

SC

SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



www.sonningcommonmagazine.org

DEC/JAN 2023/24

50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

IN THIS ISSUE

GOOD NEWS!!

Congratulations to the
Primary school
P6

IT DOES MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Introducing Julie Shorter
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10 YEARS ON...

Addressing the concerns
P19



“The team is extremely passionate and patient. Everything they do is with purpose and care. The team are happy and friendly which makes them easy to work with.” Daniel R



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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

The festive season arrives with this issue of the magazine. It is the 50th anniversary of its production – an astonishing achievement for ALL involved. It is a very colourful edition crammed with recent photos of events in and close by the village. Articles range from matches raising funds for charities, to the library events on the noticeboard, to the 10K run which raised an exceptional amount of money for the primary school, where they are pleased with their GOOD Ofsted rating to Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society's visit to Shuttleworth. So much to celebrate.

The regular pages for the Church, Health Centre, Green Village (introducing a regular page by Julie Shorter), a smiley Becky Maggs and a talented Henry Cook and of course your favourite, 'relegated', (his words) to the last page is Tom Fort, where I am sure many readers will turn to first.

On Sunday 21 January 2024 there will be a tea party to thank the many, many volunteers who ensure that this magazine is written, proofread, delivered and the list continues..... Invitations will be distributed soon.

50th anniversary, a very special celebration for us. If you would like a memento of the occasion the tea towel is shown on the front cover and should you wish to purchase one at £8 each, they are on sale at Heath and Watkins and in the library. If all the tea towels are sold the proceeds will be used to cover the costs of magazine publication.

Pages 17 to 20 contain my reflections on the main aspects that summarise the half century history of the magazine as well as its achievements on the way.

Meanwhile the team wish you all, our precious readers, a very enjoyable Christmas together with good health and happiness in 2024. ●

Diana

Diana Pearman Editor



MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



Diana Pearman



Christine Atkinson



Joan Grummant

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07766 254422
0118 9471955

Published by:
Sonning Common Magazine CIC

Cover image:
50TH ANNIVERSARY
COMMEMORATIVE TEA TOWEL

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

SC SONNING COMMON
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MECE NEWS

Farewell



MAIDEN ERLEGH
CHILTERN EDGE



It is with a heavy heart that I write my final article for the magazine as I will be leaving at the end of this term to become the Principal Designate of River Academy, the new secondary school being constructed next to the Rivermead Leisure Centre on Richfield Avenue in Reading.

Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge has moved forward considerably over the last four years, and I am incredibly grateful for the support I have received from the Sonning Common community across this period. About a week after taking up the position as Headteacher I was visited by a delegation from the local area including Diana Pearman, the editor of this magazine. It was clearly a 'sizing up the new chap' meeting as they discussed the school, the area and

what they felt the community needed. However, I felt the meeting went well and I have been really pleased with the way we have worked with a number of local organisations over the last 4 years; the Parish Council, FISH, the local primary schools and Active Leaders to name but a few. We have also been keen to support the community and the police by working together with transparency and positivity. I hope we have helped to make Sonning Common a better place to live.

I'd also like to thank the local parents who have entrusted us with their children in the last few years. When I began as Headteacher I took it upon myself to visit the local primary schools and meet the headteachers to build a relationship and understand what the feedback was on Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge. They say 'feedback is a gift' and certainly all three local primary heads were keen to make the gift as large as possible! However, we have acted upon these 'gifts' and it has been very pleasing to see a considerable increase in our local intake from Sonning Common, Kidmore End and Peppard primary schools. With the school now housing almost 500 students and full or almost full in Years 7 through to Year 9 with students who want to come to the school and whose parents are invested in their choice, we see a very different atmosphere to the school I took over in January 2020. Indeed, it is a regular pleasure of mine to walk the hallways and corridors of the school and see how hard the students are working and how much they are enjoying their time at the school.

Lastly, I would like to pay tribute to my staff. They rode the turmoil of Covid lockdowns with incredible positivity and we won plaudits for our offer during this time, visiting every student during Lockdown number 2, phoning each household every three weeks in Lockdown number 1 and keeping up the threads of education as much as possible despite the incredible stresses of this period. Since then, we have returned to 'normality' and they have fought hard to get the school back up to where it belongs within the local community. Turning a school round takes a huge effort as you fight to shift the cultural norms of the school, maintain high standards and keep focused on the long-term goals. My staff have done this with great aplomb, zest and gusto and I will always remember some of the brilliant staff I have had the pleasure of working alongside for the last four years.

Chiltern Edge is a wonderful, unique school, where relationships are strong, the word community is all important and where students are given the opportunity to excel and progress - please do arrange a visit to see the school in action if you haven't been before.

I am sure Sonning Common will maintain its support for Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge as the new Headteacher, Briony Bowers starts her tenure in January 2024.

Goodbye and good luck! ●

ANDY HARTLEY

SCPS NEWS

Such fun...

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON



Early each school year, in the Autumn term, Sonning Common Primary School Year 6 staff and students enjoy a week-long trip to the Brecon Beacons in Wales to learn new skills and get to know each other better. The school take over the Woodlands Adventure Centre and the children have a very full and exciting week away from home experiencing the outdoors in all weathers, taking part in activities including canoeing, caving, hiking and team building. The children return home on the Friday feeling tired with stories and bags of dirty washing, but all having had a wonderful time.

Here are the extracts of just three such stories of what they got up to this year.

My group explored the cave first. It's a long walk but so worth it. There are spiders, moths and if you are lucky bats. Unless you turn your head torches on it's pitch black. Overall, the cave was an amazing experience.

After, I did canoeing which was very fun. It did take a bit of time to get the

hang of. Some people's canoe capsized (including mine) but we got wet at the end anyway.

Next, we did high ropes up in the tree, so it was a bit scary. There was even a mini zip line in the middle of the high ropes course. The climbing wall in my opinion was better than the high ropes. When you abseil down it is very fun, and it feels like you are flying.

After all I've explained you can tell Woodlands is an adventurous, fun place.

You can learn loads of new skills you never knew you needed.

ELSA

After a fun but tedious coach trip we finally made it to Woodlands. After a delicious dinner we did some photo orienteering in the grounds to get to know the place.

Every morning, lunch, and dinner the food was something different. Our personal favourites were the American pancakes, a tuna mayo roll and for dinner the chicken curry which was a tiny bit spicy.

Over the next few days, we did caving, canoeing and high ropes. We loved all the activities, but our favourite was caving.

When we got into Reading everyone cheered and when we got into Sonning Common everyone cheered even louder and the bus driver told us to keep the noise down so he could focus!

When we got back everyone was very tired and went home with their families and had some rest.

ELSIE AND SOPHIE



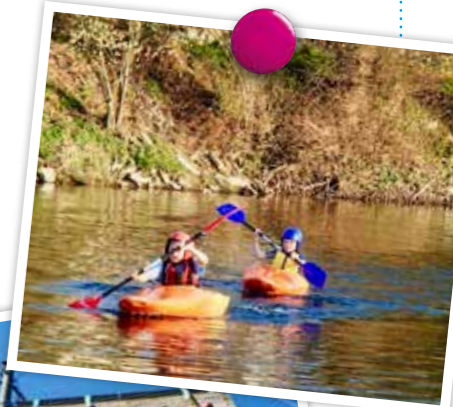
When we arrived we ate our packed lunches and worked on our teamwork. Then we met our instructor, Mark and jumped across tyres and even transported bolts to a tub. In the evening we did orienteering.

On Tuesday, we went to the dark vicious caves. As we were wandering through the caves, we came up to a narrow dark hole. Our instructor told us to go through. It was as small as an atom. We also went through a cheese grater.

On Wednesday, we did 'careful' canoeing. We carried all six canoes to the mooring site and went down the river for about an hour. Thursday was climbing. I climbed the high ropes course with ease, then it was time for the zipline! As I flew through the air, Mark took a photo of me. Then we did rock climbing and I got to the top.

OUR

Editors note: due to lack of space on this page the children's articles have been edited. Full versions of their work can be found on the magazine website.



'GOOD' NEWS FROM OFSTED



When Ofsted has previously judged a school to be good, they will then normally return to the school about once every 4 years to confirm that the school remains good, and that safeguarding is effective. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school. Sonning Common Primary School had such a visit/ inspection from Ofsted in September and were very pleased with the resulting report.

Chris Hirst, Head of the school, sent a message to all the parents after receiving the report, to thank the school community

for their help. He said 'we would like to thank you and your children for your part in this. Ofsted highly valued both parent voice and pupil voice, and your responses to the survey were important, as were the inspector's discussions with various groups of children on different topics.'

Any inspection puts some stress on all those involved, and this result rewards the huge efforts put in by all staff, both during the inspection itself, and in the months and years leading up to it. A massive team effort!

The report is available on the Ofsted

website. These are some of the main messages in the report.....

The school is a kind and respectful community.

Pupils are caring and helpful.

Pupils describe their influential role in the school.

Extra visits widen pupils' knowledge of the world

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is happy and joyful.

Reading is a joy to many pupils. ●

AN UPDATE FROM SHEDQUARTERS



Fundraising has been an important part of many of the social activities organised by Shedquarters. The weather has played an important part with the sun shining on most of our events. In August, 46 people enjoyed a scorching hot summers day on the river at Henley, courtesy of Hobbs of Henley who kindly donated the trip - thank you. Viv and Clive collected lots of prizes for the wonderful raffle and Ruth provided an amazing spread of food for afternoon tea. We all felt thoroughly spoiled.

Ridge hosted a charity golf day for Shedquarters (also on a very hot day), and we had a table at the first Sonning Common Village Day on Memorial Field, promoting Shedquarters along with other community groups.

The working party is progressing well - thanks to Richard Martin and Tim Smith who have helped clearing the site, conducting drainage tests, and submitting an arboricultural statement, as well as getting quotes for utilities and services for the portacabin building, the list goes on.

Two of our Day Leaders have attended

a First Aid at Work Course and received their qualifications, well done. Nine other members attended a Basic Life Support Awareness Training given by the Community First Responders and gained the confidence to use a defibrillator, thanks to Chris, Jane and Sue.

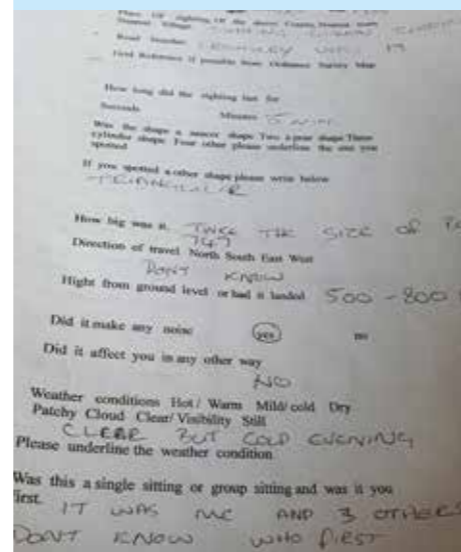
If you want to find out more then please look at our website for further information and details of future fundraising events: www.shedquarters.org.uk ●



UFO IN SONNING COMMON

In 1988 Jeremy saw a UFO in Sonning Common. It was 9pm in the evening of 31.10.1988 and was the size of a Boeing 747. There were 4 of them who sighted it for 5 minutes and was twice the size of the plane. He is wondering if anyone else in Sonning Common has seen an UFO.

Please contact Jeremy via the editor's email.



CHRISTMAS 2023 IN SONNING COMMON

I hope it will start on 1 December when the Christmas tree will be erected and decorated by the members of the Youth Club.

Over the last few years, specifically 2021 and 2022 the editorial team of the magazine raised money to give boxes/bags of goodies to disadvantaged residents. This year we are collecting money for gift card vouchers which could be spent at a variety of shops and recipients can purchase the items they choose.

Life is very tough for a growing number of families in our village so it is a good time to think about others.

A very generous donation has arrived from Chiltern Edge Community Association, so our thanks to them. We hope there will be more to come so that we can purchase gift card vouchers for every needy family and person. Your help would be appreciated. ●

Many thanks
Diana and Christine

We are doing this in collaboration with Springwater Foodbank with help from our local Coop so you can help out in lots of ways. Any donation will be used to buy gift card vouchers for a variety of shops.

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/SCMagazineChristmasGifts

FISH HOME VISITING SERVICE

Mary's powers of persuasion reached their zenith when she had me in her sights to take over the FISH Home Visiting Service towards the end of 2019.

Sue Nickson started up the service from scratch in 2016 but after four years she felt it was time to step down and so the task of finding her replacement fell upon Mary Norris, the FISH Co-ordinator. Next year I will clock up 20 years as a FISH volunteer - I still take on driving jobs, I have been a bus driver and a reserve Office Helper but taking on the Home Visiting Service was certainly my biggest challenge.

The service has gone from strength to strength. Sue had established a client base supported by a fantastic team of volunteers: it has now grown and evolved and is a little more formal but it is still working on the same principles as those earlier days.

Judy Mihajlovic worked alongside Sue Nickson and, luckily for me, she agreed to stay on and work with me too. Then in August 2021, Judy and I were joined by Caroline Stockill: I am totally in awe of the knowledge and wisdom of both of my fellow Co-ordinators.

Our service is offered to anyone who is lonely or isolated and would benefit from more social contact - most of our clients, but not all, are elderly. They refer themselves or are referred to us often by an adult child or perhaps by the Health Centre via AgeUK. Sometimes a friend or neighbour will refer someone - as long as the potential client knows it is happening, we will make contact and go along to see them.

Now, with double the number of clients we are fortunate enough to have more than double the number of volunteers. We ask our volunteers to commit to spending at least an hour a week with their client but they frequently spend much more time, some take their client out and about and their volunteer role often turns into a genuine friendship. We want our volunteers to feel part of a team and so we have an annual training session which we combine with an informal get-together.

We also have one special volunteer. Actually, he didn't so much volunteer as was co-opted on to the team. When Lillian was referred to us it was explained that she had had a serious stroke and that communication was difficult for her but that she loved dogs. I had recently taken

on a new volunteer who had a greyhound who is a large, friendly and gentle dog. Gill was more than happy to take Caspar along on visits to Lillian and on that first occasion when I took Gill along to introduce her to Lillian, we all chatted for a while and then Gill went to collect Caspar from her car. It was a joy to see Lillian's face light up with delight when she first met him. ●

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MEET BECKY MAGGS

she brightens the day for so many!

By JOAN GRUMMANT



Becky will be a very familiar face to anyone who visits the Co-op in Sonning Common. She is the smiling and cheerful presence at the till who can very often change a dull day into something far more pleasant for the customers she meets.

Becky was born in Checkendon and has two brothers and a close supportive family that included a nan who was a very great influence. She describes herself as having very itchy feet and always felt the urge to be on the move when she was younger. After going to

Chiltern Edge School from years seven to eleven she spent some time living in Caversham Park Village, working in HR, sales and different office-based jobs. With a bubbly and outgoing personality, she felt the need to broaden her horizons and consequently worked for a time in Majorca and the Canary Isles. She became a single parent in 2011 and moved back to Sonning Common to be near her family and now lives with her daughter Jasmine in the centre of Sonning Common. Becky had always thought of herself a city girl until recently but is now totally at home in a more rural environment.

A very supportive family network and friends encouraged Becky to put down roots and provide a stable home environment for herself and Jasmine and she describes going to work at the Co-op as a huge life changing event. The shop offered her flexible working hours and made a work/life balance possible for her to thrive and to feel valued in a family like atmosphere. She finds her work emotionally rewarding and it enables her to connect with customers in a very direct and warm way and describes it as 'the best thing I have ever done'. She has

worked there for eight years, and it is the longest position she has held so far.

Becky has a very strong and warm personality and makes sure that all her customers know she is interested in them and cares about them. She is particularly keen to ensure that the contact with her lightens the day and is well aware that in some cases contact with her is often the customers only opportunity to speak with another person and feel special. Her positive and sunny disposition enables this to happen and is a two-way thing. For the first time she has a role where she feels she fits and is completely at home and happy. It makes her feel contented with her life.

As her daughter grows older Becky may well feel the need to do different things and dreams of owning her own shop one day but is adamant, she could never leave Sonning Common. It is a good fit for her, and she loves the strong sense of community and friendship. At the moment, times are difficult for everyone. She loves her music, old films and many friends, but she also provides a ray of joy to the many people she encounters at work. The difference she makes is quite significant. ●

SOMETHING FISHY GOING ON WITH CHILTERN PLAYERS?

Chiltern Players are back on the boards this autumn with an evening of three one-act plays by David Tristram. Carrot, Peas and The Extraordinary Revelations of Orca the Goldfish, skilfully explore different aspects of human nature, behaviour and relationships. From worker/ boss misunderstandings through to the sometimes misinterpreted

conversations on a blind-date, and then to the many fantasies of a bored middle-aged couple, this trio of adult comedies promise an evening not just of humour but surprise.

We look forward to seeing you then! ●



TICKETS from 07768371609 or chilternplayerstickets@yahoo.com

More information available from <https://www.chilternplayers.co.uk/>

Thursday 30 November, Friday 1 and Saturday 2 December at 8pm

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Health Walks Winter 2023/24

When it's cold and damp outside I can understand not wanting to go out for a walk, but on a crisp bright Winter Day a walk in the countryside can be fantastic! So get out and enjoy it!

If you want to speak to someone about any aspect of the Health Walks, phone Chris Brook on 0118 9722609

There are no walk timetables in paper form at the moment, please check the website for days/starting places/distances: www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable (the starting places usually change in the New Year)

JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS DINNER

25TH DECEMBER FROM NOON - 2PM

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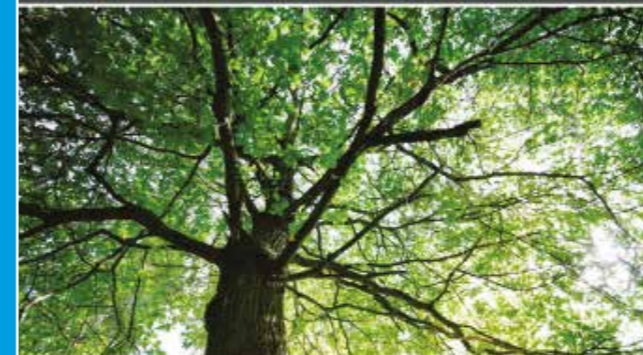
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GREEN MY VILLAGE

Hi, my name is Julie and except for a few years living in Emmer Green and Germany, I've lived in the village most of my life. Sonning Common is a great place to live and we all have a vested interest in keeping it that way for generations to come. Moving towards a more sustainable way of living and 'doing our bit' for the environment can sometimes feel like an overwhelming task, particularly in the light of the catastrophic weather events we have seen across Europe this summer.

Through this new column, I'll be suggesting easy ideas of how you can bring sustainability into your everyday choices, link you to great local environmental initiatives and celebrate what our local schools, charities, community groups and businesses are doing to help our environment thrive.

In the meantime, here's some food for thought:

The dirty facts...

Did you know that reusing and refilling saves 70% Co2, 65% energy and 45% water rather than buying a completely new product. In addition, 38% of packaging in an average shopping basket can't be recycled and is sent to landfill.

Change just one thing...

Try Heath and Watkins' refill service instead. Just take along your empty containers and fill up with all your household cleaning products, everything from hand soap to laundry liquids. GOOD for your wallet and GREAT for the planet!

A Christmas Dilemma...to gift, or not to gift-that is the question.

A 2021 survey showed that 60% of adults have at some point returned or regifted Christmas presents. This and the huge volume of gifts that end up as landfill could explain the growing trend

of foregoing gift giving at Christmas. Instead, many families are opting to gift a shared family outing, a voucher for a local leisure or wellbeing business or making a family donation to a favourite charity.

If you really can't bear to give up gifting, aim to use fully recyclable paper and plastic free Sellotape (I can vouch for it, it works just as well as the plastic stuff!) or try your hand at the Japanese art of 'Furoshiki', wrapping your gifts in fabric; a remnant works well (try our local charity shop) and can be used over and over again. Check out You Tube for easy demonstration videos.

And always remember...

'Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.' William James

Please do get in touch if you'd like to share your ideas to 'green our village' or if you'd like to get involved in some fun, practical projects to help our local environment thrive.

Email: jules.shorter@gmail.com ●

FRONT GARDENS

- Front gardens help keep our village a green and pleasant place to be.
- Gardens can soak up rain, while paving, tarmac and concrete are less porous and increase the amount of rainwater that runs off by as much as 50 per cent.
- Vegetation helps cool our environment in heatwaves better than hard surfaces which absorb heat and release it at night.
- Trees and plants and hedges, provide places for birds to nest, links along roads for bats to follow, capture dust and provide places for insects to feed.
- Tending your garden at the front of the house gives neighbours the opportunity to meet and can help to build community spirit.

There are several ways you can park your car and achieve the aims above:

- Use gravel, permeable block paving, porous asphalt
- Directing water from drain pipes and impermeable surface to a border rain garden or soakaway.
- Retain or take up the edges of hard surfacing to keep some green space in corners or borders.



CLLR VICKY BOORMAN

vickyboormanscpc@gmail.com
 Sonning Common Parish Council
 Parish Office, Village Hall, Wood Lane,
 Sonning Common RG4 9SL
 Tel 0118 972 3616
<https://sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk/>

50 YEARS OF WHAT AND HOW?

By DIANA PEARMAN

Over these 50 years the whole world of printing and media has changed dramatically. From the huge broadsheets that were first produced in the world of newspapers, to lots of us now reading digital versions on computers, tablets and phones - making news very transportable.

Our own Sonning Common magazine has also come a long way from its beginnings being produced in the room at the back of Kidmore End church.

Back in 1973 there was no village hall nor any photocopiers as we know them today. The 'team' borrowed an old small Gestetner duplicator, which was a forerunner to the photocopier, and hired the hall behind Kidmore End Church to produce the first magazine. They had managed to get £50 from the parish council to buy paper, ink, staplers and other requisites. Roy Cheeseman did a drawing of Widmore Pond which was used as the front cover for several issues.

Each page was laid out, adverts completed and then retyped onto stencils which were wrapped around a drum. The paper was then fed through against the drum, and ink forced onto the paper. It was a very long and messy process! It took TWELVE DAYS to finish printing, clean the floor of the hall and was followed by another three days of

collating and stapling 15,000 pages into 1,500 copies to distribute.

By 2013, 40 years on, the magazine articles were word processed on computers, sent to the editor via email and transferred to the designer on a memory stick. No ink, no stencils, no mess, no handwriting - the only pens involved are used to highlight grammar and spelling errors during the proof reading before final printing. Issues are also available to read on the internet at www.sonningcommonmagazine.org so even when you have moved away from our lovely village you can still read all about it!

By 2023 the copy when collated on email is organised into pages with photos and logos on a page plan. The material which is often nearly 100 pieces is sent to the graphic designer, Kevin, via WeTransfer. The first draft appears a week later and is proof read by several readers. It then returns to Kevin for the final corrections and within the next few days it is sent to the printer.

In 2023 there are many more regular contributors - Tom Fort whose piece makes me laugh every time and many readers are known to peruse his page first. There are library pages which reflect its development and use since it was saved in 2012. Regular input from the Health Centre and PPG gives access to those residents who cannot read the important information online. The church

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

pages are fulsome and regular and there is always at least one biopic of our special person.

Surprisingly there have only been 5 editors in 50 years including ME. I said I would do it for one year!!!!

The editorial team do try to make the material all relevant, interesting, useful and, hopefully, sometimes amusing - and it still takes time to pull it all together.

So, if anyone would like to offer an article, or even volunteer to help, please send a message to editor.sonningcommonmagazine@gmail.com ●



Above: Front cover of the first ever Sonning Common magazine

50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE... 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE... 50TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE...

THE POWER OF ADVERTISING

Since its beginnings 50 years ago, Sonning Common magazine has been sustained and supported by its advertisers. During this time the divide between advertising and editorial space has been roughly 50:50 and the adverts have largely funded production costs.

Delving through the magazine archives the advertisements tell their very own history of Sonning Common and its surrounding villages. Lloyds Pharmacy may recently have traded as Carsons but prior to that it was Hibberts, and a shop Bradbeers Provisions in Baskerville Road was advertising as a "High Class Grocer" in the 1970's, Peppard Building Supplies and Garden Centre was then situated in Blounts Court Road and in the 1990's The Grouse and Claret at Kingwood Common was still trading as a "characterful pub and restaurant". The demise of Carl Woods butchers has been a huge loss not just for the meat but his regular advertising and his support for many charity events in the village.

Early adverts were simple. They were produced using a typewriter, the odd one or two were even handwritten, and were often for family run, local businesses. Some were very simple and to the point:- "Anne Devlin, Hair Stylist, Kidmore End 3336" whilst others provided comprehensive lists of services. But the advent of computers and desktop publishing changed all that. Adverts now boast crisper text and include company logos and line drawings. The use of full colour has enabled the publication of the professional adverts seen in the magazine today.

Through all these changes to style, Peppard Building Supplies has loyally continued to advertise. They appeared in the first edition and they maintain their profile in the local area by continuing to advertise today. Among others, Brambles has also been a regular advertiser over the years. Another interesting observation is that in the early days the advertisers were small retail businesses and in more recent times, the predominance is towards sole traders.

So, whether your adverts be large or small, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all past and present advertisers. Doubtlessly your businesses have benefitted from advertising and will continue to do so. Thank you for your support for the magazine; we certainly couldn't produce one without you.

During COVID we managed to compile the editorial material thanks to our loyal contributors. Two editions were printed and the committee decided we would advertise for free during this very difficult period, particularly for sole workers. In some cases it did allow people to keep working if they were able to do so outside or in a separate part of a house. For example we had a patio replaced. The period of time was very difficult for many people but it also brought out the best in some. We live in a very difficult time again, the world situation is extremely grim but if you would like to be cheered up visit pages 10-11 in the June/ July 2020 issue and the random acts of kindness will warm your heart.

However, we do face a challenge as the number of pages of adverts is now only 10 in every copy. This means that there are 26 pages of editorial which is good, but it does not pay for any of the costs. We need the money from advertising so that we can

produce and provide 6 copies per year to every household in the village and some homes on the outskirts, for FREE. Every copy needs to pay for itself otherwise we are eating into our very small reserve fund.

Our further challenge is a numbers game. There are now an extra 100 new homes from the development sites and many infills which means that 2,020 are required every second month but with no extra financial return. The Shanley foundation, who built 26 homes at Kennylands Place did contribute a one off £1,000 which was appreciated. Each magazine costs £2.34 to produce.

What should we do? This dilemma has faced the print media for some years and many publications have incorporated a digital version having switched to digital production.

Is this the way we need to go?? ●



ADDRESSING THE CONCERNS WHAT HAS CHANGED IN THE LAST 10 YEARS?

By DIANA PEARMAN

Sonning Common Magazine may be 50 years-old this month and the village may be 50 years older than it was at the launch of the magazine but some of the issues that were concerning residents in the past are still bothering them today. They had certainly continued since and up to 2013 our 40th anniversary.

Concerns were identified as ...

Indiscriminate parking, particularly at junctions, dog poo, traffic problems and lack of activities for young people... We're still suffering! OR ARE WE?



Above: Front cover of the 40th Anniversary magazine

Parking

As I write this, in early November 2023 work will begin to re-do the parking and no parking lines along Wood Lane. By the time this issue of the magazine is distributed Wood Lane will have its parking and no parking lanes laid out and OCC will have the work completed. The intention is that this will reduce indiscriminate parking and ease the traffic problems. Let us hope it makes the difference we crave.

Traffic

20mph is now the expected driving speed across the whole village and there is evidence that some motorists are driving within the limits and others are beginning to slow down. It will be enforced as time goes on but how much better that we keep to the rules. It is for the safety of our children and older pedestrians.

Fouling

As a resident who frequently walks along the footpaths and across many areas of the village my view is that there is less poo left in our streets. This is observational evidence only so it may not be the case but I do feel there has been a significant improvement?

Exercising dogs at Millenium Green and Memorial Park may have helped to lesson this fouling??

Facilities for young people

The Youth Club is thriving meeting two evening per week. Currently, the average number attending is 26 with 32 in the summer. Open on Wednesday and Thursday evenings and is staffed by

the Youth Leader, Sunny Smithers who is supported, currently by 6 members of staff. Football coaching sessions are on Wednesday's and basketball coaching on a Thursday. Other activities include making cakes, muffin pizzas and snacks. Jewellery making, using model clay, arts and crafts are also enjoyed.

Recently there was a Halloween party for the youngsters and they will be decorating the Christmas tree outside the village hall on 1st December.

Skate Park

The skate park was completed in 2016 and the work had been led by two parish councillors Carole Lewis and Chrissie Philips-Tilbury (now Godfrey). Their fundraising and determination was admirable and eventually paid off. It is very popular and well used by teenage boys (mostly).

Memorial park

The Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is divided into 3 sections. The polymeric third is locked but can be booked at any time for activities such as football, netball or a children's party. The play area for children up to 12 years is very well used. The tarmac paths provide a circuit for runners, walkers and young scooter and bicycle learners in a safe environment. The very successful Village Day in June will be on Sunday 9 June 2024.

One of the benefits of our increased housing is that it comes with Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money that has enabled some of the above projects. Action at last? ●

CHILTERN EDGE HORTICULTURE SOCIETY

visit Shuttleworth Swiss Garden and Old Warden Aerodrome



On a sunny Saturday 16 September members joined a coach to go to the double delights of the Swiss Garden and Shuttleworth Aircraft and Vehicle Collection. The visit coincided with one of the old airfield's many event days which was a meet-up for enthusiasts of remote and control line model aircraft. Control line aircraft are tethered by wires held by the operator. The airplane then whizzes around the "aviator" in a circle while the operator tweaks the wires and makes the aircraft loop-the-loop, fly upside down and otherwise dazzle the viewer with its aerobatics. Those remote controlled planes undertook some beautifully detailed aerobatics. The noise generated sounded akin to a jar of large, angry mosquitoes so the nine-acre Swiss Garden was a haven of tranquility.

This garden is an historical gem being almost unchanged since its creation, by Lord Ongley, in the 1820s, on what was originally a flat clay brickfield. The then-fashionable 'Swiss Picturesque' style demanded landscaping such that the garden is imagined to resemble the Alpine foothills. This delicious conceit is then scattered with fanciful building, ponds, urns and sculptures that attract the eye and create focal points for the garden's many different spaces. The garden is the only complete example of a Regency landscape in the UK and has recently been extensively restored thanks to a £2.8 million Heritage Lottery grant. The garden is about landscape and vistas, not flowers. The grass is well kept, the paths are smooth and the bushes trimmed. There are some magnificent mature trees including a giant Redwood and Cedar of Lebanon. The quaint buildings scattered

about it include a Swiss Cottage, from which you get views over the "Alpine" hills and valleys, an Indian Kiosk (quite how this relates to Switzerland is an interesting question) and a two-seated outdoor Privy which was very interesting for its green credentials but remained untested by the author. There is a grotto with, at the time



of the visit, the annual art exhibition of Friends of Swiss Garden, a chapel and a bowl supported by dolphins made with artificial "pudding stone".

Between the model aircraft field and the peace of the Swiss Garden are the six impressive hangars containing the Shuttleworth collection of vehicles and airplanes.

The estate passed into the hands of a Joseph Shuttleworth in the 1870s and it was one of his descendants, Richard Shuttleworth, who started collecting and meticulously restoring airplanes and cars during the 1930s. Richard was an enthusiast for all things mechanical, being a racing driver and a pilot, and when he was killed in an air crash his mother kept on collecting! The six hangars all have huge doors and the machines within them are special in that they are in working condition. Thus, the

world's oldest flying powered aircraft, a Blériot XI, regularly takes the sky at the Shuttleworth shows. You can wander along and look at these marvellously restored examples of lovely early 20th century aircraft, cars, buses, motorbikes and tractors. The whole thing is brought to life with posters and re-creations of workshops.

Altogether a fascinating visit that showed that members of CEHS do have interests outside their gardens!

The next meeting of the society will be the AGM on 12th December so come along, join the society, and have your say on what you would like the society to do in 2024.

Email cehs561@gmail.com for more information. ●

by PETER CRUSH and GEOFFREY ADAMS



10K RUN

Ben Paviour, a runner from Sonning Common was the winner of the inaugural Sonning Common 10k which took place on Sunday 1st October. The 51-year-old who is part of Reading Roadrunners finished in a time of 35 minutes and 22 seconds.

Ben, was one of 272 runners who took part in the race which was set up to raise money for Sonning Common Primary School.

Race organiser Cate said "we set up this event to raise money for the school to support their ambition to create an all-weather track around the school field."

The runner-up was Zak Lambourne who finished in 37 minutes and 24 seconds with Jonny Williams in third another 16 seconds behind.

The first woman to cross the line was Molly Skel of Oxford University Cross-Country Club in a time of 40 minutes and 36 seconds with local Peppard resident Nicola Taylor in second place and Liz Fraser of Abingdon Athletics Club taking third place.

Runners assembled in the school playground and were taken through a warm-up led by Jules Greenaway, Focus Gym Manager at Badgemore Park, one of the event sponsors. Jules, who is also a parent of the school said: "This was a fantastic event. Focus at Badgemore Park is delighted to have been a sponsor. We hope the event goes from strength to strength in the future. There was a fantastic energy at the start and it was great to see so many members from Focus out on the course"

The race was started on Grove Road by headteacher, Chris Hirst. The race was marshalled by more than 50 volunteers including lots of children and staff from the school.

Running in the race was headteacher, Tyrone Howe of Shiplake College. Shiplake College also sponsored the race. Mr Howe said at the end, "It was wonderful for Shiplake College to be able to support and participate in this well-run community event. There was terrific support all along the course and we hope it is the first of many such races and that we also grow the number of Shiplake staff and parents involved."

Many ex-pupils and local residents participated. There was a great community atmosphere and many runners commented on the friendly support they received throughout the race from both the marshals and all the residents who lined the route. Many of the local children had made signs to cheer on the runners.

Cate said "We were inspired by the success of On Your Bike which was set up in 2006 by co-founders Penny Snowden and Andrew Burnett which has raised thousands of pounds for the primary school and local charities since it started"

Penny who ran the event said when asked about the event "The Sonning Common 10k was a fantastic event for school, community and competitors, really well organised from start to finish. The route was lined with supporters and enthusiastic marshals who encouraged us to great efforts of endurance and achievement! All the pre-race information was excellent, as were the announcements on the day. It was an absolute pleasure to take part and to see such a huge range of participants. The school staff and PTA were such a brilliant support and deserve all the funds raised."

The official event photographer was local professional photographer, Kathryn Fell who is also a parent at the school. The photos in this article were taken by her.

The Henley Neighbourhood Team came to support and assisted with marshalling. Cate said "we are very fortunate to

have a brilliant team in Henley who are supportive of these type of events in the local community. Many members of the community commented how great it was to see them there and the marshals are felt very supported by their presence."

The PTA ran the school's Kites Kitchen serving hot food, cakes and refreshments to hungry runners and spectators.

Beville Estate Agent sponsored all the boards and signs for the event. Richard Beville was out very early on Sunday morning putting the signs up for the race.

Cate said: "It was a huge amount of work to set the run up, but I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved today. We have had so much support from local residents, businesses and our friends and family. Special thanks to everyone who helped us make this event a huge success. It really was very special to bring a running event back to Sonning Common and we are already looking forward to returning next year with an even better event." •

CATE STURGESS

"It is wonderful to think the money raised today will go towards facilitating the next generation of runners"

RACHEL SALMON DEPUTY HEAD



ON YOUR BIKE 2024

We are delighted to announce that On Your Bike will return on Sunday 21 April 2024.

Since it started in 2006, all the entry fees from the event have been divided between Sonning Common Primary School and chosen local charities. Since it began, On Your Bike has raised over £60,000 for a range of local charities.

We would like your help to decide which charity On Your Bike should support in 2024?

Please note that in order to be considered for selection by the On Your Bike Committee, charities must:

- Be a UK registered charity,
- Be headquartered within 5 miles of Sonning Common Primary School,
- Be people-orientated (as opposed to animals or the environment)

Please submit your nomination by emailing onyourbikesonningcommon@outlook.com by 31 December 2023. •



PARISH NEWS

The content of this page is the sole responsibility of, and is paid for by, Sonning Common Parish Council

Line marking

We have worked alongside Oxfordshire County Council to introduce new parking and other measures to enable a safer environment for motorists, pedestrians and cyclists in the village centre. We have addressed concerns raised in our consultation on the village centre back in 2019 and before.

After a public consultation period OCC approved the new regulations in April 2023.

- All existing road markings will be refreshed
- There will be new double yellow lines on the corner opposite Woodlands Rd to prevent congestion and aid visibility. We have also improved the marking for the Car Park entrance and also the exit making it safer and to encourage use of this free amenity. There will be a new car park sign - (see attached.)
- We will be asking the new civil parking team to enforce the new scheme.
- We sincerely hope this will provide for a better safer Sonning Common" •

CLLR JONNY BIDGOOD
Chair Village Centre & Transport working party.



Rick Scannell

For 25 years until 2010 I lived in London working as a barrister at Garden Court Chambers doing appellant work in immigration, refugee, human rights and European Union law. I was also a Special Advocate representing the interests of appellants in hearings from which they were excluded. From 2000-2005 I chaired the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association. I have written extensively in my subject areas and am widely published.

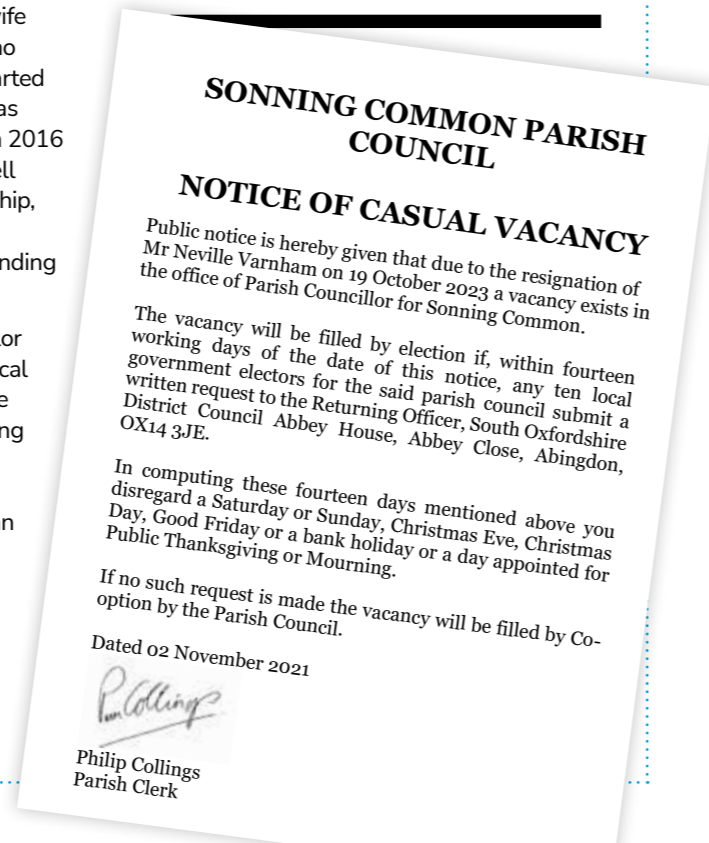
Looking for a change of career to be able both to spend more time with my then young children and to avoid totally 'burning out' I left the Bar in 2010 and together with my wife (also previously a barrister who left for similar reasons) we started to do property development (as sustainably as possible). From 2016 we became the Nicola Scannell Design and Property Partnership, offering project management, interior design and property finding services.

I decided to become a councillor in order to contribute to the local community after moving to the area in 2021. My varied working life has given me a broad skill set. I am passionate and motivated and hope I can be an asset. I believe that my legal background will enable me to make positive contributions to various issues in which the council is engaged on behalf

of local people. I am particularly interested in promoting measures that will reduce our carbon footprint and protect the climate so that our beautiful environment can be enjoyed for generations to come. I am a member of the Green Party. •



First community use of the new box. Sue Hodges of the WI and Gillian Manning kindly provided a magnificent display.



STAFF NEWS



Welcome two new receptionists - Sharron, who started with us at the beginning of September and comes with a wealth of previous GP reception skills and knowledge, and Saskia who joined the team in October, and will be working with us until mid-April next year. Also a warm welcome to Lucy our new Care Coordinator.

Flu & Covid vaccination programme

The autumn covid booster campaign was during September and October. We would like to say a huge thank you to all the amazing volunteers and staff who have been brilliant in helping us run the clinics.

If any eligible patients haven't already received their flu vaccination please call the health centre to arrange an appointment. Phone 01189722188.

Shingles Vaccine

Below are the current guidelines for who is currently eligible to be offered 2 doses of the shingles vaccine. If you are unsure of your eligibility please enquire at the surgery.

Immunosuppressed and 50+ years old

If you have a severely weakened immune system you will be offered the shingles vaccine from 50 years of age.

For 65 year olds

People born between 1st September 1958 – 31st August 1959 will be offered their shingles vaccines first.

For 70 year olds

70 year olds will be offered their vaccines if born between 1st September 1953 – 31st August 1954.

Looking after yourself through winter

Stock up on cold and sore throat remedies - the pharmacist can give you advice if you're feeling under the weather. If you have medication on prescription, check that you have sufficient especially at Christmas and New Year when the health centre will be closed.

What you can do – keep moving is the best advice. Try not to sit still for more than one hour at a time. Just moving your arms and legs will help. Eat well - at least one hot meal every day as well as warm drinks throughout the day. Wrap up well when you go out in the cold. The ideal indoors room temperature is about 21

degrees in your living room, and about 18 degrees in your bedroom.

Beat the bad weather with these simple steps

1. Keep an eye on the weather forecast. If bad weather is forecast, make sure you have everything you need. Check you've got enough medication and stock up on food to keep in the cupboards or freezer.
2. Have a torch at home in case of a power cut. Don't forget to check the batteries!
3. Keep emergency numbers nearby. Your energy supplier if there's a power cut. You can register with your supplier so they'll call you in the event of a power cut.
4. FISH provides transport, shopping trips, tea parties, befriending and much more. Phone 0118 9723986 or Email: office@fishvolunteercentre.org.uk
5. Oxfordshire AGE UK call 0345 450 1276 or email helpline@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk offer a free and confidential information and advice service for older people, their families and carers. •

SUE LITCHFIELD FOR SCHC

PPG Meeting with Day Lewis Pharmacy September 2023

At the September meeting of the Sonning Common Health Centre Patient Participation Group (PPG) we were delighted to welcome Danielle Brennan, the Regional Support Manager for Day Lewis plc. Danielle's responsibilities include the Day Lewis pharmacy in Sonning Common.

In a very open discussion, the PPG shared with Danielle issues raised by local residents including recent frustrations regarding the time taken to issue prescriptions and unannounced closures. Danielle explained that it has been a challenging time for our local pharmacy following the departure of a key pharmacist and support staff. Despite vacancies being hard to fill mainly due to a national shortage of qualified pharmacists seeking work in the retail sector, she was

delighted to report that she had now successfully recruited replacements and was back to her planned head count.

Danielle confirmed that following company research on local usage, Day Lewis has decided to only open in the mornings on Saturdays, but Danielle also confirmed that they are introducing a collection kiosk for pharmacy prescriptions at our branch. This should provide 24-hour collection for prescriptions, although with certain restrictions e.g. drugs requiring refrigeration, during November.

Finally and most importantly, Danielle confirmed that Day Lewis is committed to providing an on-going service in Sonning Common.

The PPG together with health centre administration and medical staff thanked

Danielle for her attendance and for helping us understand her challenges. We emphasised how important the Day Lewis Sonning Common pharmacy is to our community and offered our on-going support. We also asked that our thanks are given to the staff at Day Lewis, Sonning Common for their great service. •

SCHC PPG



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LIKE GRANDAD/LIKE MUM/ LIKE SON (GRANDSON)

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON



Henry Cook is 15 and, like his mum and grandad, has a talent for creativity and working with wood. He is using this great skill to help with another of his talents - playing the trumpet. Music also runs in the family as Henry's mum and both siblings play instruments.

Henry's grandad has always enjoyed turning wood and making things, which he passed on to his daughter Jules. In turn this has passed down to her son who has recycled unwanted wood into useful items around his home. He is currently saving for a trip next summer and wanted to raise funds.

Henry - it's great that you are upcycling unwanted wood to make your planter, so could you tell us a little bit about your project....

Why are you raising the funds?

To pay for me to go on a music tour to Tuscany next Summer. I play the trumpet and also enjoy the stage technician side of things.

Where did the idea for planters come from?

My mum. We both like building things and thought it would be something that would not take too long each and something that people might like to buy. We like the idea of repurposing wood rather than using new. So many people have pallets lying around that they don't know what to do with.

Have you been making things out of wood for a long time?

I've made a few things. We have a garden seat and a simple tree house made from pallets, my mum & I have also built a skate ramp in the back garden. A few years ago, I made a storage bench for my bedroom and various other things to solve problems

around the house. I also used to make Tiki heads out of tree stumps and Christmas trees for the garden.

How much help have you been offered?

I used to attend Path Hill Outdoors and learnt how to use various power tools and hand tools. Plus, my mum helps me use them. She also does the lining bit of the planters because I'm not a huge fan of that bit! A few people have been really generous donating planters and old decking and also lengths to use as corners and feet.

How many have you made/sold so far?

I have made 15 so far and all are sold. I have orders for another 12 or so and have other enquiries from facebook pages.

How much are they and how to get one?

Standard size ones - approx. 80cm long x 40cm wide - are £25. I can add more orders to our waiting list... jules.c.cook@gmail.com

Best of luck with your fundraising Henry! ●

HENLEY AND DISTRICT STAMP CLUB

We are now coming up to the festive season of Christmas and New Year and trying to think what we can give to Auntie Ethel and what to do with the children to keep them away from where you have hidden the presents. If you would like to have a break from all that, we can suggest coming to one of our meetings; the one we have for December is a display of interesting postcards.

One of the subjects within stamp collecting and postal history is postcards and this month we are highlighting postcards at our meeting.

Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month in Bix Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Wednesday 13. December - Is a Members Evening for presenting interesting Postcards

Visitors and new members are very welcome.

Further details can be obtained by phoning Steve on 07767 251670 or on our website: -

www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk



CHURCH NEWS



St Michael's Catholic Church

During October, our Day for Married Couples gave spouses an opportunity to spend time together without distractions, reflecting on their journey together and the part God plays in their marriage relationship. For some this was a new and helpful experience. Our Thoughtful Living Group continues to encourage us to live in a more sustainable way and will be providing ideas for a more sustainable celebration of Christmas. The group also coordinates our support for CIRDIC and a produce sale during our Patronal Weekend raised sufficient funds to pay for the CIRDIC Christmas lunch.

We are just about to enter the season of Advent in preparation for the celebration of the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Our thoughts are not so much on decorations, food and presents, but how we can open our hearts more to receive and welcome Jesus into our lives each day. All are

welcome to our Advent and Christmas activities:

Monday 4th and 11th December. 7-8pm, Holy Hour. A time for quiet reflection in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Come for all or part of the hour.

Monday 18th December. 7pm, Service of Reconciliation with personal confession if desired.

Christmas Masses:

24th December. 5pm - Christmas Mass for families with young children, and

7.30pm – carols followed by Christmas Night Mass at 8pm.

25th December. 10.30am - Christmas Day Mass

26th December. 10am – St Stephen's Day Mass

For those who are sick or housebound all our Masses are broadcast on YouTube (@

SaintMichael-SonningCommon)

The parish community of St Michael's wish you a very happy and blessed Christmas and New Year

For recent updates see: www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk ●

St John the Baptist and Christ the King

Do you find it difficult to get to church on Sunday mornings? Come along to Christ the King, each second Sunday of the month, at 5.00pm for a new, shorter, all-age service with singing which is especially suitable for families. On third Sundays, there is an all-age communion service at St John's at 11.15am, to which everyone is welcome.

Two open days were held recently. The local community was invited to view

plans for proposed building projects at both Christ the King and St John's. Fundraising efforts continue so that we can bring those exciting plans to fruition, including a parish concert in October, by the combined choirs of St John's and Christ the King and featuring many talented soloists from the parish. Following that, in November, a Wine Fest & Music evening was held at Kidmore End School, at which several hand-picked wines were sampled and talented local musicians performed: a most enjoyable evening!

The next fundraising event will take place on Saturday, 9th December when the parish Christmas Fair will be held at Christ the King Church hall, Sedgewell Road, from 12.00pm – 3.00pm. There will be stalls to browse, raffles to enter and homemade food to enjoy: do come along!

As Advent begins, marking the start of the Church year, Christians prepare for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ into the flesh with Advent prayers and scripture readings. To mark the start of Advent, a service of Advent Carols will be held at All Saints Church, Rotherfield Peppard, on Sunday 3rd December at 6.30pm.

The last Sunday of Advent is on 24th December, Christmas Eve, which coincides with the annual Christingle Service at Christ the King at 4.30pm. This is a lovely service, suitable for all the family. There will be carols and a Christingle to take home.

Please see below for details of all services taking place over Advent and Christmas:

Sunday 3rd December: Advent Carols, All Saints, Peppard, 6.30pm

Tuesday 19th December: Service of lessons and carols, St John's, 7.30pm

Christmas Eve: Christingle at Christ the King, 4.30pm

Christmas Eve: Midnight mass, St John's, 11.00pm

Christmas Day: Family Eucharist, Christ the King, 9.30am

Christmas Day: All-age Communion, St John's, 11.15am

Sunday, 31st December: Benefice Eucharist, Christ the King, 9.30am ●

Christingle Service



Christ the King Church, Sedgewell Road Christmas Eve 4.30pm

Please join us at this very special event - the perfect way to start Christmas!

All welcome!

CIRDIC

I should like to thank the communities of Kidmore End, Sonning Common and Peppard for their generosity towards CIRDIC (Churches in Reading Drop-In Centre). Clothing, toiletries, tinned food and financial donations have been very gratefully received. Our winter drive will begin again in November and there will be collection points at Christ the King, St John's and All Saints.

CIRDIC is an organisation which has been helping homeless and vulnerable individuals for over 15 years. Mabel Boyd manages this very worthwhile cause and is always on the lookout for more volunteers. Visit their website for further information:

www.cirdic.org.uk ●

LINDA SCOTTORN

The power of light

I love the way that Jesus used word pictures to explain different things about himself. "I am the good shepherd" he told

one group of people. He also said "I am the way, the truth and the life." And the door. The bread of life. The word. Each of these is meaningful but as days shorten each year I think of John 8:12, where he says:

"I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life"

Light! Yes please. Light, because life seems bleak and the world out there seems pitch black dark. Light. Comfort. Joy.

But read it again, because it's more, too. What a big claim! Anybody who says that Jesus was just a good man, or a gifted teacher, hasn't been listening to what Jesus is saying about himself. In this dark, painful world he's telling us not just that there is light - but that he is that light. And even bigger, he doesn't say he will light every path. Instead, he says that light can only be found in one place - by following him. ●

CAROLINE CHARLES

Chiltern Evangelical Church

Christmas Activities

Adventurers Youth Group Christmas Party

Saturday 9 December, Church Building on Grove Road

- o Younger Group - 4 - 8 year olds, 5:30 - 6:45 pm

- o Older Group - 9- 13 year-olds, 7 - 8:30 pm

Christmas Carol Service

Sunday 17 December 6:00 – 7:00 pm

Peppard War Memorial Hall with refreshments afterwards

Christmas Day service - please see our website for details

Please see website for full details

www.cecuk.church ●

ROTHERFIELD UNITED FC NEWS

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON

GREAT NEWS FOR THE CLUB, BUT TINGED WITH SADNESS ...

Many of you will have known Jordan and Pippa Norris, and their three children. The club heard the dreadful news at the end of September that Jordan passed away suddenly at the young age of 43. Jordan played at Reading FC before a bad knee injury halted his career and was a coach for many years at Rotherfield as well as playing for the adult team. He gave up his time to pass on his expertise and skills to the young team and was passionate about grassroots football. All three of Jordan and Pippa's children are involved in elite sport of which he was hugely supportive and travelled many miles to take them to events. The Rotherfield family were very shocked and saddened by this news. A minute silence was held at matches on the first weekend in October to show their respects.

Oxfordshire FA announced the recipients of this year's Grassroots Football Awards in September, which acknowledge the remarkable contribution made to local football by our clubs, leagues, projects and volunteers, and Rotherfield United FC are hugely proud to be awarded the Oxfordshire Grassroots Club of the Year Award. The award mentions the club 'embracing all members of the community, no matter their age or ability'.

Andy Tidswell, chair, was presented with the award at a small gathering of volunteers and committee members at the club's Bishopswood ground by Georgia, who is a representative of Oxfordshire FA.

Michael Thurlow, Football Development Manager at Oxfordshire FA, said: "Congratulations to each and every one of our winners. While our awards are delivered to just a small number of our Oxfordshire grassroots family, however, we were presented with a wealth of nominations which highlight the size, scale and strength of our volunteer workforce. Everyone at Oxfordshire FA appreciates and is grateful for all of the dedication and passion shown by everyone involved in football locally. Thank you."

Oxfordshire's local winners will now automatically be put forward for consideration for regional awards, with regional award winners later nominated for national awards – traditionally presented at the following FA Community Shield fixture at Wembley Stadium.

Andy said "Oxfordshire has over 200 clubs affiliated to it, so for us to receive this prestigious award is a great tribute to all the hard work put in by our committee, fund raisers, managers, coaches, parents and players (the photo is just a snapshot of the many volunteers). I am sure, as somebody with a long time connection with the club, this is something of which Jordan would also be proud." ●



ROTHERFIELD GIRLS TEAMS

by Mathew White

Last month's issue of Sonning Common Magazine had a brilliant article about the success of the boys and women's football at Rotherfield United, but did you know the club also has two amazing girls' teams at U12 and U13 levels?

Rotherfield United has run girls' football for over 3 years and our friendliness, enjoyment and success has seen the number of girls at Rotherfield United rise to nearly 50 players between the ages of 10 and 14.

The U12s play in the Oxfordshire League and the U13s play in the Berkshire League. We run weekly training sessions (Mondays during the winter and Tuesdays during the Summer) and play our competitive matches on Saturdays. Both teams have enjoyed a very successful start to the season and are already pushing for promotion to the league above.

We have players from most secondary schools in the area and are very welcoming to new players of all ability. All we ask is that players bring their enthusiasm, smile and shooting boots.

So, if you know of any girls in school years 7 or 8 who might be interested in trying us out, please contact Mathew White on 07899 677305. ●



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CHARITY WALKING NETBALL MATCH IN MEMORY OF JAMES WATKINS



On the 18 October, it was a year since we lost my amazing dad to Mesothelioma. What better way to remember him on the first anniversary of his death than to organise a Walking Netball match between the Sonning Common Walking Netball team (the team Mum and I are involved with) and the Rotherfield United Walking Football team (who Dad played for.) It was also a good opportunity to raise money for Mesothelioma UK and to have some fun at the same time.

On a sunny 14 October, the crowds gathered at Sonning Common Primary School eager to see our local sporting celebrities in action! A high tempo, energetic, and competitive forty minutes followed with some flowing and

cohesive Netball played by both teams. Despite their lack of on court experience, the Rotherfield United Walking Footballers played brilliantly and had plenty of possession over the course of the game. But experience showed in the end, and the match eventually finished with a closely contested 18-14 victory to the Sonning Common Walking Netballers!

Trophy Sponsor, Chris Butler of the Pet shop in Wood Lane, awarded the Player of the Match awards to both teams. These deservedly went to Pauline Jones of the Walking Netballers, and Terry Durrant of the Walking Footballers. All players were then awarded with Mesothelioma wrist bands and pin badges.

My mum, Jean, then delivered a heartfelt speech about Dad and awarded the 'James Watkins Trophy' to the Sonning Common Walking Netball team- much

to their excitement! A fantastic morning was had by all, and we now hope to make it an annual event. The winners get to choose which sport we play next year...sorry chaps, it looks like Netball again!

Thank you to everyone who donated, and we have managed to raise a fantastic £1600 for the charity.

A huge thank you to all the players who took part and everyone who came to spectate. A special thank you to Ian Massey and the Walking Footballers who were not just a great support when Dad was ill but afterwards too, by raising significant funds for cancer-based charities. Thank you to Sonning Common Primary School for allowing us free use of their courts. Thank you to our trophy sponsor Chris Butler and to Penny Snowden, my boss at Active Leaders who is always supportive of the 'bright' ideas I come up with! Thank you to England Netballer, Jacob Kirby, who took time out of his hectic training schedule to make a celebrity appearance for both teams. And lastly, thank you to MECE, Year 11 pupil (and trained Active Leader), Emily Norman, who volunteered to help with money collection on the gate. Not only is she a shining example of our local secondary school but she even left her Football match at half time to ensure she could help. What a star! ●

AMANDA WATKINS COOKE



LIBRARY NEWS

Whatever Has Been Going on At the Library? Really...? Wow!

What a busy year 2023 has been at the library. It has been wonderful to see so many people making use of this fabulous facility.

The Friends of Sonning Common Library (FoSCL) organised three very different Author Evenings: Sylvia Vetta explained why everyone should write their memoir; Michael Smith gave a fascinating insight into military intelligence; and Tom Fort waxed lyrical about hardware - not the computer kind! All were great successes, with both Michael Smith's and Tom Fort's selling out. Not surprising really as both went on to give talks at The Henley Literary Festival. FoSCL are planning more of these for next year so keep a look out for details.

Getting to know villagers at the Friday Social Mornings in the library has been a real pleasure. We never know who is going to turn up, and they never know quite what the quality of the beverage will be. Unless, of course, Carol Townhill is volunteering rather than me, in which case everyone heaves a sigh of relief as her coffee-making skills are far superior to mine (and she never forgets the biscuits!). By the way, if anybody is in need of a lift to the Social Morning, you'll be pleased to hear that FISH have kindly agreed to schedule two Fridays into their bus calendar in January to see what the demand is like. Please contact them after 20 November to book yourself a seat (972 3986). If you're half-thinking about coming, why not give it a go?

During the year the library has also at times buzzed with the hum of children and other little critters as FoSCL has subsidised six ZooLab visits. There was also a Lego Master Builders session. All of which proved to be extremely popular.

In April, children had the chance to follow clues around the village to discover which book in the library to look in to find the answer they sought in the Easter Trail. And the school summer holidays saw the return of The Big Bear Hunt. It was lovely to see the smiles on children's faces when they got back to the library having found the names of all the bears. My personal favourite - Will Shakesbear!

All of the above were organised and, in some cases, subsidised by FoSCL. Other events held at the library in 2023 have included a visit from Oxford Science and one from the author and illustrator of the children's book, "Maximus The Mouse". There were, of course, also regular Saturday Storytimes and craft sessions which the dad of one participant recently described as, "top quality". Rhyme Times also continues to be held on the first and third Monday of the month.

The library is a great asset to the village. If we don't want to lose it, we need to ensure it is used, so do try and come to the events or call in to see what it is like or even to borrow a book.

Volunteers are always needed to help staff the library. If you can spare two hours a fortnight please contact friendsysonningcommonlibrary@gmail.com for more details. You don't need to love Jane Austen or be able to quote Shakespeare. You just need to know your alphabet and have a modicum of common sense. Go on - you never know, you might even enjoy it! ●

ALISON SMITH
Friends of Sonning Common Library



Rhymetimes are held at 11am on the first and third Mondays of the month into the New Year. We did trial weekly Rhymetime but lack of funding sadly means it cannot continue,

We have social mornings, with tea/coffee and biscuits, every Friday from 10.30am, but if you're keen on a game of Scrabble come at a bit earlier, at 10am on a Friday, and join our Scrabble group.

If you need help with your Smartphone/tablet/laptop, let us know and we'll find a volunteer to help you. We also have free wifi in the library, and computers, printers and a photocopier for public use (there is a small charge for the prints)

For more details of any library activities, please contact the library by phone (0118 9722448) or email (sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Or just come in and ask! ●

ROSEMARY DUNSTAN
Librarian

CHRISTMAS OPENING TIMES

Saturday 23 December open as usual
CLOSED

Wednesday 3 January open at 2pm

TOM FORT BAD ME

There is a pot of cream in the fridge which should not be there. When I say it shouldn't be there, what I mean is that I put it there and I shouldn't have.

Then there is the matter of the three cold sausages left over from supper the other night. One of my daughters scoffed one of them, which left two. Or should have left two, only they have both disappeared. How can this have happened?

My problem is that I am weak, pitifully weak. When there is something in the fridge that really shouldn't be there, it works on my mind. I find myself in the grip of an unseen power that sends me in that direction. It takes possession of my hand, which then opens the fridge door, lays hold of the sinful titbit and places it in my mouth.

It's not just the fridge. The problem extends to the cupboards. I do the food shop for our household and I make a point of not buying chocolate or biscuits. But when one or other or both of our girls are at home, they beg me for treats and because I am a soft-hearted fool I give in. Then the mysterious force takes me over.

But in all seriousness my biggest problem is second helpings. If we eat at someone else's house and the host or hostess says 'Anyone for seconds' a different force – or maybe the same one – forces my hand into the air.

I do most of the cooking at home and however much I strive to prepare enough for everyone and no more, there always seems to be surplus in the pan. I look

at it. It looks at me. The next moment a utensil – any will do – is digging into it and before we know where we are the pan is empty.

It's very bad. I need help. Or do I? Maybe I should just learn to live with the knowledge that I am a greedy pig.

Now, I happen to know that there is a packet of all-butter shortbread biscuits in the cupboard. A strange force is coming over me ●



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