a deposit of tile and debris which contained tile fragments and a horse shoe of medieval date. This evidence suggests that there was a medieval building which used the Roman wall to support its western wall.

The next steps on this site are to finish processing the finds; to write up the work so that it can be published in the Berkshire Archaeological Journal; and to produce an exhibition to display at Johnson Matthey's 200 birthday celebrations on Saturday 22 July. ●

**Nigel Spencer**





# DR LIZ ROWSELL

## APPLYING SCIENCE TO EVERYDAY LIFE

By ROS VARNES

**"The best job in the company," is how Dr Liz Rowsell describes her role as director of the Johnson Matthey Technology Centres, including the one in Sonning Common.**

PhD graduate Dr Rowsell joined the company 24 years ago and worked in biomedical research before rising through the international company's ranks to become the first female director of Johnson Matthey corporate R&D (research & development) in 2014.

She commutes daily from her home in South West London to spend her days in the tranquil and airy surrounds of the eight-acre Blounts Court Road site, which is home to Johnson Matthey's largest corporate research and development centre.

The site comprises the Blounts Court manor house - the business and administration centre - four laboratory blocks and a restaurant where the staff all eat together, every day.

Around 270 people work for Johnson Matthey in Sonning Common, one of the company's four corporate technology centres. Together with the company's business sector R&D community, there are a total of 1,600 research and development scientists.

Dr Rowsell explains: "A lot of what we do is to develop new technologies based on clever chemistry. We then apply that to a whole range of markets

to enhance life, improve health and protect the environment."

World-wide Johnson Matthey currently employs 13,000 people who support a wide range of global industries, including the automotive, medical/ pharmaceutical, chemical, recycling and oil and gas industries.

The company is a world leader in the development and manufacture of catalysts to control harmful emissions from car exhausts and in the production of metal-based drugs and components for medical devices such as pacemakers and hearing devices.

Two-hundred-years-old this year, Johnson Matthey continues to be an expert in refining precious metals. It develops technologies and runs facilities to recycle and manage precious materials including platinum.

Percival Johnson founded the company in London on the morning of 1 January 1817 and got married that afternoon! In 1851 George Matthey joined the company and in 1852 Johnson Matthey was appointed the official assayer and refiner to the Bank of England.

In 1926 the company devised a process for extracting and refining platinum group metals. From its beginnings in London, the company underwent significant growth during the 1950s and 1960s, expanding its research/ development and manufacturing business into international markets.

In 1975, 42 years ago, Johnson Matthey's technology centre moved

from Wembley to Sonning Common. According to Dr Rowsell, the village is ideally placed to host this important research and development centre with its good transport links to Heathrow, London and Oxford.

Says Dr Rowsell: "A lot of our scientists come from the local community but one-third of our employees are non-UK nationals, the majority of whom are from mainland Europe but also from the USA, Africa, China and India. I truly believe diversity of the workforce is great for innovation.

"This job is so good because I am working with scientists of all ages, from different disciplines and cultures and we are making a difference to real people." ●

**\*On 22 July the technology centre is holding an open day and will be inviting community representatives to the Blounts Court Road site to learn more about Johnson Matthey's operations.**



# WHAT MAKES A

By **DIANA PEARMAN**



**The answer was the Community. This was the loud and clear message from more than 100 residents of Sonning Common who attended a discussion evening in the village hall in April 2017 organised by the magazine committee.**

Colleen Paviour, who inspired the SC Magazine committee to back the venture, gave the opening address. She described her arrival into the village from Barnes in west London, exchanging a place which called itself a village for a real one, and how she soon found friends and a welcome.

She then handed over to Tom Fort local author and well known Parish Councillor who talked about the social history of life since Roman Times. He chose to focus on the very different life of the people in villages 1000 years ago - the primitive conditions, the lack of amusements, the frequent disputes and violence, all documented in the manorial records. He pointed out that historically the purpose of the village was to service the land. But after WWII agriculture required far fewer workers, and villages tended to be taken over by the middle classes. The great difference was that they chose village life, whereas in the

past there had been no choice.

In his book he describes Sonning Common as unremarkable and lacking in distinction. There are no buildings of architectural merit; nor authentically ancient dwellings; no village green; a functional church behind a car repair workshop; a pond and Tudor manor on the outskirts and no picturesque cricket ground. "in short there is nothing in Sonning Common worth a detour to look at".

And yet the expansion of the houses in the 60's with the building of estates has led to many of those residents remaining in this unremarkable place. So what is it that has kept those people so wedded to the "Village that never was" by Fred Richens. (Available for purchase in the library).

The panel of six recruited for this event, from a mix of the population, gave their views about what makes a village.

"We feel we count". "Have a network of friends linked to the village". "SC has changed as people's expectations change". "A good place to run around the countryside". "This is a really thriving community with a heart and a spirit". "It made me realise that SC is quite unique. It has everything most of us need and many areas where people can get involved with new and exciting projects if they want to".

The discussion was then opened to the audience and their views sought. The strongest message was that it is not the buildings or infrastructure that makes SC but the people. It is a community and that is its strength. For example it was stated that the myth of the English as unfriendly, a national characteristic, is not borne out by the people who live here. The bus service is important, the shops and the idyllic countryside. Health walks and Green Gym, now national movements were started here. One person said she had drawn up a list of 14 items she wished to find when she moved out of London and only SC met all of her criteria. There were comments about the number of volunteers for all sorts of causes, and although many are of a certain age, it is easy for those who wish to become involved. The time given and the support is extensive and remarkable. People are friendly they smile and most are considerate drivers, despite the challenges of Wood Lane.

There was a shared sadness that this lovely place has become so expensive. To purchase a home is almost impossible for young people and the only option seems to be to start off with a shared equity property.

PHOTOS BY: Tilly Lawson

Answers to trivia quiz: 1c 2a 3b 4a 5c 6b 7a 8 all correct 9c 10b.



# VILLAGE?



I attempted to draw the evening session to a conclusion in 4 short points. For me it is imperative that we remain as a settlement surrounded by fields – a village. Born in West London my intense dislike of suburbia and the endless joined up places with different names but no different appearance is ingrained in my psyche. The second is that the magazine is the 'voice' of the village and increasingly the authors who appear in it are those residents who are short of time, working most of it, but do make significant contributions which illuminate the lives of interesting and committed individuals. They may have no time to volunteer but they add another dimension to the 'voice of the village' the magazine. Thirdly is the challenge of the new housing developments which will be built around the edges of the settlement. Tom in his research emphasised the challenge of integrating newcomers, especially those who are housed on the perimeters and it will be incumbent upon us all to make a considerable effort to make them welcome.

The magazine can play a part but so much more is needed and this is where Colleen set the scene at the beginning

of the evening. It is very hard being new in an area and that smile, friendly face and cup of tea can make a difference. Last but not least one of the benefits of an expanding village will be the acquisition of a recreation ground upon Memorial Hall Field on Reade's Lane. There are many exciting ideas floating around about what might be constructed and which sports might be incorporated. But one thing is for sure the revival of the Village Day in some form will be re-enacted there.

In conclusion, I use the poem that Tom included at the end of his book.

*Between the woods in folded hands  
My accidental village stands,  
Untidily and with an air  
Of wondering who left it there*  
by AA Milne

If anyone should wish to purchase a copy of Tom's book 'The Village News' it is available at the Bell bookshop in Henley.

**At the start of the evening a Trivia quiz was on the chairs which acted as an ice breaker as pairs tried to answer the questions (SEE RIGHT).**

**1. Komurakai is Sonning Common's 30-yr old judo club. What does "Komurakai" mean in Japanese?**

- a. Small warrior
- b. Break balance and throw
- c. Small village

**2. In a 1874 census of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Kidmore End, Sonning Common had:**

- a. 48 adults, 42 children
- b. 16 adults, 37 children
- c. 22 adults, 18 children

**3. In his 1965 survey of South Oxfordshire, Landscape of Distress, Viscount Esher calls Sonning Common:**

- a. "the village that never was"
- b. "the most important no-place in South Oxon"
- c. "a dull, unattractive village of cottages & farmland"

**4. From 1911-1929, villagers needing a fast trip to Reading would call on which horse & trap taxi service:**

- a. John Smith and Loose Lizzie 'The Flying Mare'
- b. John Pound and Flying Fillie
- c. Peter French and Fleet 'The Jiffy Swift'

**5. Buses started in Sonning Common before what year?**

- a. 1935
- b. 1950
- c. 1914

**6. Woodlands Road was once called:**

- a. Orchard Run
- b. Hog Lane
- c. Hounds Lane

**7. When it opened in 1913 the village school in Grove Road was originally called:**

- a. The Eye and Dunsden Sonning Common County School
- b. Kidmore End Parish School
- c. Sonning Common Parish School

**8. Who is not a character of Sonning Common's past?**

- a. Moses 'Tinker' Moring – wore a long white smock and drove a donkey cart selling kettles and saucepans
- b. Tunbridge 'Tunny' Wells – 4ft10in tall, bow-legged, wore eye patch and kept whippets
- c. Crutchy Pither – had wooden leg and pedalled fixed wheel bike with the other

**9. Three hundred years ago Sonning Common was spelt?**

- a. Sunning Common
- b. Sunneyn Common
- c. Sunnynge Common

**10. With just under 400 pupils Sonning Common Primary:**

- a. is an average sized school for South Oxfordshire
- b. is the largest school in South Oxfordshire
- c. is the second largest school in South Oxfordshire



# THE SLOWDIVE STORY

*This is a story of humble musical beginnings in Sonning Common, success, disappointment and rebirth...*

Music has always figured large for us. I first met Val whilst playing in a jazz band at her 21st. Back then in the 60s we enjoyed jazz, folk, the singer songwriters and soft rock. Now in our 70s we still enjoy concerts, gigs and music festivals.

In 1986 two fifteen year olds, our daughter Rachel Goswell, and Neil Halstead, who had known each other since attending Grove Road Primary school, formed a band.



They rehearsed at Chiltern Edge Youth Wing. At first called the Pumpkin Fairies they began to play in pubs and small venues. Later renamed Slowdive and joined by Reading based Christian Savill guitar, Nick Chaplin bass and Simon Scott drums, they signed a recording contract with revered Indie record label Creation Records. Slowdive quickly became darlings of the music press, Melody Maker and NME.

Indie, is a term applied to alternative popular music, the sort you hear on BBC Radio 6 Music. The Indie or Independent music scene started in the 70s when Rough Trade Records appeared. Back then music was dominated by the big record companies like Decca and Parlophone, there was no way in for non mainstream artists who were popular with music fans. Rough Trade nurtured the Indie scene, particularly Punk, selling records from their own stores.

I taught Rachel to play guitar by ear at age 7, she was a natural musician who loved to perform on stage. I remember

watching her with her guitar aged 8 at Grove Road Primary in front of hundreds of parents and later singing with her friend Miriam Honor as half a Bucks Fizz tribute duo complete with the 'rip off' skirts! These experiences obviously made a deep impression on Rachel. Our enquiries as to what she wanted to be when she grew up were always met with "pop singer!". One day I replied "if that's what you want, then do something about it". So, Rachel put an Ad aimed to get a band together on Chiltern Edge noticeboard and that's how it started. In Neil's household only Classical music was allowed. Despite that, in his bedroom Neil evolved into what Time Out magazine once described as "one of Britain's best young songwriters".

At first Slowdive were the darlings of the music press with radio and TV appearances including the obligatory 'Peel Session'. They released three studio albums and various EP's touring Europe and the USA many

times. Slowdive were the original 'Shoegazers'. Shoegaze is a term applied to





Slowdive because on stage they used to constantly stare at the many guitar effects pedals used to create their wall of sound. It has since been applied to other bands of a similar ilk. Once a term of derision the sound of Shoegaze is overwhelmingly loud, with vocals and melodies almost disappearing into walls of guitars, creating a wash of sound where no instrument is distinguishable from the other. Nevertheless, Slowdive's sound is pleasantly melodic and often calming to lose yourself in. Quite different to run of the mill conventional pop music.

Then, as so often with the music press at that time, after building you up, the press enjoyed slapping you down. After a meteoric rise the band's final death blow came four years later in 1995 with the rise of less challenging brasher Britpop and Grunge. Memorable quotes were from Ritchey of the Manic Street Preachers who said "Slowdive were worse than Hitler" and a sour NME journalist wrote that their Souvlaki album (now widely regarded as a masterpiece) was like drowning in a bowl of porridge! The press mattered, Creation dropped them.

Undaunted, Rachel and Neil continued their musical journey reforming as Mojave 3 an alt country band producing 5 albums signed to the 4AD record label. Rachel now living in London had a little boy Jesse, who was born with CHARGE syndrome, later moving to Exeter to be near the Exeter Deaf Academy. Neil relocated to Newquay to pursue his love of surfing and travelled all over the world singing his own brand of folksy music.

Then in 2014 after 20 years of seeming oblivion something unexpected happened - out of the blue an

international alternative music promoter offered a very large sum to tempt the now defunct Slowdive to reform and play at the Primavera Sound music festival in Barcelona. In that 20 year gap, largely unknown to the band, Slowdive's music had slowly been gaining a new audience and influencing many contemporary bands. The news of a possible Slowdive revival swept across the world's social media and fans clamoured to see the band whose unique 'Shoegaze' sound they loved, but believed they would never hear live. There was a widespread feeling that Slowdive had been treated very unfairly back in the 90s. This time it was the fans, old and new rather than the press speaking. The musical press has been largely emasculated, they no longer form opinions, fans on social media do.

A warm up gig was planned at London's Village Underground venue. All 800 tickets sold out in less than a minute. Some of the audience travelled from distant parts of Europe the Americas and Japan. At Primavera the 25,000 strong audience delivered a rapturous welcome. Online revues stoked demand to see the band no one thought they would ever see live. A staggering 44 gigs and festivals followed in 2014. USA, Canada, practically every major European Country, Japan, China, Taiwan Singapore. A large section of the audience is now young people who weren't even born when Slowdive were around back in the early 90's.

After that first hectic year a breathing space ensued with fewer live appearances, giving Neil, Rachel and the band time to produce a new album after 22 years. This, like their original albums it was recorded at the Courtyard



Studio Sutton Courtney. The new album, 'Slowdive' was released on 5th May. Dozens of appearances gigs and festivals will happen in 2017, Europe North and South America, Asia and Australasia with London's Roundhouse pencilled in. Slowdive are back and this time it's the fans who are in charge.

To watch a Pitchfork produced film about Slowdive which features their early days in Sonning Common, search Youtube for 'Slowdive - Souvlaki - Pitchfork Classic'. You will also find videos of many of their songs and appearances. The titled ones are the best.

**I know that Slowdive's story is not the only musical journey that started in Sonning Common, let's hear some more...?**

Alan Goswell

## SLOWDIVE'S AMAZING COMEBACK

What does one say about going to a concert to see one of the bands that altered how you understand music forever? As a person who writes about music and attempts to be as professional as possible, it is almost impossible not to gush having experienced a transformative moment like seeing Slowdive live for the first time. It was like an out of body experience, standing there, hearing it all, and seeing them play in front of you. Finally. A band you never thought you would get to see live because they had broken up long ago. That moment that every music fan dreams of and savors. That moment when THAT band is on the stage, playing, and they are as good and as amazing as you ever imagined in your wildest dreams. I gush, but I think, in this instance, the gushing is genuine and appropriate. Slowdive are, at the end of the day, one of the best live bands I have ever been privileged to witness.

The Guardian 30 March 2017

third-party assistance. With boyish energy from drummer Clem Burke, a minimal, buzzing guitar from Stein and laissez-faire lyrics about the vagaries of fate, *Doom or Destiny* is a pop song by New York bohemians who were as at home in the company of William Burroughs as they were with Donna Summer.

Let's hope this well-intentioned but flawed project leads to Harry and Stein coming back soon with an album of their own material. After all, nobody does it better.

### Slowdive

Secretly Canadian  
★★★★☆

Anyone wanting to take the long-view approach to being in a band should take a leaf out of Slowdive's book. In the early 1990s this Berkshire five-piece were among the pioneers of the

genre known as shoegaze: gauzy, harmonies and distorted guitars capturing the interior states of introverts who spent entire concerts staring at the floor.

Britpop made Slowdive look hopelessly fey and they were duly castigated, a member of the Manic Street Preachers claimed to hate them more than Hitler. Yet their dreamlike, Floydian music found favour with a new generation, particularly in the US.

Now they have picked up where they left off. Rachel Goswell's whispered vocals are as difficult to decipher as ever, guitarist Neil Halstead turns the folk-rock jangle of the Byrds into something redolent of afternoons on the village green. *Star Roving* and *Don't Know Why* deserve special mention, simply for gliding by in such a pleasant haze. Proof that waiting for the world to come round to your way of doing things pays off — eventually.

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# Parish news

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## SUPPORT FOR CHILTERN EDGE

The parish council wishes to reassure residents that it will do everything it can to promote a positive future for Chiltern Edge School. Chiltern Edge School plays a vital role in our local community. With new housing development planned for the village in coming years it will become even more central to education provision in the area.

In recent years, school leaders, councillors and the Neighbourhood Plan Working Party have been working closely on development plans for the school.

The parish council supported the school's application for permission from Government to sell some of its land for new housing to raise much-needed funds. More recently, the council and school have been co-ordinating plans for the development of new sport and recreation facilities on Reades Lane.

The parish council appreciates that the uncertainty hanging over Chiltern Edge's future must be extremely unsettling for staff, students and parents and it will continue to do everything it can to support the school and wider community during this difficult time.

## NEW HOUSING TARGET IS DISPUTED

**The parish council is disputing the new housing target for Sonning Common, as published in the draft South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2033.**

The Local Plan proposes that 169 new homes be built in the village by 2033 in addition to the 195 new homes designated for allocated sites within the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan.

In response to the public consultation on the draft Local Plan, which closed on 17 May 2017, the parish council challenged the methodology for calculating the new housing target of 169 new homes and stated that it did not, therefore, accept the figure. Furthermore, it argues that appropriate capacity and sites did not exist for such a high number of additional homes.

It also disputed the number of windfall developments in the village since 2011. The draft Local Plan states that 13 new houses have been built in the village since 2011; the parish council believes that closer to 40 have been constructed.

New dwellings to be built on reserve sites within the Neighbourhood Plan – numbering 44 – plus the accurate number of windfall developments will be subtracted from any final new housing target for the village. ●

## NO HOUSEHOLD RUBBISH IN VILLAGE BINS PLEASE

The parish council is appealing to residents to avoid putting their household rubbish in village bins.

The council's street cleaner is dealing with a much higher volume of rubbish than usual in village bins and the parish council has had to buy him a bigger cart to transport it.

Parish clerk, Philip Collings, said: "The village bins are meant for the litter which residents generate when they are out and about, not for household rubbish."

\*South Oxfordshire District Council has placed a new bin on the corner of Reades Lane and Ashford Avenue, following a request from the parish council for a new bin to cope with litter from Chiltern Edge School pedestrian traffic. ●

## PLEASE CUT BACK HEDGES

**Hedges and trees overhanging footpaths are more than just a nuisance. They are dangerous too, if pedestrians are forced on to the road to avoid them.**

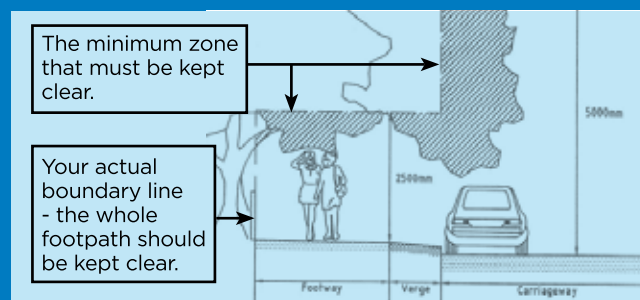
The parish council is appealing to residents to keep the areas around their property boundaries tidy and free from obstructions – from foot to above head height.

Under the Highways Act 1980 it is illegal to allow hedges and trees to overhang pavements and roads up to a certain height. If residents do not adequately cut back their hedges and trees the county council's Highways department can do the work itself and charge the cost to them.

The legal requirement is that the whole footpath should be kept clear of vegetation to a height of at least 2.5m and roads to a minimum height of 5m.

Parish Clerk Philip Collings said: "We are asking people to be neighbourly and to keep their hedges and trees inside their boundaries. If residents are unable to manage the work themselves and wish to avoid county council charges the Parish Office can put them in touch with a reliable contractor.

"People may report overhanging hedges and trees to the Parish Office and, where appropriate, we will issue letters to residents requesting that vegetation be cut back." ●



# The Edge

HIYA! 😊

Hi guys! It's me Olivia again!! Today I am going to be talking about two things, one is super cute and the other is kind of creepy... Let's begin!

So, thing number one is that over the past couple of weeks, my mum and I have been volunteering at a dog rescue centre in Stokenchurch. Basically, a dog rescue centre is a place where dogs who have not got a home, go to live. Some are fostered for a period of time while others are properly adopted. My part in all of this? I spend my Sunday mornings walking the dogs in the home! Anyone can walk them (as long as you're with an adult over 18) and you can choose from many dogs, last week, I walked Louis; a Chihuahua mix. He was honestly the cutest thing ever and the best news is Louis is moving into a wonderful home soon!

If you want to find out more, visit this website:  
[stokenchurchdogrescue.org.uk](http://stokenchurchdogrescue.org.uk)



Thing number two isn't so cute... I've been reading online about this conspiracy theory known as the Mandela Effect. The idea is that there are some book names, song lyrics, historical dates and other examples that everyone thought was one thing but actually it was another.

Example: You guys know Snow White right? "Mirror, mirror on the wall"? Well, according to this theory this iconic phrase has actually always been "Magic mirror on the wall". At first I was pretty apprehensive about this but I searched up that classic scene on YouTube and sure enough it said "Magic mirror on the wall". Maybe someone just changed the words and uploaded it but.....

Here's another example: There's that legendary scene in Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back where Darth Vader says "Luke, I am your father", well it's not those exact words, he actually says "No, I am your father". Mind. Blown. It turns out that there are so many films and books out there caught up in this "Mandela Effect"!

People think that it's because of a parallel universe where everything is nearly identical and some things get mixed up and swapped around every so often. This part I don't believe but it's still pretty interesting to think about!






















# BUCKET LISTS

By **LEAH TILLEY**

By definition, a bucket list is a number of experiences or achievements that a person hopes to have or accomplish during their lifetime. The term, 'bucket list', originates from the phrase, 'kick the bucket', which means to die, so it is basically a list of things to do before you die.

Over the past few years bucket lists have become increasingly popular as people begin to like the idea of setting goals and spontaneous ambitions that will make their life more enriched and exciting. I can completely relate to this, as I would really love to experience the wondrous aspects of the world and live life to the full.

Here I have few ideas of what you could put on your bucket list:

-  **Go skiing**
-  **Perform a random act of kindness**
-  **Fall in love**
-  **Learn a new language**
-  **Conquer your biggest fear**
-  **Gain enlightenment**
-  **Go on a road trip**
-  **Build your dream home**
-  **Climb a mountain**
-  **Befriend a stranger**
-  **Walk up the stairs of the Eiffel tower**
-  **See the Northern Lights**
-  **Go stargazing one night**
-  **Trek through the Amazon rainforest**
-  **Travel around the world**
-  **Try being a vegetarian for a month**
-  **Swim in a naturally-heated volcanic pool in Iceland**

Of course, you may find that some of these ideas are either incredibly hard to achieve or are very time-consuming, which may indeed be hard if you have a full-time job, children or are busy studying. However, some of these things are simple and easy to achieve; it's just a matter of whether you have the nerve to do it.

I also have a few examples of other people's bucket lists, including one of the craziest bucket lists and one of the funniest. One girl posted some of her crazy bucket list ideas and they included: cage dive with great white sharks, skydive, spend a day on her own island, experience

zero gravity, fly in an aerobatic plane, chase a tornado, walk on hot coals, throw a dart on the map and go there, as well as many more. Personally, I would like to try the last one as it sounds like great fun. Some of the others seem quite scary!

Another person posted a bucket list with several ridiculous ideas on it including: get in a taxi and yell, "follow that car!", browse a fancy shop walking backwards, hit somebody over the head with a frying pan, bring a chair into an elevator to sit there reading while people get on and off, and lastly fill a mayonnaise jar with vanilla yogurt and eat it in public. I find this an incredibly amusing bucket list, and would like to see something like this happen in public.

Well, I hope this article might've given you some inspiration to build your own bucket list as I believe it would really give you an overall sense of fulfilment and joy in life. ●

There is a huge range of different things that you can put on bucket list. However, a popular idea is travelling. Whether it's backpacking around the world, or, spontaneously flying to any random spot on the map, people love to travel. I mean, who doesn't want to experience proper six-foot high snow and live in an igloo, or visit tropical, luxurious islands where there is never a cloud to be seen.



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# ESSEX WAY

By **DIANA PEARMAN**

Tucked away in a quiet and peaceful cul-de-sac in Sonning Common there is a private development of homes available only to residents over 50 years of age.

The ethos and history of this development dates back to 1982, when Mr and Mrs Webb owned the freehold to the land now known as Essex Way. They registered a covenant 'that no transfer should be made to anyone under 50 years of age'. This was accepted and subsequently 18 bungalows and 16 apartments were built and sold. An important part of this ethos was that these homes were designed for and to be offered to local people first. The people who live here have become a close community.

The apartments are organised into four blocks each containing four flats. They are a good size, light and airy with kitchen, bathroom, living area and two bedrooms. Originally the apartments were leasehold but a few years ago these were purchased and will run for 998 years. All residents are members of the

Kennylands Management Company Ltd which has an annual AGM and its council is elected by its members. John Scottern is the current Chairman and Wendy Allnutt the current Company Secretary. The residents pay an annual maintenance fee, collected quarterly, which funds the upkeep of the buildings structure, communal areas, the gardens, window cleaning, gutter clearance, outside decoration and all matters pertaining to health and safety. It retains an emergency fund and pays for the buildings insurance.

An important part of the joint responsibility which has developed over the years is the camaraderie and neighbourliness generated by social events such as the pub lunch, tea and cake in the marquee in the summer and the business meetings for the management of their homes. Consequently, neighbours are known and this encourages, when in need, the feeling that they can ask for help. Wendy says "Neighbours can cross the corridor with a cup of tea just when it is needed, wearing dressing gown and slippers, if necessary,

and then call in again later to ensure the neighbour is okay. Relatives living far away know that instant help is available. A list of all residents next of kin is kept should the need arise for serious events and emergency contact". This friendly and supportive environment offers completely independent living but one where no-one feels isolated, and is a good place to live.

If you are interested in the future purchase of one of these apartments and would like your name to be on the waiting list, please contact Wendy Allnutt on 0118 972 3748 or by email: **Allnutt82@btinternet.com**



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Heating and lighting your home are basic necessities and Citizens Advice says energy companies aren't doing enough to inform customers about lower tariffs that could help them to make ends meet.

For further information on subjects covered by Citizens Advice, visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or telephone 03444 111 444 or drop in to your nearest Citizens Advice. For locations and opening hours see [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale)



# TOM FORT SMALL PLEASURES

I've been thinking about those small, everyday pleasures – things that we do on a regular basis, almost without thinking about how much they contribute to our sense of wellbeing; things we could do without if we had to, but which we would miss badly.

Here are some of mine, in no particular order. I bet you will all have yours, and they will be very different.

## 1. Newspaper at breakfast

Each morning I'm at home I put the coffee on, wander across to the One Stop to pick up the paper, and come back just as the coffee bubbles through. I drink, eat, read: the news (quickly), the weather forecast (slowly), the sport (very slowly). I never read newspapers online because I love the physical thing.

## 2. Bath

We are divided between bathists and showerists, and I am a bath man. The water must be exactly the right temperature and depth – a lukewarm bath is a domestic tragedy. Sometimes I listen to the Radio 4 news or Composer of the Week on Radio 3, or The Archers – sometimes I just daydream. If my bath is satisfactory I am happy.

## 3. TV

You occasionally meet snobs who say "Oh I never watch television, how can you waste your time like that". Idiots! Why would you deprive yourself of one of the chief pleasures in life? TV has never been better than it is now, and I speak as one who remembers The Woodentops and Rawhide back in the 60s.

## 4. Drink

I'd better not go on about the pleasure of booze for fear of setting a bad example. All I will say is that I don't overdo it – you'll have to take my word for that – but a modest intake of an evening (say, one beer/one glass of wine or two glasses of wine) cheers a chap up no end. Pathetic, I know, but it's best to be honest about these things.



# COOK'S CORNER

## Cheers to the Cheesecake!

By SANDY ONOFRIO

### CHOCOLATE CHEESECAKE – serves 8

150g digestive biscuits  
45g butter  
110g caster sugar, divided  
120ml whipping cream  
150g dark chocolate, melted and cooled  
2 tablespoons cocoa powder mixed with a little hot water  
1 (200g) tub cream cheese



Crush the digestive biscuits and mix with the melted butter and 1 tablespoon of the caster sugar. Press into a 18cm (7 in) cake tin and refrigerate.

Whip cream until soft peak stage. Add cooled melted chocolate, then the cocoa powder mix. Blend well and set aside.

Beat the cream cheese and remaining sugar together. Fold in cream/chocolate mixture and mix thoroughly.

Spread into tin on top of crushed biscuits. Freeze for one hour.

Refrigerate for about 30 minutes, then serve. ●

### STRAWBERRY CHEESECAKE – serves 8

225g cream cheese, softened  
5 tablespoons caster sugar  
200ml double cream, whipped  
150g digestive biscuits crushed  
175g sliced fresh strawberries



Beat cream cheese and sugar until smooth. Fold in whipped cream. Spoon mixture into biscuit base. Refrigerate for 2 hours.

Once the cheesecake has set, garnish with sliced strawberries. Serve. ●



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# VOLUNTEERS WANTED AT GREENSHOOTS

By JO STOVES

*"Greenshoots has been on this site for 12 years" said Denise Jones, Charity Administrator "but it's amazing how many people just don't know we're here."*

And that's a great shame because, without a penny of government funding, Greenshoots and The Ways and Means Trust do remarkable work helping people with mental health issues, learning difficulties and physical disabilities – work which is greatly appreciated by the families. The rented site at Manor Farm in Rotherfield Peppard is a safe environment for these "trainees" where they are taught new skills and are given the opportunity to expand and develop both personally and socially. "We can always find something of value that our "trainees" can do. They call it their JOB and can earn up to £3 per day pocket money."

The Ways and Means Trust started in Reading in 1968 as a rehabilitation centre for people suffering from mental illness. It operated in Caversham as a packaging depot for over 45 years until it was forced to re-locate in 2014. Fortunately, it was able to take over an empty warehouse at Manor Farm and join with the horticultural side. The whole operation was moved over one weekend and all of the 60 trainees moved too – no mean achievement. Now the warehouse contains not only the packaging operation but a new canteen where trainees prepare lunches for trainees and staff whilst

learning domestic skills; a sewing room where they make their own range of products for sale and a social club room where, one day a week, trainees "do crafty things" and learn computer skills. All this is achieved under the guidance of 11 totally dedicated staff members (7 full time and 4 part time).

Fund raising is a major issue. Costs are rising and the office needs a new roof. But this doesn't stop plans for a new outdoor classroom specifically for wheelchair users. Currently, produce and plants from the gardens are sold at open days, they have a regular stall at the Women's Institute Coffee Mornings and the Christmas Bazaar in the Village Hall where they sell plants and produce, jams and preserves and once a month between April and October they run the Tea Kiosk at Caversham Court.

More volunteers will be more than welcome. Denise says "a regular commitment, however small, would be much appreciated". There are plenty of areas where help is required with or without direct contact with the trainees. "We would particularly like some help with selling our increasing supply of good quality donated goods – perhaps someone could do it on-line or at home."

If you would like to help, please contact Denise Jones 01491 628933 or email: [mail@waysandmeans.org.uk](mailto:mail@waysandmeans.org.uk) She would love to hear from you. ●

## VILLAGE SPRING FRONT GARDENS COMPETITION

The society's judged toured the village looking at 20 gardens on a fresh and sunny day

### THE GEOFF MITTON CUP AWARDED TO THE WINNER

Alan and Janice Davis of Sedgefield Close – a very dainty garden in front of a pretty cottage style house. Small beds with spring bulbs and flowers and specimen shrubs.

### SECOND PLACE

Jean Sanders and Barbara Pilbrow of Chestnut Gardens – a large garden with a mass of daffodils, narcissi and small flowering shrubs set in a beautifully cut lawn

### THIRD PLACE

Mike and Betty Farina of Inglewood – a wonderful natural garden in front of a pretty bungalow with flowering shrubs, spring bulbs and an abundance of primroses. A large Magnolia tree in flower.

The cup and certificates were presented at the Spring Show.

### MAUREEN STEVENS



# Church news

## TOOLS WITH A MISSION

If you've ever wondered what practical assistance church and community can offer to developing countries, read on. Worn down? Not as sharp? Need a replacement part?

I am not talking about a possible visit to our wonderful village Health Centre, but about hand tools and sewing machines!

Did you know that there could be a use for those hand-tools that you no longer use or the sewing machine that is gathering dust in the loft? It is most likely that they can be reconditioned and made useful again to provide the means for someone, perhaps in Uganda or Kenya, to make a living.

A number of you in the village already know that I have been involved with Tools With A Mission (TWAM), for many years now, as one of several hundred unpaid supporters nationwide who collect tools and sewing machines, knitting machines and haberdashery. In my case, I deliver them to volunteers, at a workshop in Coventry,

who make sure that everything is in working order, before sorting items into specific starter kits typically for dressmakers, plumbers, carpenters, and car mechanics.

From Coventry, these kits are taken to TWAM's team in Ipswich where they are packed into shipping containers for transport to their destination. Last year over 20 containers were shipped out - a huge amount, over 300 tons - including over 2000 sewing machines!

There is always room for more and if you have any items you wish to donate, please get in touch with me, David Cunningham on 0118 972 1303. Please leave a message on the answer-phone, if necessary, and I will contact you to arrange collection.

If you would like further information about the work done by TWAM, please look at their website [www.twam.uk](http://www.twam.uk) (Tools With A Mission, dating from 1984, is a Registered Charity no 1104903) ●

DAVID CUNNINGHAM



## SONNING COMMON FREE CHURCH

After 2 years working with us here in Sonning Common, Martin & Samantha Seccombe and family will be moving back to Japan at the beginning of July.

Martin says: 'We were living in Japan, working with OMF International, for 8 years before we came to Sonning Common in 2015, and expected that before long we would need to go back to continue our life and work there. However we've grown to love living in Sonning Common and have an increasing number of friends who we will sorely miss. We've enjoyed working with the church and have been delighted to see a number of regular activities like praying that the church continues to build bridges into the community and sees local people drawn into closer relationship with God.'

The church will continue with all of its regular activities after Martin & Samantha leave and looks forward to welcoming new church workers to the team in the near future. ●

Services in June and July: Every Sunday at 4.30pm - all welcome.



## THREE SUCCESSFUL LENT LUNCHEAS

If you came to any of the bread and soup lunches at Christ the King Hall during Lent, you will know that they were very popular with as many as 50 people attending at one of them. We invited speakers from three different charities to talk about their work and donations were given by those who came and enjoyed lunch and a good chat. A magnificent £1,043 was raised overall!

### FIRST

Yeldall Manor Alcohol and Drug Rehab Centre, Wargrave £256

### SECOND

Helen and Douglas House Children's Hospice, Oxford £517

### THIRD

Oxfam's work in Syria £270.

Many thanks for your support if you were able to be there, if not we hope to see you for lunch next year during Lent! ●

SUE NICKSON





# HELPING THE WHITE-LETTER HAIRSTREAK BUTTERFLY

Most British butterfly species are in long term decline, in both population and distribution. Butterfly Conservation are working hard to reverse that decline, and one of the priority species in our area is the White-letter Hairstreak. This species relies on mature elm trees, the sole food plant for its caterpillars, so when Dutch Elm disease struck the UK in the 1970's it was feared the butterfly might become extinct. Luckily it has managed to hang on, although the population has dropped by an estimated 96% since the 1970's.

Butterfly Conservation (Upper Thames Branch) is trying to help the White-letter Hairstreak to recover in two ways. Firstly, in better mapping of the current population by searching for colonies on surviving elms and secondly, by planting new strains of elm that are highly resistant to Dutch Elm disease close to these remaining colonies. This gives the

butterfly somewhere to go if their host tree starts to die from the disease.

While surveying for colonies of White-letter Hairstreak, I was pleased to find one on a Wych Elm next to Widmore Pond in Sonning Common. My next step after finding a colony is to try and get permission from the land owner to plant one of the resistant elm cultivars close by. I contacted Sonning Common Parish Council and I was put in touch with Stan Rust and the Parish Council's tree planting team, and they have been fantastic! Not only was Stan and the team enthusiastic about the project, but they managed, with the help of Councillor Dirk Jones and the landlord, Rob Blue, to get permission from Brakspear to plant an elm at the edge of the garden at the Butchers Arms Pub, which overlooks the pond. The tree was purchased by the Parish Council, and planted just before Christmas.

The new elm is a variety called 'Sapporo Autumn Gold', which is already hosting

the White-letter Hairstreak in other areas. Hopefully, in a few years' time, you will be able to sit with a drink in the pub garden and be able to watch the White-letter Hairstreaks in the tree's canopy!

A big thank you to the Parish Council and the Butchers Arms in helping to secure the future of this rare species. ●

**PETER CUSS**

Butterfly Conservation (Upper Thames Branch)



## SONNING COMMON GREEN GYM

Do you feel the need to get fitter but don't fancy joining a gym, then the Green Gym could be the answer! As well as improving your health you will be improving the environment around us.

We meet every Thursday and Saturday throughout the year from 0930 until 1230 with a break for coffee and cake halfway through. There is no charge to attend and no commitment, just turn up when you want to. All tools and equipment are provided and safety information and instructions are provided by the leaders. During June we expect to be visiting Withymead Nature Reserve Goring, Aston Rowant Reserve, Hurst water meadow Dorchester, Ewelme watercress beds and Abingdon amongst other sites. Our tasks may include

scrub clearance, fencing, and path maintenance.

It is always good to welcome new people, even if you think you are fit, just to keep our countryside looking good. You may learn new skills, meet a great crowd of people and do something really worthwhile.

For more information and up to date programme see our website [www.sonningcommon.tcv.org.uk](http://www.sonningcommon.tcv.org.uk) or phone our secretary on 0118 972 3528.

It would be good to see you. ●

**BRIAN GARDENER**



# DIARY DATES

## JUNE

### Thursday 1

Short story competition opens

### Thursday 1

09:00 - 12.30

Green gym - every Thursday & Saturday

### Wednesday 7

10:30 - 12:00

Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute. Open to all.  
Village Hall

### Monday 12

14:30

FISH - Tea party.  
Village Hall

### Thursday 15

11:30

FISH - Pub lunch

### Thursday 15

19:30

Sonning Common Women's Institute - "My grandmother's legacy", talk by Jenny Mallin.  
Village Hall

### Saturday 17

12:00 - 15:00

Sonning Common Primary school fair

### Monday 19

20:00

Sonning Common Parish Council.  
Village Hall

### Monday 19

20:15

Magazine AGM.  
FISH offices

### Thursday 22

09:00

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

## JULY

### Saturday 8

19:00

South Chiltern Choral Society summer concert.  
Queen Anne's School

### Monday 10

14:30

FISH - Tea party.  
Village Hall

### Monday 17

20:00

Sonning Common Parish Council.  
Village Hall

### Wednesday 19

10:30 - 12:00

Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute. Open to all.  
Village Hall

### Thursday 20

11:30

FISH - Pub lunch

### Saturday 22

Johnson Matthey open day

### Monday 24

08:30 - 15:30

Summer holiday club starts.  
Chiltern Edge School

### Thursday 27

09:00

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

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

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

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

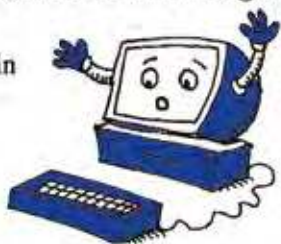


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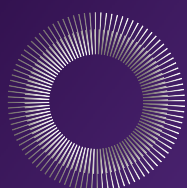
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