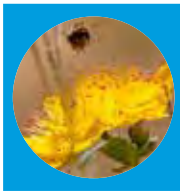
SC SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

IN THIS ISSUE

POORLY FEET
A doggy problem
P6



LOCKDOWN CALENDAR
Raising money for local charities
P7

INTRODUCING MONOLOGUES
Fact, Fiction or Fabrication
P10-11

THE 'RETIREMENT VILLAGE' BATTLEFIELD

PAGE 16

APR/MAY 2021

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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

It does not seem possible that a year ago we faced our first lockdown. I remember hearing the news of it lasting possibly 12 weeks and thinking it sounded an unbearably long time. Unbelievably here we are, locked down since Christmas with a road map which begins tomorrow and the path is precarious. Vaccination is the light bulb for our way forward but the mutations of the virus remain the threat. As a topic of conversation it consumes us; as sadly there are few other distractions to pursue.

Hopefully this issue of the magazine will provide a short distraction full of articles which may grab your attention; from football to the plant nursery, book reviews, Greenshoots and many of your favourite story tellers. Three items would welcome your response, Memorial Hall Field map, Men's sheds and support for the fight against the developers who wish to build in the AoNB.

If you happen to have some spare time, I would be very pleased to receive contributions for the magazine. I become very excited when new articles appear in my inbox.

Keep well!

Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Diana Pearman

Christine Atkinson

Joan Grummant

CONTENTS

4-7	Community News
10-11	Monologues
12-13	MHF Groundworks commence
16	Cliff Pryke
18-19	In Focus – WAR
20	Walking Football
21	FISH
22	Greenshoots/Blankets/Banksy
23	Did you know?
24	Tom and Sandy
25	Book Reviews
27	Puzzle Page
28-30	Health matters
32	Church Page

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THE BEGINNING OF THE END

By the time you read this article, school will have been up and running for almost a month, so hopefully this is, to crassly borrow from Churchill, the beginning of the end and not the end of the beginning (although at times it has definitely required some Blitz Spirit to see us through!). As the pandemic appears to be receding, this last twelve months will stay in our memories for a long time but despite the fear, anxiety and loss of this period it has also taught us many things and in many ways provided us with opportunities.

Firstly, I hope that the vast majority of students will appreciate being at school all the more. I know this sentiment was common last September and I hope that this feeling prevails even more this time. The relationships with staff, the social opportunities, the sense of identity, belonging and purpose, all combine to make Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge a special place to be.

In addition, I know that many habits and behaviours will carry forward from the lockdowns. Most teachers are far more tech savvy than when lockdown first began and there are many tricks and devices that will be used to save time as we move back to a more normal manner of teaching. Also, many of the students have developed some great IT habits that will help them as they move forward into the world of work and further education. Moreover, I wonder if and when we will return to face to face parent's evenings? The cold draughty school hall with its dodgy acoustics has been replaced by the chance to sit on your sofa with a cup of tea and do your appointments from there (and that's for both our teaching staff and our parents). Sometimes a Zoom call does have benefits!

I also feel the school has really benefitted from the feeling of 'strength through adversity'. There have been numerous examples whereby the teaching and parent community has gone over and above to support the students. Our recent book drive would be a prime example of this - around 400 books donated to the school by members of our school community and hand delivered by our wonderful staff to the doorsteps of each and every student in the school. Certainly, given the feedback our parents have left on social media, on e-mails sent in and on OFSTED Parent View **(https://parentview.ofsted.gov.uk/parent-view-results)** we feel that the efforts of the teachers delivering high quality live lessons across the whole timetable each day has been rightly recognised by our parents. This is further proof of the changing view of the school by our community and I believe we have seized the opportunity that the lockdowns have presented us.

However, whatever technological advances and other benefits have materialised in the last year, as I write this on 28 February there is a real sense of anticipation from the teaching staff that we can get back to normal and regain the momentum of last term. To stand in a classroom with a group of students who you can visibly see make progress, who you can support to overcome difficulties and misconceptions, who make you smile with their humour and idiosyncrasies is such a great feeling. Teaching young people is a wonderful job and the sense of optimism in my staff at the moment reflects their sentiments about just how much they enjoy their jobs and how much they are looking forward to the future at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge.

Take care and stay safe ●

ANDY HARTLEY
Headteacher

CAMPAIGN AGAINST INSPIRED VILLAGES APPEAL

Starts 27 April 2021

So far the Crowdfunding appeal has raised £10,600 which includes £1000 from Rotherfied Peppard Parish council.

Thanks to the people of Sonning Common and to everyone involved with the campaign!

From Sonning Common Parish Council

BACK TO SCHOOL

by Christine Atkinson

It is now 3 weeks since the children went back to school – bubbling over with excitement to see old friends, returning to a much-loved location and to the relief of parents and carers!

There were fewer children in school for the first term of the year and much activity and work had been going on at home as well as school. All have achieved a lot and are very proud of the work they have done! Some examples are in the photos.

Apart from continuing their schoolwork on-line with Google Classroom the children have also been litter picking, doing amazing artworks, celebrating Chinese New Year, cross country running, inter house story writing and dressing up for World Book Day!

The school have also taken the opportunity when not in use to drain the swimming pool, remove all of the loose tiles and then re-grout the whole pool. Mr Hirst said "it looks amazing and is just waiting for the return of some little swimmers or even some non-swimmers."

Hopefully the job becomes a little easier for staff, who have done a fantastic job, and with all the children together again they will all move forward together. ●

CYNDY ABBEY

There will be many in the village who will remember Cyndy Abbey. She was a teacher at the Junior School in Grove Road for many years and was a valuable member of the Sonning Common society. She not only taught my children but we became friends and, with a couple of other local families, spent many happy breaks away in our respective caravans. Cyndy taught my children, Steven and Sarah in 1966/67 and 1969/70 as new entrants to the Infant School. Cyndy was the proud owner of an open top sports car which hugely impressed the children. Very glamorous!

She and her late husband, Ernie, were also known in the village as proud owners of beautiful white Samoyed dogs, for many years and Cyndy was still caring for one when her health failed. She went into a nursing home and I received the sad news from her son John that she had recently died.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank you and your team for managing to publish and deliver our magazine during these trying times. It's very valuable to us all. ●

JOAN THORNE

COME AND ENJOY A GOOD SING

A group of "song birds" are flocking together and planning the launch of a new Community Singing Group here in Sonning Common and Peppard.

Once Covid 19 restrictions are lifted we are planning to meet every 2 weeks to sing heartily and rejoice that we can all meet and socialise as a community once again.

To paraphrase that ageless pianist of the '60's, Semprini, "Old ones, new ones, forgotten ones, remembered ones" will all be attempted in the pursuit of making a joyful and harmonious sound that will bring a smile to your face and lift your mood.

We are currently looking for a Musical Director and would love to hear from you. Contact

Clive Mills 07934 875127, Bernard Winnington 0118 972 4874 or Barry Wood 01491 629982

We very much look forward to hearing from you and there will be more details soon.

ALABAMA ROT . . .

by Christine Atkinson

It sounds like something from the war, or the jungle doesn't it. In fact it is an awful disease that strikes our canine friends.

All dog owners want to enjoy walking and exercising their pets safely. However, it is worth being aware of a potentially fatal dog disease that has been found in the UK, and a few locals have sadly lost their faithful friends to it this last winter.

In the muddy, winter months Alabama dog rot is more common in the UK, and although thankfully it still remains a relatively rare disease, cases have risen since the 1980s and in 2020 there were 37 confirmed dog deaths from Alabama dog rot. It is a disease that causes damage to a dog's blood vessels and the kidney. It is a bit of a mystery which is hard to identify and, sadly, very difficult to treat making it a particularly distressing disease.

It is suspected that the disease spreads from muddy and wooded areas, and dog owners who do walk their dogs in these places are advised to wash off any mud as soon as possible, or avoid the very muddiest areas if possible. Be aware of where the dog is when off the lead. Do seek advice from your local vet if your dog develops unexplained skin lesions which would be a first sign.

More information, advice and a map of cases can be found on websites like vets4pets.com/pet-health-advice/alabama-rot/ for advice and a map of confirmed cases.

Although we are now heading into full springtime there can still be a lot of muddy areas so do be aware of the dangers. ●

ALABAMA ROT WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

- Initially open wounds or ulcers that won't heal on your dog's limbs or abdomen
- Increased thirst
- Increased urination
- Vomiting
- Seizures (fits)
- Reduction in appetite and lethargy might also be seen

If you are worried consult your vet asap.

SONNING COMMON VILLAGE XI CRICKET FIXTURES 2021

DATE	OPPONENTS	VENUE	START
May 2nd	Nettlebed	A	14.00
9th	Ipsden	A	14.00
16th	Pangbourne	A	14.00
30th	BBC Caversham	Woodcote cc	13.30
June 5/6	Annual Dorset Tour 2021		
13th	Whitchurch	A	13.00
27th	Swyncombe	A	14.00
July 4th	Aldermaston	A	13.00
11th	Stonor	A	13.30
Aug 1st	Kidmore End	A	14.00
8th	Hambledon	A	14.00
22nd	Peppard Maharajas	A	13.30
29th	R.Choules Memorial Game	Highmoor cc	13.30
Sep 12th	Holton & Wheatley	Gt. Haseley cc	13.30

Any players interested please contact chairman Keith Davis on 07740 936997

'RESPECT THE CHILTERNS COUNTRYSIDE' PLEA FROM LEADING CONSERVATION GROUPS

Farmers and and conservation groups are urging people to keep to the paths and keep dogs under control when walking in the countryside.

Farmers livelihoods are at risk with one farmer losing the equivalent of 9,000 loaves of bread due to trampled crops.

The very wet weather and consequent mud has exacerbated this problem over the recent weeks of Lockdown. Please keep to the paths. ●

HEALTH WALKS

There are tentative plans to restart the Health Walks for the summer, but nothing definite has been decided yet. Any information about starting points and times and days will be available on the website at **www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable** as soon as anything has been arranged. To talk to someone about any aspect of the Health Walks phone Chris Brook on 0118 924 2515. Meanwhile, snowdrops are over, but bluebells are springing up, so get out and enjoy our beautiful local countryside! ●

Rosemary Dunstan

OPEN, CLOSED, OPEN

At the time of writing the library is expected to open again from 12 April, as long as we don't stray from the 'roadmap'. Up till then only larger libraries (Henley being the nearest) are allowed to offer 'click and collect' for people who are desperate for something to read. But if you're in need of books, whether you're over 70 or under 10 (and anything in between!) please get in touch with the library at: sonningcommon.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk (or try phoning 0118 972 2448 in the afternoons) and we'll see what we can do to help....

Information about Oxfordshire Libraries and online services is available 24/7 at: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/libraries

When the library reopens, the opening hours will be these:

Monday	2 – 5pm
Wednesday	2 – 5pm
Friday	9 – 1pm; 2 – 5pm
Saturday	9.30 – 12.30pm

We will open still under 'Covid-secure conditions', meaning that masks should be worn in the library (unless medically exempt), books are quarantined for 72 hours, numbers allowed in are monitored, and short visits are encouraged, at least for a few months yet. But the Friends of Sonning Common Library are busy making plans for lots of exciting activities in the library as soon as we're allowed to do so. ●

Rosemary Dunstan
Library manager

FOSCL

Spring has definitely sprung and with the lockdown easing, the Friends have been planning how to celebrate the library's 21st anniversary in its current home at the primary school. A plan to buy 210 new books is already well underway and suggestions are welcome from all. We are also planning several events to mark this special birthday – including an authors' evening complete with a glass of wine and nibbles in July, a poetry writing workshop in September, and the return of our Quiz in October. There will be several events for children over the summer – including an opportunity to handle animals and learn about their lifecycles with Zoolab on 18 August. We are also looking at running a children's art workshop and hoping to welcome back the Lego Master Builders. There may be a small fee for some of the workshops but fund-raising through the Quiz allows us to keep it low.

Keep an eye on the Friends website and the Facebook page as well as in the library (once it's open) for more details. As usual a big thank-you to our librarians, Rosemary and Annabel, as well as all our Volunteers, who work so hard to keep the library going. Please get in touch – email: friendsofsonningcommonlibrary@gmail.com or check out our facebook page: **https://www.facebook.com/FoSCLibrary** and our website: **www.friendsofsonningcommonlibrary.org.uk**

Helen Fort

FRIENDS of Sonning Common Library

£1,800 FOR LOCAL CHARITIES

Sales of the Lockdown calendar raised money for local charities.

£600 to the Youth Club

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Many thanks to everyone who purchased a calendar

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CHILTERN PLAYERS: FACT, FIC

Our last performance was a radio-style murder mystery supper evening in co-operation with Friends of the Library in Sonning Common. When lockdown started we had to shelve Forget me Knot, David Tristram's hilarious comedy that we would have performed last April. So like many other organisations, to keep the group together we've been doing play and poetry readings and a murder mystery game on Zoom. As a creative platform, we also challenged ourselves to write our own monologues and perform them on our fortnightly Zoom evenings. These are some of the results. Some are true, some are fiction and some are total fabrication. Can you guess which?

The first monologue for this magazine is the 'Talking to plants' and in the next few issues more will be revealed . . .

TALKING TO THE PLANTS

GREENHOUSE

Favourite place for me this. So soothing. Relaxing. I've always loved gardening. Takes you out of yourself. Communing with nature. I spend well over half the day in here. I take her breakfast up – one Weetabix, half a pint of milk, teaspoon of crunchy sugar. It's the same every day. Then I get the chores done, emptying the commode, vacuuming, washing.

Endless washing. Good job she's got plenty of clothes....

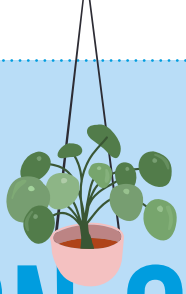
Nice milky coffee and a digestive at 10 then I'm out here till lunch time. Time goes so quickly. It's like entering a portal into another world. Picked up a bargain the other day. The caretaker down at the primary school had left out a load of plants. "Help yourself," it said. "Surplus to requirement". So, I pick up a tray of pepper plants, some salvias and a few lettuces. Leave a modest contribution in the honesty box. Lovely plants. I'll transplant them into my trug. I ordered it on the computer. That was a challenge. But I'm getting better. I feel as if I've almost got my finger on the pulse of online shopping now. Anyway, the trug arrived last Tuesday week. Put it together myself. Instructions were quite tricky but I did it. She even pottered down and had a look. Sharon looked over the garden fence. "I wondered what all that banging and screwing was", she said. "I thought you'd got guests". Made some comment about the number of pairs of knickers on the line. I ignored it. Got 8 bags of compost delivered from the hardware. Filled it up a treat. The veg will do well in there. And .... being raised, I won't have the battle with next door's cat using it as a litter tray.

"The time you spend in there", she says. "Bloody plants. They've taken over your life. You'll begin to look like one if you're not careful". "Which one, I say "Phlox paniculata or Rudbeckia angiospermus? " "They all sound vulgar", she says. "Suit yourself". This is the only time I do suit myself. I wouldn't mind looking like that Nigella damascene: Lovely head of hair on that, wispy stem and good firm roots. Loves a bit of heavy watering. Benefits from fertilisation. Wistfully Love in a Mist. Yes well. That's not going to happen now.

FRONT ROOM

I went in to wash my hands and picked up the post. She was sitting in the front room watching Loose Women. I said " I don't know why you like that rubbish". She said " It takes me out of myself. It's boring in here," pointing to her head. " And you're busy with your green fingers. Have you changed my library books yet?" "It's Tuesday" I said. " The library's closed. It's just Scrabble and computers in there today. Cutbacks. " I got her out to the toilet. Another accident. More washing.

I took her tablets in with a corned beef and tomato sandwich. She peeled back the corner disdainfully. "Is all the ham gone then?" she says. I said I was going up to the Co-op later when I'd transplanted the sweet peas and I'd get her some of that Brunswick ham. She likes that. " Well I liked it last week," she said. " I might fancy some mashed sardines next time. Ring the changes." There's no pleasing her. Still. At least she's got her appetite. You can always rely on that.



TION OR FABRICATION?

CHILTERN PLAYERS

OPENING POST IN THE KITCHEN

The letter's from Sunset Pastures. There's a place come up. Someone's passed away. She won't want to go but I'll have to talk her round. Nice rooms. All with en suite. Lovely lounge. She can take her own bits and pieces. After all she's been with me for ... well ages. After dad died .... It's expensive. But there's the attendance allowance and her pension and she's got a few thousand in her savings. I hope it will see her out. ●

IN THE KITCHEN. BAKING.

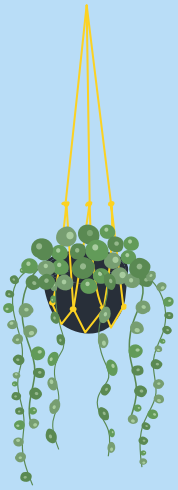
She didn't want to go. I knew there'd be an argument. "There'll be other like-minded people there", I said. " It won't be so lonely for you". She complains they'll all be old. I mentioned she was over 90. That didn't go down well. Told her the library comes round once a week. There's whist on Tuesday, basket weaving on Monday. A ukulele group visits on Wednesday. bingo on Thursday. "Bingo" she says. " What do I want with bingo? Legs eleven. 2 fat ladies. You don't need numbers for that" "You'll enjoy it," I said. "The food will be nice". I had a look at the menu. Lasagne on Monday, curry on Tuesday, steak and ale on Wednesday.... "My bowels will be all right then, won't they? " she said. I thought at least that wouldn't be my problem anymore. "That reminds me" I say, " You'll be able to see Loose Women on the telly in your room" She just looked at me. Took her down two days ago. Photos and a miniature Toby jug on the unit. Double doors out onto the patio. "You won't be needing the commode, Mrs Frobisher" said the nurse. "You've got your own lovely en suite just a stone's throw from the bed". "Never have been able to throw stones" she says. "My aim's all to pot". The nurse bristled.

Anyway, once she was there and all settled she seemed quite chipper. Nice view out onto the garden. Bird feeder with robins on it and a red geranium in a pot. I'm taking her in a special cake to share with the residents. Then I'm going to spend an hour or two with my green friends. The peppers are coming on a treat. I might even buy some weed and feed online. Spruce up the lawn a bit. ●

SUNSET PASTURES

Bit of a tummy upset apparently. Could have been something she ate but more likely a bit of a bug going round at Sunset Pastures. One or two of the others had the same. The staff weren't overly concerned but kept her separate from the others for a couple of days. They're saying as she's on the incontinent side they might have to raise the fees because of the extra care. I hope the money will stretch. I had a look at the account today. It's going down fast. I got on the phone to the council. "Ms Frobisher", they said, "we're not going to give up on your mother but if push comes to shove it may be necessary to sell your house to keep her in care there. But we'll give it a few weeks"

She's been complaining about the lack of choice in the food. So I'm taking her in an individual shepherd's pie. Freshly grown peppers from the greenhouse. Most unusual shape and variety.



The ambulance got there too late. Food poisoning they said. They haven't been able to trace what it was but... there are ongoing investigations. She was 95 and had a good life.

I've started a course at the horticultural college. To learn more about various plants and vegetables. Should be interesting. And there are some other like-minded people there.

At least I didn't have to sell the house. ●

Rosemary House

MEMORIAL HALL FIELD – THE DIGGERS AT WORK!

The diggers and earth moving vehicles should be hard at work on Memorial Hall Field in the phase one works. This will transform the field into levelled areas, sift out sharp stones, re-seed grass areas and install perimeter footpaths and a large tarmac area for future activity provision, a multi-use games area (MUGA).

Young trees will be planted, which have been donated by the Woodland Trust, to start to give shape and form to the whole site. On Saturday 8 and 15 April planting will take place and we would welcome volunteer help. Please let the editor know if you are available to help on those days 972 2381.

The groundworks will take around 4 months, with a further period over autumn to allow the seeds to root and ensure a strong grass base before the site can be opened for public use.

At this stage we have not planned for any specific sport or activity facilities, as we want to hear from all local residents first. The first step is a survey which we invite everyone to complete, specifically about the MUGA. We want to know the lines to paint on the tarmac and what kinds of sports and activities you wish to enjoy at this new Activity Hub.

On the opposite page you will see the overall groundworks plans. The perimeter footpath will be a 3m wide tarmac path, giving access right round the site. The elongated shape in the southeast corner is a swale – a shallow dipped area for drainage – it is not a pond or water feature but will have grassed sides, be gently sloping and shallow. The dark green area in the north west is the 60m x 40m tarmac MUGA, (approximately half the size of a football pitch) which could support a variety of activities and equipment. A planning application has been submitted for lighting of this area and the surrounding pathways.

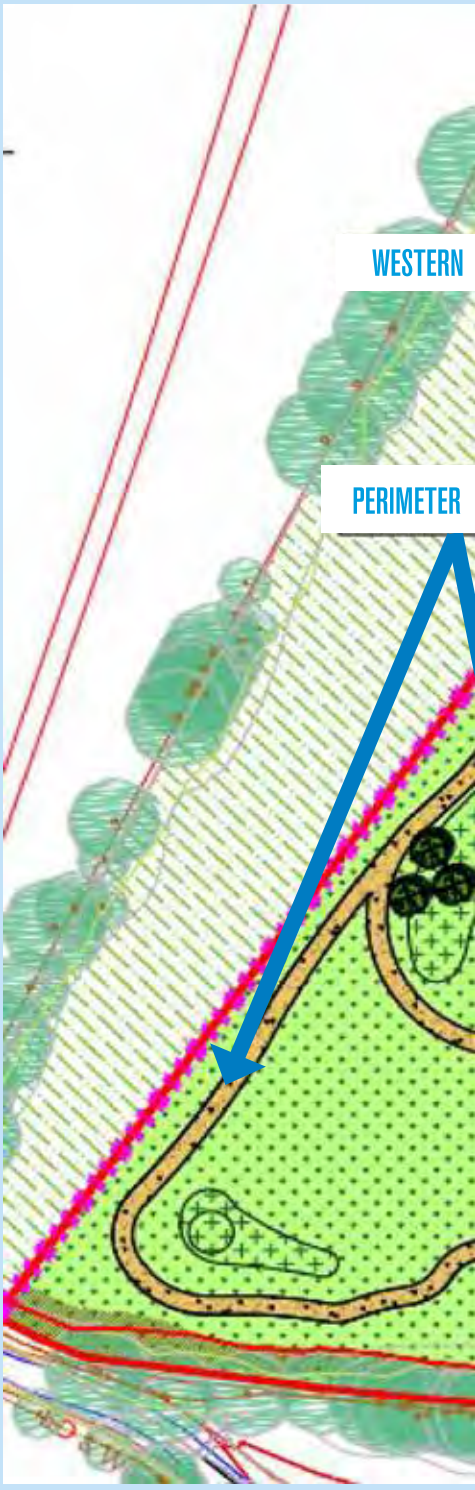
Around this tarmac area, stretching further south and east, the squarish area is level and will be more closely mown for other sporty games to be played. The circle and elongated shape south of this square area and above the footpath is allocated for a play mound and playground. A second mound will be created just above the swale to the east of the site.

Various areas of hedging and protected wildflowers will add to the ambience of the site, with benches and seats for everyone to enjoy. ●

Diana Pearman Chair of the MHF and Penny Snowden Project Co-ordinator

As well as completing the MUGA survey, which will be circulated soon via email and social media, you are welcome to mark on this plan any outdoor activities and facilities you would like to see and use on the Memorial Hall Field, which encourage health and fitness.

What we would like you to do is mark on the plan any outdoor activities you would use – which encourage activity, health and movement. We can then use this information to make the decisions about future provision. Please deliver your inspirations to 24 or 50 Kennylands Road or scan and email to the editor@sonningcommnmagazine.org



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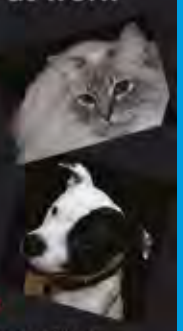

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MEET CLIFF PRYKE

By JOAN GRUMMANT

Cliff Pryke has lived and worked in Sonning Common for over eighty years and has witnessed many changes during that time. The one constant factor he recognises is the strength of community spirit and the kindness of the people. During his life he has seen a small village grow into a much larger thriving community.

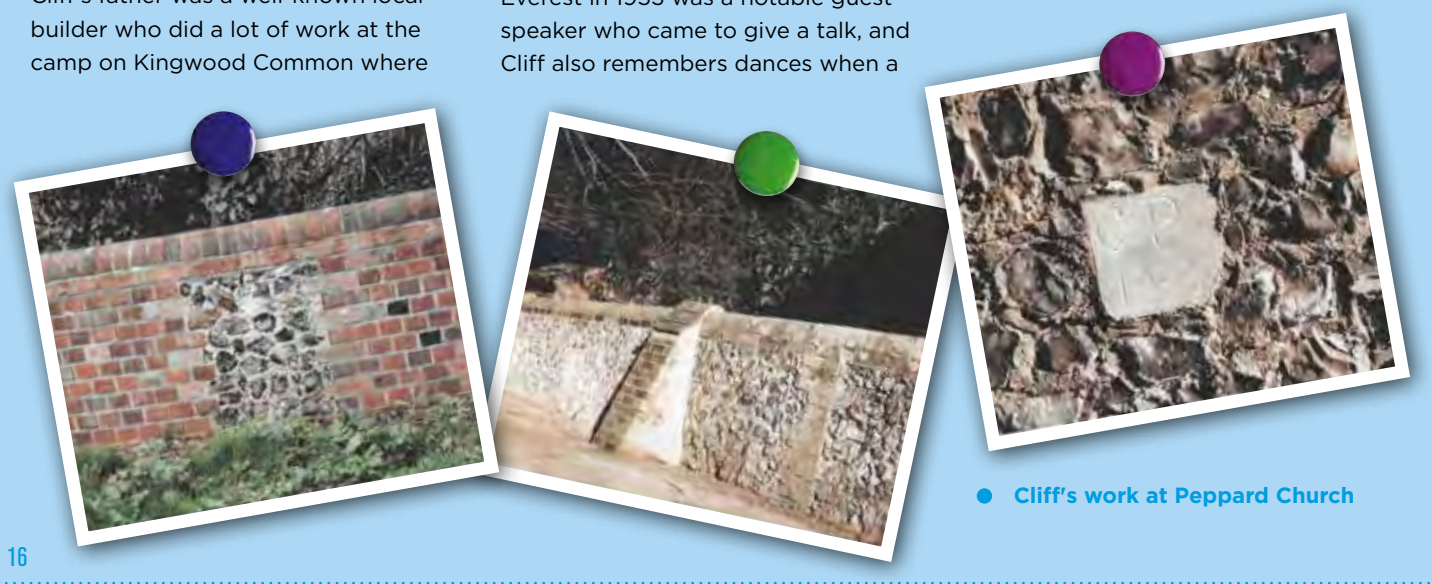
Like many families in Sonning Common he can remember the evacuees in 1940 who stayed with local families and some who lived in a large house called Maitlands that was opposite the Co-op. Cliff's father was a well-known local builder who did a lot of work at the camp on Kingwood Common where many families were housed during the war and Cliff followed in his footsteps and became a builder too. When Cliff went off to do his National Service in the RAF in 1955, he came home to big changes in Sonning Common. The roads had been properly made up and there was a lot of building taking place and over time the village expanded and a new secondary school, Health Centre and Village Hall were built. A lot of local houses are the result of Cliff's work and he has particularly fond memories of working on Rotherfield Peppard Church repairing the church and walls. The flintwork was particularly tricky because the mortar had to be just the right mix and had to blend seamlessly with the existing material - no mean feat!

Cliff has played a big part in community life and has been a member of many local organisations including time as a Parish Councillor. When he retired in 2000, he was pleased to join FISH as a car driver and still thinks that this was one of his most enjoyable and worthwhile ventures. Some years previously, he organised and ran the Chiltern Edge Youth Club which started when a group of local residents were looking for someone to manage it. Sir John Hunt who led the expedition to Everest in 1953 was a notable guest speaker who came to give a talk, and Cliff also remembers dances when a local group called The Trends came along with a singer, drums and guitar.

Cliff has always had musical interests and has a fine bass voice. Over the years he has sung in many organisations including Reading Operatic Society, Henley Operatic Society, Peppard Church choir, South Chiltern Choral Society and in 2010 Nottakwire which was a community choir based in Sonning Common. He has very fond memories of visits to the Albert Hall with the South Chiltern Choir and also of the wide ranging and fun music he enjoyed with Nottakwire.

Cliff still lives in the house he built himself in Woodlands Road and over the years has seen a small village grow in size and traffic volumes, into a very different place from its small rural beginnings. He really cherishes his neighbourhood and values the many good things it offers to people of all ages. ●

Cliff would like to take this opportunity to thank his neighbours for their kindness. On one side of his home they do his shopping and help with jobs. On the other side the neighbours provide him with a Sunday lunch every week. Such is the kindness of the people who live in Sonning Common.



● Cliff's work at Peppard Church

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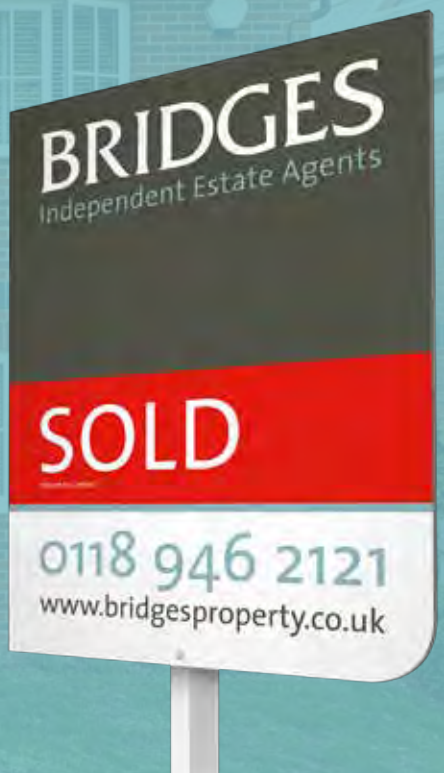

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WAR

Sonning Common is mobilising for another epic battle against developers intent on wrecking the beautiful countryside around our village.

Four years ago, many readers of this magazine will remember, the battlefield was off Kennylands Road where a speculator called Gallagher Homes wanted to build nearly 100 homes right next to Rudgings Plantation and the AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). We fought them at the subsequent planning inquiry, and we won.

Now it's happening all over again, and the future of Sonning Common's countryside setting is once more at stake. This time the focus shifts from the west to the east – to a large green field just off Blounts Court Road and almost opposite the Johnson Matthey complex.

It is called Little Sparrows and in one sense it is just another field, bounded by hedges with Slades Wood at one corner and Widmore Pond hidden away at the northern edge. But actually it is the start of a most lovely and precious stretch of rural south Oxfordshire that extends to the Berkshire border and Emmer Green, and around to take in Dunsden and Binfield Heath to the east.

Most of us know it and many of us love it. It is all AONB land – a patchwork of meadows, paddocks, mature woods and copses intersected by leafy lanes and well-trodden footpaths and bridleways. It sums up one of the key reasons why so many residents feel so strongly about this village – that we have this open world of nature and wildlife and birdsong on our doorsteps, available to refresh our spirits whenever they need lifting.

A company which began by calling itself Inspired Villages and which is now known as Senior Living (Sonning Common) Ltd wants to build what it calls 'a retirement village' on this field. It would consist of more than 130 apartments arranged in blocks with communal facilities including library, restaurant, 'wellbeing centre' and so forth. This kind of accommodation is known as extra-care or assisted living and is aimed at the over 65s.

Because the field is within the AONB, a major development of this kind can be permitted only in what are referred to as 'exceptional circumstances'. The company's case is that this requirement is met because of the shortage of this kind of specialised accommodation in the South Oxfordshire District Council area. We very strongly disagree. So do SODC, which rejected the developers' original planning application. They have now exercised the right to appeal at a planning inquiry. This is the battle I referred to at the beginning of this article. It opens on April 27th and because of the Covid restrictions will be conducted remotely.

As chairman of the working party that has spent the last three years revising our Neighbourhood Plan, I could go on for hours about why I feel so strongly that to allow this 'retirement village' (which of course bears no resemblance to a village) to be built would be a disaster for Sonning Common, an insult to its people, and a hammer blow against

local democracy. But that would be tedious, so I will simply summarise our reasons for opposing it:

1. It represents a full frontal assault on the AONB which has been so important in protecting the countryside around Sonning Common

2. The revision of the Neighbourhood Plan has been focussed on finding sites for the allocation of around 100 new homes made by SODC. We have made great progress to meeting that target – but the 130+ apartments envisaged in this scheme would swamp that target and make it pointless to continue.

3. We feel that the priority must be to enable younger people and families to get housing – but the Little Sparrows development is aimed exclusively at the elderly.

4. The likely cost of the apartments - £600,000 upwards – means that only the affluent (almost all of whom would already own properties) would be able to consider them. We do not consider that this amounts to a genuine 'need' as the developers claim; it is a market which they seek to exploit.

5. The nature of the demographics means that, inevitably, a significant extra burden would be imposed on our wonderful health centre, which is already working at full capacity to meets the needs of Sonning Common and the surrounding area.

6. The estate will be accessed from Blounts Court Road, which is no more than a country lane and is already far busier than is ideal. The extra traffic will multiply those problems many times over.

I could go on, but I am sure you have the picture by now. Sonning Common parish council voted unanimously to fund full representation at the forthcoming inquiry, which means our case will be argued by a professional planning consultant and a barrister.

The cost is likely to be over £30,000 and to help meet it we organised a crowdfunding appeal to which many generous readers of the magazine will have contributed.

Speaking for myself, I wish very much that we were not spending that money because I would very much prefer for it to be spent on the village itself. I wish there was no battle to be fought. I dread the thought of sitting through the inquiry and listening to the various experts and legal eagles trying to catch each other out. I take no pleasure in wading through the mountains of documentation and analysing the arguments. I wish I hadn't had to write this article.

But all of that is nothing compared with my conviction that if we really want to defend the place where we live for us and for those who come after us, we always have to be ready to fight. ●

Tom Fort
Chairman Neighbourhood Plan

LEARNING FROM LOCKDOWN

We all know that this has been the most difficult of twelve months. A time forever tinged by sadness and sacrifice but also hope & inspiration. This brief article covers some of the experiences of Rotherfield Walking Football club in coming to terms with a pandemic.

During the past year, the Club has continued to grow in numbers, especially during the summer of 2020 so that we now have 40 registered members, ranging from 55-80, the majority in their 60's. We have had to learn to adapt quickly and safely to the new reality and this has led to creative and innovative responses. Being an outdoor activity, we have been able to play at Bishopswood intermittently between Lockdowns. This necessitated new Covid 19 protocols of risk assessments, temperature checks on arrival, registering attendees, social distancing and becoming cashless. Our warm up activities were adapted to focus on personal physical fitness, as well as ball skills. We even developed a safer, new non – contact playing format, overseen by our excellent referee with whom we never disagree!

We see ourselves as a community club. Each year we aim to make donations to charities or local activities, and we were pleased to still do that last year with donations to two mental health charities and the 'Girls into football' initiative.

Voluntary groups such as those for music, art, exercise, sport etc also act as a source for developing social connections. From the first Lockdown we had to learn new ways of maintaining the social aspects of the group. We formed the inevitable WhatsApp group; one member organised a weekly quiz and our annual awards evening in December went ahead via Zoom instead of at the Indian restaurant. Establishing a fortnightly 'Zoom Social' for members to just drop into at any time to have a chat has been popular. All have helped to bring people together and reinforce the camaraderie that is a feature of our Club.

What I have also learnt this year has been how much being part of Rotherfield Walking Football Club means to many of the group.

Two of the Club members have had serious health conditions and both, independently of each other, set themselves the 'goal' of returning to Walking Football as a way of getting through their treatment. Alan was in hospital for nearly a year but is now recovering slowly. We maintained contact throughout, including sending a video message and reminder photos of him at Walking Football to help maintain his focus. As his wife commented "walking football is not only good exercise, but a great social event which he loved," He now has a target date for his return.

Another member, Cliff, had a potential life changing diagnosis, followed by operations then months of gruelling chemotherapy. He reflected recently, "during my darkest times it has helped me find the strength and willpower to fight to get back out there with true friends".

He returned to Bishopswood last August and asked me to take a picture of him playing. The photo was not for himself but one to send to his oncologist. He had a bet with her that he would get back to playing Walking Football within the year and he made it in time. Their stories have inspired us all.

Rotherfield Walking Football members are the type who resist being defined by their age, for that carries with it certain assumptions, mostly negative. We would rather be defined by what we are able to do, not by what we cannot do or used to do. As restrictions are eased, we will return to playing with that kind of spirit. Although we may play with a competitive edge, we put the same effort into making it safe, fun, social, & enjoyable.

We continue to learn and are already making plans for the future. ●

Ian Massey

We offer WF sessions at Bishopswood Sports Ground every Wednesday morning from 10.00am and Monday evenings from April at 6pm. You are welcome to come along and have a chat (it's not gender specific), or contact - ian.massey28@gmail.com

FISH PREMISES

We are all delighted with our new premises at 82 Lea Road and there is much to look forward to in the weeks to come.

As well as looking forward to seeing our volunteers and trustees in person, the new base gives us a more stable future and a great place for the FISH Volunteer Centre to work from. So, we can continue to provide transport for those who need it, a befriending service for the lonely and a community room for other charities and groups to use. When restrictions are eased there will be the return of our monthly tea parties and the minibus service.

Taking on these new premises removes any concerns about a future base for our community activities. When coming together to fight this pandemic in these very difficult times, the fact that we were able to purchase it, is largely down to the fantastic people within our community at large who have yet again shown their generosity and support.

So, **a very big thank you to all our supporters**, from all at FISH, - enabling us to continue to serve the village and the surrounding areas for many years to come.

An official opening ceremony and open day will be arranged once the pandemic is over.

Richard McQuillan
Chairman FISH Volunteer Centre

THE FISH SHED

Many of you will know that we are hoping to establish a FISH SHED. The need for this project has become evident due to the effects of the Covid Virus on the community and the sometimes loneliness sometimes experienced by many or just to get out of the house and try something different.

WHY NOT BECOME A SHEDDER?

This will be a place where people can meet and pursue practical interests, learn new skills and if you already have them instruct others. Enjoy making, mending and creating articles. We wish also to make the project a social event enabling you to meet like minded people. We really look forward to hearing from you by completing the form below.

Sheila Maughan
Trustee

Please return to the FISH OFFICE, 82 Lea Road, Sonning Common (Old Police Office)

I am keen to join:

NAME:

INTERESTS: Please tick

- ☐ Carpentry
- ☐ Repairing Furniture
- ☐ Wood Turning
- ☐ Upholstery
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How would you like to be contacted?
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THE SHED

LET GREENSHOOTS HELP YOU SPRING INTO A GLORIOUS SUMMER IN YOUR GARDEN

Remember last Spring during the first shutdown due to the pandemic when even the garden centres were shut? But salvation was on hand in the form of pop-up shops outside a house in Stoke Row Road, Peppard, and three locations in Caversham, where all the vegetable and flowering plants you needed for your garden were on sale. This was how Greenshoots, the charity on Peppard Common which supports adults with learning difficulties, mental ill health and physical disabilities got through this difficult time and provided a much-needed service to our local community. That first lock down encouraged a lot more people to get into gardening and having caught the bug (not coronavirus!) it seems certain many people will want to get gardening again this year.

So, don't forget this really worthwhile charity. You can buy your plants and support the excellent work of Greenshoots at the same time. The difference this year is the garden nursery at Manor Farm on Peppard Common will be open so you will be able to choose from a wider range of plants as well as take a look in the gift shop where jams, chutney, Greenshoots honey and handmade items will be on sale.

And, does anyone have any 'free' time? The charity is always in need of volunteers to help at Greenshoots, at the Tea Kiosk in Caversham or to volunteer to drive the charity's minibus. You would need a clean licence and have the category D1 on it. The minibus is used to ferry beneficiaries from Caversham to Greenshoots, then return them at the end of the day.

For more details, do pop in or give us a ring 01491 628933. We are open every weekday from 9am to 4pm, and on Saturdays from the Easter Weekend, 3rd April, 9.30am to 3pm. Check our website www.waysandmeans.org.uk or follow us on Facebook - www.facebook.com/Greenshoots96, Twitter or Instagram. ●

Frances Woolaway
Chief Executive Officer

READING HAS ITS' VERY OWN BANKSY

An unusual happening in Reading has caught the attention of passers by. On the side of Reading jail overnight an escaped prisoner was seen scaling down the wall!

Cult street artist Banksy has confirmed he's behind the escaping prisoner artwork. The new art piece, Create Escape, on the outside wall of the prison, features an inmate (thought to be Oscar Wilde) escaping on a rope made of bedsheets.

DO YOU KNOW WHO SENDS KNITTED BLANKETS TO MALAWI?

I have knitted blankets for some time and a friend in Sonning Common took them to a lady called Linda who organised transfer of them to Malawi. My friend is no longer able to deal with these and as I have no contact for Linda, am unable to pass the blankets on.

I would appreciate it if Linda or anyone reading the magazine knows of her and could contact me via email: **daphnedodd21@gmail.com** or phone the Editor on **972 2381** ●

Many thanks
Daphne Dodd

DON'T DESPAIR! CITIZENS ADVICE CAN HELP YOU WITH DEBT

When bills start piling up and multiplying, vague fears can turn into a paralysing panic for people experiencing money troubles. Turn to Citizens Advice, which has eighty years of experience in pulling people back from the precipice. Your burden might seem overwhelming and impossible to resolve but in reality there is a lot you can do to turn things around.

Start by assembling your bills and make an overall list, with relevant details like dates when payment is due. Sort the bills into priority debts (rent and mortgage arrears, Council Tax, gas and electricity, tax and National Insurance – and see **https://www.citizensadvice.org/debt-and-money** for a complete list) and non-priority debts (water rates – your supplier can't cut you off – credit card debts, unsecured loans, hire purchases etc). Take the priority debts first and contact your creditors. Don't be afraid of this step. Many companies will be expecting you to get in touch, saying on the bill itself "We know that paying a bill can be difficult" or "Affected by Covid-19?" - and providing a telephone number or web link. Approach them with a constructive attitude, tell them you are actively tackling your debts, and perhaps ask them to suspend interest charges while you do so. They also might be amenable to letting you defer payment or pay smaller amounts over a longer time period.

Ask about any special reductions – for example, the Warm Home Discount Scheme for electricity supplies (see **www.gov.uk** for more information).

If you need to compose a letter or email to a creditor, you don't have to start from scratch: you could copy or adapt a template letter from the Citizens Advice website. One especially useful letter asks creditors to give you more time.

Talk to a volunteer at Citizens Advice (call Adviceline free on 0800 278 7907, Monday to Friday 9 am to 5 pm) or through webchat ("chat with us online about debt") Monday to Friday 8am to 7pm.

TOM FORT WASHING

A while back I noticed my dear wife staring in a hostile fashion at the drying rack next to the kitchen sink. There ensued one of those domestic discussions familiar to couples all over the world.

'I think we should get rid of that rack,' she said.

'Why? What's wrong with it?'

'Look at it. It's disgusting'.

I looked at it. 'It's fine, just a bit discoloured. It does the job'.

'It's disgusting. How do you feel about getting a new one?'

I couldn't find the words to express how I felt. It was as if she'd suggested replacing the sofa with a futon or getting a lodger or ditching The Times in favour of The Daily Telegraph or erasing my beloved raised beds and laying down decking or astroturf.

What she was proposing was a revolution. A most unwelcome revolution.

The thing is, it's me who does the washing up. Ninety percent of it anyway (that figure is disputed). As we only use the dishwasher when we have company and we haven't had much of that recently, there's quite a bit of it, what with having a teenage daughter who requires a clean glass every time she needs a sip of water.

Don't get me wrong, I LIKE doing the washing up. In fact – if the truth be told – I have become somewhat proprietorial about it. I don't really want anyone else to do it. But that means it has to be done my way.

And that means using this draining rack and no other. I have a system, you see (how sad does that sound!). First the pans, then the glasses, then the plates, then the cutlery and bits and bobs. And each item has its place either on the rack or next to it. And nobody else – however well intentioned – ever does it properly, and when I see it done not properly it upsets me.

You probably think I need psychiatric help. Or counselling at least. You're wrong of course.

Now could you pass me the drying up cloth? No, not that one, you idiot ...

COOK'S CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

BAKED FALAFEL

- 1 (400g) tin chickpeas, drained
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1/2 bunch fresh parsley
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 egg
- 1 dessertspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 dash pepper
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 100g (4 oz) dried breadcrumbs

Preheat oven Gas 5/220. In a large bowl, mash chickpeas until thick and pasty; don't use a blender as the consistency will be too thin. In a blender, process onion, parsley and garlic until smooth. Stir into mashed chickpeas.In a small bowl combine egg, cumin, coriander, salt, pepper, cayenne, lemon juice and baking powder. Stir into chickpea mixture along with olive oil. Slowly add breadcrumbs until mixture is not sticky but will hold together; add more or less breadcrumbs, as needed. Form 8 balls and then flatten into patties. Place on a greased baking tray and cook until brown on both sides, approx. 15/20 minutes.

CUCUMBER AND MINT RAITA

- 175g (6 oz) low fat natural yoghurt
- 1/2 cucumber - peeled, seeded and finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons of chopped coriander and mint
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise

In a small bowl combine yoghurt, cucumber, coriander, mint, cumin, salt, pepper and mayonnaise. Chill for at least 30 minutes.

BOOK REVIEWS

By PHILLIPPA TAPHOUSE

The Last Thing to Burn
by Will Dean

Oh what a brilliant lockdown book. Gripping, sensational and unputdownable. This novel tells the story of Jane. That is not her name. Jane lives on a farm, with her husband, surrounded by fields and space...but she is trapped. No one has reported her missing. No one knows she is there. She can't run and if she did, where would she go?

There were times reading this book where my heart was literally beating out of my chest. It provokes every emotion...and you feel like you are living Jane's life...the pain, the fear, the frustration.

I read it one rainy afternoon and just couldn't stop turning the pages. I had to find out what was going to happen. It was one of the best thrillers I have read in a long time. You won't be disappointed.

The Push
by Ashley Audrain

I heard this author being interviewed on the radio and just felt like I had to read this book. For fans of There's Something About Kevin, the book delves into the nature versus nurture birth and upbringing of Violet and the relationship with her mother.

Blythe comes from a family of women who didn't take naturally to being mothers and Blythe, while nervous about the birth of her first child, is excited to prove that she will be different. When Violet is born, Blythe struggles to bond with her ... it is almost as if her new born baby doesn't like her ... and while Blythe tried her hardest to love her daughter, there is just something there that stops her. Can Blythe love Violet when she doesn't even like her?

The book carries the suspense all the way through and there were times when I was just holding my breath. It's deeply unsettling and you find yourself thinking about it long after you have finished. This book would be a fantastic read for a book club. The discussions about it, I'm sure, would carry on long into an evening.

Because of You
by Dawn French

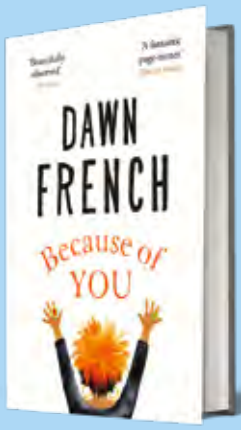
I loved this book. It`s just typical of the author...funny, warm, sad and just so beautifully written.

It's the story of two very different women who give birth at the beginning of the new millennium to beautiful baby girls.

Hope leaves hospital with a beautiful baby girl. Anna leaves with empty arms.

The story moves on 17 years later when the truth starts to unfold.

This book made me laugh and cry and is so descriptive I sometimes felt I was in the room with the two mothers. You can almost hear Dawn French's voice in the telling of the story and it just makes you love it more.



I read this book at the start of Lockdown 3 and it really couldn't have come at a better time. It was an instant Sunday Times bestseller and I can honestly see why.

This Changes Everything
by Helen McGinn

If you are looking for something a little more lighthearted and full of escapism, then this is the book for you. Written by Helen McGinn, a TV and newspaper wine expert, it tells the tale of two sisters Annie and Jess who follow their mother, Julia, to Rome when she goes to meet her first love, Patrick, who she hasn't seen for 50 years.

Julia and Patrick's story was one of true and innocent love which ended in a tragic way, leaving them to go their separate ways. As the story deepens, you realise that there is so much more to it than meets the eye and the characters really draw you in. It's a lovely Sunday afternoon book to sit reading by the fire and it's easy to lose yourself in this love story. The author takes you right into the heart of Rome. You can almost imagine yourself sitting outside the Pantheon in the sunshine with a chilled glass of perfect white wine. Pure escapism. ●

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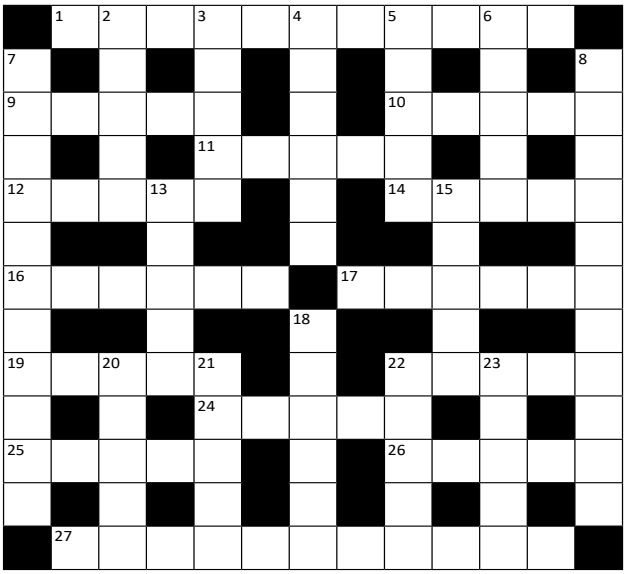
PUZZLE PAGE

By DAVID DUNSTAN

Cryptic crossword



ACROSS

1. Greek tenors confused in local hamlet (6,5)
9. Sound reproduction in car – with love (5)
10. Point of broken thorn (5)
11. Church after writer's coins (5)
12. Weapon has point in delicate fabric (5)
14. Disney takes Zulu for a dance (5)
16. Made bed in local town (6)
17. Helen is awkward with unknown local town (6)
19. Flowers in glasses or vases coming back (5)
22. Criticise roof covering (5)
24. Detectives come back with me for the doctor (5)
25. Fruit is very soft in beer (5)
26. Towel wrapped around little bird (5)
27. "Very tired and gluten-free" is in the news in local town (11)

DOWN

2. Ancient blonde loses head (5)
3. Run away with someone in the developer's van (5)
4. Good person working gold in local village (6)
5. Restore school subject? Novel! (5)
6. Take on loner perhaps (5)
7. Chart showed the way to ancient city – act badly in local village (11)
8. Sounds like sea mist on unknown moorland in local hamlet (6,5)
13. Transport revolution (5)
15. Declare void yearly, losing article (5)
18. Stupid person surrounds bishop in local brewery (6)
20. Greek letter in the ocean is dark brown (5)
21. Sniff perfume (5)
22. Mock small hack, reportedly (5)
23. Fitter in table repairs (5)

Sudoku

Grading: medium

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

Cryptogram

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

"AP JANWDSU LWEMR EMUSGAMF ES EJJ, AS LWEMR SGW DAFGS SI SWJJ BWIBJW TGES SGWU CI MIS TEMS SI GWED." – FWIDFW IDTWJJ

Decimalisation Day Quiz

Fifty years ago, on 15 February 1971, we changed to decimal currency.

1. How many pennies were there in a pound before decimalisation?
2. How much was a dozen eggs if eggs cost threepence each?
3. What bird would you find on a farthing?
4. How many sides did a threepenny bit have?
5. What was the name of a coin worth sixpence?
6. What was the common name for a shilling?
7. What was the name of a coin worth 2 shillings?
8. What was the name of a coin worth 2 shillings and 6 pence?
9. What colour was a ten shilling note?
10. How much was a guinea?

See answers on page 30

STAFF UPDATE

New Practice Manager

Welcome to the new Practice Manager at the health centre John Lisiewicz who joined on the 4th January. Andrea Tsoi, our former Practice Manager and Sue Abbott will both be Deputy Practice Managers, sharing the role.

A new GP trainee: Dr Dola Olaleye – joined early February for a one year placement.

Dr Lizzie Sherwin has moved on to her next trainee placement after 6 months at SCHC with best wishes for her future training. ●

COVID VACCINATION UPDATE: 16 MARCH 2021

3,400 vaccinations (35% of our patient population)

During the next two weeks we will be continuing to vaccinate any remaining patients in Cohorts 1- 6 but will also be providing 1st vaccinations for Cohorts 7 (60-64 years) and Cohort 8 and 9 (50-59 years).

In addition, we have started to provide 2nd vaccinations in Cohort 1 (Care Home residents and Care Home staff) and over the next week to a limited group of our patients in Cohort 2 (80 years and over). Please ensure we have your up-to-date email address and/or mobile number so we can invite you efficiently. Please do NOT phone the surgery, but email **schc.covid@nhs.net** to update any details in writing.

Carers: if you receive a carer's allowance, or are the main carer for an elderly or disabled person, (whose welfare may be at risk if the carer falls ill), please can you ensure SCHC know so that they can invite you for a COVID vaccine as part of Group 6. Please email schc.covid@nhs.net with details of who you care for and what care you give (even if not receiving carer's allowance). ●

HEALTHY ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

in and around Sonning Common

This booklet is only available from Sonning Common Health Centre in the Entrance lobby during this pandemic. Hopefully it will return to the chemist, dentist and library in a few months and the activities will restart. There is an updated copy on the SCHC website and an addendum is available listing some changes. If you know of any other changes or would like your activity to be included please email Sue: sue.HAT1999@gmail.com ●

EYES AND EARS

It is important to have eyes and ears checked regularly. In particular eyes should be checked at least every 2 years to ensure early detection of problems which can be critical in preventing sight loss. During this pandemic most opticians are now open; the staff are taking precautions of wearing PPE, masks and sanitizing hands. They ask for everyone to wear a mask if attending an appointment.

Many opticians also offer hearing tests and also wax removal if required. At Boots the cost is £50 for both ears including checking overall ear and hearing health and £55 at Specsavers for one or both ears. No wax, no charge, there are other opticians/hearing practices that offer wax removal.

Eye tests at home are available at any time and during lockdown.

If you, or someone you know, are unable to leave home unaccompanied due to a physical or mental illness or disability, an NHS eye test can be done at home.

Contact your usual optician or NHS on **0300 311 22 33** or email **england.contactus@nhs.net**

The deaf blind website **https://deafblind.org.uk** has suggestions on where to get support, talks, befriending, holidays and information.

Below are a few simple hints and tips they suggest.

- **The 20/20/20 rule for your eyes: Every 20 minutes, take a 20 second screen break and focus your eyes on something 20 metres away.**
- **The 60/60 rule for your ears: Never listen at more than 60% of your device's maximum volume and limit the amount of time you spend using earbuds to 60 minutes at a time. To help, many devices can be set to not exceed 60% volume.**
- **If other people can hear what you are listening to while you are wearing ear buds... it's too loud!**
- **Try some eye exercises! These can be found on their website.**

HOW STRESS CAN AFFECT YOUR EYES AND EARS

Almost everyone experiences stress at some point in their life, and now more than ever, stress has become more prevalent in everyone's day to day. If this sounds familiar, you're not alone: stress is behind 40% of all days off work in the UK.

Stress and your vision

Stress can lead to high blood pressure, but did you know that an optometrist can see signs of high blood pressure simply by looking at the back of your eyes? That's because the eyes are the only part of the body where small blood vessels – capillaries – are directly visible. This means we can see if the vessels have become thickened, narrowed or even burst. If we detect any of these signs, you'll be referred to your GP for precautionary general health and blood pressure assessments.

If left undetected and untreated, high blood pressure can potentially lead to blurred vision or floaters (tiny spots that float across your vision). Other symptoms of stress and the eyes include strain, soreness or twitching of the eye lids.

Stress-related eye conditions can be temporary. If you have any on-going concerns about your vision, they might be related to other health and eye conditions. If you notice any changes with your eyes, see your optician.

Stress and your hearing

Prolonged stress can directly affect your ear health, causing conditions like hearing loss and tinnitus. As with your eyes, decreased circulation can also affect your ears, and chronic stress plays a big part in slowing blood flow.

When you're stressed, the extra adrenaline can decrease or stop circulation in the inner ear, damaging or even destroying the essential tiny hair cells inside your ear. This can cause gradual hearing loss over time, or even sudden hearing loss if circulation stops completely. If your hearing loss is a reaction to stress then it's often reversible: first cut out the stress for improved circulation (easier said than done) but take a look at the handy NHS stress buster guide.

If you're concerned about stress-induced hearing loss then look out for symptoms such as blocked ears, an inability to hear sounds at certain frequencies, a sensation of pressure in your ears, loss of hearing in one or both of your ears, sounds seeming more distant than usual, or tinnitus.

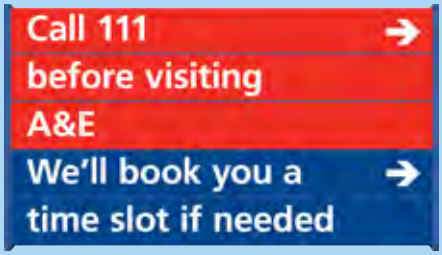
Tinnitus

Tinnitus is common, affecting approximately one in ten UK adults. It's often described as a 'ringing in the ears' or clicking, roaring, hissing or buzzing, while some people hear music-like sounds.

Despite being a highly frustrating and distracting condition, tinnitus isn't yet fully understood, but stress is one of the main aggravators. There are successful treatments to help you manage the condition. Several hearing aids now include a range of effective tinnitus relief features, and many people find a combination of cognitive behavioural therapy and sound enrichment therapy can help them manage their tinnitus. Again, reducing your stress levels is the best way to reduce stress-related tinnitus symptoms. ●

SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP

111 First - How to access same day services quickly and efficiently



In December 2020 the NHS launched a national programme changing the way the 111 service works. It is aimed to put patients in contact with the best service for their clinical needs. It also has a secondary aim to try and reduce over-crowding in A&E units and reduce unnecessary attendances. The service is available by phoning 111 or via the 111 website.

If a patient has chest pain, signs of a stroke, severe bleeding, fits that aren't stopping, or other conditions which need urgent emergency care then they should head straight to A&E or use the 999 services as normal. However, if patients have a medical need, but it does not require urgent care, then the new 111 service will listen to your problem, ask you relevant information and will then be able to refer you to the most applicable services for your urgent care needs. Patients can be booked into A&E, Minor Injury Units, First Aid Units, or be referred to a GP.

There is also a lot of medical information available on NHS Apps Library **(www.nhs.uk)** and on the Sonning Common Health Centre Website **(www.sonningcommonhealthcentre.co.uk)**.

Using the new and improved 111 service will help you to get the most relevant same day care for your condition and help to ease the number of people accessing A&E unnecessarily. ●

Dial 111 from a landline or mobile

Contact NHS 111 Online or use the NHS app

PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 27

Cryptic crossword

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

Sudoku

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

Cryptogram

"IF LIBERTY MEANS ANYTHING AT ALL, IT MEANS THE RIGHT TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT THEY DO NOT WANT TO HEAR." – GEORGE ORWELL

Decimalisation Day Quiz

1. 240
2. 3 shillings (15p)
3. wren (farthings (¼d) were legal tender up to 1961)
4. 12 (the same as the current £1 coin)
5. tanner
6. bob
7. florin
8. half crown
9. red-brown
10. 21/- or £1 1s (£1.05)

Church news

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

This time last year all places of worship were closed as we entered the first Coronavirus lockdown. Our plans for the Easter services had to be cancelled and Fr. Michael celebrated Mass alone behind closed doors. We did not have the technology to stream services to the local community but since then things have come a long way. We are as certain as we can be that a range of Easter services will take place this year. These will be subject to strict Covid regulations which means we will have to restrict our number to 40 and a booking system will be in place. This year all our Easter liturgies will be streamed on our YouTube channel. The liturgies themselves will be altered to both reduce the time people are together and to avoid physical contact, for example there will be no Washing of the Feet ceremony on Maundy Thursday. Please check our parish website for the times of services and the YouTube links.

The parish of St Michael's wish all readers a joyful and blessed Easter season.

Parish website:
www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk

SPRINGWATER CHURCH

We have continued very much as described in the last issue of this esteemed magazine.

Our Sunday services have been broadcast via our website and YouTube and have benefitted from the participation of many talented people, making them a very special experience.

Compassionate Loaf is continuing to bake at people's homes whilst meeting on line. A large proportion of their bread goes to the Food Bank which continues to be in great demand. Although the Food Bank is now housed at Christ The King Church please continue to leave any food donations at Springwater, I must thank the many people who give food plus the amazing volunteers and Jayne for taking on the management of this project.

All our other groups and activities are going strong albeit via Zoom but if you would like to have a chat with someone, or prayers for yourself or someone else, do please phone the church, if the office is closed leave your number and we will get back to you.

'The Spring Cafe' will be opening at Springwater soon, subject to the Covid, restrictions, it will be a warm and friendly place serving locally sourced food, good coffee, tea, juices and various other soft drinks, all at very attractive prices!

At the time of writing we are exploring the possibility of opening up for a service on Easter Sunday but we need to check the rules and see how people feel, so, as with updates on the café or anything else please have a look on our website or give the office a call.

HAPPY EASTER and may God bless you.

Chris Girdler

Church tel: 0118 972 4519
email: contactspringwater@gmail.com

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

One thing I've really missed during lockdown is charity shops.... that gift of rummaging, seeking the bargain, in the comforting knowledge that it's fine to make a mistake, as at least I haven't spent a fortune and the charity has benefitted.

Free to choose unwisely, free to put a foot wrong, free to fail! Freedom indeed: that's a heady freedom.

And that is surely a major part of the Christian faith - on two counts. First, we can accept with a degree of equanimity the fact that we will get it wrong, more or less often: in thought, word and deed, as our liturgy says. But we don't have to go on living with that sense of guilt, regret or failure because Jesus offers us not only forgiveness but often the inspiration and opportunity to redeem the situation and move on.

Out walking this morning, I passed a sign saying 'Danger: failed road' - and couldn't help feeling sorry for that poor little road, to be thus labelled and dismissed as a failure! Which brings me to the second blessing of faith: the knowledge that, although we may fail in certain respects, WE are NOT failures. We are simply people on a journey of growth, works in progress, learning as we go, from both good and bad experiences. It's not the falling down that matters, but the getting up again, getting up a wiser person and, by the grace of God, persevering to grow into all that God created us to be.

Sheila Walker

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Kingfisher Kindergarten (Pre School)	Back
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Mike Dockree Windows	14
Mike Farina Auto Services Ltd	Back
Milo Technical Support (Computer Problems)	35
Moores Painting, Decorating & more	8
Paul's Painting, Decorating and more	Back
Peppard Building Supplies	8
Pet Country Supplies	33
Petherwick Insurance Brokers (Barrs Insurance)	Back
Phil's Fitness	34
Pilates ABC	35
Property Maintenance	33
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Red Kite Electrical	9
Robin James Opticians	9
SB Massage Therapy Room	9
S J Hinton Carpenter & Joiner	35
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Sonning Common Pet Care	14
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Tandoori Connoisseur	35
The Diamond Fairy (Home Cleaning)	33
The Mobile Hairdresser	14
Time 4 Pilates	9
Tomalin and Son Funeral Directors	Back
TV Aerial Services	33
Village Barbers	32
Wainwrights Fencing & Outbuildings	26
Wee-Cot Seating	Back
Wood Lane Dentistry	2
Woozelbears (Canine Hydrotherapy)	26

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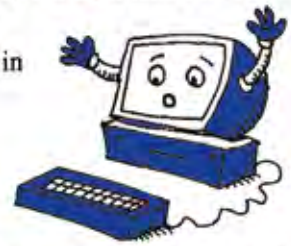

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