

APR/MAY 2024

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Sonning Common's longest serving Estate Agency welcomes Karen to the team

Beville Estate Agency established in 2002, and serving South Oxfordshire and North Berkshire are delighted to welcome Karen Drakeford-Lewis, an experienced Estate Agent and resident of Sonning Common to their team.

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We are proud to continue our longstanding support for 'On Your Bike'.

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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

As I write this editorial the sun is shining, the daffodils are blooming and the lighter days suggest that spring is on its way. Let us hope so.

The magazine committee were delighted with the tea party held to celebrate our 50th anniversary of magazine publication and to thank the residents who deliver to over 2,000 homes in Sonning Common.

This issue of the magazine has its own specialities, the amazing SoCo spring clean, 11 posters on the Noticeboard that signify a return to pre covid levels and there are new activities too, health prompts, reminders, and changes as well as from our new Eco contributor Julie Shorter.

You may have noticed on this page that there is a list of deadlines for the next and future publications of the magazine. I hope that this prompt will encourage YOU to write an article.

Happy Easter to you all. ●

Diana Pearman

FUTURE DEADLINE DATES FOR MAGAZINE COPY

1 May, 1 July, 1 September, 1 November, 1 January, 1 March

We would love to receive your articles! 😊

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



Diana Pearman



Christine Atkinson



Joan Grumman

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LOOKING FORWARD



As we step into spring, I am delighted to share an update from Maiden Erleigh Chiltern Edge. It has been an eventful start to the year for me as I get to know the school and I am very proud of the staff and young people I have the pleasure to work with.

March 1st not only marks the onset of spring, but also heralds the eagerly anticipated moment when our rising Year 7 students receive their offers. The move to secondary school can be an anxious time for students and sometimes parents too, but we see it as a time filled with anticipation and excitement as we

begin the preparations to welcome new members into our school family. I am delighted to say that we have record numbers set to join us again this year, ensuring a rising roll and a sustainable future for the school. We are proud that so many families have chosen MECE for their child's education and are committed to supporting all our students to fulfil their potential.

Looking further to the future, we are preparing for the continued growth of the school over the next three years with plans underway to reach a capacity of 600 pupils once again. This number will put us on a sustainable financial footing whilst still retaining the small community feeling in the school which is so important to us and makes it such a special place to work and learn. Our parents tell us that they really value how well the staff know their children and students benefit from very positive relationships with their teachers. Even though I only joined the school in January, I have already been able to get to know a high proportion of the students which has been a privilege.

Over the next term, I will be working to shape a vision for the next stage of the

school development that embodies our core values of aiming high, being inclusive and working together. Our 'MECE 600' plan will set out an ambitious future vision for the school community and I look forward to hearing views from students, teachers, parents and the wider community about what you want from your school.

Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who responded to the recent consultation about the school buses. By the time you are reading this the consultation will have finished, but your visible support was important to us and showed everyone in the school how much it is valued by the community. I sincerely hope that we will be able to work with Brighter Futures and Reading Buses to find a sustainable transport solution so that we can continue to serve the communities of South Oxfordshire, Reading and Caversham as the school has done for many years.

Warm wishes to everyone in the Sonning Common community from all of us at Maiden Erleigh Chiltern Edge. ●

BRIONY BOWERS
Headteacher Maiden Erleigh Chiltern Edge

SONNING COMMON PRESCHOOL NEWS



The preschool had an Ofsted inspection in January and were very pleased to be awarded GOOD status. The inspector highlighted the warmth of the welcome, the happiness of the children when they arrive, and the language skills of the children. These are a few of the comments from the report –

“staff’s interactions with children are nurturing and supportive”

“staff support children to gain essential knowledge and skills for their next stage”

“staff teach children to be patient and take turns”

“the manager and staff create a Pre-School that is at the heart of the community”

As part of the ‘teeth and healthy eating’ topic this term, the children were given a teeth brushing chart to fill in at home as well as reading books about visiting the dentist, activities to practice brushing and spoken about what foods to eat to keep our teeth happy and our bodies healthy.

World Book Day is an annual country wide event and this year was held on 7 March. The children at preschool celebrated by decorating t-shirts in the theme of their favourite book which they could wear during that week.

During March we opened for a very special stay and play to celebrate Mother’s Day - an opportunity for all the mums to experience Pre-School with their child. ●

ACT OF KINDNESS

Following a Facebook plea from Springwater Foodbank, based at the church in Blounts Court Road, for an urgent need for toiletries and other food stuffs, they were overwhelmed by a huge act of kindness.

Local company Peppard Building Supplies delivered one of their ton bags full of donations to them, thus helping to provide all those local residents struggling at the moment with supplies.

If you’d like to help do follow their Facebook page or download the ‘BanktheFood’ app on your phone where you can choose the foodbank nearest to you. It shows all urgent and running low items so that you know what to donate. ●



SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL

HOBBIES

Mini Collection

I collect mini things - mini food, mini stationary even homemade mini items. It started when my mum had an adorable little bluebird. I loved it so much that I started asking my friends at school for things. When I moved to England from America I was inspired to collect crazier, comical things. Unlike some people, my immense collection is scattered in my room, but I still know where everything is! ●

By Eva

Model trains

I collect and run model trains on my bedroom railway. My grandpop also liked collecting them and showed me them since I was two. I like disassembling them and looking at the intricate systems used to create the realistic motion.

There are two systems you can run trains on; D.C which is cheaper and simpler or D.C.C which is more expensive but lets you control multiple train at a time and in different directions. You can also activate sounds and realistic motion with D.C.C. The best way to start is with starter sets.

Trains come in lots of different scales and gauges, choose one and expand from there. I love model trains (and trains in general) as they are so varied and interesting. They come from so many countries and are unique. ●

By Gabriel



Cat Training

My hobby is clicker training my 2 year-old cat called Lulu. So far, I have taught her to sit, play fetch and come to me when I call her name. I love training Lulu because when I show people my hobby, they are very impressed at what I do. It also gives me and Lulu a special bond together that will never end! ●

By Elsie

Climbing

I love climbing because it takes your mind off all those bad and brutal thoughts and replace them with fun and fantastic moments. There are two types of climbing, natural and man-made. Natural is when you’re climbing up mountains and trees. Man-made is when you climb on walls and climbing frames. You can climb ANYWHERE even over fences to climbing Mount Everest! ●

By George



BISHOPSWOOD



It's been about a year since I last reached out to you all, and what a year it has been! The halls of Bishopswood have been bustling with activity as we've worked tirelessly to bring about improvements and reassert our presence on the Sonning Common map.

I am proud to say that our school is well on its way to greatness, thanks to the dedication and forward-thinking attitude of our wonderful staff team. Their commitment to the success of our school has propelled us forward with remarkable speed.

One of the significant changes we've implemented is the relaunch of our curriculum. We've carefully considered the skills, knowledge, and understanding our pupils need to thrive in the wider world, and we're preparing them for success from the moment they join us.

At the heart of our curriculum are themes promoting communication and independence. You may have spotted our students out and about in the local area, practicing their shopping skills at the Co-op with visual shopping lists or navigating their way to St Michel's Church for a Christmas carol service using maps. Your warm greetings and smiles as you pass by mean the world to us!

In the classroom, we're taking a creative approach to teaching English, Maths, and understanding the world. For instance, our recent exploration of the theme of Chocolate involved reading "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory," designing chocolate wrappers, and of course, plenty of tasting sessions! We also utilize Makaton signing, aided language boards, and other visual symbols to support communication and empower our students to express themselves.

Our enrichment activities are back in full swing, with a diverse range of opportunities including theatre, music, drama, swimming, and various sports such as football, basketball, tennis, and rugby. We're incredibly fortunate to offer such a rich and varied timetable of activities to our students.

We have also introduced "The Daily Mile" initiative, encouraging our students to walk or run up to a mile each day for their physical and mental well-being. With

limited space in our playground, we are grateful to have access to the expansive grounds of Sonning Common Primary School, where our children can run and play twice a day. It's heartwarming to see them hopping, skipping, and jumping, enjoying the daily activity and movement essential for their regulation. At our secondary site, you might catch our students running on the open space, with some even boasting of 3-mile runs!

As you may have heard in the news, education is facing a staffing crisis, and we're not immune to it here at Bishopswood. That's why we're reaching out to our community in search of dedicated individuals to join our team as teaching assistants. Whether you can volunteer a few hours of your time over lunch or are considering a more permanent role, we welcome your support.

What we offer is a welcoming, transparent, and hard-working staff team dedicated to championing the happiness and success of our special children. If you're interested in joining us on this journey, please visit our website to explore current vacancies. We would be thrilled to meet you.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to the Bishopswood community. ●



HOBBIES ...

Drama

I started drama classes when I was around nine. I loved standing up and acting out my own imagination however I wanted. Every three months I do an exam which is usually quite fun. It goes along the lines of : do your first performance, examiner grades on that , do your second performance , examiner grades on that to , talk about how the character is feeling and the " sequence of events" and BOOM done . I do a class every Thursday. I guess I like drama. ●

By Jack

Dancing

I love dancing. Every Wednesday I go to lyrical contently dance for 1 hour. I do it at Reading school of dance. Even though everyone is 13-15 years old and I'm only ten - I have so much fun doing it. The owner is Josie but she doesn't teach me. My teacher is Sammie and she is an amazing teacher and great choreographer. I don't really know why I love it so much but I could do it for 2 hours straight. ●

By Elsa



50TH CELEBRATION HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO US

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON

We had a fabulous gathering of committee members and volunteers on a Sunday afternoon in January in the village hall, when the days are short! The magazine committee invited all those wonderful people who volunteer to deliver the magazine every two months to their road within the village. There is an army of over 60 residents, which is very well organised and overseen by Helen Gavin.

The afternoon started with a welcome at the door and music from Dave Pinder and friends. Once everyone had arrived the lovely ladies from the WI served tea or coffee to the tables, and everyone could choose their food from the array of sandwiches and cakes on offer. A lot of catching up and chatter ensued – amazing how long some volunteers have been

distributing for!

Our new chair Sue Rawlins had prepared a short quiz for us all to take part in with cryptic questions, for which all the answers were street and roads in the village. Great fun trying to remember names! A raffle ticket had been given to everyone attending and the prizes were drawn, the fabulous cake cut (another WI donation) and Diana (our medal winning editor!) gave a toast and speech to thank all the volunteers.

The committee would like to say a huge thank you to all, to the WI for donating the cakes and serving the drinks, to Erica at Brambles for the flowers in the raffle and to all those who help, or have helped, to make our magazine so special over the last 50 years! ●



CHEQUE PRESENTATION TO WYFOLD RDA



The Sonning Common WI have been holding coffee mornings for the last year and have raised a total of £1,600 which they recently shared amongst 4 local charities of which Wyfold RDA was one of them. Marion Bayliss and Barbara Saddler recently came up to the stables to present us with a cheque for £400. We shall use the money to go towards a Visitor Viewing Shelter for our parents and carers. We really appreciate the

support that we receive from local organisations and are always willing to welcome visitors and show them round so that they can see the wonderful work we do (and have been doing for the past 54 years!). It is now costing around £45,000 a year to keep us going and we have to raise every penny ourselves. ●

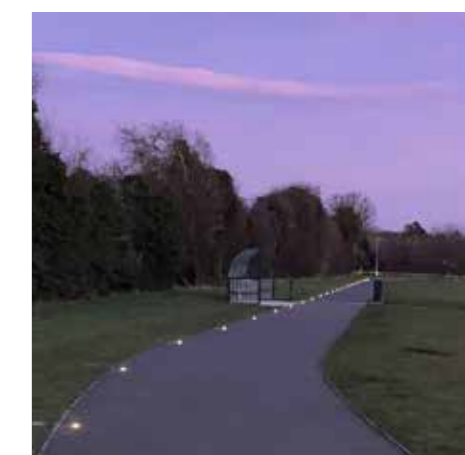
Gillian Rushworth

Memorial Park at night - solar lights installed

There have been many - positive comment from residents.

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Huge thanks to Andy and his team for all the support they gave us while selling our property. Their communication was excellent, and we felt fully informed at all times. Extremely professional without losing that personal touch. Special thanks to Liana who was always calm and reassuring.

SARAH KIDD-MAY
Horsepond Road, Gallowstree Common - March 2024



I would recommend Andy and his team at Bridges for all the help at a difficult time for the sale of my late fathers bungalow.

CORINNE SHADBOLT
Woodlands Road, Sonning Common - January 2023



We are incredibly happy with the service we have received from Andy and the team. We've really appreciated the positivity, diligence and patience. A big thank you to Liana who has really put in the hours to get us over the line! We highly recommend Bridges!

JAMES AND CHARLOTTE SMITH
Rokeby Drive, Tokers Green - March 2024



We would highly recommend Bridges Estate Agents who offered a first class service from conception to completion of selling our property in Sonning Common.

GILLY HARRIS
Kennylands Road, Sonning Common - March 2024



Andy and his team made the whole process from valuation, promotion, viewings, negotiations, right through to completion as stress free as is possible! We would highly recommend them. Thank you all.

ADELE KING
Kennylands Road, Sonning Common - December 2023



You and your team have been brilliant and have tied our sale and purchase together seamlessly, in what is a very challenging market. The initial advice you gave about value was critical to securing a quick sale.

MAT AND GRETAL WARD
Wood Lane, Sonning Common - April 2023

HOW DID WE GET HERE?

By CHRISTINE ATKINSON

Only just over the border from Berkshire, in a small corner of Oxfordshire, Sonning Common today is a far cry from the few cottages, farms and beer houses scattered on and around 200 acres of rough pasture, with cultivated areas and woods, that existed in the 1860s.

Originally part of the manor of Sonning-on-Thames, the land was used for grazing cattle and sheep. When the rich water meadows by the river flooded, the animals were driven up to the higher ground, often for months during the winter.

Hog Lane (now Woodlands Road) in Sonning Common was so called because pigs were driven along it to the nearby woods, to feed on the beech trees and nuts.

Widmore Pond, on the edge of the village, at one time supplied most of the water used locally. Dr Plot's Natural History of Oxfordshire, written in 1677, stated that when the pond was cleaned out, oak trees were found standing upright(!) and in the mud at the bottom were Roman coins and stag antlers. One theory was that it had originally been a Roman clay pit.

Before 1940, local boys spent many hours sitting on the wall fishing in the pond - but the fish died out, and the whole area became neglected and overgrown. In the early 1970s members of the Parish Council organised working parties, and the pond was cleared of rubbish, landscaped, and a bench was provided. Ducks and swans (none there now) were installed, and the area has since become a feature of the village, with some of the best-fed ducks in Oxfordshire!

With the breakup of the manor in the 1880s, much of the land was sold off bit by bit, and the slow building of an actual village began. Formerly part of the civil parish of Eye and Dunsden, it was given its own Parish Council status in 1951.

Since that time there has been much new building - three large housing estates in the 1960s boosted the population from about 1,000 at the beginning of the decade to 3,700 by 1997. In the latest census of 2021, the population now stands at 5,263.



Pressure from developers has been constant and house prices continued to increase in recent years. Attempts to incorporate the village into Berkshire, with the likelihood of it simply becoming a suburb of Reading, have been successfully repelled, and Sonning Common Open Spaces Trust has been instrumental in purchasing surrounding greenfield sites.

Sonning Common is now a friendly, active, lively community, with shops, three public houses, garages, library, health centre, dentist and veterinary surgery along with a thriving village hall. The primary school has over 350 pupils on the roll, and Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge school covers a considerably larger catchment area.

Now you know where we came from! Maybe let us know how you got here... ●



Wood Lane, Sonning Common, in 1905



Brind's corner, with the Brind's Butcher shop (left) and the cycle hut opened by Frederick Comfort Morris.

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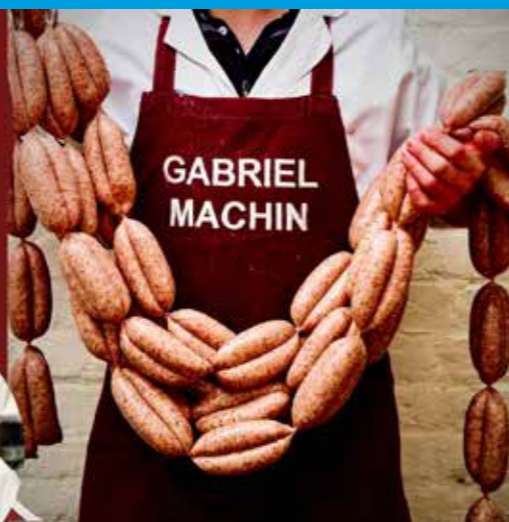
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MEET JULIET LEGG THE FRIENDLY FACE OF SONNING COMMON LIBRARY

By JOAN GRUMMANT

Juliet is not a new face at Sonning Common Library. In fact, many people will recognise her from her many years working there in quite different roles but also as a very friendly and enthusiastic presence. She was recently appointed librarian after the retirement of Rosemary Dunstan and it is a role she embraces with great excitement as well as a little anxiety because she feels Rosemary is a very hard act to follow!

Juliet has lived in Sonning Common for twenty-five years but originally hailed from Gosfield near Braintree in Essex. An enjoyable work experience placement at Braintree Museum led her to make the decision to follow a library degree at Brighton University. It was there she met her future husband Nigel and with families split between Essex and Dorset the couple decided to settle at a midway point – Reading in 1989 and eventually Sonning Common in 1999. Juliet was working as a corporate information researcher at the British Cement Association outside Slough at this time and left soon after her oldest son was born in 1995. She started working again as a part time librarian at the engineering firm Racal Research in 1996.

Juliet left Racal when pregnant with her younger son who was born in 2000 and she was delighted to be offered some casual work at Sonning Common Library by Sue Brewer. Both she and Nigel were both very active in the community with Juliet working as Community Correspondent and contributing about local affairs to the Reading Chronicle. In 2003 she went back to work at Racal, now Thales UK for twenty-seven hours a week and filled in at Sonning Common Library where she was the Saturday Library Assistant for about seven years. Juliet and her boys faced an incredibly sad and challenging time when Nigel tragically died in 2012 from a brain tumour, aged 49, and together this close-knit family were able to forge a future supporting each other at this very tough time.

Building on the very strong foundations already in place in Sonning Common Library Juliet is now hoping to expand and develop the many exciting developments. She has already discovered that although she had a lot of knowledge about the workings of the library there were many new management initiatives she must deal with. Monthly management statistics and the number crunching involved is very new as is the responsibility for buildings, volunteers etc. Juliet is very keen to acknowledge the sterling

work conducted by the Friends of Sonning Common Library and the commitment and hard work of the 'lovely volunteers' and assistant manager. She would like the library to continue being a warm, vibrant, and friendly place for the whole community to use and enjoy.

This new role for Juliet leaves her with little time to pursue her own interests but she is a keen jogger and has taken part in The Race for Life on several occasions and has even tried her hand at crochet.

With Juliet at the helm, our library is in very safe hands, and we wish her well in the future. ●



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THE SOCO SPRING CLEAN 2024



This year, Keep Britain Tidy will be celebrating its 70th year of protecting the environment. The SoCo Spring Clean may only be in its 6th year, but our 120+ volunteers did an incredible job on Sunday 3rd March, collecting over 70 bags of litter and helping to tackle the local environmental damage that littering causes.

Our favourite finds this year included; a photo of a crocodile, a helium balloon, a PreComputer 2000, a 2-stroke engine, a garden chair, the front of a Vauxhall Astra, a plethora of hubcaps and a live smooth newt, who was found amongst collected litter and was quickly re-homed.

Thanks to a glorious spring morning, this year our volunteers spilled out of the village hall for a post-pick cuppa in the sunshine. The Sonning Common WI donated home-baked goodies, prepared a table of treats for our volunteers, and

served juice, mugs of tea and coffee. Special thanks to the WI team of ten, led by Sue Frayling-Cork, we are so grateful to you all!

Thank you also to Leigh Rawlins for the use of his trailer and who, with Paul Wat from The Sonning Common Village Gardeners, collected full bags of litter around the village.

The next SoCo Spring Clean will take place on Sunday 2nd March 2025. Please like, share and follow us on Facebook @soco.springclean and if you'd like to get involved in any way, contact us at soco.springclean@gmail.com

EMMA LAWRENCE
#LitterHeroes @soco.springclean

We'd like to thank the following organisations who helped support The SoCo Spring Clean 2024: South Oxford District Council, BIFFA, Sonning Common Parish Council, Davis Tate, Peppard Building Supplies and Sonning Common Coop.



PARISH NEWS

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Youth Club

Looking for some fun activities to do over Easter?

Sonning Common Youth Club are running three, fun, free sessions over the Easter holidays for young people aged between 10 and 16 years old from the village and surrounding areas. This is courtesy of the national lottery community fund we applied for back towards the end of last year. We feel very lucky to get this grant, so please encourage the young people you know to come along. We will be doing a variety of activities which include multi sports, football, baking and crafts. We have our very own amazing coaches Ryan and Max who will be helping with the sessions.

Our sessions will be Tuesday 2nd April 2024 held at Kidmore End Memorial Hall between 1.30 - 3.30pm, Wednesday 10th April at Kidmore End Memorial Hall between 5pm - 7pm and finally a baking session at Sonning Common Village Hall between 1.30 - 3.30pm. All of the events are totally free, but please try and email youthleader@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk to

book on to ensure we have the correct ratios of staff and children.

Looking to the future we are excited to announce we will also be running a week full of amazing activities including things like zorbing football, a bouncy slip and slide, dragon boat racing and more. Again, all free of charge. People will just need to book on to ensure we don't disappoint. We are open again to ages 10-16 years old. It doesn't matter what school you go to and you don't have to live in the village we are offering these services to anyone who needs it.

Sonning Common Youth Club believes that everyone should have the opportunity to access fun activities in the holidays and understand that the holidays can be long for some people. So, this is our way of helping to ensure the young people can have somewhere to go, that they can develop their skills and have fun while they do so. ●

SUNNY SMITHERS
Youth Leader

Memorial Park Play Area Update

Firstly, we would like to apologise for the delay that has occurred in getting the rectification works done in the play area. We have not been happy with the works the contractor carried out and have been in protracted negotiations to get these works completed to our satisfaction. The safety of our children is important especially in the play areas.

It is not an ideal time but on Tuesday 2nd April the contractor will begin the rectification works which will mean that the play area will be closed off for 3 weeks.

The contractor will be replacing the wet pour surface areas around the equipment and stabilise the ground which has been subsiding and will be replaced by coloured wet pour. The design is quite eye catching, and we hope these repairs will provide us with a safe secure surface. There will also be some works on the mound to restyle the steps, cover the mud alongside the slide and to replace the unused climbing net with climbing ropes.

The company will be mindful of the safety and security of the children will be guaranteeing the rectification works for 10 years. ●

DOGS, DOGS ,DOGS



The working party are delighted with the number of people who regularly use and appreciate the Memorial Park to exercise their pets.

We decided some 2 years ago that we would ask residents to keep their dogs on a lead. The intention was to ensure that there would not be dog poo all over the grass, as this would be a serious hazard to the children playing there.

We thank the 95% of people who accept this rule and understand why it was requested. There are just a few who feel it is unreasonable and ignore it blatantly when asked to place the lead back onto their dog.

Sonning Common, both around the borders and in other green spaces eg Millenium Green, has many other areas where dogs can be allowed off their leads and can run freely.

PLEASE accept the reasons why we have the dogs on leads rule and obey them. ●

GREEN MY VILLAGE

The dirty facts ... Oxfordshire has lost 80% of its orchards since 1911. Nightingales have completely disappeared from Oxfordshire woodlands and the number of Swifts has declined by 47% between 1994 and 2014.

Change just one thing...this year make your garden a Spring oasis – chat with your neighbours and create a hedgehog sized hole in your fences, provide a shallow dish of water for the birds and bugs, join in with 'No Mow May', turn off all unnecessary outside lights (moths need dark nights to thrive) and leave the Spring dandelions alone -they'll provide much needed early food for the bees.

Say hello to Eco SoCo – your Sonning Common Environment Group! Here's where we are so far:

- Plans for tree & pollinator friendly planting, creating new habitats, a Repair Cafe, a 'Green My Street Initiative' and hedgehog highways
- Great volunteers with enthusiasm,

skills and experience to share

- Land identified for a community orchard, a wild garden, a variety of eco habitats and a community vegetable garden at Abbey Crest - all to be accessible to the community!
- A qualified Ecologist advising us, to ensure whatever we plant / do is going to be great for wildlife and the chosen site
- A Biodiversity Opportunities Mapping Exercise for the village
- Potential link ups with Sonning Common Cubs, Berkshire Bucks Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, St Michael's Church Eco Volunteers
- A Hedgehog Hut building workshop

Ways that you can start helping from today:

Join Eco SoCo by completing this super quick (2 minutes) survey to help us understand what projects you may be interested in: <https://forms.gle/CmwFpGHzgEKhwDaD7>

Join the Eco SoCo Facebook group

Come along to one of our meetings: we are a friendly action orientated bunch of likeminded people. Only sign up for what interests you and what you have the time and energy for! **Let me know if you can join us!**

Split your Primroses, so we can plant your spare plants along the verges.

Collect items for our insect hotels - air bricks, pinecones, bamboo canes, hessian sacks, tiles etc.

Tell your friends and neighbours about us, we can never have too many volunteers. Share this email with anyone who you think might be interested, be it an individual or local business who may want to donate.

Or Email me jules.shorter@gmail.com And always remember... 'Positive anything is better than negative nothing.' Elbert Hubbard ●

JULIE SHORTER

BIO GARDENING

I'm super excited to share the news that I have booked Andre Tranquilini, a renowned expert in climate friendly gardening and biodynamic farming to give a talk in Sonning Common in June, as part of the national Great Green Week 8-16 June.

Gardeners You're Invited...to a specialist talk by Andre Tranquilini, Manager of Waltham Place Estate, Market Gardener, Consultant in Biodynamic Farming & Gardening Expert.

'As gardeners we have the potential to make great strides in our gardens, adapting the way we grow to mitigate

the effects of climate change by supporting wildlife and developing healthy soils and resilient plants. Andre will share climate friendly solutions that will create resilience for your garden and crops. The talk will include Carbon Gardening, No Dig and Gardening for Wildlife.'

Thursday June 13th @ 7pm @ Sonning Common Village Hall

£10 per ticket - ALL profits go to Eco SoCo to fund a range of environmental projects in Sonning Common

To request tickets: email jules.shorter@gmail.com ●

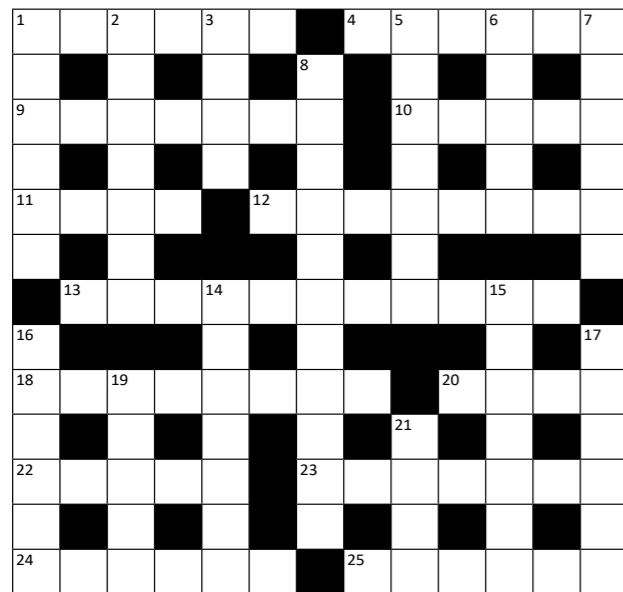
JULIE SHORTER



PUZZLE PAGE

By DAVID DUNSTAN

Cryptic crossword



ACROSS

1. Leave phone in village (6)
4. Harass wild animal (6)
9. Thaw in dead forest revived (7)
- 10 and 6 down. Eat grass, we hear, with eco-friendly hamlet (5,5)
11. Electronic photo is grand (4)
12. Manic bee ruined the atmosphere (8)
13. Numbskull leaked chunk in confusion (11)
18. Chopped onions include two grams for events (8)
20. Indian food in curried halibut (4)
22. Girl in hotel enamoured of me (5)
- 23&25. Lad, new in game initially, familiar in village (7,6)
24. Notes composed around name in poem (6)

DOWN

1. Badly tagged contraption (6)
2. Scotsman with neckband is a miscreant (7)
3. Corner is satisfactory after refusal (4)
5. Heartache resolved as in hug (7)
6. See 10 across
7. More hot-headed bacon (6)
8. So timely, got confused for student of words (11)
14. Bendy part of circuit found in north-east, after American city cut short (7)
15. One article after another is madness initially – and unbelief (7)
- 16&19. Immature after bad stroke in hamlet (6,5)
17. Work hard on article to produce motto (6)
19. See 16 down
21. Obsessed with Shintoism inside (4)

Sudoku

Grading: easy-medium

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

Cryptogram

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

AO NTI PHSAOR NAGI, NTI EOML HSINNL
SAOR NAGI, YTIO WASBP BE PAOR... –
YAMMAUG PTUDIPHIUSI, UP LEK MADI AN

Quiz: Time for drinks

1. Kirsch is a fruit brandy traditionally made from which fruit?
2. What was the last name of the 1850's London oyster bar owner who offered a gin-based drink known as a 'No.1 Cup'?
3. What is the main alcoholic ingredient in a pina colada?
4. Which fruit-flavoured, whiskey liqueur was created by New Orleans bartender Martin Wilkes in 1874?
5. The French brandy Calvados is made from which fruit?
6. Which brand of beer does Homer Simpson drink?
7. Which country would you associate with Carlsberg?
8. Which cocktail consists of tequila, triple sec, and lime or lemon juice?
9. What is the name of the cocktail made from Guinness and Champagne?
10. Which tea company opened Britain's first tea room in the Strand, London, in 1706, which still operates today?

HELPING HEDGEHOGS

Sonning Common has a good population of hedgehogs as evidenced by the sale of hedgehog food at the village pet shop. Certainly, we saw good numbers at our Newfield Road feeding station in 2023, often 3 at a time and at least 4 individuals. Let's keep it that way and do what we can to help them.

They are known to travel 3 to 4 km each night in search of food and a mate. New houses mean that increasing traffic makes their lives more hazardous so try to adhere to speed limits and look out for them if driving between dusk and dawn. Lights and noise may cause them to freeze, flee the scene or roll into a ball. We know that at least two were killed in Woodlands Road last year.

Although hedgehogs are supposed to hibernate in the winter months (December to March) they seem to be unaware of this. They are however known to wake if there is a warm spell. We saw our first this year on January 23rd.

For more information you can contact the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) and Hedgehog Street. Hedgehog Street is gathering information on Hedgehog populations and is a joint effort between BHPS and People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES).



You can help by:

- Cutting a hole in your fence
- Providing food and water
- Minimising use of pesticides:
- Providing suitable habitat such as rough grass where insects and other invertebrates can flourish:

Join BHPS and Hedgehog Street (Search the internet)

I would be pleased to hear any news of hedgehogs that or answer questions at davidl.bhps@gmail.com •

DAVID LITCHFIELD

Hedgehogs are nocturnal; if you see one during daylight it is probably unwell.

Male hedgehogs play no part in raising young and may attack their own young.

Hedgehogs eat insects, slugs, snails, worms, and some seeds (we have known them to eat sunflower hearts.) If not using proprietary food then food must be varied.

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SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE



Staff news

Due to recent retirements, promotions and expansion of departments Sonning Common Health Centre have been busy recruiting. Please congratulate Anne who has recently been promoted to a new role as the Operations Administrator along with coordinating the clinical diary. Anne has moved from reception and 2 others have been promoted. All 3 vacancies have been filled plus 2 for the admin team and a new Care Coordinator.

Angela and Rosie are taking on the shared role of Senior Administrators. They have worked in the admin department for a few years and are looking forward to the additional challenges their new role brings. ●

Partner Changes at SCHC

From the end of March this year Ralph Drury and Kim Emerson will be stepping down as partners at the practice. They will both be carrying on at the surgery Ralph in a purely clinical capacity doing 4 sessions a week and Kim doing clinical and managerial work the same days for one year then dropping to 4 sessions a week clinical and training.

They are delighted to announce that Peter Mennear and Tom Rockell will be joining the partnership and are very confident that the four partners will be able to continue to make the practice thrive and provide a high quality of care with a good working relationship.

There are lots of changes coming in the next few years and we

feel positive that a new younger approach to developments will be an advantage.

Kim says 'After over 30 years at the practice and 29 years as a partner it feels the right time to start retirement dial and to ultimately have more time to pursue my other jobs and hobbies.' ●

SUE LITCHFIELD for SCHC



TAKE OWNERSHIP OF YOUR OWN HEALTH

As a 50 something, non-smoking man who had experienced no significant health issues to that point in life; I was unsurprised but unconcerned to receive a message from Sonning Common Health Centre, telling me that I was over 50. I knew that. It invited me to attend a routine health check. Men are generally very poor at heeding health warnings and at looking after their health, but for some unknown reason I accepted the invitation and attended the appointment.

The appointment was quick and simple. It involved lifestyle questions, and blood-pressure. A blood test and a test to identify an enlarged and irregular prostate, which was painless. The bottom line (pun intended) was that the result of my test highlighted anomalies that needed further investigation. Next was an MRI scan at RBH. This in turn identified a suspect area of my prostate, which led to a biopsy confirming that

I had prostate cancer. I stress, I had no symptoms. The word cancer rocks you back on your heels, I am not going to lie. On the plus side, it was caught early. Once you have got your head around the word, you need to tackle the problem head-on.

I had four options. 'Do nothing' (not recommended); remove the prostate altogether with some possible severe side-effects; a prolonged course of radiotherapy, or brachytherapy. With Brachytherapy, they implant (in my case) forty-eight radioactive metal seeds into your prostate to slow release radiation over nine months. With the latter, it only radiates the area that you are targeting as opposed to your other organs. Minimising the side effects. I chose Brachytherapy.

The eight-month wait for surgery was too long. Keep pushing, it's your life. I had the option of private or NHS treatment, but the fact was that it was the same team that would do the operation, in the same theatre and you sit on the same list. The wait is due to the shortage of operating slots.

I am not going to tell you that the operation is dignified, but you just have to 'man-up'. I was admitted to hospital on a Thursday and discharged the following day. The side effects are manageable but include fatigue, short-term difficulty passing urine and a stitch. On the plus side, with my radioactive metal seeds, I can play havoc with metal detectors at airports. I have to carry a card.

Had I ignored the health check invitation my cancer would have remained undetected and would have worsened. Consequently, I would have had fewer treatment options open to me if they detected it later. The treatment would have been more invasive. My advice to men of my age who receive an invitation for a Health Check is don't put it off. I am sincerely grateful to Sonning Common Health, they are the unsung heroes in this story. One in eight men will get prostate cancer in their lifetime. Catch it early, to give yourself the very best chance of effectively treating this life-threatening condition. ●

ROB JAMES

PPG NEWS

Sonning Common Health Centre Patient Participation Group is a group of patients and GP practice staff who meet to discuss practice issues and patient experiences to improve services. PPGs are 'critical friends' to their practices. They carry out research on behalf of the practice into the views of those who use the practice, pass on feedback they receive and provide information to patients on services that are available to them. We are currently looking for new members to volunteer with us. SCHC PPG

SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

WE WANT YOU!



PPG RECRUITMENT

WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE BACK TO YOUR LOCAL HEALTH CENTRE AND VILLAGE COMMUNITY?

SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG) ARE LOOKING FOR ENTHUSIASTIC, ACTIVE MEMBERS TO HELP THEM SUPPORT THE HEALTH CENTRE AND BE A CRITICAL FRIEND. VOLUNTEERING INVOLVES ATTENDING FOUR MEETINGS A YEAR IN SONNING COMMON, PROVIDING FEEDBACK AND ASKING QUESTIONS TO THE HEALTH CENTRE ABOUT THEIR PRACTISES AND HOW THEY WORK. ASSISTING IN ORGANISING PPG DUTIES AND EVENTS.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN GIVING UP A LITTLE BIT OF TIME TO VOLUNTEER FOR SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PPG THEN PLEASE EMAIL SCHCPPG@GMAIL.COM TO FIND OUT MORE



FIVE WAYS TO LOOK AFTER YOUR MENTAL HEALTH



Money and mental health struggles often come as a package. When finances are difficult, our mental health can take a hit, and vice versa: poor mental health can lead to difficulty managing money. As millions of us continue to face challenges when it comes to money, it's so important that we take steps to look after ourselves and prioritise mental wellbeing.

1. Talk it out

When it comes to our finances, we too often feel we must face the problem alone. Many people feel too ashamed or embarrassed to seek help but find that when they finally reach out, things start to change! If you're struggling with money, open up to someone you trust, or

get free help from an organisation like Christians Against Poverty (CAP). You can find out about all the services CAP offer at capuk.org/help.

2. Write it down

Our emotions can easily build up and become too much to bear. Putting your thoughts down on paper can help you process how you're feeling and provide a healthy outlet for anger, frustration, grief and lots of other emotions.

3. Sweat it off

According to the NHS, physical exercise causes chemical changes in the brain that help to improve our mood. However, you don't need an expensive gym membership or pricey equipment to do this – walking, running and playing games in the park are all great ways to get a bit more active (and they're free!) There are walking groups, walking netball and football clubs

who meet in Sonning Common. Look out for their sessions listed on the local noticeboards including online Facebook & Nextdoor groups.

4. Know it well

Whatever emotions you're feeling, it's important to know that they are valid and worth taking seriously. You can honour this by taking the time to get to know your emotions better, learning about what causes you to feel a certain way and why. This might include speaking to a trustworthy source such as Samaritans (call 116123) or SHOUT (text 85258), or asking the GP about counselling.

5. Cook it up

The food we eat affects not only our physical health, but our mental wellbeing too. Planning your meals before you head to the shop can help you choose healthier options and cut down on non-essential costs, bringing a little peace of mind.

Springwater Church is launching a CAP Life Skills course in April with lots more guidance on shopping and cooking healthily on a budget. The course will run over 8 weeks on Thursdays 12-2pm, and also includes topics such as energy saving, making the most of your money, wellbeing and healthy relationships. To book a place on the course, or to come along to the taster session on 25 April, contact Niki on nikiclarke@caplifefskills.org

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a UK charity working with over 800 affiliated churches to deliver debt help, budgeting guidance, support to find work, life skills education and more. Visit capuk.org to find out more.

ARIA CARE

FRESH NEW LOOK AT ABBEYCREST

CARE FROM THE HEART IN SONNING COMMON

At Abbeycrest Care Home, we are dedicated to helping people to live fulfilling lives and maintain their independence, with the freedom to spend each day as they choose. Surrounding our residents with familiarity, we support them to enjoy the company of friends and family, activities, days out and good food.

Abbeycrest is part of the thriving village community, and offers residential, nursing and dementia care in an atmosphere that feels like a home from home.

The people that live at Abbeycrest receive compassionate and personalised care to meet their medical and daily living needs. Our highly skilled carers take the time to get to know all of our residents, learning their personal history, preferences, routines, hobbies and interests. Knowing their stories is as important to us as it is to them; helping us shape each person's care plan and allowing them to enjoy the experience of living at Abbeycrest.

Our team all work to ensure that the time residents spend here is as rewarding for them as it is for us, and 'everyday' can stay just how they like it. We offer a variety of activities, events, entertainment and trips and



we encourage everyone to maintain links with outside interests, too.

Our intention, always, is to ensure our residents are at the heart of everything we do, this extends to our hospitality offering. We don't just serve meals; we create experiences that bring joy to every bite and mealtimes here are more than a routine; they are vibrant social occasions.

FRESH NEW LOOK AT ABBEYCREST

Abbeycrest has been celebrating the completion of its extensive refurbishment, seamlessly blending modern amenities with timeless charm. Lovingly revitalised areas, include

dining rooms, day spaces and bedrooms. The delightful furniture and furnishings are in keeping with the property and the practical needs of residents.

LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS

We host a range of regular events that the local community are welcome to join including our monthly coffee club and whist club.

Whether you're looking for permanent or respite care, or would like more information about our events, please get in touch. We would be happy to give you a tour of our home and meet our team. Whatever your needs there is a place for you at Abbeycrest.

0808 223 5401 | ariacare.co.uk/abbeycrest

Sonning Common, Berkshire, RG4 9RG



Scan to find out more

Widmore Park - a new retirement community for Sonning Common

An update from the Project Team

About

Building and civil engineering contractor, **Farrans Construction**, is delivering the first phase of a new retirement community located on Blounts Court Road, for client **Inspired Villages**. Farrans' first phase of works will include 73 high-quality, age-appropriate, sustainable homes for over 65s and a state-of-the-art wellness suite within the community centre. We invite you to read this update regarding the progress of the project.

If you have any queries regarding the project, please contact the Farrans Construction team by emailing sonningcommon@farrans.com or calling the project helpline - **01483 717 321**.

Social Value

Delivering Social Value is at our core vision, mission, and company values. To ensure that we leave a lasting legacy to the local community, we've developed a Social Value plan to be delivered over the duration of the project. Over our time in Sonning Common, we will arrange events within the community, engage in volunteering opportunities, site visits, and facilitate work placements.

Our Educational Outreach programme will commence around May – this will see the first of our STEM focused workshops delivered to students at Sonning Common Primary.

We will donate 10 decommissioned company laptops and equipment to Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge Secondary School and will begin to plan bespoke Construction workshops to supplement the existing curriculum.

We also have plans for our workforce to volunteer at the 1st Sonning Common Scout Hall, where we will help clear one of their storage areas, identifying any surplus equipment that can be donated to other local charities.

Recent Site Activity



Ariel View of Site – February

January saw the set-up of our permanent site cabins which provide offices and essential welfare facilities, first aid, cleaning facilities and kitchen space for the workforce. Moreover, the new entrance road and pedestrian access into site were established – allowing a safe and monitored route into our site offices and around the site welfare. Hoarding around the site was erected, ready to be adorned with Inspired Villages branded livery.

Essential ground improvement works using a ground improvement rig were successfully

completed which allows us to swiftly progress with the underground drainage and services.

Look ahead - March to May

Over Spring, we will continue installing site wide duct and cable services around the road network. We'll begin the raft foundation works which consist of - large concrete slabs which help spread the weight of the building out over a big area. We will commence the timber frames for the 4 main building blocks within the community and the reinforced concrete work on the Village's core building is due to commence in the later spring months.

We have currently on average 35 members of staff on site daily, we expect this to increase to 50-60 over the next three months.

Stay in Touch

If you would like to continue to receive digital updates from Farrans on the Project's progress, please email into sonningcommon@farrans.com to be added to our e-mailing list.



Design Impression - Inspired Villages

This advertorial has been commissioned by Farrans Construction

Coming soon to Sonning Common Widmore Park

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For further information scan the QR code or visit: www.inspiredvillages.co.uk/village/widmore-park



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CHURCH NEWS

CHILTERN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Jesus Christ was a real man. He taught about God and provoked people to think about how they lived and thought. He spoke in Jewish synagogues and in the open air. He once taught from a boat anchored offshore. Thousands heard his teaching which touched all areas of human life and called for loyalty and sacrifice. He offered perfect peace but told his followers they would be persecuted. The Bible records his teaching, telling how he challenged the hypocrisy of the religious leaders, leading to his eventual execution. But that wasn't the end.

The core of Christianity is the belief that Jesus was and is. God in human form and that he lived, died and came back from the dead to enable humanity to connect with God. Christianity teaches that anyone can have a fresh start. It's not about living your best life or living in a Christian country. A Christian believes in Jesus and follows his teachings. When someone becomes a Christian, they look the same, but they're forever changed on the inside. Jesus still impacts lives so connect with us and discover how you can know God and find freedom. You're always welcome to join us. ●

SUSAN JUDGE

Chiltern Evangelical Church
www.cecuk.church

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST THE KING

Following the joyful news of Easter Day, in April and May we celebrate the risen Christ throughout the season of Eastertide, ending on the Day of Pentecost, which this year falls on Sunday 19 May. Do join us on Sundays at our regular services:

Eucharist at Christ the King (9.30am) on 1st, 2nd and 4th Sundays, and a Service of the Word on 3rd Sundays.

Evensong (6pm) on 1st Sundays at St John's, sung Eucharist on 2nd and 4th Sundays and an All-Age service on 3rd Sundays (11.15am).

Family-friendly Second Sunday service held at Christ the King at 5.00pm on every 2nd Sunday of the month: do come along and join in! Please check the church pages at www.achurchnearyou.com for other updates at any time.

The Parish is planning some special events throughout the month of June to kick off its Parish Fundraising Appeal for planned extensions and enhancements to both Parish churches. Three concerts and a Flower Festival will be taking place at the church of St John the Baptist, Kidmore End, throughout the weekends in June.

The Festival starts with a choral concert involving the choir of St John the Baptist and the Kidmore End Primary School Choir. The Flower Festival "Colours of the Rainbow" (8 June) will feature a variety of styles of floral art on display in St John's. Monetary donations in memory of family and friends welcomed. Flowers will be placed on all the graves in the churchyard; there will also be a plant sale and refreshments.

The second concert will involve local musicians performing music from various cultures. The church's Patronal Festival on 23 June will be celebrated in a Festival Evensong, and the final event (30 June) will be a solo and ensemble concert of instrumentalists and vocalists performed by parish musicians.

Refreshments will be available following each of the concerts as well as during the Flower Festival. Please do make a note of these dates and come along to enjoy some very special music and floral decorations.

EVENTS CALENDAR:

- **Sunday 2 June** - Choral concert 3pm
- **Saturday 8 June** - Flower Festival all day from 10am-4pm
- **Sunday 16 June** - Folk music concert 3pm
- **Sunday 23 June** - Patronal Festival Evensong 6pm
- **Sunday 30 June** - Solo and Ensemble concert 3pm

All events are free but it is hoped that audiences will give generously towards the Appeal in the retiring collections. Donations to the Parish Fundraising Appeal will be welcome from the beginning of April and can be made via the Parish website: <https://givealittle.co/campaigns/80b9b652-122d-4cb3-b09c-be2147340d13>.

Building plans are available to view. When the construction work is finished, the newly transformed church buildings will provide our communities with flexible venues for various types of events within spacious and warm environments, complete with kitchen and toilet facilities. ●

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LIBRARY OF SURPRISES



If you go down to the woods library today, you're sure of a big surprise...

I don't suppose many people associate the library with surprises. That's undoubtedly because we tend to have a set idea of what to expect there. In fairness, years ago they were quiet, studious places. I vividly recall being told to shush many times during my childhood visits to the one in the basement of Henley Town Hall. These days it is only the larger branches, where people may be studying or working, that are mindful of noise. In community libraries like ours in Grove Road, it is quite all right to talk to people without lowering your voice. If toddlers are excited by the picture books it is perfectly okay for them to squeal with delight. Because **SURPRISE**, libraries can be fun!

SURPRISE! Libraries can be sociable places too. It's wonderful to see people meeting for a game of Scrabble, or catching up with friends old or new over a cup of tea at the

Friday Social Mornings. FISH often run a bus, making it accessible to even more people.

How magical to hear the gasps of wonder when children realise the snake brought along by ZooLab really is alive! And how surprised they are when they touch it and feel how dry and smooth its skin is.

SURPRISE! The library isn't just for the very young or for retired folk. Events are held there which may interest people of any age. For example, last year, the author and former British military intelligence officer, Michael Smith, gave a fascinating talk about the historical relationship between MI6 and the CIA. And on 9 April, Sublime Science will be running their first workshop for 8-11 year olds. The Friends of Sonning Common Library (FOSCL), who organise these events, are open to suggestions so let us know what sort of thing interests you.

SURPRISE! There are often craft activities on Saturday mornings

after Storytime. We are very lucky at Sonning Common that the Library Assistant, Elaine Govatt, is a particularly creative person who enjoys planning new and exciting projects. She also devotes a lot of her own time working on glorious displays for the foyer which seem to change from week to week so check out her latest creation next time you visit.

SURPRISE! A lot of activities in the library are free. Those that are not, tend to be subsidised by FOSCL so it's definitely worth keeping an eye on our website www.friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk to see what is coming up.

SURPRISE! You can borrow jigsaw puzzles from the library for free and you don't even have to be a member (though I'm not sure why you wouldn't be as that's free too!).

SURPRISE! I've just about got to the end and haven't even mentioned books! You won't be surprised that they are in the library but you might be surprised by just how many there are available. You are not even limited to those on the shelf. You can, for a small fee, request just about any one.

Sadly the biggest surprise is that, despite all it has to offer, more people don't use the library. Let's try and change that! If you already do, spread the word, and if you don't why not come along and see for yourself what you've been missing? You never know, you might be surprised! ●

ALISON SMITH
(FOSCL)

FOSCL

www.friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk where you can register your interest and find details of how to pay directly into the bank.

From 7 March the library has hosted weekly Thursday morning Scrabble sessions. Come along at 10:00am if you fancy a game and a cup of tea and biscuit. If chess is more your thing, then let us know as we would be happy to host that as well if there is demand for it. If you are ever at a loose end on a Friday, why not drop into the Social Morning which starts at 10:30am. A hot drink, biscuit, and chat - what could be better? Looking forward, the Friends of

Sonning Common Library are organising a quiz in October!

Now, all that remains is for me to wish you luck in the monthly book draw. There really are some wonderful titles to choose from for the lucky winner!

Best wishes

ALISON SMITH
Chair of FoSCL



TOM FORT DOCTOR FINLAY

Hands up anyone who remembers Doctor Finlay's Casebook (the under 70s are excused)? At lunch the other day someone mentioned the classic BBC serial of the 1960s and early 70s, and I immediately found myself warbling the jaunty theme tune which accompanied the credits. It so happened that I heard the same tune a few days later on Radio 3 and it set me thinking about TV in the old days.

We didn't have a set for a long time, but my granny - who lived next door did - so my watching tended to be dictated by her taste. She never missed Dr Finlay - Bill Simpson as the handsome young doctor, gruff Andrew Cruickshank with huge eyebrows as Dr Cameran, little grey-haired Barbara Mullen as the housekeeper Janet - and as a fifteen-year-old I quite liked the

gentle, undemanding stories.

But some of her other favourite programmes were terrible - the Black and White Minstrel Show (abysmal), the Horse of the Year Show and Badminton Horse Trials (dire), Wimbledon tennis (boring), Terry & June (totally unfunny), Dixon of Dock Green (creakingly implausible). I longed for more sport, but there was very little coverage of live cricket or league football, although I do vividly remember how the country came alive during the 1966 World Cup.

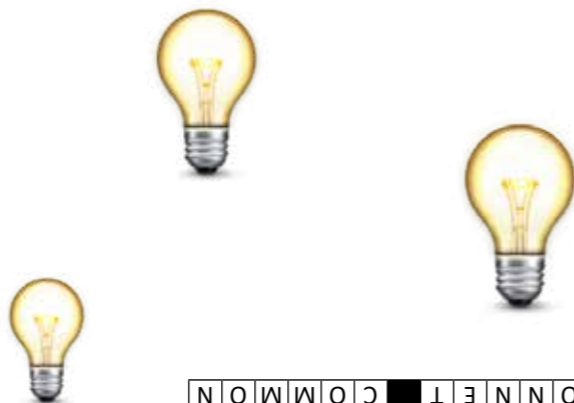
If you look back at the old TV listings, you realise how dismal most of it was in those distant days - and you understand why classic serials like The Forsyte Saga (Eric Porter as the satanic Soames, Nyree Dawn Porter as the fragrant Irene) caused such a sensation.

I was mesmerised by the spy serial Callan, which ran between 1967 and 1972, but it was too grim for my granny - luckily by then we had our own telly, and I could also watch Jimmy Hill and his chin, presenting Match of the Day and international rugby (there were only Five Nations then).

How lucky we are now. Of course the volume of dross is far greater than fifty years ago, but so too is the quality and range of good stuff. Snooty types say 'Oh I never watch TV, it's such rubbish'. What nonsense - television is wonderful. ●



PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 22



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Quiz: Time for drinks
 1. Cherries. 2. Pimm. 3. Rum. 4. Southern Comfort. 5. Apples. 6. Duff. 7. Denmark. 8. Margarita. 9. Black velvet. 10. Twinings.

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Cryptogram

Sudoku

Cryptic crossword

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