

# SC

# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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## RUF 50 YEAR CELEBRATIONS

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AUG/SEP 2023

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# FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

This magazine copy was largely put together on a ferry from Bilbao to Portsmouth. Two days with very little interruption – apart from food prepared by chefs and presented for our consumption. What a treat?

The internet makes this all possible and the benefits accrue for such a project. The wi-fi on our Spanish campsite was very efficient so the material was there downloaded and ready for me to use, both photos and texts. Almost 200 pieces for this one magazine.

It is almost unimaginable that 10 or so years ago this would not have been considered possible.

This issue is full of the fun activities across the village in recent times. It includes profiles of two special residents and their work, our amazing librarian's trek across Scotland as well as books written by local writers.

I hope the weather improves for the school summer holidays!! ●

Diana Pearman Editor

## MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



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# MECE NEWS



As we near the end of the school year I always lead my staff in a piece of reflection that both asks them to look at the last year and what has gone well and to consider what our next steps are. In terms of the next steps, it was pleasing that our staff are seeing the way forward in an almost identical manner as my leadership team and more of that later in the article. Nevertheless, it was the positives from 2022-2023 that really made my heart burst with pride as this was a different list from years previously, a list that showed the maturation of the school over the last few years and indicated the progress we had really made.

**These included:**

- A range of successes with individual students, many of whom had overcome previous difficulties or had coped with the transition into secondary school surmounting considerable adversity.
- Our range of trips made the staff feel proud (the ski trip, Parliament, Duke of Edinburgh, The Tower of London, theatre trips, the Imperial War Museum to but a few) but also the students conduct on these trips.
- Our success in the UKMT national maths challenge. When I became headteacher the students barely got any bronze awards. This year because of a continued curriculum push, we achieved a range of gold, silver and bronze awards.

- Our House events, including the wonderful House Music event- if you wanted to see a benchmark of how our students feel about their school, watching Year 7 sing 'MECE' (with lyrics re-written and linked to the different Houses by my brilliant Head of Music, Mrs Brown) to the tune of YMCA was really quite something!
- The academic progress of some of our least able groups has really pleased us as has their attitude to school.
- Our GCSE results last summer still leave the staff with a great feeling: to increase the 4+ (C in old money!) pass rate from 49% to 73% was another affirmation of all we are doing.

As I write this, we have just finished two weeks of school tours for Year 5 parents with over 140 families visiting the school as they make their decisions regarding the selection of a secondary school. Their remark is always the same- "isn't the school quiet and calm?" and "our guides have been wonderful, articulate, confident students who are clearly proud of their school". And these two barometers make me incredibly gratified- that the students' day to day experience is clearly such a positive one. However, when I spoke to my staff last week, I used the word "restless" and our need to keep building on our successes and progress. And so, as one year ends and we prepare for what comes in 2023-2024 we must ensure we focus on improving our homework provision, on how we guarantee the students make



progress at each assessment point, a sharpening of our detention system and the consistency of our staff in terms of how they teach and how they support the students each day. We also know we need to continue to work hard with those students who find school difficult for a matrix of different reasons; building their self-esteem, supporting their challenges and giving them a positive experience of life at secondary school.

By the time you read this the MECE community will be on their summer break but there is a lot of excitement about what is coming next and our new Year 7 (which will be at full capacity) and the next increment in the school's journey. Fingers crossed for a nice warm summer holiday- all the members of the MECE community thoroughly deserve it! ●

**ANDY HARTLEY**  
Headteacher



# SCPS NEWS SUMMER 2023



**Quad Kids**

Quad Kids is a school competition held in Oxfordshire where teams of children all take part in four different athletics disciplines – a throw, jump, sprint and long run – gaining points in each for their team.

On a lovely sunny Thursday in June the Key Stage 2 (junior school age) teams travelled to Didcot for the South Oxfordshire Final. After the usual amount of throwing, jumping and running, the Year 3/4 'A' team and Year 5/6 team both came first, meaning that SCPS are South Oxfordshire champions for both age groups! The Year 3/4 'B' team also came fourth overall, a tremendous achievement.

Mr Andrews who went to the event with the children said "we are so proud of all of the children for their hard work and dedication up to this point. We are so lucky to have so many strong teams and be backed up by such strong reserves, and it is fantastic to see this culminate in them being champions!"

**Gardening**

The reception classes (Kites) have been enjoying gardening this term. The children have planted fruits and vegetables including carrots, beans, spinach, strawberries, tomatoes, melons and more, which have been flourishing in the warm weather. The children have been enjoying eating their home grown foods during snack time!



**Summer Fair**

After weeks of very hot weather the weekend of the summer fair was cooler in temperature, but all of the stalls were very busy and the bbq queue very long! Gunge the teacher proved very popular with the children, and the bottle tombola was also a sell out. Music was provided by the school choir and band, and children also helped at the year 6 stall. In the hall cakes and hot drinks were available and the enormous bouncy run through – The Challenger – was full of children.

**Staff**

Chrissy Matthews, school office manager, left at the end of term and is the subject of a whole page in the magazine. Teacher Mrs Abi Fraser also left after 10 years at school and two teaching assistants - Jo Kemp and Sue Green, who has been a teaching assistant at SCPS for 31 years! She has seen many children, and staff, pass through the gates at school and everyone wishes her the very best in the future. ●



**Coronation Mosaic**

15 children from each year group took part in creating a Coronation Mosaic. A competition was held for the best design and the winner was Phoebe Edney in year 4, who designed the Mosaic to represent King Charles III. The school thanks CECA (Chiltern Edge Community Association) and the PTA for funding this brilliant Mosaic workshop!

# SOCO 10K A FIRST

We are delighted to announce the inaugural Sonning Common 10k, a fundraiser for Sonning Common Primary School taking place on Sunday 1st October at 9:30am. This is a great opportunity to support our wonderful school whilst also participating in a chip-timed 10k around Sonning Common and the surrounding countryside.

Starting and finishing at the primary school, the proceeds from this event will go towards a fantastic cause: the creation of an all-weather track around the school field. This mud-free track will promote an active, healthy lifestyle among the pupils and encourage the "Daily Mile", where each child and staff member walks or runs a mile on a

regular basis. Entrants need to be 15 or over on the day of the event. To register, please go to: [www.SoCo10k.co.uk](http://www.SoCo10k.co.uk) and to find out more.

If you are on social media, please follow our pages to be kept up to date with news:

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**Facebook: [Sonning Common 10k](https://www.facebook.com/SonningCommon10k)**

We are immensely grateful for the generous support of our sponsors: Badgemore Park and Shiplake College. Without their encouragement and financial contributions, it simply would not be possible to stage the race and raise money for the school. A special thanks to Beville Estate Agent who

are supporting us with all the signage and advertising: Richard was a founding member of the school's 'On Your Bike' in 2007 and we are looking forward to hopefully making this fundraiser as successful as On Your Bike has been for the school and local community.

Finally, to put on this event, we require an army of volunteers, so if you can help us on the day, please get in touch for further information:

**[sonningcommon10k@outlook.com](mailto:sonningcommon10k@outlook.com)** ●

**CATE THOMAS**  
Sonning Common 10k Committee

# PRESCHOOL MOVES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

The village is very lucky to have their own preschool which has actually been running for 47 years now! Starting from a small group of mums it is now well established in our community with many opportunities for learning through play.

One of the new opportunities this year has been the first Summer Holiday Club. Running over the first two weeks of the school holidays, it has been a roaring success. The children have been enjoying lots of outdoor games, baking and crafting and the staff are looking forward to running the club again next year.

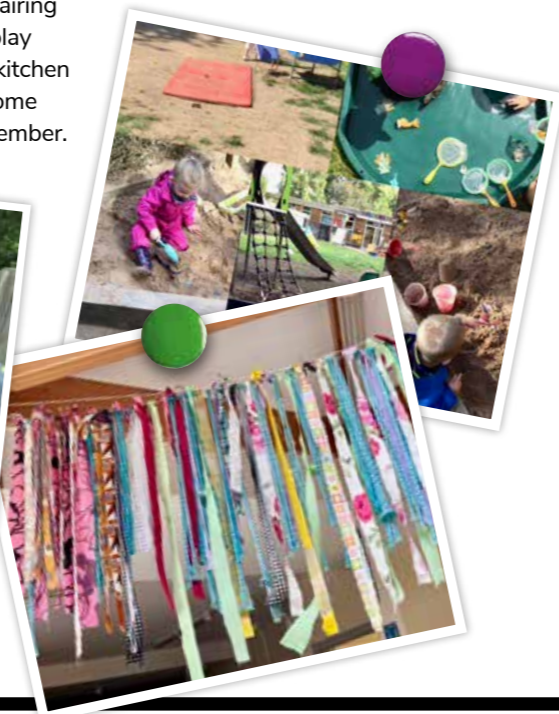
The preschool has recently launched a Clothes Bank to support the local community and encourage sustainability. The aim is to offer parents an option to

access children's clothing they will need at preschool. The key items they are looking for are wellie boots, slippers/indoor shoes, coats, and waterproofs, in good condition. Donations are welcome - in small sizes of course! Parents will be able to access it outside reception, Monday - Friday from 8.30am to 5pm in term time.

Jo Lawson, manager, would like to say thanks for some recent donations. Bridges estate agents and CECA (Chiltern Edge Community Association) kindly donated funds which will be put towards repairing and replacing some of the outdoor play facilities. The children love the mud kitchen and sand area and will appreciate some new equipment to play with in September.

Beville estate agents kindly bought fabulous hi-vis jackets for the staff and children at the start of this year so they can be safe and seen around the village for trips to the library/school etc. Do say hello if you see them on a walk around!

There are a few spaces still available for the Autumn term and preschool can now provide care from 8.30am to 5pm, so please contact the office for information - 01189 724760 or email [info@sonningcommonpreschool.co.uk](mailto:info@sonningcommonpreschool.co.uk)



## TENNIS



Following a ballot, the members of Sonning Common Tennis club voted to have the new resurfaced courts painted green/dark green. The weather is finally improving and everyone is looking forward to playing on the new courts.

If interested in joining our club please look at our website [www.sonningcommontenniscub.org](http://www.sonningcommontenniscub.org) or email us at [info@sonningcommonclub.org](mailto:info@sonningcommonclub.org)  
Memberships junior £10, single adult £25, Household £40



## Photographic competition

This lovely photo taken by Alex Wong, Winner of the photographic competition. Alex is 11 years old.



# FUN AND GAMES AT ABBEYCREST

Abbeycrest Care Home have had a fabulously busy summer. We have held our Annual Summer Fete whereby a number of local businesses donated bottles of wine and meals for our very successful Tombola. We were even gifted a Porsche Track Day Racing car experience at Silverstone.

We celebrated Bastille Day on the 14 July, with a fabulous day with the staff dressing up in costume and all having a great time.

Abbeycrest are hosting the Sonning Common Whist Club every Monday from 1.45pm-4.30pm ish. Drinks and nibbles are available.

Lorna Bishop from Little Birches brings a selection of children to Abbeycrest where they play games and the children read to the adults.

Deacon Brian from St Michaels Catholic Church and Rev David Jenkins from the Methodist Church come in to give Holy Communion every other week.

We are also very excited to announce that Abbeycrest has had a facelift. We are having our communal areas redecorated along with new furniture and upgraded bedrooms. We will be holding an open day for the community to come and give us their opinions.

**GEORGE KING**  
Regional Sales Support Manager



## Missing crown

It is very unusual that I decide to comment on what I feel has been unsociable behaviour. The King's coronation crown knitted by a WI member, a job that took her 4 months, was stolen at the beginning of June. It is such an unusual occurrence in the village that I comment on it and seek any information anyone might have about its location.

Thanks Diana

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central part of the makeup of the town. Throughout lockdown Machins opened its doors to continue to serve its loyal customers and today the popularity of the store is still seen with the queues at peak times.

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# PEOPLE, PAPERWORK, PLASTERS!

by CHRISTINE ATKINSON



Chrissy Matthews is the Office Manager at SCPS, but she is so much more to the children, parents, staff and wider community. Like their mum at school, the children go to her when feeling unwell, falling over, falling out with friends, forgotten their lunch, need a swimming hat or lost a jumper. Parents know the hatch window to her office will always be opened if they need to chat and the staff know that Chrissy is just a fountain of knowledge. Chrissy left the school at the end of the school year in July after 19 years as Office Manager and I had a long chat with her about her time there.

Chrissy has been involved with the school for more than two decades starting out as a parent with her sons, becoming a parent volunteer and joining the PTA, before starting to help the bursar in the office a couple of times a week. At this time the school head was Pip Marples, and so, when the bursar (Mrs Pam Gibbons) was leaving he encouraged Chrissy to apply for a role.

There was a lot of change happening at that time, with new technology – computers arriving! – and reorganisation in the school office. Chrissy started full time in September 2004 as School Administrator when the first emails were being sent via the world wide web, and you still had to dial up through the phone line to get to the internet. Most communication with parents and staff was through pieces of paper; notes taken round to teachers by pupils and hundreds of permission forms sent home for trips

out swimming and sports events – which often remained buried deep in book bags. All the tear off slips were then returned, or lost and resent, plus cheques and cash for trips, to the office to be sorted. All of this is now achieved electronically on a special school system where parents can give the permission, pay for lunches and trips with no forms or cash. This is probably the biggest change in Chrissy's role since starting. When my children were at the school one of the best 'jobs' was being chosen to take the register back to the office. Two children would get the role for the week and be allowed to walk themselves from classroom to the office. Even this is now electronic.

There have been many staff changes at school over the years. Bursars, teachers and teaching assistants, caterers and caretakers. Pip left in 2009 and Chris Hirst took over the role of head, and Chrissy became Office Manager. Mr Hirst is still head and things have evolved and changed through the 10 years since then. Electronic interactive white boards mean teachers and staff can use them for writing on, presentations and even watch

documentaries. Standing desks have been introduced to help with children who might find it harder to sit still and focus in lessons. This has been a huge success. Chrissy says she has made many lifelong friends that she keeps in contact with and still sees some of the ex-staff outside of school.

I asked Chrissy what were her favourite things at school?

"My favourite time is Christmas. We have a Christingle service where all the children sit in circles with their class and have an orange with a candle lit. It is a lovely scene. The decorations the children make each year are hung in the hall and look great, and the whole school has a special Christmas lunch with festive songs which makes wonderful memories. The other favourite thing is talking, listening, and helping the children, this is very important too."

Hundreds of children have passed through the primary school whilst she has been working there and one of the other things Chrissy mentioned is how lovely to see some of the previous students return for work experience, now as parents themselves, and one has returned as a teacher in the school. She often sees ex students working locally or in shops and they will recognise her before she recognises them.

Chrissy is looking forward to a few months off, spending more time with her husband and wider family and getting to travel in term time (a big bonus!) before looking for a new role. Everyone at school, children and staff, will miss her enormously and she said she will miss the people and the community connection most. I am sure that she will be kept up to date with all that is going on as she walks round the village. Enjoy your next chapter Chrissy! ●

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There are no walk timetables in paper form at the moment, so you will have to check the website for days/starting places/distances: [www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable](http://www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable) (the starting places usually change at the beginning of September)

## FOOD BANK

THANKS to all of you who are not deterred by the road closed sign on the entrance from Widmore Lane into Blounts Court road and are still providing donations. The gas workings are taking place for 20 weeks so a long-term problem.

Food donations are still needed and gratefully received. Springwater Church can be reached from Widmore Lane and from the B481.

## STAMP FRAUD

It is well known that there have been a number of counterfeit stamps being used and that the Post Office has been trying to counteract this by increasing the security in the design of the stamps. To this end, the new stamps with their digital code strip has been developed. Unfortunately, a number of customers have been sent notices to say that the letter which has been sent cannot be delivered, as they have used an improper stamp.



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# ROTHERFIELD UNITED FC NEWS

## COMMUNITY DAY 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



invited to hand out trophies. Ex Rotherfield player Dan Bayliss (now playing for Slough Town) and local professional Danny Loader (playing for Porto) were invited to give out awards and chat to the children. These two young men had photos taken with the children and are great examples to them of what you can achieve with training and dedication. The Mayor of Henley, Sarah Miller, was also invited and came along to be a part of the day and was given her own RUFC medal to go with her chains of office!

There is a very special cup that is given out to an under 9 player each year. The Christopher Cup is awarded to an Under 9 player who plays football in the right spirit, and for their love of the game. Christopher Kendrick was only 9 when he died of leukaemia, and his parents, Fred and Margret (Fred was chair of RUFC for many years), wanted this award to commemorate their son who loved football. This year Fred and family came along to enjoy the day and present the award in person.

**Scarlett Holland was this year's recipient of the Christopher Cup**

**The Manager of the Year was awarded to Ian Leath**

**Clubman of the Year to Jon Durant who has been immensely helpful this year with a fabulous new website.**

**Junior Clubman of the Year to Millie Queen Bee Award to Louise Colam**

The BBQ, hog roast and bar were very busy all day and the fastest shot proved very popular as there were prizes for youth age groups and adults. The brand-new full-size mascot – Rotherbee – made its first appearance and had lots of children clamouring to get a photo. There was a tuck shop selling sweets and ice creams, and a merchandise stall with plenty of club goodies to purchase. Local charity Sport In

Mind have a close association with the club and were on site in the Well Being area. They organise and support sessions for all, to help mental health through sport and exercise.

All this and live music too!

The day was brilliantly planned and organised by the club Treasurer/ Membership Secretary Alan Noble who said, "What an amazing day! I hope everyone enjoyed themselves, and the club would like to say a big thanks to the main sponsor Bridges Estate Agents who helped with all the boards to advertise the event, and to all others who had stalls, donated or helped out in any way. Thanks also to the parents and coaches who set up and ran stalls through the day, and to Michelle Boden for running the very busy and hot! BBQ all afternoon with her helpers. See you next year!"

Andy Tidswell, club Chair said "I would like to thank the many, many people who have made it possible for the club to run for 50 years. It has been great to celebrate with some of them today. We always welcome new players and are particularly keen for pre-school and year one boys to join us at the end of August along with year 1 to year 4 girls. Lots of info on our great new website. [www.rotherfieldfc.com](http://www.rotherfieldfc.com)

June 25th dawned hot and sunny. The Rotherfield set up team were up bright and early to put up gazebos and prepare the ground for the big day. Rotherfield United FC continues to grow and has more children registered than ever before, playing and enjoying football every week in the season, and training through most of the summer. The sad news of the year was the theft of the club tractor, but this was not allowed to upset the 50-year celebrations. The club have been going for 50 years this year, they wanted to ensure they celebrated that.

When the football season finishes Rotherfield United FC hold their annual team presentation day, and this year it was bigger and better than ever, to mark the occasion of the 50th Anniversary with a new logo, new mascot, and a big event planned.

Starting at 10am with presentation for the youngest footballers – the Wildcats – these presentations went through to a break, just after midday for the Chair's Speech, and big group photo with as many children as possible, the photographer high on a stepladder to get everyone in!

Award ceremonies went on throughout the afternoon and special guests were



# VILLAGE DAY ... VILLAGE DAY ... VILLAGE DAY ...

The first Village Day celebrating Sonning Common Community was a roaring success with many asking for a repeat next year.

We were entertained by Now thats What I call Ukelee, of Paul, Calum and Lee, who also provided the sound equipment followed by Ben Cosh the local weatherman and the amazing Jodie Anderson topping the bill.

The Dog Show run by our very own Emma Stone of Blue Jay Dog Wellness who had secured some excellent prizes for the pooches from Pet Country Supplies in the village. It had a crowd all afternoon watching on, with the dogs enjoying the shade and paddling pools provided.

With a variety of food and drinks on sale from the Butterfly Cafe a local community enterprise delicious Jamaican food and Burgers from the double decker as well as Icecream keeping us cool on a lovely day. •

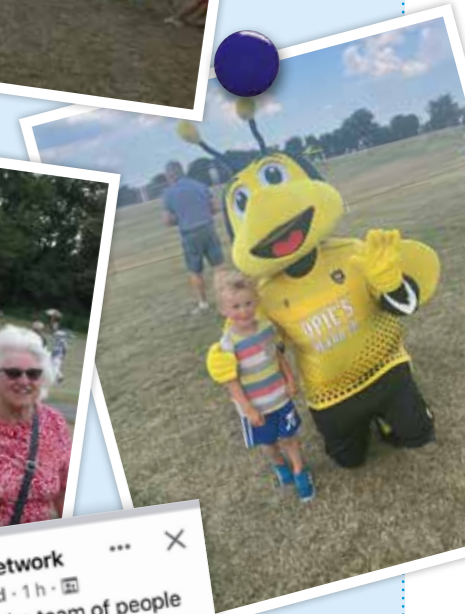
## Vicky



It was great to rekindle the Annual Sonning Common Village Day and we were blessed by lovely warm sunshine all day.

The activities included Football for all ages hosted by Rotherfield United Football Club and this was enjoyed by all, even if it was played in hot conditions. There was also a Tug of War competition for everyone to participate in, and children of all ages thoroughly enjoyed it, with some parents joining in too. •

## Ian



# VILLAGE DAY

## Community volunteer's section



1 to 7 June 2023 was designated as volunteer's week. I was previously aware that the profile of volunteering had become a national priority and many of the inspiring volunteers across the nation had been invited to the coronation of King Charles III. One day of the coronation celebrations highlighted the importance of this role and the resultant benefit to our society.

It certainly resonated for me that there are many groups of volunteers in Sonning Common who make a huge contribution to life in this village and thought it was high

time that everyone knew, of their important work (especially our more recent residents) but also surprisingly people who had been here a long time. My hope was additionally that more volunteers might be recruited to add to a growing need for younger people to become more involved.

Representatives were invited from First Responders, SHED quarters, the Library, Parish Council, the Magazine, WI, Pre-school, FISH and Village Gardeners. There were volunteers to chat to, material in the displays of information, games to play and plants to buy. It was very impressive and my thanks to ALL of you.

Sadly, there were no new volunteers. So, if subsequently, you would like to be involved please contact me and I will provide the information you need for contact to a specific group. ●

DIANA PEARMAN  
editor.sonningcommonmagazine@gmail.com



## Library

Thanks for your ongoing support of the library and for including us in the Village Day which was very successful for us - some funds raised and also a good reminder for people that there's a library in our village! We did have quite a lot of people asking why the stalls were so far away from the food so perhaps that's something to consider for next time. Also, somebody asked where the bouncy castle was. ●

ALISON

## Belated congratulations and thanks for such a successful day from one of the Village Gardeners

On the day we sold plants and talked to a lot of people including children keen to start or develop their own garden. This made it very worthwhile even if it did not meet our original hope of recruiting new members.

It may be of interest to know that £120 made on the day and £100 from a car boot sale has now been used. All the tubs and planters on both sides of the road from the Co-op to the Charity shop have been planted with colourful annuals and we hope to be able to keep them watered.

Village Gardeners are a small informal voluntary group without an administrative structure who enjoy gardening and know that their work makes the village a more attractive place. The group could plant even more if there were some new people who share the love of gardening and who would be prepared to give some time and VOLUNTEER.

Sometimes it may be difficult for you to make contact. I am happy to have my contact details held as an additional contact should you wish to use them in relation to the village gardeners. ●

Jenny Ward 0118 972 4542 Home 22, Lea Road. jennyservoz@aol.com

# STORIES, SINGING AND A LITTLE BIT OF CAKE



Rainy Saturday in June, swelteringly hot weekend in August, bitterly cold Saturday in December: what do they all have in common? Well, you can be sure that at 10am Saturday there will be free Story-Time in the library. It's on every week, so if you are ever stuck for something to do with your children on a Saturday morning why not come along and try it out? You don't need to be a member, or to book in advance, simply turn up just before 10am to see what fun ensues. It is aimed at children aged from 3-8 years old. The little ones are not expected to sit still for too long. And I'll let you into a secret, although they are encouraged to sit and listen quietly, often one of them randomly stands up and wanders back to their grown up and that's absolutely fine. After all, we all had to start somewhere!

Now, I must admit when my children were small I struggled to get them out of the house for 10am at the weekend. Actually, that's not quite true, the problem was more

me than them but that's another story! So, if you're like that too, you might want to keep an eye out for the special Story-Times which are followed by craft sessions (see upcoming dates below). That way, if you happen to miss the story at least there will be another activity going on when you arrive. Your child can make something to take away with them (also for free). Don't worry if you're not the creative type, there will be a volunteer on hand to help the children make a themed item. The library is all about freeing the imagination so if your child is inspired to make something unrelated to the topic like a purple pig with five legs covered in shiny stars, then that would be a winner all round! If you don't fancy Story-Time you can arrive slightly later and just take part in the Craft Morning.

How can these activities be free? The answer is simple - volunteers and cake sales. Some wonderful people in our village make cakes for the Friends of the Library to sell on Craft Mornings and the funds raised are used to buy any materials needed. Also, as with a lot of craft projects, everyday items are recycled and given a new lease of life. How many uses can you think of for a toilet roll tube?

These days, the library is not the shush-shush place that some people imagine it to be. Yes, it is helpful if the children attempt to stay quiet while the story is being read but interaction is encouraged so if yours is



the type to constantly ask questions then don't worry about it. They will be gently encouraged to wait until after the story has finished but nobody will be cross. However, if your child enjoys making a noise you really should consider bringing them along to Rhyme-Time which takes place on the first and third Mondays of the month at 11am in the library. This is aimed at pre-schoolers. And guess what? It's also free! Again, there is no need to book, just come along and give it a try. The library is closed to the general public at that time so there is a limited embarrassment factor if you, like me, are tone deaf! Let's face it, little kids don't care if you sing in tune. They just revel in the happy atmosphere singing induces.

Come and try one of these activities. It's a great way to meet other people with children of a similar age. It's free, it's relaxed, and did I mention there's cake?!!

New volunteers to read stories or lead the Rhyme-Time sessions are always welcome. Please contact Rosemary Dunstan, the Library Manager, on 0118 972 2448 or email sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk if you fancy giving it a go. ●

**UPCOMING CRAFT SESSION DATES:**  
Every Saturday in August & 23rd September 2023

ALISON SMITH FoSCL

# READY, STEADY, READ

By the time you read this the Summer Reading Challenge will be well under way. The theme this year is 'Ready, Set, Read', and there will be special story and craft sessions every Saturday in August, starting at 10am (and home-made cakes for sale!) The idea as usual is that children should visit the library at least 3 times over the summer holidays, and read at least 6 books - they will be rewarded with stickers and other goodies before receiving a certificate and medal for completing the challenge. Please

encourage your child to keep going - it makes library staff sad to see children start so enthusiastically and then just 'fizzle out' when they go back to school. (The challenge doesn't end until mid-September)

Saturday 19 August the author (Kim Ansell) and illustrator (Lisa Read) of 'Maximus the Mouse' will be visiting the library to lead a special story session about their book (usual time - 10am) If you've not heard of Maximus, come along and find out about him!

Rhymetimes continue throughout the summer for the under-3s on the first and third Mondays of the month at 11 - 11.30am

The annual library quiz will take place on Friday 15 September - put it in your diary and round up your team! ●

0118 972 2448) or sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Or just come in and ask!

ROSEMARY DUNSTAN

# AN AMAZING ACHIEVEMENT ROSEMARY

Walking the West Highland Way and the Great Glen Way  
(May - June, 2023)



**I've never done a really long walk completely on my own before, and when they heard what I was planning, peoples' reactions were varied, ranging from 'You must be mad' to 'Will it be safe?' My main worries were about getting lost, or losing/breaking my phone, neither of which happened, fortunately.**

The West Highland Way from Milngavie to Fort William is a very busy route and there was little danger of getting lost (I just followed someone with a rucksack!) In places the path can be seen stretching for miles ahead, through stunning mountain scenery, with lots of ant-like, rucksack bearing people ahead and behind. If I had fallen and injured myself someone would have been along within 5 minutes, to help. They might not have been able to speak English very well, but I'm sure they would've helped!

The track was at times smooth, broad and easy to walk, and at other times it was ankle-twistingly rough and steeply

undulating. The scenery of course was magnificent, except where forestry work had devastated the hillsides, and there was plenty of evidence of the lack of recent rainfall.

Walking on your own means that you can walk at your own pace, stop when you like, and eat when you like – and I enjoyed that. However, there were times when I missed talking, so I chatted to anyone I met, and had lots of interesting mini-conversations along the way.

The accommodation booked for me each night was good, especially the rooms which had a bath where I could soak my aches and pains away. I certainly did NOT find the walking easy! All accommodation and luggage transfer was organised for me in advance. There was no way I could've carried all my luggage.

I called my second week 'Walking the Great Glen Way', though to be more accurate what I did was walk 'Coast to Coast', from Fort William to Inverness, through the Great Glen, following the Great Glen Way for much, but not all, of the time. For this second week I was with a group of 9 others (2 Americans, 4 Canadians, 2 Aussies and a Brit), sleeping and eating on a hotel barge, which sailed on up the Great Glen, after it had dropped us ashore for our walk. We walked an average of 12 miles a day, through varied but beautiful scenery, along paths which were at times very steeply undulating. We had a good breakfast before we left, took a packed lunch, and returned to the boat in the evening for a satisfying dinner. I can highly recommend this method of exploring the Great Glen!

So, I completed the challenge I set myself: 176 miles in 14 days of walking. My feet and legs felt the strain, especially in the

last couple of days, but I expect they'll recover in time – and I got no blisters! There was no rain at all for the 2 weeks I was in Scotland, which was amazing, but very welcome.

I'd like to thank everyone who has already sponsored me – I'm about three quarters of the way to my target of £2000, so if you have any spare cash, I can make your purse lighter if you'd like me to. Or go to [www.justgiving.com/page/rosemarydunstan](http://www.justgiving.com/page/rosemarydunstan) to donate online. All proceeds are going to the Institute of Cancer Research, based at the Royal Marsden Hospital in London. They have been doing ground-breaking research into both causes of, and cures for cancer, for over 100 years. ●

ROSEMARY DUNSTAN



# LEILA

by CHRISTINE ATKINSON



**Dr Loader (Rupert) has been a year 6 teacher at Sonning Common Primary School for 10 years and has recently written, and self-published, his first novel under a pseudonym of Earl du Porter.**

It tells the story of a teenager, Leila, who is a bit lonely and troubled and finds school a little difficult as she feels that nobody understands her because she is different. She meets a stranger, Duke, who lives deep in a forest and has also led a troubled life, so maybe he can understand her. Duke used to be a teacher until his wife died and he lost touch with his daughter and granddaughter. They end up supporting each other until an unexpected turn of events means he disappears from her life. Can Leila go on without him to a new beginning?

As Leila grows up, she learns who she really is. In a tale of triumph over adversity and neurodiversity, Leila starts to find her own path in life and makes a success of it, leading to reconciliation.

Rupert says we should celebrate neurodivergence in all its forms and not see it as a hindrance. Having autism used to be seen as a negative, whereas Rupert wanted to focus on the positives, unique features, 'superpowers' that helped Leila to navigate her way to success in

adulthood. I asked him about how the book came about.

**Who helped you along and designed the cover?**

I designed the cover and drew the eye. Drawing eyes became a theme so I thought I'd better have a go at it. I'm not sure whether the drawings of the eyes drove the story of the eyes, or the other way round. I didn't really have help – even my family only knew what I had been doing when they saw the finished published book. The subconscious support came from hundreds of people I have met working here at Sonning Common over ten years.

**What was the most difficult thing (publishing/editing?)**

The most difficult thing by far is marketing the book especially without using a publisher. There are lots of skills involved in self-publishing – writing, drawing, designing, proof-reading, editing, compiling, pricing, printing – but marketing and getting it noticed has been the most difficult.

**Why this particular subject matter?**

I think our school has a good track record

of working with children a bit like Leila. I particularly wanted to emphasise the futures of such children and that being different is not an obstacle to success.

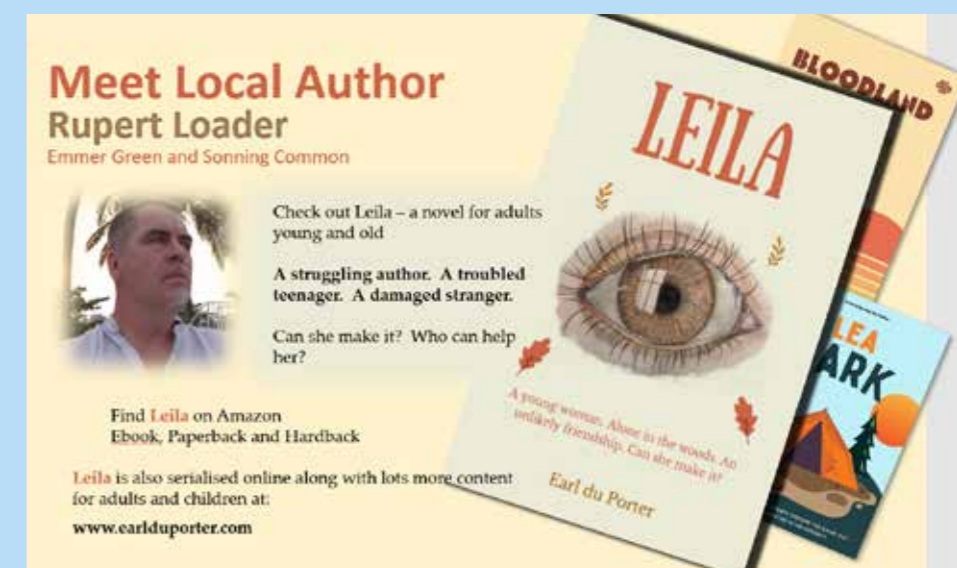
**Where did you get the inspiration for the name?**

I'm not sure. It changed several times. As I wrote I realised it had to work as an anagram, so that limited the choice.

**How long did it take to write?**

For eighteen months or so I had been working on a different novel. It is based on an existing work (by someone else) so is currently unpublishable without permission. I will go back to that one, but I realised I had to write something more original. Leila came together in about six months (1000 words per day, most days). Editing and tweaking took a lot longer.

Rupert has always enjoyed writing stories and has written other books for younger children, but this is the first one aimed at older children and adults. He gave a talk at the library in late July about the whole process. His book is available to buy from FourBears Bookshop in Caversham, and The Bell Bookshop in Henley. ●



# PARISH NEWS

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## Sonning Common Cycleway Community Survey Report

Firstly, a big thank you to all those who responded to our recent survey. The Parish Council Cycleway Working Party received over 500 overwhelmingly positive responses from Sonning Common. The overall responses including those from Emmer Green and Caversham came to an astonishing 1221 total. A fantastic response rate with 98% positive in their support for the proposed cycleway.

### Perceived Dangers of Cycling the B481:

Overall, 600+ respondents provided additional written comments with more than half (53%) citing safety issues on the busy B481. Typical comments included:

*"It's the vehicles that come dangerously close to me, their speed and the pot holed state of the road edges (where cyclists have to cycle) that puts me off cycling to Sonning Common."*

*"This road is dangerous to both car drivers and cyclists when a bike is present. The road is narrow and without any verge. Cars drive fast and it's also riddled with pot holes that cars try to avoid. I myself am a regular cyclist but I would never cycle along this road."*

### The Potential of Greener and Healthier Travel Options:

The responses to survey question 5 present a powerful argument for the development of a cycleway between Sonning Common and Emmer Green.

Well over half of the respondents indicated that they would cycle the route regularly if there was a safe cycleway. That represents over 600 people making fewer car journeys with associated health and environmental benefits. This statistic was backed up by written comments where 48% indicated that respondents or their family members

would be more likely to cycle the route if a safe cycleway was in place.

Some typical written comments from the survey reinforce these points:

*"It would be a fantastic benefit to the community - health and safety wise, for the climate, economically and for a better lifestyle. It will be used extensively."*

*"My children go to school in Sonning Common and we would love to be able to cycle there and reduce our carbon footprint."*

*"This would be life changing! What a lovely activity to have on your doorstep. I'd get so much more exercise and it will be great for mental health. Please do this!!!"*

### Issues:

The potential shared use of the cycleway was a concern for a few respondents who did not feel a shared route would be safe for pedestrians if cyclists were travelling at speed. Conversely, many respondents actively supported the potential for walking and running the route without mentioning concerns about mixed use. In fact, 19% of respondents indicated that they would also like to see this route designated for other use-cases, like walking, running and horse-riding.

The Cycleway working group will look at ways to incorporate these options into the scheme as the proposal develops and encourages walkers, runners and horse-riders to get in touch. We would very much welcome representation in the Working Group as we develop and refine proposals for the scheme.

### Overall Support:

The survey demonstrated overwhelming community support for a cycleway with

pedestrian provision between Sonning Common and Emmer Green. 98% of over 1200 respondents welcomed the proposal. In addition, 88% of written comments were explicitly supportive.

*"This is a brilliant idea! Can't come soon enough!"*

*"This would be a brilliant addition and make the north of Reading countryside so much more accessible for families."*

*"Better on every level. Better for the people, better for the local communities and better for the environment. What's not to like?"*

### Conclusion:

The above responses indicate the cycleway has a significant potential to impact on green and sustainable transport on this route connecting communities. One written response captures the potential impact particularly well:

*"I genuinely think this would transform the way people travel between Sonning Common and Reading."*

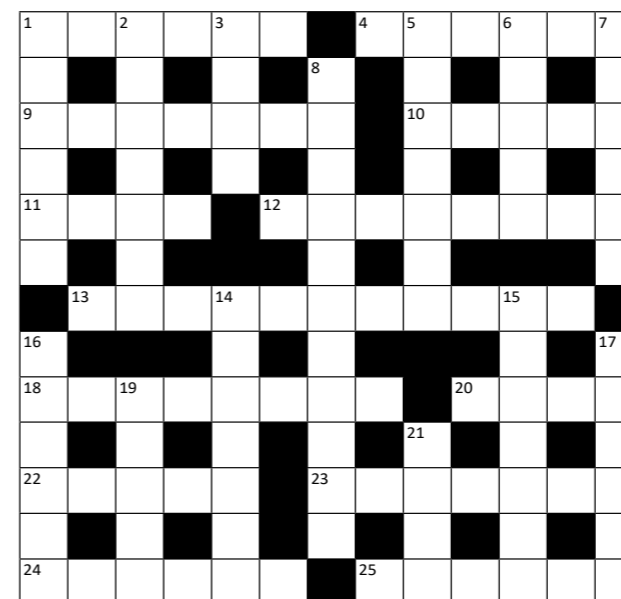
Clearly, the proposal for a cycleway between Sonning Common and Emmer Green has exceptional community support. It is hoped that any landowners potentially impacted by the route will recognise their opportunity to benefit their own local community now and into the future. The Working Party look forward to the continuing encouragement Oxfordshire County Council have shown by supporting Sonning Common Parish Council's initiative. ●

**DAVE MURRAY**  
(Sonning Common Parish Council Cycleway Working Party Member)

# PUZZLE PAGE

By DAVID DUNSTAN

### Cryptic crossword



### ACROSS

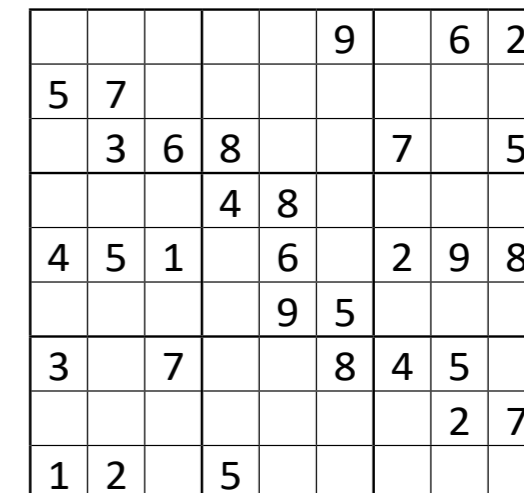
- 1&10. Hamlet: unusual genre following a bad stroke (6,5)
- 4. A taxi reversing before American counter (6)
- 9. Officer in the main is mad liar possibly (7)
- 10. See 1 (5)
- 11. Greek hero's football team (4)
- 12. Maybe mahogany bed on east of village (8)
- 13. Wrap up time and trade things bought together at a good price (7,4)
- 18. Elevated space returning to village (8)
- 20. Egg on rug creased with energy (4)
- 22. Island for about four roughly (5)
- 23. Criticise Miss Bryan: a woman with a box (7)
- 24. Second car with no top for a short nap (6)
- 25. Stabbing in village (6)

### DOWN

- 1. Badly beat silver; it makes a brew (3,3)
- 2. Capital MP, aka AI, is uncertain (7)
- 3. Unusual in infrared radiation (4)
- 5. Seize father reportedly in capital (7)
- 6. Decor ruined in school of thought (5)
- 7. French one on ship and French dusk (6)
- 8. Old pro, bogus, confused A and B maybe (5,6)
- 14. King with hesitation joins queen with oddly missing Kuwaiti fruit (7)
- 15. Monk caught up in artificial intelligence theoretically (1,6)
- 16. Examines Slavs by the sound of it (7)
- 17. Henry, consumed by uncontrolled anger, to fix again (6)
- 19. Ogres destroyed in prickly bush (5)
- 21. Enthusiastic about being in Badminton (4)

### Sudoku

Grading: medium



### Cryptogram

The following quotation has been encoded using a simple letter substitution. What does it say?

E YADPILEM AT E LES NWI EPNEUT  
HFLFLRFHT E NILES 'T RAHMWYEU ROM  
SFBFH HFLFLRFHT WFH EVF. - HIRFHM  
GHITM

### Quiz: Towns in Cornwall

1. Where is the Tate Gallery in Cornwall?
2. Which is the only city in Cornwall?
3. Which town is at the end of the main line from London Paddington?
4. Which town is regarded as the surf capital of the UK?
5. Which town was famous for its jail and its lunatic asylum?
6. Which town was famous for its School of Mines, now part of the University of Exeter?
7. Which town is the location of Murdoch House, the first house to be lit by gas, and Kresen Kernow, the Cornwall archive centre?
8. Which town is the centre of the china clay industry?
9. Which town is situated on the third largest natural harbour in the world and the deepest in Europe?
10. Which town is linked by a causeway to St Michael's Mount?

# MEET MARY NORRIS A KEY MEMBER OF THE FISH TEAM

By JOAN GRUMMANT

Mary was born and bred in Henley and moved to Kingwood with her husband Colin when she retired twelve years ago. She is one of three children and has a brother who now lives in South Africa and an identical twin. Her family still retain the very close bonds of a happy childhood and she and her sister enjoyed the natural pranks practised by identical siblings when growing up. When she started up her successful recruitment business, The Mary Norris Organisation, Colin and sister Angela soon joined her, and they formed a very strong and happy team that continued to function extremely well for over 21 years.

Mary left school aged fifteen and enjoyed working in many jobs before finding her perfect one. When she worked with her family, she was lucky enough to be part of a well organised cohesive group that thought alike and shared the will to help people find exactly the right career paths for themselves, the clients. She describes it as being a time full of fun and laughter as well as providing a satisfying career. She was, and still is, a strong believer in the personal touch and appreciated the on-going contact with her clients.

After she retired Mary volunteered to work for FISH and was encouraged by friend Sheila Maughan to take on the role of Volunteer Coordinator for 2 hours on a Tuesday for four weeks to cover sickness leave. This very quickly became a permanent role and part of a very much larger commitment. She has never left this pivotal role and is

still going strong twelve years later! Her enthusiasm and commitment to coordinating the vast assortment of volunteers who work for FISH is amazing partly because it is an organisation with many different parts, and she fully recognises the different strengths that are needed to make her team function as well as possible. Matching the right volunteer to a role is something she finds enormously rewarding and the success of the role of FISH in the local community is a cause very close to her heart.

Mary has many interests in her busy life as well as working for FISH. She enjoys her dogs, horse riding and has a busy social life with her husband, sister and friends. The natural wastage that occurs in any voluntary organisation means that recruiting new people is a paramount concern and keeps her very busy. Volunteers are welcomed and managed with great humour and

kindness and Mary knows that Sonning Common is very fortunate to have such an organisation at the centre of village life and wishes that it would be the norm everywhere. Sonning Common is indeed lucky to have FISH at its heart and is also very fortunate to have such a person full of energy and drive looking after the volunteers. Thank you for being there Mary! ●



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# SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE



## Staff news

Molly, one of the receptionists, has graduated from university and left to follow her dreams. Molly is wished every success for the future.

A new receptionist has been recruited.

## Cervical screening

Patients need to make their routine cervical screening appointment. Caroline, Julie and Annabel, excellent nurses, have plenty of appointments throughout the week at various times. Cervical screening helps prevent cervical cancer from developing and saves thousands of lives every year in the UK.

## Social prescribers

Rachel Downey and Abbie Crook are our Social Prescribers Team at SCHC

who help with a wide range of issues, including financial support, living standards, and health and wellbeing. They provide support and guidance to help you, or someone you know, access services and resources that can improve your overall quality of life.

We want to promote Abbie and Rachel, so those who require assistance know this service exists. This can be especially beneficial for those who may feel isolated, or those who are unsure of where to turn to get help.

Please contact the health centre for more information.

## News from the PPG

Sonning Common Health Centre Patient Participation Group (PPG) have hosted several health talks now, the most recent

being 'Understanding Rheumatism and Arthritis' by Rheumatologist Dr Antoni Chan and 'Hearty Living' by cardiologist Dr Nicos Spyrou. These talks have been recorded and are available via the PPG page on the SCHC website. The PPG will be running first aid training sessions and information will be on the website or email us.

If you are interested in finding out more about who the PPG are and what we do then please visit: <https://sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk/patient-participation-group/>

If you are interested in joining the PPG email [schcpgg@gmail.com](mailto:schcpgg@gmail.com) for more details. ●

# POISONOUS GARDEN PLANTS

Good weather, school holidays, time to be in the garden but take care if you have any plants known to be toxic to humans or your pets. A poisoned pet may cause great stress within your family. If your pet or child is likely to ingest plants or part thereof you should identify what you can. Children may be attracted to colourful flowers. There are numerous websites which list plants which are known to be toxic. Good ones are operated by Battersea and the HTA

## If it is not a food plant, do not eat it.

Teach children not to play with or eat growing plants.

Use gloves when pruning or weeding and keep skin covered.

Do not leave prunings or uprooted plants in reach of farm animals or pets.

Check plant labels for toxicity warnings or consult a reliable on-line database.

## What are the hazards?

### Ingestion hazard

Children are mostly at risk.

Some plants may cause digestive upset or discomfort if eaten.

A number of common garden plants are extremely toxic and could cause severe symptoms, internal bleeding or worse.

### Contact hazard

Irritant sap may cause a burning sensation and sometimes blistering of the skin; anyone can be affected if exposure is sufficient. Irritant sap could be transferred to the eyes and do significant harm. This could happen with spurge and hogweed and ragwort. Some plants contain chemicals called allergens. These do not affect everyone, but some individuals may acquire sensitivity to them, resulting in an allergic reaction.

A very small number of plants have sap which renders the skin excessively sensitive to strong sunlight. Contact

with the plant followed by exposure to sunlight results in very severe, localised sunburn with blistering and long-lasting skin discoloration.

### What to do if there's a problem...

#### Human ingestion or skin contact

If you think a child or adult has eaten part of a doubtful plant, seek medical advice immediately from a hospital Accident & Emergency department.

Take a sample of the plant with you.

Do not panic and DO NOT try to make the person sick.

#### Pets

The HTA Guide to Potentially Harmful Plants gives toxicity information for pets, including dogs, cats, rabbits, rodents, tortoises, caged birds, poultry. Seek veterinary advice if you think an animal has eaten a poisonous plant. Take along samples of the plant concerned. <https://www.battersea.org.uk/> ●

# MAKERS FAIRS AND CREATIVE WORKSHOPS

For the last two years Mumadora Crafts have been running monthly Makers fairs locally. Initially they started in the village hall, but then due to the hall being out of action for works we moved up to Kidmore End Memorial Hall in October. All the items for sale at the fairs have been handmade by very talented local artists and makers. You will find something to suit all budgets whether it be a gift for someone else or a treat for yourself. The products on offer range from homewares to gifts, local produce, and artwork. We are also proud to highlight we have The Butterfly Community Café serving refreshments and sweet treats for you to purchase too.

If you love to craft, want to try something new, or are looking for something different to do with friends, we hold regular creative workshops in the village. Our monthly Fizz Friday evenings are very popular, they are a great way to relax, learn a new skill and have a good natter with others to start the weekend off. At our workshops you will learn how create something beautiful for you or your home, which you will be able to take home to show off and make others jealous of your talents. Bubbles or hot refreshments are available during the workshops to keep you going and of

course we usually have biscuits and cake too.

The workshops are aimed at beginners or anyone wanting to craft with like-minded people. There are plenty of different workshops to sign up to or take part in, these include crochet, fabric dyeing and printing, lampshade making, metal embossing, embroidery, beaded jewellery, decoupage, macrame, wreath making and much more.

Tempted to try something new or have a free Friday night? Book a place today for the next workshop, or book onto the next two. Just think of the Christmas presents you can make.

Our next makers fair is Sunday 8 October, 10am – 4pm in Kidmore End Memorial hall. Free entry to visitors and plenty of parking

Workshops run throughout the year, please visit our website [www.mumadoracrafts.co.uk](http://www.mumadoracrafts.co.uk) for more details. ●



# CHURCH NEWS

## ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

At the time of writing, we have just celebrated the First Holy Communion of 16 of our young people. The majority attend our parish primary school, St Martin's in Caversham Park Village, and these were joined by children attending other schools in the area. In order for all the children to integrate with one another preparation was carried out over several months in the parish hall on Thursday evenings. Occasionally, parents had their own session in the church at the same time. The British weather had us on tenterhooks. After weeks of warm, dry weather the predication was for heavy rain around the time of the First Holy Communion Mass. Fortunately we were blessed with a fine morning with the rain arriving later in the day. The church was full as the children were joined by members of their extended family for their special day, not only from around this country but abroad as well.

The Thoughtful Living Group continue to encourage the parish to think about our contribution to sustainable living. The bins they have provided to help recycle plastic film, crisp packets, cosmetic containers, pens etc are being well used. They also arranged a viewing of the film *The Letter*. It tells the story of the letter written by Pope Frances about the environment (*Laudato Si'*), from the perspective of frontline leaders battling the ecological crisis across continents.

The parish had its first May procession in honour of Mary the mother of Jesus. Our statue of Mary was carried from the church to the grounds of the hall accompanied by parishioners. Prayers were said outside and after a final blessing refreshments were available in the hall.

[www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org](http://www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org)

## ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST THE KING

The past few months have been busy for our churches and there are exciting plans for the future.

Both churches were decorated splendidly for the King's Coronation at the beginning of May. In Kidmore End, at St John the Baptist, a team of 12 worked hard to produce several beautiful and effective red, white and blue floral arrangements in the church and the churchyard. At Christ the King a simple arrangement of red, white and blue flowers and union flags adorned the church.

On the Sunday of Coronation Weekend, a special celebratory Choral Evensong was held at St John's, led by the church choir (with singers from Christ the King) and further enhanced by the choir of Kidmore End School. Many came from the surrounding villages to hear the specially-composed anthem, 'The Mountains shall bring Peace' by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange, which was being sung not only in our Parish, but all over the country and throughout the world.

In recent months, the PCC has been considering plans to enhance the appearance and facilities of both churches. At St John's, there are plans to provide better access and safety outside and to provide upgraded amenities and an eco-friendly heating and lighting system inside. At Christ the King, urgent repairs to replace the flat roof and lantern window will soon be taking place, with added insulation and solar panels. To finance these improvements, the Parish is making plans for active fundraising, as well as seeking grants to help with both projects.

Weekly services continue in the usual pattern (St John's: Evensong 6pm on the first Sunday of the month; Sung Eucharist at 11.15pm on other Sundays. Christ the King: Service of the Word 9.30am on the third Sunday of the month;

Eucharist at 9.30am on other Sundays). Benefice services will be taking place throughout August, please do check [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) to see where these are being held. You are assured of a warm welcome at St John's and Christ the King: why not come and see? ●

KAREN BROADBENT

## PAUSE FOR THOUGHT

For me, Summer means books. My husband likes reading about POW camps, or Antarctic disasters, but I only want something that will make me laugh.

So, I recently chose 'Paradise Lodge' by Nina Stibbe. The 15-year-old protagonist is working in a 1970s nursing home. Her beloved residents are very old and very unwell, but she says "They didn't see themselves as being around the corner from death. They saw themselves as being around the corner from a nice cup of milky coffee and a Lincoln biscuit". I loved this, but now I can't stop thinking about it. A Lincoln biscuit. For me, a good pizza. Around the next corner, a book that makes me laugh. How about you? Small pleasures, quiet happiness. These are some of the best things in life, surely?

Yet I know this is how I can fool myself. Focusing on what is in front of me, I forget that one day the journey will come to an end. What are we all around the corner from? A lovely summer, I hope, but that's not the end of the story.

Don't let today's pleasures stop you asking the big questions. Is there a God? Is he real?

Maybe it's time to find out. ●

CAROLINE CHARLES  
Chiltern Evangelical Church  
[www.cecuk.church](http://www.cecuk.church)

# READ EASY

## Would you like to help adults learn to read in your community in Reading?

Read Easy is looking to launch a new group in Reading in the next 6 months.

"We are looking to help adults in Reading who need reading support. We know that 6,068 adults in Reading alone can't read or struggle with everyday reading, and we're passionate about transforming more lives in the community through our proven, confidential programme of free, one-to-one, volunteer-led adult reading coaching.

"The stark reality is that 2.4m adults in the UK cannot read, while 2.5m struggle to read," Michelle Baker underlines.

"On a practical level, this means that even carrying out everyday tasks can be challenging, if not impossible. Many of our new readers have never been to the doctor as they're too embarrassed to have to read and fill in forms. Being unable to read and write is often associated with depression, isolation and even higher mortality. Sadly, statutory provision by local authority adult education does not look likely to improve.

The impact of learning to read is tangible for both volunteers and new readers as Michelle concludes by explaining. "The phrase we hear from our readers time-



and-time again is 'life-changing'. But for our volunteers too the process of helping adults learn to read can have a profound effect on their lives. If you'd like to play a key part in helping to transform the lives of adults near you, while developing existing skills and learning new ones in a supportive, fun environment, then why not get in touch?"

To learn more about becoming a Read Easy Management Team volunteer in Reading, please contact Michelle Baker [michelle@readeasy.org.uk](mailto:michelle@readeasy.org.uk) ●

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# TOM FORT WORDS AND PHRASES



It's time for a summer rant, and what better subject than the words and phrases whose frequent use causes me to grind my teeth.

Let's start with single words:

**Enjoy** - as used when depositing a plateful of mediocre pub food on the table without the slightest possibility of enjoyment actually happening.

**So** - to introduce the answer to a question in a radio interview. I have heard, with rising impatience, interviews in which every single answer has been preceded by this small but intensely irritating word.

**Robust** - when government ministers or spokespersons are asked what they are doing about something, they almost invariably reply that 'robust action' is being or will be taken. The NHS, immigration, climate change, potholes -

all are being 'tackled' by 'robust action'. It generally means nothing is happening.

Now phrases that get me steamed up:

**Going forward** - again, ministers, shadow ministers, functionaries of various kinds, are always 'going forward' when dealing with something. When did you last hear one of them 'going backwards'?

**Working tirelessly (or 24/7)** - again, usually deployed when something has been promised by ministers but nothing has happened.

**Pan fried** - as used on menus to describe something fried in a frying pan. What else would you use?

**Odd rumble** - I have complained about this before. In the weather forecaster's vocabulary book thunder only ever comes in 'odd rumbles'. Why can't we occasionally have a clap of thunder?

Or a crack?

**Drill down** - used when someone is trying to find something out as in 'we need to drill down' to uncover the detail. This phrase needs an extended stay in a verbal rest home.

There are others - **wake up and smell the coffee**, for instance (I'm not sure what this means but golly it annoys me) - or **speaking truth to power** (which was once a striking expression but now needs to join **elephant in the room** in the rest home).

I'm sure readers of this magazine will have their favourite hate words/phrases. All I can say is **ENJOY!!!!!!**.

# A NURTURER OF DREAMS

## By Tom Fort

My holiday reading this year took an abnormal diversion. More often it is romantic fiction that captures my attention as I sunbathe for days on the beach.

This year my attention was diverted from this froth to the latest 'masterpiece' from our exceptional wordsmith Tom Fort about rivets, trivets and galvanised buckets. I had no expectation of the all-encompassing enjoyment.

It is an interesting and unusual read which is a combination of village quirks, family involvement, customer stories plus a large amount of research about the development of rivets, trivets and galvanised buckets. It was fascinating how these diversions into detailed history have captured the hearts and minds of many over the generations, focussing

particularly in the UK and USA.

What I found most fascinating was the notion of visiting a hardware store being a very different experience to popping into the co-op or any other store. Those who venture over the doorstep are on a mission to discuss and solve a problem, to create a dream DIY job or replace an essential item. Shorona, known as Shro, has become very well-known in the village for her advice and expertise and her revamping of the shop and the premises, adding new aspects to it are seen and give recognition to her considerable skills. The shop now retails a whole range of environmental products such as washing up liquid, an invaluable key cutting service, the craft centre and the more general range of diverse products. She is patently obviously

a very skilled DIY person. Under her leadership the shop goes from strength to strength.

It was with hesitation that I ventured to a comment on Tom's book, my word skills not being as fluent and engaging as his. But I do urge you to purchase a copy (from the shop). Enjoy the read.

Diana Pearman



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PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 25



**Quiz: Towns in Cornwall**  
 1. St Ives. 2. Truro. 3. Penzance. 4. Newquay.  
 5. Bodmin. 6. Camborne. 7. Redruth.  
 8. St Austell. 9. Falmouth (the biggest natural harbour in the world is Sydney). 10. Marazion.

**Cryptogram**  
 A DIPLOMAT IS A MAN WHO ALWAYS REMEMBERS A WOMAN'S BIRTHDAY BUT NEVER REMEMBERS HER AGE. - ROBERT FROST

9	1	2	8	5	7	4	6	3	9
7	6	4	5	9	1	3	8	2	7
3	9	7	6	2	8	4	5	1	
6	7	8	3	2	9	5	1	4	6
8	4	5	1	3	6	7	2	9	8
2	6	9	4	8	1	5	7	3	
9	3	6	8	4	2	7	1	5	
5	7	2	1	3	6	9	8	4	
8	1	4	7	5	9	3	6	2	

**Sudoku**

9	N	I	R	O	G	A	T	S	E	S
N										
V	R	O	D	N	A	P	U	F	O	C
H										
E	G	U	R	O	O	H	M	G	H	
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N										
U										
S										

**Cryptic crossword**

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