

SC SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

As I write this editorial, summer has barely been revealed and yet will be over by the time this issue has run out, England lost the Euros at the very last moment and it is a gloomy wet morning. On a brighter note, we are heading for fewer restrictions on our lives and a 'learning to live with COVID' scenario.

Sadly, we have lost the Appeal against the plan to build 133 homes in the AONB which many residents crowd funded to fight the challenge to our Neighbourhood Plan. In contrast we have a new Chairman of our Parish Council Michael Cann, two new Councillors and the first phase of the transformation of a field into the Memorial Park has been completed. And a junior contributor, Gabriel is joining the editorial team of the magazine.

This issue still does not yet have a return of the Noticeboard which informs residents of the events taking place in the village. Once this is back it will really feel that we are returning to normal and I am sure many of you are looking forward to this happening. While we patiently wait there are many news stories from the schools, Village Gardeners, local history and helpful advice plus future plans from the Health Centre. Special people who live here and have during their lives contributed so much to our community are also celebrated here.

Enjoy the heatwave we are promised soon. ●

Diana

Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



Diana Pearman



Christine Atkinson



Joan Grummant

USEFUL CONTACTS:

Chairman: Geoff Adams
1 Woodlands Road, Sonning Common RG4 9TD
chairman@sonningcommonmagazine.org
Tel 0118 972 2134

Diary dates: Helen Barker
helen.barker75@outlook.com Tel 0118 972 1241

Distribution: Helen Gavin
distribution@sonningcommonmagazine.org
Tel 0118 972 4680

Advertising: John Pearman
advertising@sonningcommonmagazine.org
Tel 0118 972 2381

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Design & Artwork: Kevin Taplin
TenSevenNine.com
hello@tensevennine.com
07887 902376

Print: Rick Peedell
R.J.Peedell
rick.peedell@gmail.com
07766 254422
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HEAD'S REPORT



Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge is such a positive environment. The teachers and students are so friendly which, as well as being such a small school, allows everyone to get to know one another and work harmoniously. The great thing about the number of pupils is it allows students to get more help and closer attention when needed as well as more opportunities for workshops and school trips. When I first joined, I felt welcomed instantly and didn't get too lost, but when I did people were always polite enough to offer their help.

Harriot B - Head student (Year 10)

Since January 2019 I have been writing a regular column for the magazine, extolling the virtues of MECE and how much it has changed. This has been supported by so many visitors who tour the school and talk of the calm, purposeful classrooms and positive focused teaching. However, please do not just take it from me! I have used this month's column to let some of our students speak and this includes one recent leaver, two current Year 10 students and two of our most recent arrivals from Year 7.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time at MECE, as a small school I feel teachers really know their students and the sense of community is apparent both academically and with the provision of extra-curricular activities. Teachers want the best for each and every one of their students, no matter their ability. They run intervention clubs for students who are struggling and further clubs for students that have the potential to achieve the very best grades. My favourite experience of school has to be the Christmas productions; seeing all the students, from all year groups, working together with staff to put on an incredible show.

James B - Year 11 - Former Head Student

My favourite aspect about our school is the amazing close-knit community. We support each other which improves the overall atmosphere and learning environment, so we have the best opportunities to thrive. I have enjoyed playing a wide range of sports including badminton, table tennis and rugby, and particularly enjoyed having the opportunity to play table tennis with Mr Hartley, our headteacher at lunchtimes. I also appreciate having a large field in our school to relax and have a break from lessons. The teachers at our school are brilliant. They are kind, encourage new ideas and care about helping us reach our maximum potential.

Akshaye D - Head Student (Year 10)

I am very proud to be a pupil at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge. The teachers are very supportive with helping students that need help in class with their work. The school has a lot of extracurricular activities such as after school clubs and school clubs at break times. When we had covid-19 and had to work at home, that didn't stop the teachers from being unbelievably supportive. I really love the school and the teachers they make students feel safe and not have to worry about coming into school. They take bad behaviour very seriously at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and the teachers put so much effort into their classes and students. MECE is an amazing school.

Matt B - Year 7



From when I joined in September, I have found it really easy to make friends at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge as everyone is so kind and welcoming. One of the best things about Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge is that all the teachers are friendly and supportive. Another thing is that the school is very diverse with clubs such as netball, rounders, fitness, art, history, eco club and many more. Also, the school has many fun opportunities for pupils to take part in which includes school council, house ambassador and house competitions. I have found that Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge has managed to handle the covid school restrictions and student behaviour in a calm fashion.

Eleanor C - Year 7

What pleases me most about these student viewpoints is that they cover those aspects of school that I hope are most important to parents: teaching, relationships, behaviour and extra-curricular opportunities. I know it is still early days, but I am so pleased to read that the students feel the same way that the staff do about our wonderful school. ●

ANDY HARTLEY
Headteacher

DEAR EDITOR

I am a retired Maths teacher, living in Sonning Common, and am happy to give extra support to a GCSE higher year 11 or year 10 student without charge for one hour a week.

In the current situation the lessons would be by telephone which from experience is successful until it is safe for lessons to be arranged in my home.

If you are interested, please contact me by email on yvon.d@tiscali.co.uk.

YVONNE KEDGE

GROVE ROAD

Dear Editor

If something isn't done about the parking situation in Grove Road there's going to be a really nasty accident. I'm well aware that during school time it is always a problem but the situation has now become very dangerous, with cars parked either end on the junctions of Peppard road and Kennylands road. Twice I have nearly been hit by cars turning into Grove Road as I was on the wrong side of the road to get past the parked cars. Fortunately, we were able to stop before impact. Cars are blocking safe egress either end of Grove Road. Parking in Grove Road at the Kennylands junction causes a serious hazard, already one car has been hit fortunately only the car damaged but the young driver was very shaken. I had nearly hit a child and met head on with a lorry trying to turn into

Kennylands from Grove Road. Driving the chicane any time of the day is a nightmare, particularly at night when the cars are parked facing the wrong way so their reflectors are not visible.

ANN DEIGHTON

Dear all

Thank you for including me into the email trail.

We regularly ask our parents to park responsibly, but it is the three or four cars and vans parked at the bottom of Grove Road and then the numerous contractor vehicles that seem to present quite a serious risk. I don't think that the flats at the bottom of Grove Road have off street parking for more than one vehicle per flat.

I will remind our parents of road safety

and also run some sessions in school as the number of vehicles on the road has significantly increased following the unlocking of the country. ●

CHRIS HIRST
Headteacher

STOP PRESS

Dr Peter Hemphill

Many of our readers will remember Dr Hemphill who founded the Sonning Common practice in 1949 where he remained a doctor until 1985. He died on Sunday 18 July 2021 at the age of 101.

JAPANESE DAY at Sonning Common Primary School

by Christine Atkinson

There is always a lot going on in SCPS day in and day out. But on a sunny day in June the whole school embraced a special language day and 'turned' Japanese.

Staff dressed in traditional clothing and children were encouraged to dress in the colours of the Japanese flag, red and white. There were activities in the classrooms, and a special lunch for the children was put on by Kites Kitchen, with katsu curry and gyoza dumplings.

All the children really enjoyed the day as you can see from the photos and some of the comments from their parents....

'Thank you, the children loved it. Very excited about all things Japanese and insisted on eating their fishfingers with chopsticks when they got home!'

'My little one can't stop talking about how fun her day was! Thank you for all the amazing effort.'

'My daughters were absolutely buzzing yesterday when they got home. They had so much to tell me about their fantastic day.' ●



An introduction to our new junior contributor Gabriel Andlauer-Turner

Hello,

I am writing this piece to introduce myself so you can get to know me a bit before reading any of my articles in the future.

I am a fourteen year old called Gabriel Andlauer-Turner who has lived in or close to Sonning Common all my life. I enjoy many hobbies in and around the village such as running, paddleboarding, canoeing, mountain biking and wildlife watching, often aided by beautiful views of the slow moving river Thames or the sweeping Chiltern hills.

I decided to start writing in our local magazine as I have been reading articles for a long time and felt that the Sonning Common magazine would allow me to try my hand at journalism in a respected, friendly, official paper. In the future, I would love to try writing about anything and everything relating to the village ranging from local walks, wildlife, trails and sales, to local news and politics.

I hope you will enjoy my work in the future,

Thank you for reading ●

GABRIEL

I-SPY TRAIL

With activities in the library limited by social distancing, the Friends have tried to find new ways of getting children interested in books. Alison Smith – a FoSCL committee member – came up with a book themed I-Spy trail around the village during the June half term. Thirteen year old Ben James was the winner of a £10 voucher, completing the trail with his 10 year old sister Eliza – both pictured here with their younger sister, Meredith. Ben lives near Bath but is the grandson of Rosemary and Tony House

– stalwarts of the Chiltern Players. He's an avid reader and a big fan of Michael Morpurgo, Michael Grant and Steven King.

Although the FoSCL authors' evening had to be postponed, the easing of Covid restrictions should now allow some fund-raising events to go ahead. There'll also be several children's activities in August, including an opportunity to meet some wildlife with Zoo Lab – find details in the library and on our website: www.friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk



LIBRARY ... OPEN ... OPEN ... OPEN AT LAST

This year's national Summer Reading Challenge, organised by The Reading Agency, was launched on 10 July. If your child hasn't signed up for the challenge yet there is still time as it runs until after the start of the new school term.

There are treats (stickers, pencils and medals) to be collected, and a prize draw to enter – and all the child has to do is register with the library and promise to read at least 6 books by mid-September. The theme for the challenge is 'Wild World Heroes', and various library activities have been planned to support this. Contact **972 2448** or sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk

It is also hoped that a visit to the library will be more 'normal' by the time you read this, with the furniture back in place, opening times restored, the one-way system, 'Test and Trace' and mask-wearing abandoned, and books no longer having to be quarantined. I'm keeping everything crossed! ●

Rosemary Dunstan
Library manager

JUST ONE HOUR

There is a fantastic team of volunteers who take clients of the FISH Volunteer Centre to their hospital, medical or medically related appointments. There is also the FISH minibus that runs regular shopping and leisure trips. In normal times, FISH organises monthly tea parties held in Sonning Common village hall that are greatly enjoyed by all.

But there are still many people in Sonning Common and the surrounding villages who, for all sorts of reasons, are lonely or isolated and would greatly benefit from more social contact. This is where the Home Visiting Service comes in – our small team of dedicated volunteers spend

time each week with their own allocated client. They may go to their home for a chat and a cup of tea, and in time may choose to take their client out for a coffee, to a garden centre or even to the cinema or theatre.

Just one hour a week would make a world of difference to someone's life. Can you spare some time to become a Home Visiting Volunteer?

If you are interested then call the FISH office on **0118 972 3986** or e-mail office@fishvolunteercentre.org.uk and your enquiry will be passed on to Rita Hadgkiss, the Home Visiting Co-Ordinator.



"V.G." - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU?

What DOES "V.G." mean to you?

If you're one of the brighter ones, you probably frequently saw (or see) it when receiving your marked school work. Well done you!

The comments I received were usually less positive; "Is this all?" or "You must try harder". In those days dyslexia was almost unheard of, and certainly not acknowledged in school.

But I digress.

Here in our lovely village of Sonning Common, "VG" has come to mean something else. Can you guess what? – Here are 10 clues (The pictures are a bit of a giveaway) :-

1. In this context, "VG" is not an abbreviation for "Very Good" (although it could be). It is a noun.
2. "VGs" appear quite regularly - Usually a couple of times a month.
3. You might see them for about an hour at a time.
4. A "VG" is a person, or their title.
5. Our Village has about 20 of them.
6. Oops; there's an extra clue in 5.
7. These 20 or so people are members of a group.
8. Some wear gloves; others get their hands dirty.

9. In the 12 years since April 2009 they have transformed our Village, and kept it a more attractive place.
10. "VGs" focus mainly on the centre of the village, around the Post Office, the hardware shop and the pharmacy, but have also been known to tackle areas as distant as the far end of Kennylands Road.

"SONNING COMMON VILLAGE GARDENERS"

They are all unpaid volunteers. They give a few hours of their own time each month to keep our village looking attractive. Their regular dates are 1st Sunday and 3rd Thursday each month, except in really dire weather!

When? Starting 9 or 10am* for one hour. *(Check the website, or phone.)

Where? Meet outside the Post Office.

New Volunteers don't need to be experienced gardeners. The others will be pleased to show you what needs doing and how to do it.

You don't need to commit yourself to attending – Just show up at the right time if you have the time.

A NEW website - Has recently been launched. It has a very memorable address; simply **SCVG.UK**



CLARE THURSTON

Clare Thurston, one of the founding members of the Sonning Common Village Gardeners, has died after more than ten years battling cancer. She was 57.

The idea of fighting disease can be a bit of a cliché – but with Clare it was anything but. Her Welsh pluck – she might have said her sheer bloody-mindedness – meant she repeatedly defied and amazed her doctors. She brought that same determination to bear in other parts of her life, including in helping to set up the Village Gardeners.

It was a roadside conversation in 2009 about the state of the One Stop flowerbed, that got the ball rolling. After gathering the support of other like-minded friends, Chrissie Godfrey (then Phillips-Tilbury) went to the Parish Council to ask for some money to buy a few plants. Much to her disappointment, a modest

request for a few hundred pounds was dismissed by the then chairwoman. Clare was in the public seats and was outraged by the decision, threatening all sorts of guerilla gardening tactics. In the end, the group began work without official support, helped along by generous donations from members of the public and some plants liberated from their own gardens. Clare's appearances on gardening days inevitably trailed off, but she had definitely helped to sow a seed.

Despite her diagnosis, Clare lived life to the full – working as a gardener and then at Chiltern Edge school, travelling as much as she could with her family, tending to her own beloved garden and supporting her children, Dale and Jess, through exams and into work. They can be as proud of her, as she was of them. ●

Helen Fort

It is so new that they are still working on it, but it already explains what they do, when they do it, and it has lovely pictures.

For potential volunteers, donors or general enquiries, there are Contact details.

Non-internet users may prefer to phone Andrea (0118) 972 2141

From our reporter Paul W
Pictures courtesy of Stan Rust ●



DEAR EDITOR

Thank you all residents who give such care to their front garden flowers, especially those who are wild flowering. My last delivery of the Magazine along Lea Road became a joyful experience.

Yvonne Kedge

GREENSHOOTS - Job Opportunities

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Parish news

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SUMMARY OF RESULTS SPORT AND RECREATION NEEDS SURVEY

In April 2021 the Parish Council conducted a Sport and Recreation Needs Survey, in consultation with the Memorial Hall Field Working Party. The purpose of the survey was to gain feedback from the village community on priorities for developing sport and recreational facilities at Memorial Park and to use the survey results to inform future decision-making on provision.

This three-week independent survey was probably the most comprehensive and in-depth consultation exercise ever undertaken by the Parish Council. Approximately 2,000 homes received copies of the survey by post over the course of the Easter weekend. In addition the survey was available to complete on-line and by smart phone via the council's website. The survey was publicised via posters throughout the village, social media, the council's website as well as in the Henley Standard and SC Magazine.

Individual responses were invited to the survey, taking into account differences in people's age, sporting interests and abilities. A total of 668 responses were received – 258 by post and 410 on-line – a response rate of 33%. Additionally, Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and Sonning Common Primary School promoted the survey to their communities.

Residents were consulted on what sports/activities should be provided on a 60m x 40m multi-use games area (MUGA) and within the park generally; specific facilities for different age groups; uses for a community building on-site; as well as the name of the park.

Opportunities were provided throughout the survey for respondents to make individual comments and suggestions. Respondents were invited to record their age, gender and postcode.

It is envisaged that public consultation on the development of Memorial Park will be on-going and will build upon past public consultations conducted by the Parish Council and by the Memorial Hall Field Working Party. Future focussed work is planned with special interest groups, such as disabled people, and sports organisations. It is hoped to hold public displays/meetings in the village hall in future to gain further insight from residents.

The Performance, Consultation and Insight section at Stratford-on-Avon supported the Parish Council in conducting this research by helping to design the survey, collate and report on findings.

The following is a brief summary of the survey's main findings:

SPORT AND ACTIVITIES

- 69% of respondents felt an outdoor gym should be provided on a 60m x 40m multi-use games area. More than half wanted a football/walking football/5 a side activity (58%) to be made available, followed by netball/walking netball (57%), basketball (55%) and an area for organised exercise/fitness classes.
- When asked for a top four, respondents went for an outdoor gym, then football/walking football/5 a side activity, followed by netball/walking netball, and an area for organised exercise/fitness classes.
- 42% would use the MUGA often, 40% occasionally, and 8% only for organised sport and activities. Exactly one in ten respondents indicated they would never use the MUGA.
- 39% would be prepared to pay to use the MUGA for some sports or activities. 35% were a "maybe" and 25% would not be prepared to pay.

RECREATION PARK

- 57% would often use the perimeter path, 38% said they would be likely to use it occasionally and 4% responded with a no.
- 44% felt they would use the field for social activities often, 49% occasionally and 7% never.
- 40% would often use the playground area for those aged up to 12, 30% occasionally and another 30% would never use it.
- Asked what specific facilities should be included for teenagers, 65% felt a

basketball hoop be installed, 54% felt a climbing wall should be constructed and 52% thought a shelter or social area would be a good idea.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

- 77% of people surveyed would be keen to see fitness classes organised in a community building, 66% would like social clubs organised, 62% would play badminton, 56% table tennis and 55% would like to see more arts-based activities in the form of singing/dancing or drama sessions.
- Asked whether they would hire the function/meeting rooms in the building

for social or business use, 43% of respondents thought they would, 20% responded with a no and 38% were a maybe.

- 95% of those surveyed felt toilets to be the most important facility provided on-site and considered important for the safe and enjoyable use of the park, followed by 85% wishing to see picnic tables installed, 81% wanting lighting on the MUGA and around the perimeter path, 75% required a café to be constructed and 51% changing rooms.

ACCESS

- 76% would expect to travel to the site

on foot, 12% arrive by bike and a further 12% would use their car as transportation.

MEMORIAL HALL

- 66% agreed that the Memorial Hall Field should be renamed Memorial Park, 20% answered "maybe" and 14% were against the name.

Ros Varnes

Deputy Clerk, Sonning Common Parish Council - 21 June 2021

NEW ARE COUNCILLORS KEEN TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY



Keith Settle has recently been co-opted on to the Sonning Common Parish Council, having lived in the village for the last four years with wife Tamryn and stepson, Jacob.

Councillor Settle, a maths teacher and rowing coach by profession, is involved with a range of local matters which are important to him.

He is a trustee of the Millennium Green and governor of Sonning Common Primary School, chairing the resources committee overseeing finance, staffing and health and safety.

Keith explained that he had decided to become a councillor because he was keen to contribute to his local community.

"Sonning Common is a real gem in South Oxfordshire and it is a privilege to be able to serve in this way. We have some amazing local organisations that we should be very proud of and I hope that the parish council can continue to support them.

"I also believe that whilst we should continue to respect the beautiful surroundings of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in which we live, we do need to make sure there is provision for young families to be able to flourish in the village as well as amenities for our older residents as well."



NEW COUNCILLOR HAS HIS SIGHTS ON A CYCLEWAY TO EMMER GREEN

New parish councillor Jonny Bidgood moved to Sonning Common with his

wife in 2014 - to make their home in Kennylands Road. He was previously involved with residents groups in Windsor, Taplow and Maidenhead.

Councillor Bidgood is particularly interested in traffic management and reducing the impact of cars on the environment. Two years ago he joined the council's Village Centre Working Party, as a resident representative, after the publication of a council-commissioned report into traffic problems in the village.

Said Jonny: "I was impressed and inspired by Ben Hamilton-Ballie's 2017 Placemaking Strategy report which is a great analysis of the village and full of useful ideas to make it better. Reading it convinced me to finally join the parish council. I will use my experience in architecture and the built environment to help promote and achieve those ideas, which include a new traffic management scheme in Reades Lane, near to the new Memorial Park and School, to be known as Chiltern Edge Place"

Top of Jonny's agenda is promoting the introduction of a cycleway between Sonning Common and Emmer Green. He would like to see a two-lane cycleway being constructed off the B481 behind the hedge line, which would need agreements from landowners. He started working on this project as an individual a year ago and is now hoping to pursue it through the parish council. ●



APPEAL IS LOST



The decision by Harold Stephens, the government's planning inspector, to allow a 'retirement village' of 133 apartments to be built on the edge of Sonning Common is a travesty and an utter disgrace.

In this case he found in their favour on every count. Most fatal of all to the case made by South Oxfordshire District Council and Sonning Common Parish Council was his ruling that SODC did not have a 5-year-land supply. The assertion by a planning officer, that they did have one was shredded mercilessly by the Inspired Villages barrister. SODC's failure in this – and it was a failure – should be prompting some deep reflection in the planning department on how they could have been so ill-prepared, particularly as within a few weeks of the end of the inquiry they were able to produce a significantly more robust statement.

But critically Mr Stephens, also swallowed the developers' argument that the location of the appeal site within the AONB should count for nothing, because the AONB around Sonning Common is not part of the 'core' Chilterns AONB, and the site is on the edge of it. The implications of this are extremely serious. In future any developer wanting to build into the AONB close to a settlement will be able to use this precedent to justify their case. It amounts to nothing less than a frontal assault on the whole

concept of the AONB.

Mr Stephens also accepted Inspired Villages' case that their development would contribute to meeting the 'unmet need' for extra-care accommodation for the elderly. It needs to be understood that only the affluent will be able to afford these apartments, priced at £600,000 upwards with a £7,000 a year service charge plus a large cost for selling the property on.. By their own figures, most of the takers will come from outside the area. They will be existing property owners. Is this a real need? Surely the overwhelming need in a civilised society is to provide housing for young people to get started?

One by one Mr Stephens, dismissed the objections to the scheme. I won't go through them because it would take too much space and depress me too much. But I would like to mention the impact of his ruling on the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan (I am chairman of the working party charged with reviewing the plan). Because of SODC's failure to show a 5-year land supply, the policies of our neighbourhood plan were deemed to be out of date. The review which we began three years ago was dismissed as having 'no weight'. Actually, we were ready to proceed with allocating sites for what our village needs – small homes for young families AND an appropriate provision of

specialist accommodation for the elderly in locations accepted by our residents. That process was paralysed by the Inspired Villages' plan which is on a scale far bigger than the overall housing target set for us by SODC which we were working towards.

With a few contemptuous words, Mr Stephens consigned the nine years work that went into our original neighbourhood plan and its review to the dustbin. The support that the village gave to that plan counted for nothing. The fact that we would, if allowed, have provided the housing the village needs counted for nothing. The fact that our plan was widely regarded as one of the success stories of neighbourhood planning counted for nothing.

Mr Stephens, has achieved a number of things with his ruling. He has enabled a speculative developer to bank a massive profit. He has enabled the landowner, to do the same. He has sabotaged the AONB and created a precedent that will be gleefully exploited by every other developer intent on trashing our countryside. He has made possible a significant addition to the over-65s population of Sonning Common, which has more than its fair share already. He has made it possible for the rich, the powerful and the utterly unscrupulous to trample on local democracy at work. That is some achievement, Mr Stephens. ●

Tom Fort

Neighbourhood plan

Disheartened but not defeated the NDP team will continue to work on completing our review and the results will be ready for residents' consultation in early October.

MEMORIAL PARK

HEALTH, ACTIVITY AND WELL BEING



It is quite incredible to believe that our new recreation ground is nearing completion.

These pictures show some of the challenges which have had to be overcome – snow and frozen ground, torrential rain and water flows, as well as dry weather and dust.

As you can see on the aerial shot taken in June, the pathways, multi use games area and general site layout has continued despite all the weather conditions, so that by the time the next magazine appears, we will be able to bring you pictures of the finished works.

We must pay great tribute to the determination of our appointed contractors – Blakedown Sport and Play – and their contracts manager Barry Jacobs. Led by Barry, they have helped us solve all manner of challenges which we could not have foreseen. They will hand over to us a site which we hope will be enjoyed for generations.

The weather has delayed essential seed planting until almost the end of July. This means we need to leave the grass

to root until next Spring, so that it will be durable for the long term. Therefore, the site will remain closed to the public until then, allowing us to plan a great opening, raise funds for additional items of equipment, create the play areas and install lighting and CCTV.

We have respected the wishes of local residents with regards to the landscaping, re-use of plants that the developer no longer required, obtaining donations of hedging plants from the Woodland Trust and incorporating wild-flower seed mix into our planting plans. We have kept as much as we could of the original topography, with the site rising to the north and with surface drainage in the form of a swale capturing water in the south.

The extensive Sport and Recreation questionnaire has provided further information and suggestions which we will digest. We wish to thank all residents for their contribution.

We hope that the much-loved Summer Fun programme will return in 2022. In the meantime, Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and Sonning Common Primary Schools have offered their facilities for a programme this year, especially for vulnerable children and families. We are proud that our local young people who have trained as Active Leaders will be helping deliver this programme and gaining valuable experience. The Parish Council has supported a week of Youth Club activity as well.

These occasions will create a further opportunity to speak with residents about how we can ensure our new Memorial Park, as it has been named, will be the hub of our village in the future. ●

Diana Pearman and Penny Snowden
Memorial Hall Working Party



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HIS MUSIC LIVES ON



Gwyn Arch MBE, who died on 6 June 2021 just weeks after his 90th birthday, brought music and life to Sonning Common for over 50 years.

Gwyn and Jane came to the village in 1964. Their sons, David and Jonathan, attended Sonning Common Primary School (where Jane later taught) and Chiltern Edge.

Gwyn had taught English in Rickmansworth, but music was a passion since his days as a choirboy in his father's church. He loved the piano, performing in jazz bands both at Cambridge and at Oxford. Once for a bet, he disguised Colonel Bogey within the music for the congregation to process into church. He was a master of Improvisation!

The interview panel at Bulmershe were very interested that Gwyn built 7 cars for a hobby!

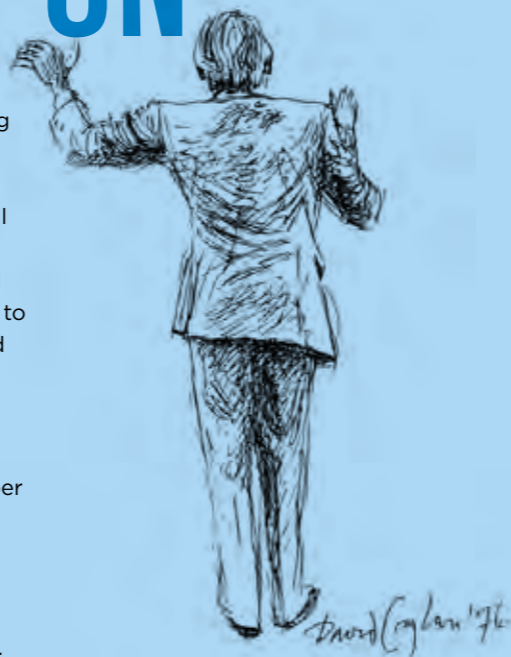


His appointment as Director of Music at Bulmershe, the new teacher training college in Reading, followed an extra-curricular career of writing and performing in musical theatre. As well as educating generations of musical teachers, Gwyn formed the wonderful Bulmershe Girls' Choir and took them to competition success and tours around the world.

He became Musical Director of the South Chiltern Choral Society (SCCS) from 1965 to 2014. Many will remember Christmas Concerts at Chiltern Edge, always involving children from local schools. Gwyn formed a particular bond with the children, who were thrilled to perform with an adult choir. His philosophy was that choral singing brings people together and builds caring communities. The community of Sonning Common was particularly precious to him.

In 1971 Gwyn founded Reading Male Voice Choir (RMC), bringing together about 70 men from all walks of life to raise funds for charity by giving monthly concerts at home and abroad. Friday rehearsals were enlivened by Gwyn's jokes (not always in the best possible taste!). RMVC continues to flourish under Clive Waterman, supported by an active group of Friends.

The SCCS and the RMVC choirs took part in concert tours, as guests and hosts of choirs across England, Wales,



Ireland and the rest of Europe. Many life-long friendships have been formed.

After retiring early in 1985 Gwyn founded two more choirs: the highly successful Central Berkshire Girls' Choir and, at the request of a group of parents, Parenthesis. All six of his choirs still exist, the youth choirs in slightly different forms. So much of his life was spent encouraging people to sing and so many singers were inspired by him.

Gwyn now had time to develop his choral music arrangements. He had already written cantatas for children, notably Creation Jazz, with long-time collaborator Pat Rooke. More arrangements were published by Grove Music, Gwyn's own company, (to provide a larger range of pieces for male voices) and by Faber and the Austrian company Helbling. Gwyn has made some 800 arrangements and is one of the most successful arrangers of choral music in the UK.

Gwyn was grateful for his "interesting and fulfilling life".

His choristers, old and young, have admired and loved him.

We too are grateful for his life. ●

Jackie Million

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WIDMORE POND

In the last edition of the magazine a link between roman engineering and an english pond was suggested as it's origins. The pond is probably not a natural feature but its actual origin is a mystery. It might be the flooded remnant of an ancient pit, later filled in. "Widmore" means "Wide Mere" (wide pond) in Anglo-Saxon, and there are references to a settlement called "Widemere" nearby.

The first recorded reference to the pond was by Dr Robert Plot who wondered if the early miners were extracting silver or even gold. But it would be much more likely they dug iron ore, and if so, there could have been local metal-working along with the related industries of glass and pottery making. Field walking nearby has produced pottery finds, but no sites have as yet been excavated and no firm evidence to support the mine theory has been revealed to date.

In 1681 the Stonor family sold Blounts Court. In 1733 the new owner, Charles Price, declared the pond: "A free water place for the inhabitants of Shiplake", where their horses and cattle could drink. But after an entire horse and cart disappeared into the pond, posts were put in at the Southern end to stop animals venturing too far into the water. The main road then ran along Widmore Lane and Blounts Court Road. The brickwork along Widmore Lane is Victorian – passing steam engines used to fill up their water tanks there, putting their hoses through the gap in the wall, dated 1888.

Ken Stevens has added to the history of the pond and its connection to a very short lived railway line. Another slant on this story.

The Railway that hardly ever was

It started with a fascinating snippet in a book "Thames Valley Branch Lines"

(Selbury Press 1981, ISBN-13: 9780141305820). The record for the shortest-lived is held by the Sonning Common Light Railway, a life so brief that it barely got a mention in Fred Richen's book "The Village that Never Was". Perhaps he was scornful of it having been so short lived.

The reason for its existence was the clay workings in what later flooded to become Widmore Pond. This clay had a sought-after natural reddish hue that was used in the manufacture of high quality pottery and tiles at Tilehurst. A Parliamentary Bill was submitted for a narrow gauge railway line to convey the raw material there. The route was to have run across the current site of the Herb Farm, over by Chalkhouse Green, thence skirting the western boundary of Caversham and down to the Thames, where an extension of the Tilehurst works aerial conveyor system would have carried it high over the river and up to the kilns on Norcot Hill. Unfortunately, that route would have taken the line close by the gardens of the influential residents of The Warren, which included Caversham's MP of the time. One little word by him in Parliament "Object!" killed the Bill at first reading. A revised bill was then submitted and approved for a route in t'other direction down to Henley, where the loads were tipped into barges for carriage upstream to Tilehurst. The clay jetty was at the bottom of Mill Lane and it was extended later to form the walkway out to Marsh Lock.



This old postcard shows the claypit, just across the road from the old Butchers Arms. Note the horse and cart being loaded, assisted by some lads of the village – a good way to earn a bit of pocket money!

The Sonning Common end of the railway was on a flat area of land above the original Butchers Arms.

After a two-year construction period, the line started operation in 1910, running past Blounts Court and veering left to cut the corner across to the Devils Hill road, running alongside it for a short way. Still visible is the permanent way enclosure between the double line of fencing on the boundary of Crowsley Park, though now since overgrown with trees. The line then curved away from the road to achieve a shallower incline, down where the microwave dishes are now sited, and onwards through Harpsden to the Thames.



Despite high hopes for the railway, it never actually paid its way. The short sharp slope up from the claypit still necessitated hauling the loads by horse and cart up to the terminus. This was a somewhat slow process and there was never enough to fill a complete trainload by that means, without the earlier loadings starting to dry out. The cost of running half-empty trains outstripped the revenue from sale of the clay and the company went bankrupt.

Thus ended our little bit of railway history as the line closed exactly one year after its inauguration – on 1st April 1911.

Ken Stevens

In the early 20th century Brakspear had a public house ("The Pond House") where the lay-by is now. This was demolished when the Butchers Arms was built in 1940. A shed stood on the North side of the pond, which later became a blacksmith's forge and later still a butchery. A man sadly drowned himself in the pond around this time. The pond had long suffered severe pollution from the forge, butchery and sewage from the "Pub" (which also kept pigs).

Sonning Common Parish Council took over ownership and management



of the pond, after the pond was declared a "Common" in 1967, and no-one else claimed it. In 1976 a three-year clearance and restoration programme led by local Councillor F.R. "Dick" Denning, earned it an award in a national "Save The Village Pond" competition

Today the pond is maintained as a nature reserve and amenity for the village of Sonning Common. The water is up to six feet deep, but there could be a great depth of mud below. It supports an abundant population of fish – mainly carp and roach – as well as many ducks, which are regularly fed with special Duck Food by local caretakers. There is no need to give them extra food, especially bread, which can encourage rats.

The pond is regularly inspected, but if you notice anything wrong with the pond, please contact the Parish Council. ●

MEET JACKY HOLCOMBE ... A FOUNDER MEMBER OF 'VISITS'

By JOAN GRUMMANT



Many people in Sonning Common will know Jacky from her days working in adult education when there was a wide-ranging programme of evening classes taking place all over South Oxfordshire. Her interest in adult education began in the 50's as an Education Officer in Exeter and continued after having a family and moving to Sonning Common in 1987. She describes her work at the Caversham Centre in the 1980's and '90's as a 'golden age' of adult education when the courses offered were a wide mix of academic and practical and when people were given the opportunity to try out new things, develop skills and meet new people within their communities. This was sorely missed when it ended. Jacky has worked in administration at Greenfields Business College and the Caversham Centre and this organisational flair has enabled her to create a strong data base that has proved invaluable to the VISITS programme.

Jackie was made redundant in 2000 and, fortunately for us, this saw the birth of Visits. It began with three other founder members including Margaret Moss, Margaret Hulse and later John Brearley and enabled the team to arrange interesting opportunities for people to visit unusual and exciting places by coach. It is a voluntary, non-profit making organisation and the passion of the organisers is very clear to see. Pre Covid there were two visits offered each month except August, and programmes were sent out in advance. It proved to be so popular that the group has never advertised and has about 400 names on the data base currently. The visits are meticulously organised and managed and are thoroughly reconnoitred before taking place. There is a coach pick up point in Rivermead, Caversham and Valpy Street, Reading. Having such a variety of choice on offer caters for a huge range of interests and the team provide days out to museums, National Trust houses and Stately homes, theatres, gardens and gladly accept suggestions for anything new. So far eleven holidays have taken place where the group take the coach and stay at a hotel Monday to Friday as a base for travelling around.



'Visits' has celebrated twenty years of enriching the lives of people and have even had two teas to celebrate their success at the Town Hall in Reading. At one event, actor Anthony Valentine was the speaker and at the other two magnificent magicians provided some great entertainment.

Having such a strong team is the foundation of the success of 'Visits' and Jacky enjoys the challenge and stimulation of the organisational side of the work. The fact that she clearly loves the community feel of the events is plain to see and we are very lucky to have someone like her doing such a massive amount of work to enable us to enjoy something so different. She and the team deserve a great vote of thanks for their magnificent work. ●

MORE CHALLENGING THAN EXPECTED – AND A LITTLE DISAPPOINTING?

Only six of us signed up to do last weekend's South West Coast Path Challenge, which made things a little difficult for the organisers: six participants call for only two guides – but the part of the coast path on the itinerary really needs three guides: one to drive the support vehicle, and two to walk with the group in case of problems, owing to the inaccessibility by road of much of the path. So the decision was made to alter the route a little: instead of St Ives to Penzance, via Land's End, we walked from Porthleven to Land's End, and then a short section on the north coast. This change was suggested 2-3 weeks beforehand, but not officially decided on until we arrived. To say I was disappointed is an understatement: the St Ives to Land's End section of coast is believed to be the most stunningly beautiful part of the coast path.

On Saturday, after a rather windy, disturbed night in the tents, we set off from the east side of Porthleven to walk to Penzance: a distance of about 16 miles (by the route we went – possibly not the most direct!). It was very hot and the wind had dropped – the sea was like a millpond – and one of our group had to give up and join the support vehicle. The five of us walked on (with the guide), with frequent breaks for water and snacks, and to admire the views, and eventually, after over 8 hours of walking, we got to Penzance and climbed gratefully into the van. I'm fairly familiar with this section of the coast path and was surprised at how overgrown it was – all the paths in South Oxfordshire seem very well-used because of lockdown walking habits.

We all slept well that night, and rose to a cooler, cloudier day. We were dropped



off in Mousehole at 8.30am, and our destination was Land's End, about 13 miles further on. The path was steeply undulating from the start, with lots of uneven steps up and down the cliffs. The track was even more overgrown than the previous day: there were campion, nettles, yarrow, foxgloves and brambles at knee-height, and thistles, honeysuckle, gorse, hogweed and sloe bushes at shoulder height. Although this was the coast path, there were times when we couldn't see the sea at all! One of my companions put her foot down a hole as far as her knee, scraping it painfully – but fortunately no broken or twisted ankle.

Highlights of the day were Lamorna Cove, the Tater Du lighthouse (dating from the 1960s, and which Derek Tangye used to write about), Penberth (where we had our picnic lunch, and where parts of 'Poldark' had been filmed), Porthcurno and the Minack Theatre, Porthgwarra and Land's End itself, with the grandeur of the waves smashing themselves against the granite cliffs. We arrived at about 5.30pm – an exhausting nine hours walking.

We knew the forecast for the next day was for rain, and sure enough it started at about 3am and was still pouring when it was time to leave. After much discussion and consultation it was decided to walk a nearer part of the coast path, from Portreath to Hayle.

This path was obviously well-used and we were able to pick up the pace in spite of the rain and strong wind. The rain eased off for a while, and we were hopeful of walking further – but then it started getting heavier and the majority decision was to call a halt after only six miles. What a blessing that our first two days had been dry.

So I didn't walk the original planned route, and I only managed 35 miles in the three days, but it was more challenging than I expected, and my legs felt the strain for several days. Thanks to all who have sponsored me, and if you haven't, you can still do so, by cash or cheque (payable to the 'Institute of Cancer Research'), or online at: www.justgiving.com/fundraising/RosemaryDunstan6-21 ●



SUMMER READS

BOOK REVIEWS

By **PHILLIPPA TAPHOUSE**

Malibu Rising by Taylor Jenkins Reid

Seeing as it's very unlikely we will be visiting any glamorous, hot beach locations this year, we will have to find some sort of comfort in a good read and Malibu Rising is that read. It follows the story of the Riva family from the 1950's when June and Mick first meet, to the 1980's when their four children are grown up and getting ready to celebrate the end of summer at the eldest daughter Nina's annual party.

Nina is a successful supermodel and surfer and is dreading her own party. Jay can't wait for the party to start as the girl of his dreams promises to be there.

Hudson is dreading it, like his sister, as he has to come clean to his brother about a secret and Kit has invited a secret guest. By daybreak, the party will be over and the family looking at a future they didn't expect.

It's a fun read with lots of glamorous escapism, fun, tragedy and suspense. The perfect summer read...now we just need a beach and some sunshine!

Flappy Entertains by Santa Sebag Montifiore

I absolutely loved this book and it made me laugh out loud. The author wanted to write something funny and uplifting and it really is.

Flappy Scott-Booth is a self-appointed queen bee, the very worst kind of snob, who lives in a fabulous house with beautiful gardens and a husband who is retired and plays golf all day. All her friends look up to her and she is constantly organising them and all the events for the village. Her life and social status are turned upside down when Hedda Harvey-Smith and her very dashing husband Charles move into the biggest and grandest house in the village. Flappy made me laugh and cringe in equal measures and I found that I actually quite liked her. It's a lot of fun!

The Last Thing He Told Me by Laura Dave

Everyone needs a summer thriller, and this is a good one. Hannah Hall's husband Owen disappears but before he does, he makes sure Hannah receives a note saying "protect her". Hannah knows exactly who he means... Owen's daughter and Hannah's stepdaughter, Bailey, who after losing her mother as a young girl, has no time at all for Hannah.

After Owen's boss is arrested and

the FBI turn up at Hannah and Owen's home, Hannah realises that she hardly knew Owen at all, but the key to his disappearance could lie with Bailey. Together they set out to find him and uncover the truth.

It's a fast-pace thriller and you quickly become involved in the characters.

Worst Idea Ever by Jane Fallon

I have been a fan of Jane Fallon's books for years. Her writing is sharp, funny, wicked and compassionate.

Georgia and Lydia have been friends all their lives. Georgia is a very successful author and illustrator, while Lydia had struggled to get her illustrations off the ground. When she starts up an online business, Georgia is keen to help but Lydia doesn't like handouts, so Georgia creates a fake twitter account to encourage and help her friend. Things get complicated when Lydia starts confiding in her new online friend about work, relationships and her friendship with Georgia.

This is a great summer read. The more Lydia confides, the more Georgia gets involved, and very soon she is starting to regret it.

Take a few hours off, put your feet up, get a glass of wine or a cup of tea and enjoy. Hopefully, the sun will shine too. ●



OXFORDSHIRE SOUTH AND VALE CITIZENS ADVICE – NEW TRUSTEES NEEDED

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A new future for the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty announced in ambitious new Landscape Designation Programme

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SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE NEWS

Proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has published its initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituency boundaries and launched an eight-week consultation, which closes on 2 August 2021.

You can comment on a range of issues such as where the proposed new boundary lines are to the names of the constituencies. To view the proposals for your area, and to submit any feedback, visit the **Boundary Commission website**.

Welcome to Climate and Nature News! This is our new, regular section to keep you up to speed on how we're tackling the climate emergency and highlight some of the great work being carried out in our communities.

In Thame, the town council has adopted a Green Living Plan, a 10-year plan for a cleaner, greener Thame, which seeks to protect and enhance the quality of life locally, in the things that really matter – our air, our water, our overall well-being and the natural world that surrounds us. Find out more on the **Thame Green Living website**.

Share your stories

We want to hear about your climate action and nature protection work - here's your chance to showcase your efforts! To share your stories, email us at climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk. ●

TOM FORT GETTING OLD

I had my 70th birthday in May and around that time I met Chrissie Godfrey, stalwart of this magazine, in the road and she asked me how it felt. A good question, which I've been thinking about a good deal.

Of course, to my children, aged between 19 and 39, I seem incredibly and impossibly ancient, and they tend to treat me as if I were some precious (at least I hope precious) and fragile piece of porcelain in human form. Younger friends, say between 45 and late 50s, seem surprised that I could be so old and sometimes compliment me on not looking it – while to me they seem absurdly distant in age (some of them weren't even alive when Harold

Wilson was Prime Minister).

What do I notice about myself? Apart from the obvious physical slowing-down, I mean. Am I wiser? More mature? More sensible? Less inclined to do and say foolish things?

On the whole I fear not. I am more aware of my health, I think – if there's something wrong I go to the doctor or dentist instead of hoping that it will just go away. But being a somewhat talkative fellow, I still have a tendency to put my foot in it. And according to my dear wife my weakness for being childish has not improved at all.

I have noticed that I am much less sure in my views than I used to be. When younger I thought I knew the answer

to most things.

Now on matters like Black Lives Matter or LGBT or whether we should still be fighting in Afghanistan or whether the double-vaccinated should be allowed to do what they want and go where they want, I have a real problem in deciding what I think is right and wrong.

Oh, and I eat slightly less than I used to and can no longer manage more than a couple of pints in the pub, which is probably a good thing. ●



COOK'S CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO



Lamb Koftas – makes 8

- 900g lean minced lamb
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 15g fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
- 25g fresh coriander, finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon ginger paste
- 1 tablespoon chilli paste
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 teaspoons salt

• 4 tablespoons vegetable oil

• 8 Skewers

In a large bowl, mix minced lamb, onions, mint, coriander, ginger paste and chilli paste. Season with cumin, coriander, paprika, cayenne and salt. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. Shape 1/8th of the lamb mixture into sausages around skewers. Make sure the meat is spread to an even thickness. Refrigerate until you are ready to cook. Preheat grill or barbecue to a high heat. Brush liberally with oil and arrange skewers on grill/barbecue. Cook for 10 minutes or until well done, turning as needed to brown evenly.

Roasted Vegetable Couscous – serves 4

- 2 courgettes, thickly sliced
- 1 aubergine, cut into chunks

- 1 large red pepper, quartered and seeded
- 4 large ripe tomatoes, halved
- 2 red onions, cut into wedges
- 2 carrots, peeled and cut into chunks
- 4 large garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 30g couscous
- 5g butter
- 2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley or coriander
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 200°C (gas 6). Arrange all the vegetables in a large shallow roasting tin, leaving the garlic cloves whole but peeled. Drizzle over the olive oil and season well with black pepper. Roast the vegetables for 45–50 minutes, turning them occasionally, until tender. Meanwhile, put the couscous in a deep ovenproof dish, pour over 500ml boiling



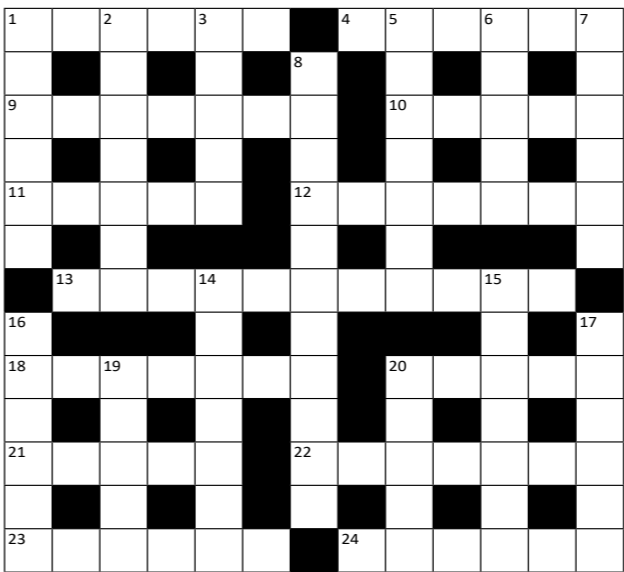
water, cover, and leave for 5 minutes to allow the grains to soak up the water. Cover tightly with foil and put in the oven with the vegetables for their final 15 minutes, to keep warm. Fluff up the cooked couscous with a fork, stir in the butter and herbs and season to taste. Serve the roasted vegetables piled on top of the couscous. Sprinkle with harissa or chilli sauce, to taste. ●



PUZZLE PAGE

By DAVID DUNSTAN

Cryptic crossword



ACROSS

1. Give answer about article – do it again (6)
4. Scandinavian pastry (6)
9. Scoundrel wearing jacket at waterfall (7)
10. Oldie is confused and well-lubricated (5)
11. Minced lamb contains posh book (5)
12. Spain poised insecurely causing an incident (7)
13. Bullock crossing horse in the county (11)
18. Hazel, perhaps, has best crown (7)
20. Badly aimed communications channels (5)
21. Dish made of tripe (5)
22. A drink and torte for Sally Lunn (7)
23. Christie is in Malaga, thankfully (6)
24. Sestet is troubled by a fly (6)

DOWN

1. Grass contains green – add more paint (6)
2. Position on tree – drop letters here (7)
3. Clock in the style of navy troops (5)
5. Sailor oils badly – hard to get rid of (7)
6. I have defective logo on house (5)
7. Out of sight, Henry dined poorly (6)
8. Inspired, yet strangely making a lucky discovery (11)
14. Chorister without hesitation transforms into a bird (7)
15. Adrian, about time, is beaming (7)
16. Posh patio constructed in a perfect world (7)
17. Run with equine initially replacing article at school for horses (6)
19. Wide actor? (5)
20. Signifies names, perhaps (5)

Sudoku

Grading: medium

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

Cryptogram

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

“HAGI AD HACI DABAPM I KAFZFHI. SE CIIT ZEOD KIHIPFI, ZEO NODS CIIT NEWAPM.” – IHKIDS IAPDSIAP

Books of numbers

Can you identify these books, which have a number in the title?

1. By Alexander McCall Smith. Set in Botswana and features Mma Precious Ramotswe.
2. By J R R Tolkien. The second book in ‘The Lord of the Rings’ trilogy.
3. By Alexandre Dumas. The story of Athos, Porthos and Aramis and young d’Artagnan.
4. By Arthur Conan Doyle. A Sherlock Holmes story, subtitled ‘The Problem of the Sholtos’.
5. By E Nesbit. Some children find a sand fairy in a gravel pit.
6. By A A Milne with illustrations by Ernest H Shepard. Poems featuring Winnie-the-Pooh.
7. By T E Lawrence. An autobiographical work about the Arab Revolt against the Turks in World War I.
8. By Alison Weir. The story of the wives of a British monarch.
9. By Dorothy L Sayers. Features detective Lord Peter Wimsey doing some bell-ringing.
10. By David Nicholls. A working-class boy joins his university team on ‘University Challenge’.

See answers on page 34

Is your dog slowing down or showing signs of stiffness?



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HEALTH CENTRE UPDATE

STAFF UPDATE

Dr Kim Wild is now on maternity leave. In October Dr Claire Webster will return from maternity leave.

Julie Davis has joined SCHC as a Phlebotomist for 3 mornings a week.

50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Updates appear on the SCHC website <https://sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk> and Facebook page or contact Sue Abbott sue.abbott6@nhs.net or Sue Litchfield sue.HAT1999@gmail.com

FLU CAMPAIGN 2021

Further guidance and results of current research into whether flu vaccination can be given with Covid booster will inform the planning of our flu clinics.

Important all patients over 65 should receive their pneumonia jab before winter. Please book via reception.

More information will be in the next Magazine, on SCHC website <https://sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk> and village notice boards

UPDATE FROM SCHC

Extra doctors have been employed to help with the backlog of patient conditions, but they ask that patients should only ask for same day appointments when absolutely necessary. The wait is less than 2 weeks for a routine problem which is excellent for most practices across the country.

Throughout the pandemic patients have only been seen when it is medically necessary to do so. If patients support this continuing, the huge volume of care needed, will be safe and efficient.

COVID UPDATE

Lateral flow tests are designed for asymptomatic people as they are not very accurate. A PCR test, arranged via 119, is needed for any Covid symptoms.



Results are taking about 24 hours to come through.

The Delta variant is increasing locally and to help combat this, second doses of Covid vaccination are being given at 8 weeks not 12. Soon, all over 18's will have had their first dose. Reception can make appointments for you.

The vaccine appears to be effective against the Delta variant and those very unwell and requiring hospitalisation being those who have only had one vaccine or none. Both covid vaccinations will keep yourself, your families and others safe. ●

Sue Litchfield for SCHC



NHS DIGITAL OPT OUT OF SHARING YOUR DATA



You can make a decision about what you would like to do with your individual data by opting in (no action needed) or opting out.

Type 1 Opt-Out - you can register a Type 1 Opt-out with us. **Please complete the form via: Medconfidential Website** and return to the health centre by emailing schc.admin@nhs.net or posting through our letterbox marked for the ADMIN TEAM. Please complete a form for every family member.

For children under 13 years of age, please read point 2 on the medconfidential.org website and complete the form.

Printed forms are available from reception. DEADLINE has been extended to **25th August 2021** to precede new GP Da to complete the

online form: <https://www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/manage-your-choice/>

Type 2 Opt-Out (Also known as National Data Opt-out): If you do want to opt back in, if you have previously opted out.

Please note, as a GP practice we cannot process Type 2 (National Data Opt-out). You can only do this the following way - If you want to Opt-Out of National Data you need to complete the online form: <https://www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/manage-your-choice/>

For further information please visit [NHS Digital Website](https://www.nhs.uk/your-nhs-data-matters/manage-your-choice/)

FOOD ALLERGIES

Now that eating out again is possible, being aware of the food you eat is essential if you develop a new allergy or already have an existing problem.

What are the top 14 food allergens?

There are 14 major food allergens which need to be mentioned (either on a label or through provided information such as menus) when they are used as ingredients in a food product or meal. However you can be allergic to any food substance.



A food allergy is when the body's immune system reacts unusually to specific foods. Although allergic reactions are often mild, they can be very serious.

Symptoms of a food allergy can affect different areas of the body at the same time. Some common symptoms include:

1. An itchy sensation inside the mouth, throat or ears
2. A raised itchy red rash (urticaria or "hives")
3. Swelling of the face, around the eyes, lips, tongue and roof of the mouth (angioedema)
4. Vomiting

At risk

It is unclear what causes the immune system to mistake harmless proteins as a threat but some things are thought to increase your risk of a food allergy.

Family history

If you have a parent, brother or sister with an allergic condition—such as asthma, eczema or a food allergy—you have a slightly higher risk of developing a food allergy. However, you may not develop the same food allergy as your family members.

Other allergic conditions

Children who have atopic dermatitis (eczema) in early life are more likely to develop a food allergy.

The rise in food allergy cases

The number of people with food allergies has risen sharply over the past few decades and, although the reason is unclear, other allergic conditions such as atopic dermatitis have also increased.

One theory behind the rise is that a typical child's diet has changed considerably over the last 30 to 40 years.

Another theory is that children are increasingly growing up in "germ-free" environments. This means their immune systems may not receive sufficient early exposure to the germs needed to develop properly. This is known as the hygiene hypothesis.

Diagnosis

See your doctor; make a list of symptoms, what has been eaten and how long symptoms have lasted. If an allergy is suspected you might be referred to an allergy clinic. Tests will determine what foods should be avoided.

Treatment

There are 2 main types of medication that can be used to relieve the symptoms of an allergic reaction to foods

Antihistamines – used to treat mild to moderate allergic reaction they work by blocking the effects of histamine, which is responsible for many of the symptoms of an allergic reaction.

Many antihistamines are available from your pharmacist without prescription, stock up in case of an emergency. Non-drowsy antihistamines are preferred.

Adrenaline – used to treat severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) this works by narrowing the blood vessels to counteract the effects of low blood pressure and opening up the airways to help ease breathing difficulties.

You'll be given an auto-injector of adrenaline to use in case of emergencies if you or

your child is at risk of anaphylaxis or had a previous episode of anaphylaxis.

Check the expiry date regularly. An out-of-date injector will only offer limited protection.

Don't delay injecting if you think you or your child may be experiencing the start of anaphylaxis, even if the initial symptoms are mild.

Further advice

It's very important to always check the ingredients list on any pre-packed food or drinks you have.

A business could provide full allergen information on a menu, or they could have a sign advising customers to ask a member of staff for this information

1. **Let the staff know** – when booking a table at a restaurant, make sure the staff know about any allergies. Ask for a firm guarantee that the specific food will not be in any of the dishes served.
2. **Read the menu carefully and check for hidden ingredients** – some food types contain other foods that can trigger allergies, which restaurant staff may have overlooked. Some desserts contain nuts (such as a cheesecake base) and some sauces contain wheat and peanuts.
3. **If abroad and language is a problem** – Take a written statement of the allergy in that language.
4. **Always take anti-allergy medicine** – with you when eating out, particularly an adrenalin auto-injector
5. **Notify your child's school about their allergy** – Arrange for the school nurse or another staff member to hold a supply of adrenalin. Food allergy bracelets and an emergency plan may be useful.
6. **Let other parents know** – young children may easily forget about their food allergy and accept food they should not have when visiting other children.
7. **Educate your child** – once your child is old enough to understand their allergy, it's important to give them clear, simple instructions about what foods to avoid and what they should do if they accidentally eat them.

Allergy UK

<https://www.allergyuk.org>

Helpline 01322 619898 has information on all aspects of allergies.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG)

The PPG provide information and advice on events that are publicised on the health pages of the magazine.

We are a group of patients from the Health Centre whose aim is to provide a patient voice on matters relating to the surgery and who meet with the GP

practice staff to discuss issues and topics of mutual interest. New members would be welcome at our AGM to be held in September.

More details closer to the time will be on the SCHC website



HEALTH WALKS

First Steps at 10am on Mondays at the Millennium Field, 10am on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and 9.30am on Fridays and Saturdays. These are in different locations, so go to www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable or Chris Brook 924 2515

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Church news

CHRIST THE KING HALL

Fitness classes have started at our hall at Christ the King after a prolonged wait as has the art group. Chiltern Players will be following closely in its wake, providing easing of restrictions allow.

The hall isn't a cavernous space but it is beautifully appointed in the centre of the village. And unlike other churches in the village you might blink and miss it as you pass the Hare and Hounds and Mike Farina's garage, because it's set back from the road.

Under normal conditions the hall is used by a number of hirers: dance and drama groups, fitness training, art clubs, literature groups and after school tuition. But like many other halls and churches locally over the last 18 months we've had to impose strict restrictions.

Springwater Church and its team of helpers have been using one of our rooms for the food bank on specific days and **we will be hosting a big thank you to the NHS event on Saturday afternoon September 11th. Please join us.**

The hall is housed in the church building itself and nestles between the church and the kitchen room. It is well ventilated with the kitchen space included in the hire charge and is a base for social contact. All we ask is you leave it all clean and tidy and observe government regulations.

Bookings are starting to open up now so please contact me if you're interested on hallbookings.ctk@gmail.com ●

Rosemary House

BENEFICE OF ROTHERFIELD, PEPPARD AND SONNING COMMON

Greetings from Christ the King! Along with other churches and organisations, we are emerging from lockdown with a mixture of hope and caution, making sure that we follow the guidance from the Church of England and the government. We've begun a pattern of weekly services, with the first and third Sundays being at the usual time of 9.30am, and the service on the second and fourth Sundays being at a new, trial time of 4.00pm. You will receive a warm welcome!

Details of these services are on "A Church Near You": www.achurchnearyou.com/church/252/

My email is revjstickings@gmail.com; phone number: **07522 042735** for more information.

Over the next few weeks and months in particular, may the peace and stillness that comes from God bring you comfort and safety. ●

Rev'd James Stickings

NHS THANK YOU DAY SATURDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 3 - 5 PM

This event will take place at Christ the King Hall and garden, Sedgewell Road, Sonning Common. It promises an interesting time for all. Enthusiastic members of the Sonning Common Youth Club are making art work to go up in the hall and are writing a short play about the NHS which they will be performing. One of our local First Responders will be talking about their work responding to local medical emergencies and there will be an opportunity to buy items from our local wood turner who will donate his takings to the First Responders. AND there will be free tea, soft drinks and cakes for everyone!

This will be our village's way of showing our appreciation to all those who have worked so hard to get us through some of the toughest times we have known. Can YOU afford to miss it? ●

Sue Nickson

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CHILTERN EVANGELICAL CHURCH, (GROVE ROAD)

It has been fantastic to start up our face-to-face groups over recent months.

The kids were so excited to be able to meet up with their friends again at our youth group, Adventurers. All events are being held offsite around the local area. We have enjoyed trips to the woods and local parks where we have been able to play games and hold the Bible talks. Most occasions have enjoyed good weather, apart from a torrential downpour on one occasion which added excitement, for the kids at least!

We run the group with a wide age range (5-11) and with numbers increasing we are looking into options for running 2 clubs from September. A younger group at a slightly earlier time, and then an older group following on from that.

Mainly Music has been operating with 4 sessions on a Friday, rather than 1, to accommodate social distancing. Although singing isn't allowed, and there is no cake and coffee, we have still enjoyed listening to the songs and spending time together in smaller groups.

Please see the website (www.cecuk.church) for plans for September. You would be very warmly welcomed at any of our events. ●

Ben Densham



Chiltern
Evangelical Church

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Although Covid restrictions were eased somewhat during May we decided that we would continue with the procedures introduced last year when churches were re-opened after the lockdown. We wish to keep our church as safe as possible for those who come together each week to worship God. It has been noticeable that as the vaccine rollout has continued more people are returning to church to participate as a community. Our live streaming continues and will probably remain for the benefit of our housebound parishioners.

June/July tends to be the time of year when our young people, mainly from our primary school, make their first Holy Communion. Last year this important moment in the life of the parish had to be cancelled and we are pleased that it will go ahead this year. Candidates from last year as well as this year will make their first Holy Communion. Extra Masses are being celebrated so that social distancing can be maintained. Unfortunately, congregational singing is still not allowed nor the traditional gathering in the hall afterwards for refreshments. Similar arrangements are being made for those unable to be Confirmed last year.

Our Mothers' Prayer group continues to meet regularly online and we have recently started a weekly online Gospel Share. The latter is an opportunity to participate in quiet, reflective prayer inspired by the coming Sunday's gospel. Visits to take Holy Communion to the sick and housebound have now resumed.

Up to date information can be found at www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk ●

INTERESTING, EXCITING AND YET, SLIGHTLY TENTATIVE TIMES

We are enjoying worshipping together indoors as well as outdoors.

The Spring Community Cafe has proved very popular but is now closed for the summer holidays. There will, however, be some exciting events taking place during August so do keep an eye on our website and local social media, the café will be open again in September.

Everything else which the Springwater community is involved in: the Food Bank, Compassionate Loaf, The Ark Parent and Toddler Group, The Aspire Woman's Group and the Steering Wheel Fellowship all continue to flourish.

We hope you have a blessed and healthy holiday period and would love to warmly welcome you to Springwater to share in the grace, love and forgiveness Jesus offers everyone, unconditionally.

Or just for a coffee and a chat?

Chris Girdler
www.springwaterchurch.org.uk
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