

SC

SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Another bumper edition of 36 pages has just been handed over to our Graphic Designer!

It is full of articles which affect our daily lives in Sonning Common; from very local issues such as the closure of Nat West bank and the impact of planning decisions on the flower beds which enhance our village centre, to the entry for the Britain in Bloom competition. Then taking on the larger issues which may affect us; the possibility of a 3rd Bridge across the Thames; the likely impact of the lack of effective antibiotic treatments on our health; to a national event marking the start of the First World War.

The community news pages celebrate many local events and, of course, our regular contributions from Tom Fort and Zack Hawkes. A new and exciting feature is Village Travel - a non-profit organisation led by Andrea Golder, offering a wide range of holiday opportunities available to local individuals and family groups. I hope that many of you will be able to take up the offers?

The summer holidays are fast approaching, a busy but enjoyable time. Reactions to the new refreshed style of the magazine have been very positive and with luck will prompt you to engage and write an article by 1 September please?



Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org



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SC SONNING COMMON
MAGAZINE

MEET THE TEAM ...



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'POWER GROUP' AND THE DIANA AWARD



Chiltern Edge 'Power Group' was formed to take a stand against any type of bullying in the school. Although bullying is no more of an issue in our school than anywhere else, we take it very seriously here. Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, cyber, racist, sexual and homophobic, but it does not matter what form it takes: it will always be deliberately hurtful and repeated. It will always involve an imbalance of power – making it hard for those who are being bullied to defend themselves.

The group is run by pupil-led committees that have been developed by students from every year group and they have recently received a Diana Award for their contribution against bullying in their own school www.diana-award.org.uk. The Diana Award is given to young people who inspire the lives of others.

Their achievements include delivering training to staff, representing the county at a conference, making important contributions to the school's behaviour policy, setting up a dedicated anti-bullying e-mail, running surveys, and

producing a student-friendly leaflet – soon to be translated into various languages, starting with Polish.

The success of our Chiltern Edge pupils as Anti-Bullying Champions is testimony to their hard work and enthusiasm. I am very proud of their success, and feel privileged to be able to work with such a dedicated and energetic group of young people. ●

Anne House, Specialist Teacher,
Chiltern Edge School

AN 'INTERNATIONAL' SUMMER FAIR

Sonning Common Primary School's annual summer fair was held in June and started out a little bit damp!

But the mood and the sun shone through during the afternoon and ensured a great time was had by all. The theme was 'International' inspired by all the countries in the World Cup. A big thankyou to all who came as all the funds went towards the Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) which is now being constructed during the summer in the school grounds. ●



CHILTERN EDGE YEAR 11 PROM

After months of revision and the end of the exams the Year 11 students from Chiltern Edge enjoyed a well deserved evening of fun at their leaving prom.

A hard working team from the staff and parents association transformed the student canteen into a theme of black and white for the prom.

The boys and girls arrived in their finery on a slightly drizzly evening, but headmaster Daniel Sadler gallantly escorted every girl to the entrance with his umbrella.

They are all now 'resting' and awaiting their exam results later in August.

Good luck to them all in the future! ●



Thames Valley Gym merger

Sue Newton from the Thames Valley Gym has announced that they are to merge with the Tilehurst Gym Club to form 'Kennylands Gymnastics'.

The merger will not affect the running of the club and all the classes will remain in place in both locations.



Rebecca Taylor from Tilehurst Gym Club will be running the new club with a team of coaches and is keen to continue the club's great reputation for producing success.

Rebecca started her own gymnastics career at Thames Valley in its previous life when it was known as The Dorian Centre. She is delighted to be able to take the club forward and realise her vision to provide a fun environment for all to enjoy.

For further information on gym classes and children's parties please contact her at kennylands.gymnastics@hotmail.com ●

PRIMARY SCHOOL GETS ITS 'MUGA'

For the past two years Sonning Common Primary School, alongside its Parent Teacher Association, has been saving to fund a Multi-Use Games Area which is costing about £70,000.

This is really just a large playground, 40m by 20m, with a 3m high rebound fence surrounding the area. It can be used for PE lessons through the winter and has areas marked out for football, basketball, tennis and many other activities.

Chris Hirst - SCPS Headteacher said 'The area will be used as an extension of the infant school playground and will enable us

to develop our sports facilities, and hopefully a few sporting champions, for the future.

Hopefully we will be able to start tennis lessons at an after school club in September for our children which is a sport that we haven't been able to offer before. Construction starts as soon as we break up for the summer and should be ready for use at the start of term.' ●



PROPOSED CLOSURE OF NATWEST BANK IN SONNING COMMON



Hannah Rice and Joan Grummant asked villagers using or passing the NatWest Bank in Sonning Common their views regarding the proposed closure of the branch on 29 August 2014.

Pat from Sonning Common Electrical thought, "It is going to affect a lot of people in the village because it is the only bank we have."

The NatWest press office states that: "The number of customers using this branch has dropped by nearly a third over the last few years as more and more of them use alternative ways of banking with us. This includes by telephone, in Post Offices, by app and online. The branch is open for 18 hours a week and

only 29 customers use it regularly, each week...Over our whole branch network there has been a 30% drop in branch transactions since 2010 as people do their banking when and where it is convenient for them." One gentleman we interviewed, John agreed with this statement as he said he does all his banking online.

Despite this, many are disappointed with the news of the closure and have signed an online petition against it. Many villagers highlighted the branch's convenience as it is near the centre of the village. Becky Godfrey said: "it's a really handy bank for me. I use it every single week". Rhona Ash said: "It is so convenient...part of the village really."

Jason Hawkes, who uses the branch for deposits said: "I use it for putting in cheques because I work at home. I will have to send my assistant into Reading or Henley." Heather said: "I am self-employed and it is very useful to pay in cheques, otherwise I would have to go into Henley"

In response NatWest stated they are ensuring that their customers will still have access to banking in the area. "We have an arrangement with the local Post Office, which is 0.4 miles away that allows our customers to withdraw cash, check balances and pay bills free of charge. We also recently announced that in the coming months, our customers will be able to deposit both cash and cheques in any of the Post Office's 11,500 branches across the UK. We're leaving the ATM behind so customers can get cash, check their balance and transfer money 24 hours a day."

Although the online petition against the closure has had over 900 signatures and is still available to sign, many are sceptical and doubtful that it will make an impact. Julie, a resident, said: "It (the closure) is going to happen anyway no matter what anyone says."

It is clear that this is a very emotive issue and as a village we eagerly await the results of the petition, whether successful or not. ●

THE SONNING COMMON SOCIETY FACES AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE



Sibella Bonham-Carter
former president of Sonning
Common Society

Since its formation in 1965 the Sonning Common Society has worked hard to fulfil its aims. Not all endeavours were successful but many were, such as tree planting, walks, discussions and talks, publication of two separate village postcards, walking leaflets and the Sonning Common Guide.

However, some of the Society's activities have been absorbed or taken over and by September the society, understaffed for some time, will be reduced to just two members. Chairman, Mark Richards, will not be available on a regular basis - and it will be difficult for the Society to function.

A Secretary, Treasurer and Guide Editor are needed.

Please think seriously about helping to save the Society from closing after nearly 50 years. ●

Contact Mark Richards.
Call on 972 3939 or email
mark.richards62@btinternet.com

POSITIVE FEEDBACK FOR SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE

Back in February of this year, Sonning Common Health Centre in Wood Lane asked patients to complete a questionnaire on the surgery and the standard of care they receive.

The questionnaire consisted of some 20 questions, designed by the practice and supported by the Patient Participation Group, aimed at obtaining patients' opinions of the service they receive and suggestions for improvements. Questions ranged from, "How would you rate the waiting room?" to on-line appointment booking and whether patients were able to see their preferred doctor or nurse.

A total of 416 completed questionnaires were returned and much of the feedback was very positive, praising the practice for its high standard of service. A full report has now been compiled together with an action plan which includes:-

- Introduction of a text message appointment reminder service
- Information display boards in waiting room
- A carers' board giving up to date and specific information
- Review of car parking facilities - signage and lighting
- Improving access in all areas

The full report is available on www.sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk. Those of us who are registered with the health centre are very well served by doctors, nurses and practice staff but also by the members of the Patient Participation Group who work with the practice on our behalf. ●

Jo Stoves

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE 2014

It's not too late to sign up for this year's Summer Reading Challenge! This year is 'Mythical Maze' - so you can expect lots of mythical mystery storybooks in the library. Staff & volunteers at Sonning Common Library are running special storytimes every Saturday in August at 10am, to make this a particularly mythical summer.

We also have an extra-special storytime on Wednesday 6 August, with visitors from an Oxford Museum leading the event - check with the library to see if there are any spaces left.

This year we're again asking teenagers and adults to challenge themselves too - read a book from a genre you wouldn't

normally choose, or write a review for a favourite book. (All entries will be put into a prize draw to win free days out). ●

Rosemary Dunstan
Manager Sonning Common Library

VOLUNTEERS IN THE LIBRARY

Library staff have been busy training volunteers since the beginning of June, ready for the start of the new 'system' on Monday 18 August. So when you come into the library after that date, please be gentle with the volunteers - they're still learning!





Cash boost for the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance

A cheque for a fantastic £1000 was presented to the Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance (TVACAA) representative John Downey by Caroline Conway from the 'On Your Bike' committee.

This year saw a massive 520 cyclists take part. The main organiser of the event is Sonning Common resident Penny Snowden. The event has raised well over £25,000 for charity in the seven years it has been running.

Two other cheques for £1000 each have also been presented to the Sue Ryder hospice at Nettlebed and to Sonning Common Primary School.

Next years date for On Your Bike is Sunday 26th April 2015. ●

INSPIRATIONAL MUSICAL DIRECTOR SAYS GOODBYE

South Chiltern Choral Society said a sad goodbye to its conductor and musical director of 47 years Gwyn Arch in a Very Special Summer Concert on 5 July at the Concert Hall in Reading. It was an evening full of emotion and reflected the love and esteem in which he is held.

The programme for South Chiltern consisted of Captain Noah and His Floating Zoo by Michael Flanders and Joseph Horowitz as well as numbers by George and Ira Gershwin and Cole Porter. South Chiltern shared the concert with Gwyn's other choir, Reading Male Voice, who sang a wide ranging selection of music including spirituals, arias, and African music. Both choirs also sang pieces by Randall Thompson to words by Robert Frost and then joined together to sing a surprise version of Thank You For the Music with words specially written by Allen Appleby. The words cleverly reflected Gwyn's love of a good joke, his wonderful arrangements and his ability to instil a love for music in others. The commitment and real feeling from the choirs was a fitting tribute to a

hugely respected man.

Gwyn inherited a choir with 52 members when he was first appointed in 1965. It is a tribute to his drive, musical acumen and lively personality that the choir now has over 100 enthusiastic members. Under his guiding hand it has enjoyed singing a hugely varied repertoire to a high standard and it also supports the musical development of young people in our local schools and the commissioning of new works by living composers. He will be sorely missed by all and we wish him well. Thank you, Gwyn, you will be missed. ●

Joan Grummant



NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATE

During the last two months the NDP Working Party has organised and led many meetings with residents, landowners/developers, officials from SODC, SOHA (South Oxfordshire Housing Association) and Chilterns Conservation Board. At the time of writing we have asked our neighbouring Parish Councils for the opportunity to talk with them about our progress so far.

The residents' meetings held in June, were arranged so that residents living adjacent to sites put forward for housing developments could discuss our site proposals with us and tell us their concerns and suggestions. This was done around tables in small groups with the proposals, maps and drawings given to each resident.

Discussions were positive and residents were asked to complete and return feedback forms itemising each separate element of the site proposal under three basic headings – Agree, Disagree, Alternative – with other spaces for comment and opinion.

These feedback forms have now been analysed and recorded.

This information will be evaluated and incorporated, where possible, into our final proposals.

At the time of writing we have had separate meetings for SON#15a - Chiltern Edge Top, SON#9 - Lea Meadow, SON#7 - Hagpits and SON#6 - Kennylands Infill.

During July we will have met with representatives of the owners of SON#1, #2, & #3 (Old Copse Field, Bishopswood Middle Field and Memorial Hall Field) to discuss our proposals for these sites – which are for:

- recreation and community/sports hall development on SON 3
- housing on SON 2
- some amenity green space use on SON 1

Meanwhile the Working Party is working on a first draft of the NDP. ●

Barrie Greenwood,
Chairman, Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan



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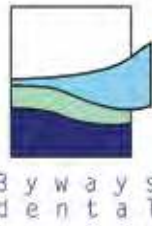


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AN EVENING FOR JENI

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Featuring excerpts from plays, comedy turns and
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involved from the director's chair, onstage, backstage
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for the RNLI, Jeni's favourite charity.

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Come and meet people, bring along friends,
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Book and Bric-a-brac Table

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Raising funds for Club SC



Sponsored Walk for Macmillan Nurses Cancer care

Instead of Macmillan Coffee Mornings

Rural sponsored walk 5 miles

Tea/coffee and cake in Village Hall afterwards

Look out for posters, article in Henley
Standard in September

Contact Linda Webb

PEPPARD BOWLS CLUB FIXTURES

August

Tues 5th	Peppard v. Henley Gentlemen (Home match)	2.30pm
Sun 10th	Clarrie Cook (Pairs - Club competition)	2pm
Sun 17th	Peppard v. Milton Hill (Home match)	2.30pm
Wed 20th	Peppard v. Suttons (Home match)	2.30pm
Sat 30th	Peppard v. AWRE (Home match)	2.30pm

September

Wed 3rd	Oxfordshire v. Berkshire at Peppard BC	2pm
Sat 6th	Dick Bishop Cup - Club competition	2pm
Sun 14th	President v. Captain	2.30pm
Tue 16th	AGM	7 for 7.30pm

SONNING COMMON SOCIETY

Autumn talk
Lest We Forget
30 October 2014

SONNING COMMON VILLAGE CRICKET CLUB NEWS

A mixed season so far! Highlights include:

- + the annual tour to Bridport
- + the performance of 4 Sonning Common teenagers against Swyncombe:

Markland Tidswell scored 75,
Luke Pitson, Tom Mee and
Michael Barker took 8
wickets between them.

All welcome to Sunday afternoon
friendlies especially young players

Contact

Howard Cooke: howard337@btinternet.com
Nick Pitson: welsh364@hotmail.co.uk

HEALTH WALKS

Health Walks continue through the summer
with new routes and starting places.

For fitness, it's friendly, fun and free! Walks are
for everyone and are graded according to age
and ability.

Contact us for advice about which one is best for
you at www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk

Timetables available from Health Centre, library
and Herb Farm. Come and join us!

Open Days 2014

Save the Dates!

Open evening
24 September

Open mornings
30 September
& 1 October

Chiltern Edge School

AUTUMN SHOW

Saturday 6 September 2014

2.30pm - 4.30pm

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MARGARET AND ELAINE HAPPY HERE AND NOW

By ROS VARNES

Margaret Moola and Elaine Williams, Sonning Common's two leading musical ladies, may be in tune with each other most of the time but when the sparks fly it's fun to watch!

Seeing the pair of them spark off one another is one of many draws for the 70 members of Nottakwire - the village's friendly and successful community singing group.

Friendship, enjoyment of singing, performing and contributing to the community are among the other reasons why Nottakwire has become such a force for good in the village.

When Margaret and Elaine decided to form Nottakwire in March 2010, they planned for a singing group that was all-inclusive and different from the usual expectation of 'a choir'.

However, their expertise and dedication together with the enthusiasm and commitment of the members has ensured the group's technical and musical abilities have steadily improved to reach what many would call a high standard.

Over the last four years Nottakwire has raised more than £8,000, the majority of which has gone to local causes and organisations, such as the village's pre-school, lunch club, youth club, Scouts, health centre, First Responders, FISH, Sonning Common Magazine and The Village Gardeners.

When speaking with Margaret and Elaine you get a strong sense of their commitment - to music, to their singing group, to Sonning Common and to all that they are achieving together in the community.

Friends and colleagues for 29 years, their lives have always been filled with



Margaret Moola (left) and Elaine Williams, directors of Nottakwire

music and they are both former music teachers. During the latter part of their careers in education, they were living and working in London, which is how they met.

Having decided to leave London, they began house-hunting. Margaret's daughter, who lives in Henley, said she had heard that Sonning Common was, "rather a nice place", so they came to have a look, liked what they saw, so decided to settle here and share a house.

The stage at the village hall is a far cry from the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and York Minster Cathedral, two of the places where their previous musical careers took them, and they appear to have found happiness and fulfillment in Sonning Common, directing Nottakwire.

Margaret said: "When we moved here 10 years ago, I had a feeling that something was going to happen in my life although I didn't know what it was. I know now it was the singing group.

"We saw a gap in Sonning Common for an amateur, community singing group and we thought that we would form one. We planted a seed, the seed grew and we have responded to that.

"We have received so many messages from people over the years who say, 'Without Nottakwire, I don't know what I would do - it's made such a difference to my life!'"

"That makes us feel seriously humble," said Elaine. "It's an incredible feeling. The group has enriched the lives of many associated with it. Singing gives everyone a voice and your voice is who you are." ●

New singers continue to join Nottakwire, and, according to Margaret and Elaine, slot right in because everyone is so friendly. To find out more about Nottakwire, contact Margaret and Elaine on 0118 972 1248. Email: margaret.moola@btinternet.com

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"I found everyone at Bridges professional. They were very respectful of our difficult situation and were always consistent in giving feedback. From my interaction with the staff I could tell that their aim is to provide an excellent service and therefore I would highly recommend them."

MS J RITCHIE
Kidmore Lane, Sonning Common



"I had originally instructed another agent without success and I decided to go with Bridges due to their personal service. And I was not disappointed – the entire team were proactive not only in getting potential buyers through the door but in driving the sale through to the end."

MS A BROWN
Baskerville Road, Sonning Common



"Thank you all for the excellent service that we received during the sale of our property. You handled the matter very efficiently and your staff were helpful and friendly. We would gladly recommend your services to anyone wishing to buy or sell a house in Sonning Common."

MR & MRS B ASHLEY
Widmore Lane, Sonning Common



"Bridges were very professional throughout the sales process which was a marked difference to some of the competition. I would recommend Andy & his team to anybody looking to sell in the Sonning Common area."

MR A HARDING
Kennylands Road, Sonning Common

NOTTAKWIRE THANK YOU FOR THE MUSIC



The feedback from visitors to Nottakwire's summer fund-raising concerts on Friday and Saturday 27 and 28 June, confirmed both concerts a roaring success.

A mixed programme of four sets, comprising "Songs of WW1," a medley of best known songs from "Les Miserables", Spirituals and Abba which was followed by a "Lucky Programme Number draw" with prizes generously donated by local businesses. The concerts ended with a finale of "The Rhythm of Life."

Soloists were: Cliff Pryke, Claire Holland, Peter Dayton, Chrissie Philips-Tilbury and Susan Rusman. The audience was enthusiastic - and sang along heartily to all the choruses for the WW1 songs. A team of volunteers acted as stewards and provided refreshments. Thanks go to: Sheila Walker, Sarah Hall, Becky Jenkins, Carol Viney, Adam Negus, Jill Greenwood, David McKnight, Peter Rickards, Alan Gibbon and David Rusman. We are truly indebted to them for their generous support. Beautiful flower arrangements were made by Sue Hedges. Sound and staging was by Hugh Legh: HDL Audio Visual Services and filming on Saturday by Jason Moola: Crouching Mole Films. In due course both a CD and DVD will be produced.

We wish to thank both of our fantastic audiences, not only for being so receptive but also for their generosity. Proceeds from ticket sales and donations totalled £1200.

Nottakwire presented cheques to the following organisations in the Village Hall on Friday 18 July: Sonning Common Health Centre; Lunch Club; Club SC; Scouts and Village Gardeners.

Our hearty thanks go to each and every one who was involved with the success of this occasion - singers, helpers, audiences, local businesses and professional services.

Our Christmas Concert Dates are: Friday 12 and Saturday 13 December. Do make a note in your diary now! We'd love to see you. ●

Margaret Moola and Elaine Williams
NOTTAKWIRE DIRECTORS



A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY

"Nottakwire membership has made a difference for me on a number of levels. It's almost like joining an extended family – everyone is so friendly, helpful and happy to talk, you are made to feel so welcome. Through the varied selection of songs that we sing you can also experience a number of different emotions and memories such as childhood, teenage years, those 'swinging sixties' and many others, including maybe some of those memories that have lain dormant for a while. Sharing them in song with others is really special and often very uplifting. Sometimes we are asked to learn the words by heart for a song and sing without our sheets – no bad thing when you get to a certain age!!

The members of Nottakwire owe all of this to the two very inspirational people Margaret and Elaine who originally formed this choir and continue to provide us with this wonderful opportunity."

Rosemary Edginton

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IT WAS A GLOBAL STRUGGLE ... LIFE CHANGED FOREVER NOTHING WAS EVER THE SAME AGAIN

By DIANA PEARMAN



In August 2014 the world will mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. The First World War reached out and touched almost everyone's life in some way or other...

My family's story is one that will be replicated by many. My grandfather born into a different world in 1883 was the fifth son of William and Ada Langford; one of ten children, seven of whom survived to adulthood. Apprenticed as a bookbinder he worked in leather, engraving the book covers with inlaid gold (one of his books went down with the Titanic!). Arthur married Eva Dye, a composer, in 1910 at the age of 27 and they lived off the Old Kent Road in south east London. My father William was born in 1911.

In 1915 Grandad joined the Royal Army Medical Corps and as Private Langford was sent to Ireland during the 1916 'troubles'. At the Easter rising he was issued with a truncheon! Subsequently he was sent to France, his corps was attached to the Portuguese Expeditionary force and spent some time in Belgium. A certificate supplying the date 10 April 1919 suggests that he was demobbed on that date.

No-one ever spoke of his war experiences and the tiny pieces of information above have been gleaned from artefacts left behind. It is fascinating to speculate

why these pieces were kept by my Grandmother who died in 1971, surviving him by 12 years. This secrecy is a familiar story, one that many families acknowledged. It is assumed that the horrors of the experience were too dreadful to recount. Not surprisingly perhaps, given that 21 million people died in WW1 and 20,000 in one day at the Somme. My family was one of the lucky ones whose Dad survived.

The war is slipping inexorably beyond the fringes of living memory and, as the Centenary of 1914-18 approaches, the Royal British Legion is launching a nationwide project Every Man and Woman Remembered. Families are invited to honour every one of their ancestors who died in WW1 www.everymanremembered.org

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have got a nice lot of toys.
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week. I have got two war loafs.
I wish the old war was over so
that you could come home.
I have gone up in a machine of war.
I have got a new pair of pattern shoes.
I am sending you lots of kisses. From
your loving
Willie.

DADDY HERE'S A LITTLE CARD
JUST TO SHOW I MISS YOU.
WHEN YOU'RE SAFELY BACK AGAIN
DADDY I WILL KISS YOU.

A bridge too far!

By JOHN PEARMAN



You may be old enough to remember the film which tells the story of the failure of Operation Market Garden during World War II, an attempt to break through German lines and seize several bridges in the occupied Netherlands, including one at Arnhem, to outflank German defenses.

The film's title is based on an unconfirmed comment attributed to a senior British Officer who, before the battle, told Field Marshall Montgomery, who had planned the operation.... 'I think we may be going a bridge too far.'

That same comment would be applied by some to the current debate that's divided opinion in Berkshire and Oxfordshire for more than 50 years and has been re-ignited following the traffic chaos caused by the closure of Sonning Bridge for six weeks earlier this year, due to flooding coinciding with the long-term closure of Whitchurch Toll Bridge for refurbishment.

The question is, should there be a third bridge over the River Thames in Reading to ease traffic congestion? There's support for the plan in Reading but communities north of the river in South Oxfordshire aren't so convinced.

In the last issue of the magazine we gave a brief account of the Annual Parish Meeting held in the Village Hall which focused on the issue of a possible third vehicle crossing over the Thames. At that time we

acknowledged that the topic was a complex one and worthy of more consideration. In this issue we are giving more space to the various pros and cons which have been aired, discussed and published during the last few months and particularly the view of our own Parish Council.

Things have moved on since then with a recent 'summit' meeting held at Westminster attended by both local and national politicians from those areas, which would be most affected by such a scheme. The meeting, hosted by Henley MP John Howell and Reading East MP Rob Wilson, was attended by the Home Secretary and Maidenhead MP Theresa May.

The meeting agreed that a traffic study should be carried out into congestion in and around Henley to see if a third bridge over the Thames at Reading is really needed and the impact such a bridge would have on traffic flows in the surrounding areas.

Reading, Wokingham and Maidenhead borough councils support a new crossing, with an estimated cost of £100 million, while Oxfordshire County Council and South Oxfordshire District Council are very concerned about the extra traffic it would create north of the river.

The 'Third Bridge' issue has been rumbling on for many years, anecdotal evidence suggests that the issue was first raised at a Reading Borough Council meeting back in the early 1930s. Needless to say Reading Borough Council are very much in favour

of a third Thames bridge, to the East of Reading, and argue that the communities north of the river stand to benefit from a new Thames crossing as much of that as much as those who lived south of the Thames.

Councillor Tony Page, deputy leader of Reading Borough Council, makes the case that a 'managed' crossing, which would moderate and control traffic flow, is the best option for drivers tired of congestion and delays. A crossing designed and managed alongside Caversham and Reading bridges could provide for a local distributor road providing for much faster journey times and be part of a wider plan for a park and ride system for Reading without the need for an extended road network. A new bridge would benefit the thousands of people from South Oxfordshire who travel to (or through) Reading for employment, leisure and shopping on a daily basis.

However, the communities north of the river in South Oxfordshire seem less than impressed with these arguments. Their major concern being traffic, more traffic and even more traffic! ...and this on a mainly rural road infrastructure that was never designed or built for such traffic volumes.

Councillor David Bartholomew, the Oxfordshire County Councillor who represents Sonning Common and eight other parishes that surround Henley, is concerned that without the supporting infrastructure of new roads and road

BELOW LEFT-RIGHT:

Reading Bridge ●

Road closures through Sonning ●

Motorists struggle through the flooding ●

Sonning Bridge ●

The delayed rebuilding work to Whitchurch Bridge ●

Caversham Bridge ●



improvements any new bridge may ease Reading's problems at the expense of making South Oxfordshire's traffic problems much worse. Of these nine Parish Councils that would be most closely affected the majority oppose a new bridge outright. One council wants private cars barred from using any new bridge and one is still considering its position on the matter. Sonning Common Parish Council has taken a more balanced view and supports the new bridge proposal in principle but only if a number of important environmental and infrastructure conditions can be met.

The main concerns of the parish councils who are in opposition to the new bridge is that any such development would channel thousands of cars from Reading across the Oxfordshire county border with the only onward routes being through Shiplake into Henley on the A4155 or through Sonning Common and Rotherfield Peppard on the B481. They feel that the B481 route would, by default, effectively become a new link road from the M40 to the M4. Also, that the situation on the already traffic choked A4155 Reading Road into Henley town centre would become even worse. A more general concern is that any new bridge and associated road improvements would actually encourage more cars and lorries - the M25 cited as an example of what occurs when new traffic routes become available to motorists.

Our own Parish Council has taken the view

that the current traffic situation across the river is not tenable and can only get worse. Even with both Sonning Bridge and Whitchurch Bridge in full operational use traffic congestion and the associated misery is likely to increase over the years. The Parish Council accepts that there is a genuine need for a third bridge. However, this support is not a just a 'knee-jerk' response, but one which has been agreed only after much debate and discussion. The Parish Council is also concerned that the limited timescale provided to give a response to a third bridge proposal has meant that there has been no opportunity to consult widely with residents as it would have wished.

The Parish Council's acceptance that a third bridge is needed comes with the following conditions:

- 1. That the road infrastructure can cope with the extra traffic without adverse effects in Sonning Common.**
- 2. That South Oxfordshire is provided with formal Green Belt planning guarantees that neither the bridge nor the road route will be used to justify approval of further housing or other development along it.**
- 3. That there is no question of Reading using the existence of a third bridge to claim any part of South Oxfordshire.**

If these conditions are not formally agreed and met then Sonning Common Parish

Council would withdraw its support.

So, the Deal ...There must be proper new road links, there must be protection of the landscape and areas of outstanding natural beauty, there must be protection against any new road being used as a pretext for building development and there must be no absorbing of any part of South Oxfordshire into Reading ...otherwise No Deal.

Many other questions surrounding a new bridge project have still to be sorted. Where would a third bridge actually go? How would you 'manage' traffic on a new bridge to avoid M25 syndrome? How could Park & Ride and Cycle Route Schemes be integrated into any proposal? How will the planned new housing in South Oxfordshire affect traffic flow? How will economic growth in Reading affect travel and traffic in South Oxfordshire? Who would pay for any new bridge?...And not forgetting ...What will happen if no third bridge is built?

One possible answer to the last question was provided by Parish Councillor Leigh Rawlins at the parish meeting in May when he said: "Even if a third bridge is agreed it won't happen for another decade and if it isn't, then the traffic misery will go on".

Predicting the future is always difficult, the past is more certain, and at Arnhem in September 1944 it certainly was a bridge too far! ●

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HELLO EVERYONE,

I hope you are enjoying your summer holidays. What have you been doing? Have you been on holiday? Are you looking forward to going back to school? I'd love to hear what you've been doing.

Please email me at junior_editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

ZACK



DOG

WORDSEARCH

G	E	R	T	E	P	P	I	H	W	W	T
J	N	N	E	N	E	V	B	F	P	V	E
G	F	A	J	L	A	B	R	A	D	O	R
A	O	V	I	Q	I	G	Y	P	N	M	R
K	I	D	X	T	R	E	D	M	F	U	I
J	P	B	L	F	A	K	W	C	S	L	E
P	O	D	E	L	K	M	G	T	D	H	R
C	O	R	X	A	U	K	L	Z	T	C	F
A	D	U	X	P	G	B	S	A	L	O	N
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J	E	F	I	Q	X	D	E	P	W	R	S
E	U	S	U	E	O	P	B	O	X	E	R

BEAGLE
BOXER
BULLDOG
DALMATIAN
LABRADOR
POODLE
ROTTWEILER
TERRIER
WHIPPET

MINECRAFT

MY TIP

My Minecraft tip today is about recharging pickaxes.

If you have two of the same pickaxes and they are both really low on charge, put them both in a crafting table.

A copy of your pickaxe will become fully charged.

BOOKREVIEW

**Football Academy
Boys United**
by Tom Palmer



My brother Finn is football-mad so he loves books about football.

My dad is helping him read this book every night and they are really enjoying it.

It's about a boy called Jake who wants to become a professional player but he is worried he is too small. It's a good book for children aged 7 and up. ●

CHESSINGTON WORLD OF ADVENTURES

I went to Chessington with my mum and brother. The rides were fantastic.

I especially love the Kobra and Dragon's Fury. We went on a water ride so we got really wet. It was very funny.

I liked going on the Monkey Swinger, which swings you through air while water shoots up at you like a bullet. Adults can go free with a voucher from some cereal packets, so if you get the chance over the holidays, I recommend you go. ●



A MEDICAL TIMEBOMB

By PHILIP COLLINGS

"A post-antibiotic era – in which common infections and minor injuries can kill – far from being an apocalyptic fantasy, is instead a very real possibility for the 21st century".

All of us under the age of 70 have lived our lives through an era in which we have all come to assume that bacterial infections can always be dealt with by a course of antibiotics. Those over 70 may, with luck, have that protection until they die. Those coming up behind can have no such confidence.

Before usable Penicillin arrived in quantity, from 1944, those were the risks that everyone faced as bacterial infections could not be treated. That may all be ending soon - think of a world where joint replacement, chemotherapy and reconstructive surgery carry a greater risk of death than of life.

The discovery of antibiotics and their amazing efficacy stimulated a burst of research that had discovered 14 classes of antibiotics by 1968 and five more by 1988. In the quarter century since none at all have been developed and most pharmaceutical companies have actually ceased research into the area. That just might not matter were it not for at least these critical factors:

- Bacteria evolve resistance to antibiotics very quickly, especially if they are exposed to weak doses as happens when a course prescribed is not completed or when, as happens in some parts of the world, the antibiotics are 'cut' or diluted to create a larger number of saleable doses.
- The discovery some years ago by the agricultural industry that adding

antibiotics developed for pure medical and veterinary use into animal feedstuffs not only inhibited the spread of infection in intensive rearing conditions but it also promoted animal growth and thus profit. An important side effect is that antibiotic carrying waste from these animals gets into watercourses and into the human food chain, spreading resistance further.

- Because people often feel better quickly they don't complete the course of medication which helps the bacteria to develop resistance. A sometimes casual approach by the medical profession to prescribing antibiotics when not necessary or appropriate makes this worse.
- The growth in world travel, especially medical tourism, such that an individual can be infected in one part of the world and bring that infection back to their home and family in hours. The resultant of all this is a huge growth in the number of cases of infection by antibiotic resistant bacteria - a problem that already kills as many people in Europe as die in traffic accidents, about 25,000 every year.

The problem is already with us and yet most people assume that major research continues - it does not. This is because, unlike drugs for chronic conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes which are prescribed for daily use over many months or years, antibiotics are only prescribed in short courses to eliminate specific problems. Therefore not many doses are sold to bring in revenues whilst to bring one new drug to market takes at least ten years and costs hundreds of millions of pounds.

There is thus no incentive to discover new antibiotics. What should be being done is at least threefold:

- 1. To conserve the treasure of the antibiotics already available by immediately bringing in draconian restrictions on their prescription and use whilst making their use for non-medical purposes, such as in animal feed, a criminal offence;**
- 2. To treat the need to discover new antibiotics as the Manhattan Project of this decade by attracting the best brains in the world and unlimited funding into the necessary research and development.**
- 3. To find ways to bring new discoveries into medical use in a controlled manner that minimises the risk of misuse - probably by applying a combination of tough regulation and very high pricing.**

As a parent and grandparent there is nothing that I want more than to be confident that my descendants will have the same chance to lead a life as free of infection and unnecessary pain as I have enjoyed thus far. Knowing what I now know about this incipient disaster I can have no such confidence - must I just despair?

(excerpted from Henley Standard Letters page 27.6.14)



Children with tuberculosis sleep outside at Springfield House Open Air School in London in 1932



100 YEARS

OF THE NATION'S HEALTH

By **DIANA PEARMAN**

As the nation commemorates the outbreak of WW1 – a look at how health has changed over the century, 1914 to 2014.

When war broke out in August 1914 there was a massive recruitment campaign for men to join the forces. For the first time, records were made which showed how many were unfit for service, they were so unhealthy. The average working week for labourers was 54 hours, sixty per cent of wages went on food and 10 per cent of people lived below subsistence level.

Many innovations were occurring at the beginning of the last century and some of it in the health arena. Florence Nightingale had instituted reforms which had improved the spread of infection in hospitals; the first sewage plant was opened in Manchester and the vaccinations given to the troops going overseas virtually eliminated typhoid.

Improvements in Public Health since 1914 have been in sanitation, nutrition and antibiotics, each having a massive impact. The reduction in infant mortality has been hugely significant, as has the control of Tuberculosis.

What a change has taken place over this time and one wonders what a worker from 1914 would have made of the growth in cosmetic surgery, of the rampant levels of obesity and the number of elderly people who live alone and are lonely?

A century from now human health is likely to be further transformed. Cancer will be treated with an individualised rather than a generalised approach. Degenerative diseases will be reversed by 'switching on' those genes that have gone 'off'. Re-engineered viruses are being pumped into bodies to target illness. Cures for cancer, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease are on the horizon.

The greatest threat to us all now is the decline in the effectiveness of antibiotics. ●

100 years in stats

1914	2014
43 million	63.2 million
UK population	
166cms (5ft 5 ins)	177cms (5ft 10ins)
Average height (male)	
2.8	1.96
Children (per family)	
52 (male), 55 (female)	90.7 (male), 94.0 (female)
Average life expectancy	
0.3% (male), 1.2% (female)	32.9% (male), 39.9% (female)
Chance of living to 100 (at birth)	
63%	12%
Chance of dying before 60	
130	4
Infant mortality per thousand	
Infectious, perinatal and respiratory diseases	Cancer and heart disease
Most likely cause of death	
39,000	261
Deaths from TB	
8.2	3.1
Murders (per million)	
Owbridge's lung tonic, Curie wafers, Pistoia gout powders	Simvastatin, Levothyroxine sodium, Aspirin
Common medicines	

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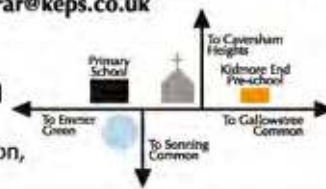


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IT'S YOUR VILLAGE

What Do You Think?

By ROS VARNES



The village centre seems to be constantly evolving at present, mostly due to brightening touches by The Village Gardeners. However, the biggest changes are yet to come with new residential development now underway.

Work began in early June on the construction of two pairs of semi-detached houses off Wood Lane (behind Occasions), while on 25 June South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC) gave the go-ahead for six new homes to be built on a neighbouring

site behind the chemists' shop and indian restaurant.

Around the same time, a new application was submitted to build a residential/office unit on the Green Lane/Wood Lane corner between the charity and fish and chip shops. As we go to print this application is yet to be determined by SODC.

In each case, Sonning Common Parish Council and some residents strenuously objected to the developments, arguing they would lead to an over-development of the village centre; have a negative impact on existing residents'

properties; and be detrimental to the village's character.

Concerns were also raised over the impact of building work, increased traffic and parked cars in the village centre.

However, those objections were overruled by planning authorities and at least two of the developments are going ahead, possibly simultaneously.

The developers argue that infilling within existing built up areas is preferable to developing new sites ●

Do you support new housing developments in the village centre?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

Should developers preserve village centre features like the flower-beds and telephone box?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't know

Parking in the village centre is

- ☐ Good
☐ Adequate
☐ Poor

Comments:

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Please return your form to: Sonning Common Parish Council (post box on the door of the village hall).

PLANS FOR THE GREEN LANE/WOOD LANE CORNER

Members of Sonning Common Parish Council's planning committee considered a new application to build a residential/business unit on the Green Lane/Wood Lane corner (SODC's planning reference P14/S1503/FUL) at its meeting of 16 June (a similar application to develop the corner was granted in 2005 although no development occurred).

Members voted unanimously to recommend that this new application be refused. Here are extracts from a letter to SODC from Gail Noble, chairman of the parish council's planning committee.

- There is insufficient parking for cars associated with this proposed development.

- It represents a loss of amenity area.
- As a residential development in a commercial/retail setting, it is contrary to planning policies.
- There would be inadequate visibility for traffic and it would be unsafe due to the proposed dropped kerb and repositioned phone box.
- It represents poor design due to its proposed pitched roof among flat roofs.

The letter goes on to state:

If permitted, this application would result in the further degradation of our village centre, which has been significantly enhanced over the past two years, largely through the efforts of our community group, the Village Gardeners. What was

once an untidy corner of the village is now an attractive, flowering focal point.

This voluntary work by The Village Gardeners to improve the village environment for the benefit of the whole community is highly valued by residents. Around 10 residents attended the planning meeting to voice their concerns about the proposal and many people have made written objections to SODC. ●



SIX NEW HOMES FOR THE VILLAGE CENTRE

On 25 June SODC's planning committee considered a new, amended application to build six homes on land behind the chemist's shop and indian restaurant on Wood Lane. Sonning Common parish councillor Carole Lewis attended the meeting to object to the proposal.

Below is an extract from her objection:

This proposed development must be seen in the context of other on-going and proposed residential developments in the village centre. It must not be viewed in isolation.

Work is already underway on developing two pairs of semi-detached homes on a site neighbouring this one.

At the same time, a third application is being made to install another residential/business unit in another busy part of the

village with limited parking and poor access.

If these unwanted developments are allowed to progress simultaneously, they will lead to months, if not years of chaos and disruption for existing residents and compromise the safety of road users.

In summary we urge you to reject this intensive and overbearing development which will adversely affect the village's rural character, the privacy of residents and compromise the safety of road users.

The proposal to build six new homes was granted by SODC. ●



From the developer

It is a well accepted fact that we need to urgently increase the housing supply to meet the needs of our growing and changing population.

Where do we want these houses to be built? Within the existing built environment where the infra-structure and services already exist, or on green fields on the edge of towns, where people will be forced to use their cars for every journey?

Most sensible people will want the former provided the development is of good design and respects the existing form of development.

Parish councils are limited in their powers to resist development. The housing numbers proposed will happen over the next 10 years, and, in my opinion, it is far better for the community to engage with the planning process to help shape where this development will happen.

Most sensible and responsible developers will welcome this engagement. To continue to resist, object and say NO will result on development being imposed on you by Government inspectors who have no feeling or empathy for your community.

Peter Neville, of Elegant Homes, the company behind the planned development of the land behind the indian restaurant and chemist's shop on Wood Lane. ●



BRITAIN IN BLOOM: JUDGEMENT DAY!

Following months of painstaking preparation, judgement day dawned bright and fair for Sonning Common's entry into the Britain in Bloom competition.

The two judges - Peter Thompson and Brian Burton - toured Sonning Common in Bubbles, the FISH bus, courtesy of volunteer driver Karen Guy. Their hosts were Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury, Jill Greenwood and Stan Rust, from The Village Gardeners.

The tour took in recent housing development, Gardeners' Copse, at the Peppard Road/Kennylands Road triangle, where The Village Gardeners have planted a flower-bed.

Then it was onto the Millennium Green and Sonning Common Primary School to show off combined community gardening efforts - the hallmark of Sonning Common's competition entry.

Planting outside local businesses, in front gardens, the red telephone box and the beautiful village centre flower-beds were also examined.

The judges heard about how the community gardeners had planted 7,000 bulbs in the last four years, and how residents and businesses had embraced the efforts to improve the village environment.

The tour culminated in afternoon tea at Bay Trees, on Wood Lane, where judge Peter Thompson commented: "It's great to hear about and see all of the wonderful improvements that have been made, particularly in the main street. And there is some really good stuff going on at the school."

Sonning Common is competing in the small towns category of the regional Britain in Bloom competition. It has also been entered for a community award.



The competition results will be announced in Henley in September.

Co-founder of The Village Gardeners, Chrissie Phillips-Tilbury, thanked all of the residents and businesses who had supported the gardening effort for Britain in Bloom. "We have done everything we can. Now we'll have to wait and see what happens," she said. ●



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Tuesdays Mornings (term-time only) 09:30 – 10:30 in Kidmore End War Memorial Hall
Call Debbie on 07802 347 943 or see www.debbiepage.org



TOM FORT

Hedge & wall ...



My mother was a woman of strong views forcibly expressed, which may (or may not) surprise those of you who know me. After buying our house in Wood Lane, we brought her over to cast a critical eye over the wilderness that was the garden, gardening being her chief passion in life.

Just about the first thing she said, pointing at the enormous hedges running the length of both sides was: "You should get rid of those." I pointed out that following her advice would require strafing with napalm, or – at the very least – an army of chainsaw-wielders and stump-removers. But she

stuck to her guns. "Dreadful stuff, laurel," she said scornfully.

She was right. We have laurel on all sides and I have grown to hate it. I hate the bright shiny greenness of those waxy leaves. I hate the fact that the colour and texture do not vary with the seasons. I hate the way it grows and grows and keeps on growing.

The biggest hedge is around fifty yards long, ten feet high and about eight feet thick. It casts a tall shadow, sucks the ground dry and is an absolute swine to cut. Even with the longest trimmer known to mankind I cannot reach the far

side of the top, so the damn thing never looks better than a mess.

What I would really like is a wall – one of those mellow old, slightly crumbly walls with bits of flint here and there, with succulent apricots and peaches against it. Failing that, either a fence (we've now got one opposite the monster hedge, with fan-trained plums creeping up it), or a sensible mixed hedge, hawthorn and blackthorn and wild cherry plum and wild rose, maybe some hazel and elm. Or a beech hedge. Beech is fine.

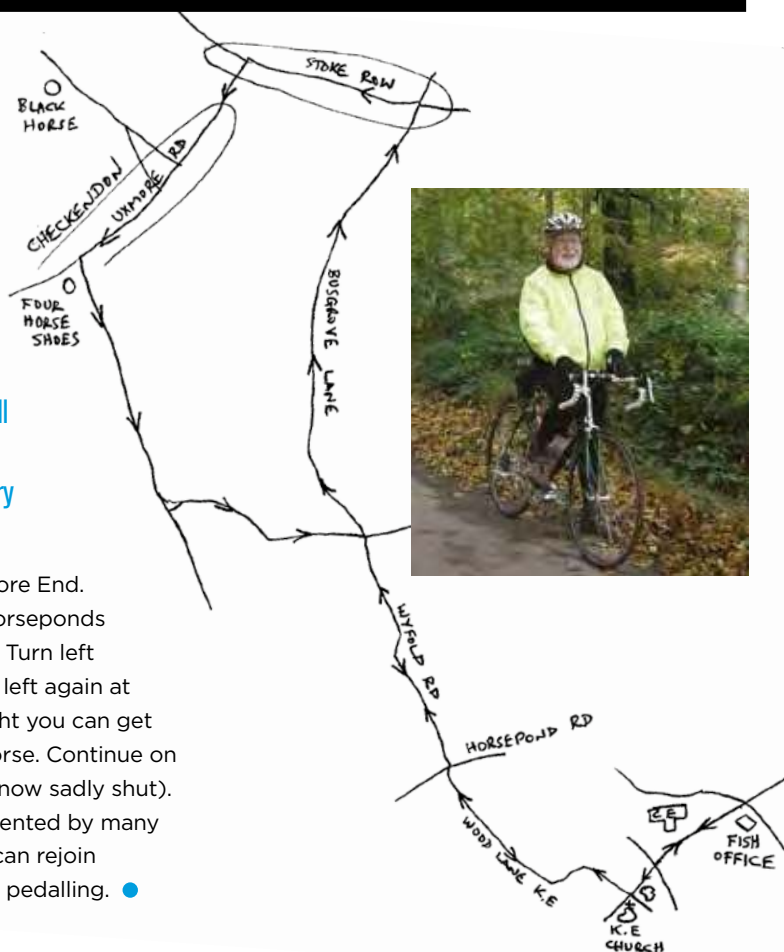
Anything but the accursed laurel. ●

A RIDE THROUGH THE WOODS

This ride is 11 miles, will take an hour or more and is ideal if you haven't cycled for a while. You travel through deep forest much of the way – good on a hot day, with only one or two small hills. You won't see many cars but sometimes deer. Stop at the Maharaja's Well for your water or drop into the Black Horse to try the excellent real ale drawn from the barrel the old way.

Leave the village by the FISH office heading towards Kidmore End. Then turn right and cycle North via Wood Lane crossing Horseponds Road into Wyfold Road, then Busgrove Lane to Stoke Row. Turn left through the village just past the small Industrial Estate and left again at Uxmores Road towards Checkendon. If you take the first right you can get to Checkendon's totally unspoilt friendly pub, The Black Horse. Continue on through Checkendon turning left at The Four Horseshoes (now sadly shut). Bear left at Hook End Manor (now a recording studio frequented by many famous artists) and continue to the crossroads where you can rejoin and retrace your route home through Kidmore End. Happy pedalling. ●

Alan Goswell



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ALL PROPERTY MATTERS

Village travels



Whether you feel like jetting off to the Amalfi Coast, taking a leisurely cruise or the Theatre trip, then you need look no further. Local resident Andrea Golder has some wonderful trips lined up for us in the coming months. You may have seen the 'Village Travels' folders in the CCA Charity shop, Sonning Common Heath Centre, the library and also in the Wood Lane Dentistry. Here is a sample for you.

27 September 2014 - 'Wild Tracks' Experience

Enjoy a fabulous day out to the West Midlands Safari Park followed by a ride on a steam train along the Severn Valley Railway. We will have a guided tour round the Safari Park with hopefully a sight of the new baby elephant 'Sutton' born earlier this year! After the safari, there will time to look around the other exhibits and animal shows before we take our steam train ride along the Severn Valley to Bridgnorth. Adults: £39. Children: 4 -15 £34. Under 4's go free (but no more than 2 free places per paying adult please). Local pick-ups available. **BOOK NOW**

13 December 2014 - Matinee performance of Irving Berlin's 'White Christmas'

Running for 8 weeks only at the Dominion theatre, London, starring Aled Jones, Tom Chambers and Wendi Peters. The price of £75 per person includes executive coach travel, best available stalls seats (normally between £68-£75 each), plus a 2 course lunch at 'The Landseer British Kitchen' restaurant in Great Russell Street, 3 minutes' walk from the theatre. Songs

featured include classics such as 'I've got my love to keep me warm', 'Sisters', 'Blue Skies' and of course the iconic 'White Christmas'. Local pick-ups available.

15 December 2014 - A Christmas Party with a difference!

A glamorous evening aboard Fred Olsen's 'Braemar' cruise liner berthed at Tilbury. 4 course dinner plus entertainment and dancing for just £59 per person. Optional overnight accommodation available for just an additional £30 pp. (Recommended). Transport not included in the price but there is a car park at the port. Great for groups of friends or colleagues.

19-20 February 2015 - Northern Lights Experience. £295

The Price includes an executive coach to the 4* Mickelover Court Hotel in Derby for an evening meal before departure to East Midlands Airport. There we will have a pre-flight briefing from members of the BBC 'Sky at night' astronomers before boarding our flight towards Iceland and the Arctic Circle in search of the Northern Lights. You will experience the night sky from a blacked out aircraft interior with a running commentary from the on board astronomers! After a 3 - 4 hour flight looking at the night sky, we return to our hotel in the early hours. After breakfast the following morning, we will depart for a visit to the National Space Centre before returning home. Local pick-ups available.

March 2015 - Amalfi Coast. £299 pp based on 2 sharing

3 nights 4 days B&B. Price includes flights, foreign transfers and a full day's tour of the Amalfi coast.

April 2015 Dubrovnik. £389 based on 2 sharing

3 nights 4 days half board at a 4* hotel just across the bay from the historic ramparts of Dubrovnik. Price includes flights and foreign transfers.

29 August - 1 September 2015

3 nights mini cruise to Guernsey and Honfleur aboard Fred Olsen's flag ship liner the 'Balmoral'. Price includes all food, amenities and entertainment. Drinks packages and additional excursions available. Price from £299 (pre brochure price shortly to be increased). Free parking available at the berth, but subsidised coach travel may be available. ●

For further information, posters and/or booking forms, contact Andrea on 0118 9722995 or e-mail amgolder@hotmail.com Early booking essential to be assured of a place.



Parish news

SKATEPARK WORK COULD START IN THE AUTUMN

The revamped designs for Sonning Common Skatepark were given a big thumbs-up by young people at Club SC recently.

Richard Bartlett, from Wheelscape, the skatepark supplier, visited the village's youth club last month to share the new designs and get feedback from the park's prospective users.

Some of the youngsters, who saw the new designs, had been involved with earlier consultations on the skatepark. Alex Jolly, 16, said: "This park is a mixture of everything that we asked for."

Richard, from Wheelscape, said: "What we have designed is a park to suit all ages and abilities. It will be suitable for

skateboards, scooters, BMX bikes, roller blades and wheelchairs."

The £100,000 skatepark, measuring 45m by 28m, will be built in the bottom corner of Bishopswood Playing Fields. The majority of the funding has come from grants and donations, and, if all goes according to plan, construction could begin as early as this autumn.

Douglas Kedge, chairman of Sonning Common Parish Council, said: "There was an attempt to start collecting money for a skatepark many years ago and it fell through. Now, under the leadership of the Skatepark Working Party, with support from the parish council, it is finally going to happen."



Young people at Club SC view the new designs for Sonning Common Skatepark

Around £15,000 is still needed to reach the fundraising target for the skatepark. If you can help please contact: Ros Varnes, Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council. Phone: 0118 972 3616. Email: deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk

PARISH BOUNDARY REVIEW

From Douglas Kedge, Chairman of Sonning Common Parish Council

Readers may have seen a full page open letter in the Henley Standard on Friday 4 July, taken out by the parish council in protest against South Oxfordshire District Council's (SODC's) boundary review proposals.

District councillors made their decision on the outcome of the boundary review for Sonning Common at a full council meeting on 17 July (after this magazine had gone to print).

And as I write this, I don't know what they decided but I want to explain to you why the parish council decided to publish the open letter to district councillors.

BACKGROUND

The Government recommends that local authorities conduct a review of their parish boundaries – the boundaries for civic administration – every 15 years.

The main purposes of these reviews are to ensure that parish boundaries are geographically logical; effectively separate communities; and allow for

proper local representation.

The parish council put forward a proposal to SODC for a fair, logical and democratic boundary for Sonning Common that fully met the review criteria. It advocated that the village boundary with Rotherfield Peppard must change to reflect the village as it is now by incorporating the continuous built up area of the Sonning Common settlement.

However, SODC's boundary review working group proposed that the boundary between the two villages should not change, despite admitting that this was "unsatisfactory".

The parish council considered this proposal of 'no change' as flawed and illogical.

We demanded that the boundary should change because it did not properly separate the two villages; Sonning Common had to take its neighbour's share of new housing – 30 of the 138 new homes that have to be built by 2027; and we felt it fair that

Rotherfield Peppard residents, in our settlement area, should be incorporated into the parish, make an appropriate contribution and be represented by the parish council.

THE ACTION TAKEN

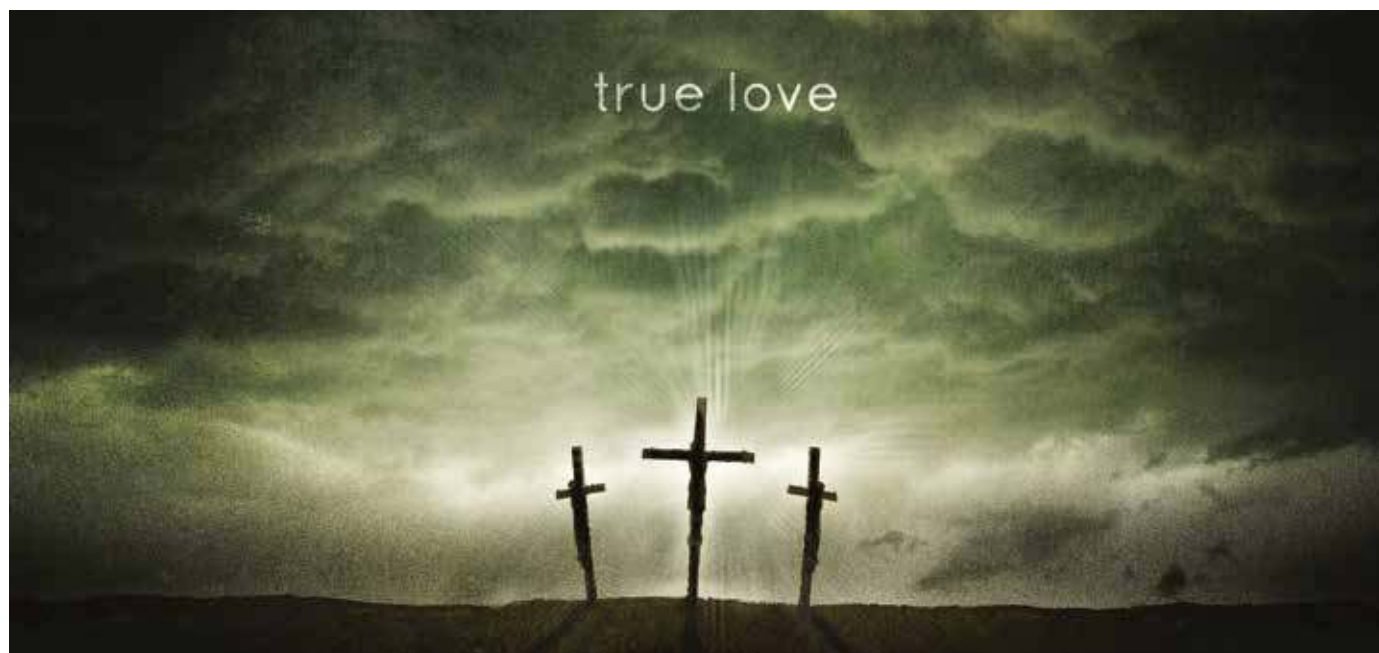
We decided to write an open letter to SODC councillors to encourage them to change their minds and re-draw the boundary with Rotherfield Peppard.

This was unprecedented action for the parish council. However, in the absence of an appeals process for the review and no support from our two district councillors – Paul Harrison and Alan Rooke – we felt we had little option.

We believe we are representing our residents' interests. We know from the feedback we have received that many of our residents want a new parish boundary. Indeed, more than half the cost of publishing the open letter to councillors in the Henley Standard was contributed by residents.

Thank you for your continued support.

Church *news*



TINY ISRAEL: A REFLECTION ON LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

When I was younger, I used to find it intensely irritating to read spiritual authors, gurus or life coaches who advised me not to worry and fret about being famous, leaving a mark or becoming a star! My annoyance did not come from nursing a secret desire for fame or notoriety. It was more a case of, "Well, it's alright for them to tell us not to worry about these things, since they have already them in abundance!"

Have you ever noticed how it is often the admired and respected – Mother Theresa, John Paul II, Martin Luther King – who tell us not to worry about admiration and respect?

I understand, therefore, that it could seem all too easy for a man who has spent 12 years of his life in the Eternal City of Rome and the last six years in this nation's capital, to advise people to accept the contours of their concrete existence. But as a Christian, I look to Jesus of Nazareth for the meaning of

my own and all human existence. His life tells me that one doesn't have to have all the trappings in order to live a life full of vibrancy and significance and having just returned from a study tour of Jerusalem, the meaningfulness of our ordinary, humdrum lives resurfaced.

Compared with other states around the world, Israel is tiny – about the same size as Wales. Apart from three years at the beginning of his life, when he was an exile in Egypt, Jesus of Nazareth never crossed the borders of his homeland. And yet, it is within such narrow geographical confines, within such a tiny, insignificant backwater, that Christians believe the most meaningful and intensely lived human life unfolded.

That life taught us that real living is about giving life to others. A life lived with real (not fake) panache, lived according to the mind of God, is a life given away to others. The spiritual physics of Christianity state that the more you grasp at life, the more you lose its secret and remain unhappy; the more you realise that your life is not

about you and so spend your life on others, the more happy you will be.

The only mark worth leaving behind us is the mark that God requires – a life marked by love. As Saint John of the Cross put it: in the evening of our life, we will be judged on love. ●

Rev Dr Paul Rowan, Priest-in-charge,
Saint Michael's RC Church, Sonning Common

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August 2014

FRIDAY 1	Peppard Group - Village Hall	10am
SUNDAY 10	Felt-makers get together. Bring lunch and a project to work on - Village Hall	10am - 4pm
THURSDAY 21	FISH - Pub lunch	11.30am
THURSDAY 28	FISH - Henley Farmers' Market	

September 2014

WEDNESDAY 3	Village Coffee Morning hosted by Sonning Common Women's Institute. Open to all. Raising funds for SC Village Hall - Village Hall	10.30am - 12noon
THURSDAY 4	Antique & Collectable Fair - Caversham Heath Golf Club	8.30am - 4pm
FRIDAY 5	5th Annual Themed Lunch - Italy. 3 courses with wine £15. Supporting local charities - Village Hall	12.30 for 1 pm
FRIDAY 5	Chiltern Players present 'An Evening for Jeni' - a night of entertainment to celebrate the life of former Players' chairman Jenifer Titchener who died in April. Free to all, with donations to the RNLI, Jeni's favourite charity - Peppard Memorial Hall	8pm
SATURDAY 6	Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society - Autumn Show. All welcome. Free admission - Chiltern Edge School	2.30pm - 4.30pm
MONDAY 8	Royal British Legions Women's Section - Cream Tea. £3 a head - Batten House	2pm - 3.30pm
FRIDAY 12	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45am - 11.30am
SATURDAY 13	Community Christian Action (CCA Shop) - Autumn Fayre - Village Hall	9am - 12.30pm
MONDAY 15	Sonning Common Parish Council - Village Hall	8pm
TUESDAY 16	Peppard Bowls Club AGM - Peppard Memorial Hall	7pm for 7.30pm
THURSDAY 18	FISH - Pub lunch - 11.30am	
THURSDAY 18	Sonning Common Women's Institute - Keep Fit led by Jeannette Hughes. Visitors welcome - Village Hall	7.30pm
FRIDAY 19	Notts group - Village Hall	9.30am - 12.30pm
SATURDAY 20	Greys Court Big Harvest - Greys Court	10am - 5pm
SUNDAY 21	Greys Court Big Harvest - Greys Court	10am - 5pm
THURSDAY 25	FISH - Henley Farmers' Market	
THURSDAY 25	Sonning Common Society AGM. All welcome, refreshments included - Sonning Common Library	7.30pm
FRIDAY 26	Nottakwire practice - Village Hall	9.45am - 11.30am
SUNDAY 28	Felt-makers get together. Bring lunch and a project to work on - Village Hall	10am - 4pm

FISH runs regular shopping trips to Tesco in Henley on Monday mornings and to Henley and Reading town centres. For more information and to book call 0118 972 3986. ●



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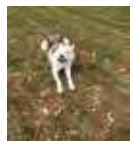
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