

# SC

# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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**NDP  
REFERENDUM**  
95% say YES  
P16



**20 MPH IS HERE  
TO STAY**  
20 is plenty  
P17



**FIND YOUR  
MEMORABILIA**  
Soldiers of  
Oxfordshire Museum  
P20



THE SOGO  
SPRING CLEAN  
2023  
PAGES 18-19

APR/MAY 2023

# What a great start to 2023!

With more people moving into our village. Here's just a selection of the properties we've sold and let agreed for our clients.



If you're thinking of selling or letting contact Davis Tate on 0118 972 4242 or email [sonningc@davistate.com](mailto:sonningc@davistate.com)



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## FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

The highlight of the month for me was the support of the residents in our community who voted for the Neighbourhood Plan review. The new plan will safeguard the policies that we feel are important to SC remaining a village. The exhibition on 17 February was attended by our granddaughters who had great fun putting out chairs and sticking Velcro on the back of the paperwork for display. The 10 year old produced a poster with the words Vote Now/help our village/help our community/respect/join in/help/love and kindness will change everything/looking for a better village. Fascinating that she had picked up the ethos. Is this how we would like to be perceived as a community?

The theme for this magazine is Anniversaries - The Women's Institute 10th and Richard Beville's 20th. There is considerable concern about the survival of the village pubs - and this is one where we could all help - it would be so sad to lose them. Excellent support from the village's children and parents/carers for So Co Spring clean provides a sense of pride about how the village looks, especially after the residue left by road works everywhere.

As ever there are a range of articles for your perusal. I hope you enjoy reading them? ●

Diana Pearman Editor

## MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



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



# MECE NEWS



**Early March brings us the names of new students who will be arriving at the school in September which is always exciting to see. This year I am very pleased to say that we look like we will be full (and a bit more!) for the upcoming academic year. This is wonderful news, and I am delighted about the progress we have made and our continued expansion. To grow in a contracting number of Year 6 students locally is even better and says a lot about how the perception of us, as a school, has changed so much in the last few years. If the new students are**

**anything like our wonderful Year 7 students from this year, then we can't wait to welcome these new families to our MECE family.**

We have had a busy few weeks including a visit from OFSTED. Thankfully, this wasn't as a result of a Monday morning phone call from an inspector for a formal inspection - I'm hoping we're safe for another four years from that pleasure following last year's 'Good'. This visit came on the back of that positive inspection with an inquiry from a senior inspector asking if we would be prepared to be a part of a research project into the effective provision of History in secondary schools. The inspector watched lessons, looked at books, spoke to our staff at length and quizzed a panel of pupils. On the back of this we received some very positive feedback regarding our 'delightful' students, 'our engaged classroom atmosphere', and 'our rigorous and well thought out curriculum'. It is reassuring to see our work being validated following such a thorough scrutiny.

Just before half-term we were also visited by a trust from Nottinghamshire who



have been working with Maiden Erlegh Trust on improving behaviour in their schools as part of the Behaviour Hubs initiative. The visitors were very impressed to see our smart students, engaged in lessons, with teachers teaching in tidy, calm classrooms. They were keen to hear our journey story and how we systematically ensure our students are ready for each and every day. As a secondary school in post pandemic Britain, of course we have some issues, but for the vast majority of our students I was pleased to hear that we compare very favourably.

In addition, we have sent a deputation of students to Parliament, competed and played in many fixtures, held a very successful ski trip to Austria (apart from many of the staff coming back with Covid!), hosted county cross country championships, had a large number of our students have their writing published in a young writers' anthology, and completed coursework and revision for the exams. All in all, another very busy, fulfilling and rewarding few weeks with its ups and down but with so many great steps forward for MECE. ●

## YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER COMPETITION

**We would love to see your photos!**

We are launching a competition for all the young photographers out there. Mobile phones now have great cameras built in and so hopefully most young people could borrow a parent's if they aren't old enough to have their own yet, and some might have a 'proper' camera, making it very easy to take great pictures.

The theme will be 'Spring' and we would love to see your favourite trees, plants, places, pets, events (Easter holidays/ Lambing/Coronation weekend), or days out. Hopefully the weather will be

improving and with longer days there will be plenty of time.....so send us your best shots.

**editor.sonningcommonmagazine@gmail.com**

There will be 3 categories of ages - Under 9, Under 12, Under 16

We are looking forward to seeing them all.

Closing date will be Monday 5 June and judging will be by the magazine Directors with the winner and runner up being published in the Tuesday 1st August magazine. ●



# SCPS NEWS



**It has been very busy at school over the last term. In January, after months of commitment and practice, the children took part in the national Young Voices event in Birmingham. It was a long day of travel, rehearsals and, finally, the performance which included singing with Heather Small from M People. A great, but tiring day.**

February saw the Kites (reception) children and staff working hard on their outdoor space. Following a request for supplies Peppard Building Supplies offered funds to spend in their shop., Kites staff returned to school with pipes, buckets and funnels to add to the water area, a variety of paintbrushes as well as tools, nails and screws for our new woodwork area. The school says a big THANK YOU to Peppard Building Supplies for their generosity. The children in reception learn much from their outdoor playing, while having fun at the same time! They have also enjoyed some

baking and learning about science - discovering which material is best for an umbrella!

Those in the older years have had many chances to dress up this term, having had an ancient Greek day making crafts, and World Book Day. The school had a whole book week culminating on Friday 3rd March when they could dress up as their favourite character from a book. Parents were encouraged to use clothes or costumes that they already had at home and to bring in the book to represent the character they were dressed as.

There were many wonderful costumes with a lot of wizards, Where's Wally, Dennis the Menace and even an astronaut turned up for school.....the teachers also joined in the fun with a couple of Miss Trunchballs from Matilda's 'Crunchem Hall Primary School' as guests!

There have also been inter house challenges, Safer Internet Day, celebrating Chinese New Year with a special lunch and lots of sports including cross country and football for the girls and boys teams. Cross country runs have been held at

Shiplake College and MECE and Year 1 have some very keen runners! The girls combined year 5/6 football team have played in two local tournaments against schools from the area. This is quite a new team who haven't played together for long and are very much enjoying the sport. The boys combined year 5/6 team have also played really well against teams from Goring, Didcot and Chilton. ●



# THANKS TO ALL WHO VOLUNTEER FOR FISH



FISH has been very busy taking our 'clients' to their appointments at hospitals in Reading and Oxford as well as to appointments at doctors' surgeries, chiropractors, physiotherapists and to many other clinical or community settings.

The FISH minibus is now back to its regular schedule of shopping journeys, social outings and leisure trips.

Both car and minibus drivers are always ready to engage with their passengers and provide these much appreciated services for both Sonning Common and the surrounding area. Our volunteer office team work hard in ensuring the transport needs of the local community are met and it is very rare that a journey request cannot be fulfilled.

Likewise, our befriending team have also been well occupied providing companionship, comfort and conversation to those who would otherwise be isolated at home.

To say a big thank you to all our dedicated helpers we arranged a volunteers get together and social in the village hall at the end of February. Accompanied by a light buffet, wine and soft drinks, we were able to express our gratitude for their invaluable contribution for the benefit of the community at large as well as providing the opportunity to refresh acquaintances, chat and compare notes

with each other. The event ran from 12.30 to 4.00pm and everyone was pleased to have had this opportunity to mingle.

**Please get in touch with us at the office or phone Richard on 07732 210969 if you would like to join us in this very worthwhile and rewarding cause. There are opportunities to help on either an occasional or regular basis, whichever suits your situation..**

**0118 972 3986 or office@fishvolunteercentre.org.uk**

In January this year, Mary, our office coordinator was invited to give a presentation at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School, to explain how the FISH Volunteer Centre operates for the benefit of the local community.

As part of their Social Studies course each of the school's Four Houses has chosen a charity to support. Abbey House has chosen FISH and wanted to know what they can do to help us. Mary explained about all the different things that FISH are involved with and mentioned that we would really appreciate some help with social media. Mary also suggested that they might like to help at some of our monthly Tea Parties (held for senior residents in the village hall every 2nd Monday of the month) or putting on some form of music entertainment.

In the past some of the pupils had helped

to serve teas and talk with our clients. This provided a very enjoyable opportunity for our seniors to make contact with a younger age group. The pupils also found the experience very worthwhile.

Mrs Shepard, the teacher leading Abbey House, is very encouraging and we hope to be able to develop this opportunity for pupils' involvement with FISH. ●

**RICHARD MCQUILLAN**  
Chair FISH



# PARKING WITHIN 15 METRES OF A ROAD JUNCTION IS ILLEGAL

Many residents are very concerned about the parking situation at road junctions especially at the access to Maple Close. Parking on the pavement is also a hazard in Lea Road, Elm Court, and Westleigh Drive. The latter causes great difficulties as it restricts access to wheelchair users and parents with prams. As one of our Parish Councillors used to say, pavements are for people not for cars.

The photo shown here was taken at the time of day when many cars will have been

used to travel to work and their return will make the area even more congested.

It is recognised that not enough parking space was built into this estate for the number of cars now existing. The last time this matter was raised in the magazine some inspired solutions were found by the residents who live in these roads. Let's hope it happens again!!

Any suggestions gratefully received. ●



# SAVE A LOCAL PERSON OR FAMILY FROM A WINTER CHILL



Spring 2023 could still be hard for an increasing number of Sonning Common residents.

We are all too aware of rising prices, watching our energy costs, and of costs increasing all around us. This will leave some people unable to meet all the expenses of running a home and caring for their family.

It's Heat or Eat for many even after

receiving the benefits they are entitled to.

People in 'fuel poverty' are those whose energy bills are greater than 10% of the net family income. There are sadly many local people who are in this situation.

We hope with your support some of this can be helped. A big thank you to all those Sonning Common Magazine readers who donated to last year's appeal. You made a difference. Can you help again?

Some people give part of their Government's Winter Fuel Payment to help others stay warm and any donation of any amount is very welcome. The process Henley Lions adopts is for Citizens Advice Henley to meet applicants for help from this fund and make sure they are getting the benefits and assistance they are entitled to. This is all completely confidential. Henley Lions then make a payment direct to the client's utility account.

To make a donation online via [www.henleylions.org.uk](http://www.henleylions.org.uk) - click on

"Donate" and identify your donation as "Winter Fuel Project". To get information on paying by cheque or bank transfer please email [donate@henleylions.org.uk](mailto:donate@henleylions.org.uk) or phone 0345 833 7387.

Please Gift Aid if you are a taxpayer.

If you are in need yourself or know of someone in need please encourage them to talk to Citizens Advice Henley or NOMAD in Henley who can offer help and guidance. Citizens Advice can also give assistance in managing debt.

Any donation, however small, can make a difference. Thank you for your support! ●

**For more information Contact: Joan Evans 0118 924 2967 or 07778 984984 communityservice@henleylions.org.uk**

**Editor's comment: The winter is not yet over but please check to see if you are eligible for help with a bill that you cannot pay.**

# NEW 2-BEDROOM HOUSES AT FARINA CLOSE

**Elegant Homes are delighted to announce the delivery of a new housing development off Sedgewell Road, Sonning Common. Known as Farina Close, after Mike Farina's old garage, the scheme will deliver four new houses in the heart of the village - a location that is a level, 300m walk to the Co-Op and central village facilities, via Woodlands Road.**

The former garage owner Gary Catt has now relocated to Kidby's Yard, off Kennylands Road, which enabled the redevelopment of his old garage into a site to deliver high-quality new homes. The cottage-style properties are perfect for people looking for village-centre living.

The three homes available for purchase are 850 square feet in size and have 2-bedrooms. Downstairs there is a living room, kitchen/diner and W/C cloakroom,

while upstairs has two double bedrooms with fitted wardrobes, family bathroom, en-suite and extra storage. All properties benefit from turfed rear gardens and two parking spaces.

The houses will also be incredibly thermally efficient, which will help to keep household energy costs low.

The development will be finished in June 2023 and a show home will be available to view at that point. One property has already sold off-plan, so please contact us to discuss purchasing options and avoid disappointment.

Please contact John Neville at Elegant Homes using the below details:

**Email: [john@eleganthomesreading.co.uk](mailto:john@eleganthomesreading.co.uk)**

**Phone: 07545 072482**

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## RICHARD BEVILLE CELEBRATES 20 YEARS AS AN ESTATE AGENT IN THE VILLAGE



Having worked for other agents Richard ventured out on his own in 2002 setting up Beville Estate Agency in the village. In 2015 Richard took on an apprentice, Marcus Witt, who is still with the company today, has become a fully trained agent and is now a very important part of the business.

It was a family affair from the beginning as Richard's wife Helen is a director and manages the accounts. They have had three sons, the eldest two having helped out between studies, and the youngest, Ben, is now working within the business whilst studying at Henley College.

Richard believes very strongly in the

community that is the village of Sonning Common. His children all attended the local primary and secondary schools and he's been proud and happy to support them, along with other clubs and charities including Rotherfield United FC, Caversham AFC, Fish and Greenshoots. They have also sponsored Sonning Common's largest event "OnYourBike" where Richard was a member of the founding committee back in 2007 - another family affair with many local families taking part in the fundraiser. Richard said 'whilst Sonning Common has expanded considerably over the last 20 years, what hasn't changed is the warm, welcoming people who are the heart of this really thriving community. Clients who have moved into the area have commented on exactly this, once settled in. We are now selling houses 2 or 3 times over the decades and seeing the children of clients now moving into their own homes.'

The Beville family are now into their 21st year of trading and looking forward to many more. ●

## WOMEN'S INSTITUTE 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF VILLAGE COFFEE MORNINGS

**theWI**  
INSPIRING WOMEN

Sonning Common WI has been hosting coffee mornings for a number of years and the event reached its 10th anniversary in March. From small beginnings these monthly events have become a regular feature on the village's social calendar, and the monies raised have benefited a number of local charities and other good causes over the years.

The 10th anniversary milestone was marked by an extra special coffee

morning which took place on the 1st March. Representatives from some of the charities were invited and had the opportunity to say a few words and highlight the good work they do.

Gill Hayward led the presentation and they were pleased to have Jackie Million attend who was the group's first president. A fabulous amount of £8500 has been raised over 10 years and given to local causes. Those in receipt recently include Launchpad Reading, Riverside Counselling, Greenshoots, Scouts/

Guides/Brownies, Springwater foodbank and Wyfold Riding for the Disabled. ●



Liza Foster

Foot Health Professional



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## HENLEY AND DISTRICT STAMP CLUB

The Henley stamp club is a friendly group and we would be delighted to see new visitors or members. If you are interested in fact concerning stamps or postal history, why not come along and find out how you can promote your interest.

To learn more about stamps and postal history why not visit us at Bix one Wednesday evening? You can then meet people who find postal history and the story of stamps fascinating too.

Wednesday 12th. April - The evening when members will display 'Cinderellas and Revenues'.

Wednesday 26th. April - We have a guest speaker, Chris Folland to give a talk about the 'Pigeon Post of New Zealand'.

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

Visitors and new members are very welcome.

Further details can be obtained by phoning Brian on 01491 681739 or on our website: -

[www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk](http://www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk)

## chance2dance4charity

5th May 2023  
19:30 - 21:30

Peppard War Memorial Hall, Gallowstree Rd,  
RG9 5JA Henley-on-Thames

Kick off the Coronation weekend in style at our third chance2dance4charity event!

A friendly, relaxed social evening for those who love dancing and hardly ever get the chance.

All kinds of music: Motown, soul, pop, rock, funk, reggae, and even a bit of ballroom.

With a fun short taster session by local dance teacher, Kayleigh Rixon @DanceFitFunwithKayleigh

Bring your own refreshments & recyclable cups - NO FOOD OR DRINK ON SALE

Tickets £7 on the door or online: <https://billetto.co.uk/e/chance2dance4charity-tickets-786602>

All proceeds split between Amnesty International UK Section [www.amnesty.org.uk](http://www.amnesty.org.uk)

(the largest human rights organisation in the world) and a local charity:

The Ways & Means Trust [www.waysandmeans.org.uk](http://www.waysandmeans.org.uk)

A Charity helping adults with learning or physical disabilities, or mental health. We provide social and practical skills for independent living, and training, education and work experience to assist adults working towards open employment.

## Sonning Common Health Walks

Spring is here, the bluebells are out, and the Health Walks provide a good opportunity to get out into the countryside to enjoy nature coming back to life. Meeting places for the start of the walks change at Easter: the up-to-date timetable is always available on the website at [www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable](http://www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable). To talk to someone about any aspect of the Health Walks phone Chris Brook on 0118 972 2609

Sonning Common theWI

## Invite you to COFFEE MORNINGS

Sonning Common Village Hall

WEDNESDAYS 5th APRIL  
and 3rd MAY

10.30 a.m. - 12 Noon

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## TASTER DAY Shiplake Village Bowls

SATURDAY 29 APRIL

Play bowls at Shiplake Village Bowls Club,  
Memorial Ave, Shiplake.

Come along between 10:30-16:30. Please wear  
flat soled shoes/trainers.

Equipment provided

All ages and abilities welcomed.

Tea and coffee available.

Any enquiries, please phone 07947664922.  
We look forward to seeing you.

Thanks in anticipation.

Graham Kennedy  
07979065608

## LIBRARY AUTHOR EVENING PRESENTS

# Sylvia Vetta

Oxfordshire Libraries

SYLVIA VETTA

AUTHOR TALK at  
Sonning Common  
Library

Seasoned with facts, stirred with love, sprinkled with insight, Sylvia Vetta's story as related in *The Food of Love* is of a life lived in the cauldron of change, for women, the working class and for people of colour....but with recipes!

Come and hear Sylvia talk about memoir in all its variety and why YOU should record your memories.

24th April 7.00pm at the Library  
Tickets £5 from the Library, including a glass of wine



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# Parish news

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## NDP REFERENDUM 95% SAID YES

**The marathon is over. After five years of work, of hopes raised and dashed, the verdict on our revised Neighbourhood Plan was announced by a returning officer in the Village Hall shortly after 11pm on 23 February. Almost 95% of those who voted backed the revision. The turnout was nearly 28%, which may not sound much but in the context of other referendums on other neighbourhood plans was actually pretty good.**

Some members of the working party who produced the document – of which I was the chairman – had been in the same place on a night in September 2016 for the result of the vote on the original plan. On that occasion we drank champagne – or at least fizz – to celebrate what was a tremendous result for us and the village.

This time there were no bubbles, no triumphant smiles. The emotion was one of relief rather than triumph. It was done – no more meetings, no more poring over drafts of all the documents that go towards making a neighbourhood plan, no more raging over corrections demanded by SODC or the examiner, no more public meetings and exhibitions to try to explain

to a sceptical public why all this was worthwhile, no more banging posters into the ground at various strategic spots to urge people to turn out and vote.

Was it worth all the grief and effort? Only time will tell. What we have is a document that HAS to be taken into account when the district council deals with future planning applications. The settlement boundary written into the plan will be – or should be – a potent weapon in resisting future efforts to build houses outside the current shape of the village. We now have environment policies that are in tune with the needs of the time and they cannot just be ignored by developers. We have protection for the big field between Bishopswood sports ground and Woodlands Road, Old Copse Field.

There are many good things in the plan and the fact that it is bang up to date gives it the maximum possible weight – which should, if new government plans are put into action – last for five years instead of two years, as at present. So, yes, on balance I would say that I'm glad we did it, and glad that I was involved.

But would I go through all that again? Absolutely not. ●

TOM FORT

## YOUTH CLUB

We have lots planned over the next few months like Mothers Day gifts and cards, Easter hunt, baking, crafts and lots more. We also have a 12 week course of Multi sports coaching starting on the Wednesday 8 March. The funding for this was secured by Active Leaders to provide 2 hours of coaching. This is being provided on Wednesdays by Performance Sports of Caversham. We have also facilitated the on-going cost of hiring the sports hall at MECE for the Reading Rockets basketball hub club which meets on Fridays and is hugely popular.

Summer time is just the best time for fun at youth club, so come along on a Wednesday or Thursday evening 6.30pm-8.30pm. ●

SUNNY SMITHERS  
Youth Club leader



## SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE AND VALE OF WHITE HORSE POLL CLERK RECRUITMENT MESSAGES

Play your part in the local elections

**Would you like to earn money, meet lots of people and play a key role in our local democracy?**

South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils are looking for people to work as poll clerks at the local elections on Thursday 4 May. If you sign up, you'll receive £168 for the day, working from 6am until the finish around 10.30pm.

If you or someone you know is interested, please get in touch as soon as possible by emailing: [electionstaff@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:electionstaff@southandvale.gov.uk).

For more information, visit: [whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs](http://whitehorsedc.gov.uk/electionjobs) or [southoxon.gov.uk/electionjobs](http://southoxon.gov.uk/electionjobs). Please note, the councils cannot offer these roles to people that work for or are connected with a political party. ●

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

BECOME A PARISH COUNCILLOR

Sonning Common Parish Council needs new Councillors

More information is available from the Parish Clerk

0118 972 3616 [clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.gov.uk)

# BAH! HUMBUG! 20MPH... WHAT'S IT FOR? WHO NEEDS IT?



Driving the length of Kennylands road (1 mile) from end to end at 20 mph would take you 3 minutes.

IF you could do it at 30 mph - unlikely with the parked cars and oncoming traffic to contend with - it would take you 2 minutes.

That's only 1 minute quicker IF there's nothing in the way.

Dodging traffic could mean we'd save

only 30 to 45 seconds.

But why should we be limited to 20 mph?

Apparently, a pedestrian struck by a car at 20 mph is **FIVE TIMES more likely to survive** than if struck at 30 mph.

Fortunately we're all careful drivers. We don't run into pedestrians. Only other people do that.

Maybe that's not the point – Suppose a child ran out from behind a parked car, or I was briefly distracted by “playing” with my satnav, or other dashboard “toy”, the worst just might happen – to me, to you, to that child, their granny, your dad, ...

**Should we (perfect drivers) weigh up whether a child's life is worth more than 30 seconds of our journey time?**

An eight year study in Bristol showed that introducing 20mph speed limits reduced fatalities by around 63% city-wide.

Independent studies show that most residents and drivers support 20mph schemes.

In Sonning Common we had the chance to contribute to the recent consultation.

20mph zones bring road safety benefits, improve air quality, reduce noise pollution and encourage more physical activity, such as walking and cycling, by contributing towards a safer environment. The money spent on the schemes can also greatly improve the residential area.

**Like it or not, we can now lose our licence for exceeding 20mph around our village.** ●

D'S ADVOCATE.  
(AKA Paul W)

Sources include;  
[roadwise.co.uk](http://roadwise.co.uk)  
[injuryprevention.bmj.com](http://injuryprevention.bmj.com)  
[www.gov.wales](http://www.gov.wales)  
[www.rospa.com](http://www.rospa.com)

## 20 MPH COMES INTO FORCE WITH NEW SIGNS

On Monday 13 February 2023, following new signs being erected around Sonning Common, the Village wide 20mph scheme became officially legal.

Clr Andrew Gant, Cabinet member for Highways at Oxfordshire CC, visited the village to see the new scheme in place and was welcomed by Parish Clr Jonny Bidgood.

Clr Jonny Bidgood said “I'm very pleased to see the signs going up and that the scheme is now up and running. This will make it safer for walking and cycling in the village and will help with our cycleway project. I would like to

thank Clr Gant very much for taking the time to come and see our village”

Clr Gant said “This is a policy I'm really proud of and I'm thrilled it's being rolled out. It has been very popular and a large number of communities have adopted it.

The purpose is to improve safety for children going to school and for parents to feel more confident to let their children walk and cycle round villages, to reduce noise pollution and to create better and safer places to be”.

“It is also a really good example of partnership working - this project requires active involvement of parish and town councils.” ●

CLLR JONNY BIDGOOD



# THE SOCO SPRING CLEAN 2023



The Great British Spring Clean is the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign. This year, Keep Britain Tidy is focusing on the pride that volunteer #LitterHeroes have for their local community, and as volunteers streamed through the doors of the village hall at 10am on Sunday 5 March to join the SoCo Spring Clean, we felt very proud indeed to be part of this brilliant community.

Over 80 volunteers braved the chilly weather to join our event, now in its 5th year and included returning pickers and many new faces of all ages. We even welcomed some four-legged friends too.

Our team had a couple of new recruits this year, a special mention for Elsie Davis who helped set up the village hall and expertly organised all the equipment for our volunteers. Also Stanley Lawrence, who is litter picking

for his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. He was the first volunteer up and out early, to help put our signage up around the village. His efforts were richly rewarded with one of the most lucrative finds of the day, a £10 note found stuck in a hedgerow!

We obviously love litter picking but one of our favourite parts of the SoCo Spring Clean is after the pick, when everyone returns to the village hall with tales of the weirdest and most unusual items found. The buzz in the hall as everyone catches up over a cuppa is always a lovely moment and it's thanks to the Sonning Common WI team who help make that happen. We'd therefore like to give a very special thank you to Sue Frayling-Cork, Marion Baylis, Rose Prinn and Lesley Davis who helped us this year. Not only did they donate home-baked goodies and prepared a table of treats for our volunteers, they served much needed mugs of hot tea and coffee, washed up and even swept the hall!

Sonning Common already benefits from

the services of litter picker Tony Parisi and facilities manager Tony Goodchild has been kept busy offering extra support to the village. The purpose of our annual pick is to target hotspots and reach areas of the village that are not serviced regularly including; Peppard Road, Blounts Court Road, The Old Copse, Kennylands Road, Blackmore Lane and more.

Our volunteer pickers generally reported that levels of litter in the village seemed good and we know that there are many volunteers, friends and neighbours who already regularly pick all year round in the village. Thanks to everyone's efforts Sonning Common continues to be somewhere we can all feel very proud of.

The next SoCo Spring Clean will take place on Sunday 3rd March 2024. Please like, share and follow us on Facebook @ [soco.springclean](#) and if you'd like to get involved in any way, please express your interest by emailing [soco.springclean@gmail.com](mailto:soco.springclean@gmail.com)

#BigBagChallenge #LitterHeroes @ [soco.springclean](#)

We'd like to thank the following people who helped support The SoCo Spring Clean 2023

**The Co-op Food Sonning Common** - for donating refreshments

**WI** - for running the kitchen

**Sonning Common Primary School** - for loan of their litter pickers

**Suzanne Hopes at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge** - for loan of their litter pickers

**Team Leaders:** Geoff Davis, Tony Goodchild, Emma Stone, Alex Lawrence, Leigh Rawlins, Rachel Barker and Gillian Last

Special mentions to Leigh for the use of his trailer and for collecting bags around the village.

**South Oxfordshire District Council** supplied bags, pickers and high-viz jackets

**Biffa** put on a special collection to deliver the kit and pick up all the rubbish we collected.

**Davis Tate** - for our signage and kids hi-vis

**Peppard Building Supplies** - for helping us purchase equipment over the years.

**EMMA LAWRENCE**



# SOLDIERS OF OXFORDSHIRE MUSEUM

THEIR FINEST HOUR COLLECTIONS DAY AT SOLDIERS OF OXFORDSHIRE MUSEUM  
AIMS TO PRESERVE SECOND WORLD WAR MEMORIES



Soldiers of  
Oxfordshire  
Museum



and exhibitions on the day. Visitors will be able to enjoy displays from 1940s living historians inside the museum, a recently installed replica Anderson Shelter, as well as a number of exhibitions.

Attending Living history groups will include Winstan (Churchill), Doing Their Bit (Home Front), Oxfordshire Home Guard and Ham & Jam (Second World War British Airborne troops).

Collector John Noott's expansive exhibition, The Art of World War II, will showcase a diverse range of perspectives of the era all produced during the conflict, while the Aces High gallery will have a range of impressive prints - including many signed by veterans - up for sale.

Visitors can talk to museum staff on the day about donating items to the museum's own collection if they wish, but the focus will be on digitisation - photographing objects, recording stories and scanning documents - so original items can remain with their families.



Dr Stuart Lee, Their Finest Hour project leader, said, "We know from previous projects that people have so many wonderful objects, photos, and anecdotes

which have been passed down from family members which are at risk of getting lost or being forgotten. Our aim is to empower local communities to digitally preserve these stories and objects before they are lost to posterity."

The project team is especially interested in collecting contributions from people from underrepresented backgrounds in order to increase the diversity of people benefiting from Second World War heritage.

With often limited parking in Woodstock, Blenheim Palace will also be kindly supporting this event, offering free parking to those attending to share their stories. The museum is just a short walk into town through the palace's Woodstock Town gate. ●



## About Their Finest Hour

For more information about the project, please visit the website. You can also follow the project's progress on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

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

## About the Soldiers of Oxfordshire

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum, Park Street, Woodstock, OX20 1SN  
Registered Charity No. 1145408

[www.sofo.org.uk](http://www.sofo.org.uk)

[frontofhouse@sofo.org.uk](mailto:frontofhouse@sofo.org.uk)

01993 810 210

SOFO Museum first opened during the summer of 2014, tucked away in the beautiful garden in the grounds of The Oxfordshire Museum and Woodstock Library, and just on the doorstep of Blenheim Palace.

More than a local military museum, SOFO is a museum that everyone can enjoy, from kids to parents and grandparents. We tell stories of how conflict has affected the county and its people, from soldiers serving on the front lines to ordinary people living on the Home Front.

As well as a range of ever-changing displays and events, our permanent exhibits explore topics that you'll find surprising and moving in equal measure, such as raw accounts of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen from both camp survivors and Oxfordshire soldiers.

Battles of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry puts you on-board a Horsa Glider as it prepares to land in Normandy in the early hours of D-Day 1944, while Secret War explores the world of spies and espionage and lets you try your hand at sending and decoding secret messages.

SOFO holds a collection of over 3,500 objects and 7,500 archive items from two county regiments, the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars (QOOH) and the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. These are our starting point for reflecting on the county's rich and diverse military heritage. ●

• Share your family's Second World War stories and objects to be digitized for an online archive

• Opening from 11am - 3pm, Saturday 1st April 2023

• Museum Open Day - free admission to the museum throughout the day

• See Second World War living history displays, kit displays, and art exhibitions in the museum galleries

The event is part of a nationwide campaign organised by Their Finest Hour, a team based at the University of Oxford and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, which is collecting and preserving the everyday stories and objects of the Second World War.

As these stories are fast fading from living memory, it is vital that they - and the wartime objects that often accompany them - are preserved for future generations.

At the Digital Collection Day, stories about your family's wartime experience - and associated objects such as diaries, letters, medals, journals and ration books - will be recorded, digitised, and then uploaded to the Their Finest Hour online archive, which will be free-to-use and launch in June 2024.

To encourage even more people to drop in and share their stories, the SOFO Museum will waive its normal admission fee on the day - **entry will be free to all on 1st April.**

SOFO will also be hosting a range of other Second World War-themed events



THEIR FINEST HOUR  
Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

## SHARE YOUR STORY!

SECOND WORLD WAR DIGITAL COLLECTIONS DAY

SATURDAY 1ST APRIL 2023  
11AM - 3PM

JOIN US at SOFO Museum to share your Second World War stories, photos and items - we'll record your stories and photograph your objects to add to the Their Finest Hour online archive.

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SECOND WORLD WAR EXPERIENCES

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ONLINE ARCHIVE AT  
THEIRFINESTHOUR.ORG

# WORLD BOOK DAY SURVEY 2023

About 10 years ago we did a survey around World Book Day, asking adults what books they liked when they were children, and we thought it would be a good idea to do the same thing again to see if the favourites had changed. Children tend to say that the book which they have read most recently is their favourite, but asking adults what their favourite books were when young makes them really stop and think! Some were able to answer immediately, and others had to go away and think about it.

Several people mentioned 'Heidi', 'Black Beauty', 'The Secret Garden', 'Biggles', 'Swallows and Amazons', 'Little Women', Noel Streatfeild books and the Narnia series, but 'Rita the Weekend Rat' by Sonia Levithin was a new one for me, as was 'The Littlest Guide' by C R Mansell, and if you have a copy of 'Pippin in Giantland' look after it carefully as it is worth quite a lot!

Picture books were also mentioned: 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar', 'Topsy and Tim', 'Mr Men', 'Dear Zoo' and 'Thomas the Tank Engine', and for slightly older children: 'Milly Molly Mandy', Ladybird books retelling traditional tales, Beatrix Potter and A A Milne.

Some preferred books with attractive or unusual artwork: 'The Patchwork Cat', the Charlie and Lola series, Raymond Briggs' 'Snowman' and 'Fungus the Bogeyman', the Maisy series and Jane Hissey's 'Old Bear'. Some people said they preferred comics: The Dandy, Beano and Hotspur. Only one person mentioned a book with a close connection to a TV programme of the time: 'Twizzle' by Roberta Leigh.

A few people put down one definite author and title, or author and series: 'Goodnight Mr Tom' by Michelle Magorian, 'The Animals of Farthing Wood' by Colin Dann, 'Kes' by Barry Hines, 'Redshank's Warning' by Malcolm Saville, 'The Wasp Factory' by Iain Banks, R L Stine's 'Goosebumps' series, Agatha Christie books, Nancy Drew by Carolyn Keen and the Hardy Boys by Franklin W Dixon. Only one lady said she preferred non-fiction: books about trees, animals and flowers.

I think only one non-British person replied, and he mentioned 'All Quiet on the Western Front', and the 'Winnetou' series by Karl May, which he read in German.

Interestingly Roald Dahl, Jacqueline Wilson and J K Rowling only got one mention each - presumably by younger adults?

And the most mentioned author of all? Exactly the same as 10 years ago: Enid Blyton. We had interesting discussions about whether the Famous Five were better than the Secret Seven, or whether the Mystery or Adventure series were more exciting. And surely 'Malory Towers' was the boarding school of choice before Hogwarts? But what about 'The Faraway Tree' or the 'Wishing Chair'? 'Chimney Corner' stories or 'Round the Clock' stories? 'The Children of Cherry Tree Farm' and 'The Family at Red-Roofs'? Even though teachers of the time were very disapproving of her, so very many children acquired their love of reading from Enid Blyton that she really can't be all bad.

And my favourite? Probably 'Shadow the Sheepdog' - by Enid Blyton.....! ●

**Rosemary Dunstan**

## THE LIBRARY IN APRIL AND MAY



The regular events - rhymetimes, storytimes, gadget sessions and social mornings - will continue as normal, but there are quite a few public holidays in April and May which will affect our regular events because the library will be closed. These are what I expect the changed hours to be:

### EASTER

**Friday 7 April (Good Friday)**  
CLOSED

**Saturday 8 April**  
OPEN

**Monday 10 April**  
CLOSED

### MAY DAY WEEKEND

**Saturday 29 April**  
OPEN

**Monday 1st May**  
CLOSED

### CORONATION WEEKEND

**Saturday 6 May**  
CLOSED

**Monday 8 May**  
CLOSED

### LATE SPRING HOLIDAY

**Saturday 27 May**  
OPEN

**Monday 29 May**  
CLOSED

## Author Event

On Monday 24 April we have Sylvia Vetta, an Oxfordshire-based author, giving a talk called 'The Food of Love', which is about writing memoirs, and why we should write our own. Doors will open beforehand at 7pm for a 7.30pm start, and tickets will be £5.00, to include a glass of wine. ●

# FREE EBOOKS, AUDIO BOOKS, ENEWSPAPERS AND EMAGAZINES



The library is not only your gateway to a host of physical books, it also holds the key to unlocking free access to literally thousands of electronic books, newspapers, magazines and audio books.

Anyone in the UK can join Oxfordshire libraries and borrow books for free whether they are hardback, paperback, electronic or audio downloads (although there is a charge for books on CD). Visit your local library (Sonning Common's is in Grove Road), take ID with you and say you'd like to become a member. Once you've joined, you'll be given a library card with your membership number and a PIN code to enable you to login online. If you already have a library card but have lost your PIN, you will need to visit the library to get a new one. To keep your account active you will need to borrow just one book a year.

Armed with your membership number and PIN you are ready to access the

vaults of online publications - old and new! There are three main apps which can be downloaded via your usual app store onto either Android or Apple devices. Unfortunately, Amazon Fire tablets are not compatible as they do not like you downloading free content. The apps are: Libby, BorrowBox and PressReader. You can choose to download any or all of these.

PressReader, perhaps unsurprisingly, contains newspapers and magazines. These can be downloaded to read when you are offline. Search for something new to read by title, language or country of origin. Alternatively, take the lazy route and read the recommended publication. Today there are 2,631 choices in English alone. If English isn't your first language, or you want to swot up on a second language, you'll be pleased to know that publications are available in over 60 of them. I don't know about you, I'm not sure I can even name that many! A great feature

of PressReader is the ability to set a publication to automatically download new issues when they come out. You can even choose whether to have the supplements or not. It really is an easy app to use, so why not give it a go?

Libby and BorrowBox are similar to each other in that they both contain ebooks and audio books. However, their layout is different and the books available are not all the same. Personally, I find Libby easier to use. You can search by genre, title or author, filter to narrow down your results, and sort them in various orders. You can choose whether to see all titles or just those currently available. There is the option to place on hold a title that is currently on loan to another user. With more than 34,000 titles, on 141 different subjects on Libby alone, chances are you'll find something to enjoy.

Don't be afraid to play around with the searches, filters and downloads in all of these apps as you won't be charged. You even have the opportunity to listen to samples of audiobooks before downloading so you can decide whether you like the narrator's voice.

Once you're a library member, all three of these apps are free as are their contents. Next time you have a spare 5 minutes, download them to see for yourself how much is on offer.

If you are unsure of anything about this process you can, of course, ask at the library. ●

**Alison Smith**  
FoSCL

# WE HAVE TO USE THEM OR LOSE THEM – OUR LOCAL PUBS NEED OUR SUPPORT

By **JOAN GRUMMANT**



rise in energy bills had the additional task of attracting back regulars who had got out of the habit of calling in. Steve thought the business was just about breaking even now, but the situation is dependent on local support. He has many plans to develop the pub after its refurbishment

The hospitality industry has suffered a huge decline over the last few years and in many cases small businesses are struggling to make ends meet. The Covid crisis started the decline, and the recent cost of living crisis has meant that everyone has felt the impact of huge energy bills and the soaring cost of food and goods. Small businesses are the bedrock of our national economy, and our pubs are often central to village life. They provide a community focus and meeting point for us all.

After visiting and speaking to the landlords of our local pubs a very clear message emerged. Small community pubs like ours in Sonning Common are struggling to make a viable living and that no amount of hard work will change this, because they need paying customers to enable survival.

The new landlord of the Bird in Hand took over a pub that had been empty for ten months and Steve and Tracey Daley, as well as dealing with the huge



but also needs an improvement in the national economy to help things move forward.

Michael and Clare have been landlords at the Hare and Hounds pub for eight years and it is very much a community pub that has also felt the impact of rising bills, food shortages and the problem of customers with much less disposable income not choosing to visit their local. Trade is very up and down with quiet days and well supported large events. When VAT is levied at 20% on hospitality it makes the option of drinking at home much more attractive when money is really tight. Michael and Clare have had to cut

down on their charity work and find that making ends meet is a constant priority. A refurbished and welcoming village pub with a beautiful garden is a great asset to the community and it can be noted that it is only when they are forced to close that they are truly missed. A representative from Brakespear Brewery made the point that if every person in the village bought one drink a month it would be a huge step forward.

Our third pub, The Butchers Arms, will be reopening shortly after the



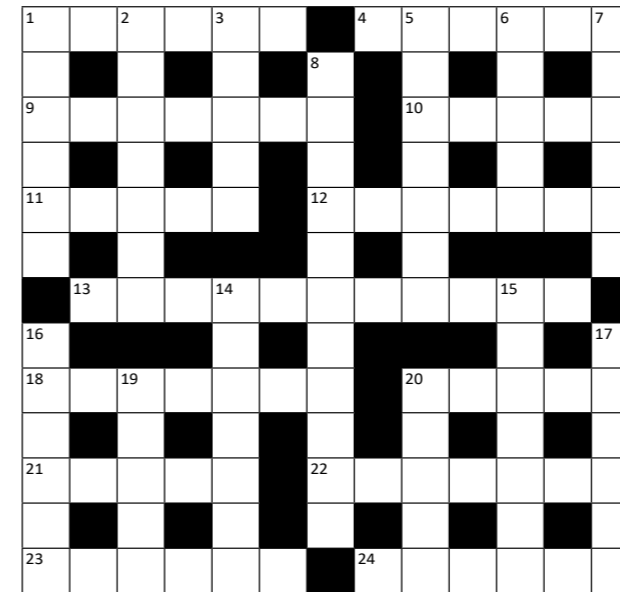
last tenant's retirement. It takes a lot of optimism to embark on starting a new business in the present economic climate and the reopening will be welcomed by many.

We wish all these community assets the very best and hope that we too can all do our bit to support their trade and we do not lose them. To visit these friendly and lively establishments should hopefully make us all feel a bit better when times are tough and a good community spirit is strong. ●

# PUZZLE PAGE

By **DAVID DUNSTAN**

## Cryptic crossword



### ACROSS

1. Posh bachelor in Scandinavian river (6)
4. Diana rioted carelessly (6)
9. Portugal, a country – an old country (7)
10. British rely awkwardly on precious stone (5)
11. Turn shows unusual wit – right and left (5)
12. Defenders in dark periods for the audience (7)
13. He gets into untidy berth with remote member at a village attraction (3,4,4)
18. Red wine in Appalachian tipple (7)
20. Stretch, we hear, can be found at 13 (5)
21. Prototype for fashion label initially (5)
22. Bill found on trees in spring? (7)
23. Hairy – like the animal in the yarn? (6)
24. Enemy destroyed around unknown biological catalyst (6)

### DOWN

1. Record in tax for representative (6)
2. Feed bewildered US rhino (7)
3. John Cleese character can be found at 13 (5)
5. Remove underpants and question after event? (7)
6. Set fire to neck-ring with hydrogen (5)
7. Chutney for fifty in shire in a pickle (6)
8. Beavers kill madly in road in village (11)
14. Deer takes a lap which talking may remove from animal (7)
15. Payment for a princess (7)
16. Scallywags pitch tents on boat (7)
17. Recent disorder in the heart (6)
19. State in Mandarin dialect (5)
20. Locomotive – or coach (5)

## Sudoku

Grading: easy-medium

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

## Cryptogram

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

POBBOT ER I SEDDOT AN FOTPR HFOTO  
WALO ER BFID I NIBBODOS AV IDS FIBTOS  
HEBF EB. – XTALOTPR 15:17 ORL

## Quiz: Rivers in England

1. Which river, at 220 miles long, is the longest river in Great Britain?
2. Which river joins the Thames at Reading?
3. Which river joins the Thames at Wargrave?
4. Which river flows through Buckingham, Bedford and Ely, and into the Wash at King's Lynn?
5. Which river rises in Staffordshire and flows into the Humber Estuary?
6. Which river flows into the North Sea at South Shields?
7. Which river starts in Stockport, forms part of the Manchester Ship Canal, and flows into the Irish Sea?
8. Which river forms part of the border between England and Wales and flows through Hereford?
9. Which river forms the border between Cornwall and Devon?
10. Which river flows through the Peak District in Derbyshire and joins the River Trent south of Derby?

# TOM FORT MEG

It's a long time since I reported in this magazine on the antics of our small and exceptionally annoying dog, Meg, and I thought this might be the time to repair the omission.



Some things have not changed. She still hates the postman - long-suffering Andy knows all about her - and still takes a

fiendish delight in chewing up the mail if she gets the chance.

She still goes demented when anyone she doesn't know intimately

comes near the house - ask the editor of the magazine. She still hurtles around the garden yapping furiously to let any potential enemies know that she's around.

But there have been gradual behavioural changes which have made her less of a public menace than she used to be. She now tolerates almost all other dogs, unless they really bother her. Poignantly she actually tries to make friends with some of them - when she spots a dog she approves of, she tends to squeak and quiver and bounce up and down on her paws.

Unfortunately for her, her reputation among other owners is not high and they tend to avoid her. But there are a few tolerant dog lovers who are happy to let their animals have a game with Meg

and I confess it is quite sweet to see her dashing around and play fighting.

My wife and our two girls adore her. My own feelings are very much more lukewarm. But I do know that having to walk her is good for me, and there are occasions when I find her company really quite pleasurable. And others when I would cheerfully... well, I'd better not say. ●



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## CITIZENS ADVICE RECOMMENDS INTERNET-BASED FINANCIAL CALCULATORS



As you read these paragraphs, multitudes of people in this country are taking stock of their financial positions and finding plenty of reasons for feeling glum. The near future looks bleak with higher and higher food bills, galloping gas and electricity charges, zooming mortgages. But worse comes if we give way to our mood and allow reasonable concerns to be clouded in uncontrollable fears, so it is important to be calm and objective about our situations. In this respect the "calculator" tool is a big help: it tells us very simply what our financial position is, giving an objective diagnosis, without judging us.

The second is an energy calculator on the Citizens Advice website which will tell you the cost of using various electrical appliances. For this calculator you need to have some data ready - for instance, how much energy you are consuming and the unit price you pay. Visit <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk> and search "consumer energy".

Another calculator that you might be interested in is one that gives you your own personal inflation rate - i.e. the effect of inflation on your own

spending. This gives you an objective percentage figure which you can use to establish whether your bank balance is going to hover above or below zero. The calculator is on the Office for National Statistics website at <https://www.ons.gov.uk>

Whatever your problem is, volunteers at Citizens Advice are available to help. Call Adviceline on 0808 278 7907. There is much more information on <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk> ●

Citizens Advice recommends two calculators in particular. The first is a benefits calculator on the trusted Turn2us website. You might not have thought your finances were so bad that you needed to claim, but you could be eligible to receive benefits and you only need to answer a few simple questions. Go to <https://benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk> and find out.



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# SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE



## Staff Changes

A Long service member of our administration team, Helen, has retired after nearly 15 years. She will really be missed. Hayley, our new administration lead, was able to have a three week hand-over period and is settling in well.

Jan, one of our reception members has also retired. We have recently welcomed Anne and have also recruited Carol, to help with the demands of reception.

A new nursing member, Annabel, joined the practice on 1st March with a wide range of nursing skills to help the clinical team.

We recently received an email from one of our patients who brought to our attention that our bike rack was blocked. It was highlighted because our patient didn't feel we were encouraging our community to have a healthy lifestyle with low impact exercise. As a result, not only is the bike rack now accessible, we will be purchasing an additional bike rack to encourage an active, healthy lifestyle.

## Hay fever Season

The hay fever season of 2023 has already started, according to Weeronline. Due to the mild weather at the end of December and the very mild turn of the New Year, the first alder and hazel trees and shrubs had already bloomed by 5 January 2023

### What is hay fever?

Hay fever is a common allergic reaction which occurs at particular times of the year. It is known as seasonal rhinitis, sharing symptoms with perennial (year round) allergic rhinitis, but occurring as a reaction to pollen from grass, trees and weeds during the early spring and summer months. It can affect both adults and children.

Hay fever is usually worse between late March and September, especially when it's warm, humid and windy. This is when the pollen count is at its highest.

### Antihistamines

Antihistamines are medicines often used to relieve symptoms of allergies, such as hay fever, urticaria, conjunctivitis and reactions to insect bites or stings.

### Ask a pharmacist for advice.

### Top tips for reducing tree pollen exposure

- Check pollen forecasts daily and stay indoors wherever possible when the tree pollen count is high. Hay fever symptoms usually appear when the pollen count exceeds 50. Rain washes pollen from the air so counts should be lower on cooler, wet days.
- Keep car windows closed and the air intake on 'recirculate' when driving.
- Keep windows closed when indoors.
- Avoid drying clothes/ linen outside when pollen counts are high.
- On high pollen days, shower and wash your hair and change your clothing, especially before going to bed.

- Wipe pets' coats with a damp cloth to remove pollens when they have been outside.
- Wear a mask, wraparound sunglasses and a hat with a large peak or brim when outdoors to keep pollen allergens out of your eyes, face and hair. Wearing a face mask has been shown to reduce symptoms of hay fever, by reducing the amount of pollen inhaled, as well as creating a warm humid environment to breathe in which reduces the reactivity of the nose.

### Birch trees

Birch trees produce pollen via yellow catkins that hang down from the branches, like other tree pollens, the pollen grains are incredibly small and fine and pollinated by travelling on the wind. Tree pollen can be carried long distances by the wind or even a light breeze, so that there is no need to be in direct contact with birch trees to experience symptoms.

Birch pollen season usually peaks in spring, between April and May, however Birch pollen can cross-react with hazel and alder pollen, so that some tree-pollen sufferers can experience symptoms starting in winter and lasting until late May or early June. While some people with hay fever react to one type of pollen during the 'season', and then feel better later in the year, it is also possible to be affected by more than one type of pollen or airborne allergen, leading to many months of allergic rhinitis symptoms, for example some people have both tree pollen and grass pollen allergy and will experience symptoms for most of the spring and summer.

### Birch pollen and gardening

Birch trees have become very popular trees to plant in the street or the garden in the UK. However, birch tree pollen is highly allergenic, and it is advisable to avoid planting birch trees near homes



or in school grounds where the pollens can sensitise susceptible people leading to worsening symptoms of allergy including hay fever and asthma.

### What will climate change do to pollen patterns in the UK?

It's likely a changing climate will impact pollen patterns in at least three ways:

1. A changing climate will mean that changes in temperature and rainfall may lengthen the UK pollen season and potentially make pollen concentrations higher.
2. It's possible that climate change will lead to changes in the potency of pollen - a single pollen particle can have varying amounts of the allergy-causing agent on it.
3. The UK is also facing a threat from changes in the geographical distribution of allergenic plants, due to climate change, with invasive species such as ambrosia (common ragweed) being on the watch list. A single ragweed plant can produce a billion grains of pollen per season and its pollen causes strong allergic reactions. ●

Sue Litchfield for SCHC

## Pollen calendar

The timing and severity of pollen seasons differ across the UK from south to north and east to west. This pollen calendar shows the general timing that the main allergenic plants are in flower.

Pollen season: PEAK

Plant type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Tree	Alder								
	Hazel								
	Yew								
	Elm								
	Willow								
	Poplar								
	Birch								
	Ash								
	Plane								
	Oak								
	Pine								
Weed	Lime								
	Grass								
	Oil seed rape								
	Plantain								
	Nettle								
	Dock								

Information sourced from University of Worcester www.worcester.ac.uk

**AllergyUK** 1991-2021  
Thirty years of supporting people living with allergy

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# Church news

## ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND CHRIST THE KING

As we move into April, the forty days and nights of Lent come to an end and we anticipate the joy of Easter Day. Palm Sunday, the last Sunday of Lent and the start of Holy Week, is the celebration of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and this year falls on Sunday 2nd April. There will be services across the Parish with palm crosses (9.30am at Christ the King and 11.15am at St John the Baptist). On Maundy Thursday, 6th April, in commemoration of the Last Supper, there will be a service at St John's at 7.30pm. The ecumenical Good Friday Walk of Witness starts at Christ the King, Sedgewell Road, at 10.00am on Friday 7th April. Join us for this walk around the village, with hymns and readings, followed by tea/coffee and hot cross buns. All welcome!

Across the benefice, we are joyfully anticipating the imminent arrival of our Associate Priest, Revd Sarah van der Watt, and her family, so arrangements for the Good Friday Devotional service and Easter Sunday services have yet to be finalised at the time of writing. These are likely to follow the usual pattern: 2.00pm at St John's on Good Friday, 7th April; 9.30am at Christ the King on Easter Sunday (9th April) and 11.15am at St John's on Easter Sunday. However, please do check [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com) to confirm, or visit either of the churches, or contact Revd James Stickings (07522 042735) or Karen Broadbent (07837 151196).

Wishing you all a blessed and happy Easter.

## SPRINGWATER

Oh what joy, spring is upon us, a wonderful time of year to thank God

for the beauty of creation and renewal.

I know many people are struggling in the present economic circumstances but at least the worst of the cold weather is over and we are not so reliant on the utilities to keep warm.

So, apart from all the usual goings on at Springwater: Compassionate Loaf, Aspire woman's group, the Ark mother and toddler group, the foodbank, The Steering Wheel Fellowship and the home groups etc., we have some special events coming up.

Springwater will be one of the venues on the Henley Arts Trail, featuring work by three local artists and a potter, really looking forward to this on: 29th April - 1st May, The Skylark Men's weekend on: 12th - 15th of May, plus things like the local church's barbeque and Safari Supper and more. Please have a look at our website or phone the office for more information.

The other way to find out more and enjoy the possibility of feeling and connecting with the Holy Spirit of love and peace, is to join us on a Sunday morning at 10.30am where you will be warmly welcomed, Easter Sunday on the 9th of April being, of course, an extra special time.

Chris Girdler

[www.springwaterchurch.org.uk](http://www.springwaterchurch.org.uk)  
Tel: 01189724519

## ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, PEPPARD ROAD, SONNING COMMON.

Like many other churches and organisations much of our fund-raising efforts are to help those who find themselves in need. This could be supporting local efforts like the foodbank and CIRDIC, or internationally, the victims of war and natural disasters. Occasionally we

have the opportunity to raise money to support someone from our own community. Luke Theobald is currently training for the priesthood at the Venerable English College in Rome. He is hoping to attend World Youth Day in the summer when potentially millions of young people gather to reflect on their Catholic faith and be joined by Pope Francis. This will take place in Lisbon but the cost was prohibitive for Luke on his student allowance. The parish rallied round and through a raffle and personal donations enough was raised to get him to Lisbon and back. He is also being assisted by a number of neighbouring Catholic parishes.

As this magazine is being distributed, we are entering the holiest week of the Christian Calendar beginning with Palm Sunday (2nd April) when we join Jesus as he enters Jerusalem. Palms will be distributed at all our Masses. On Maundy Thursday (7pm) we will celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Last Supper, including the washing of feet ceremony. On Good Friday morning (10am) we will join the other local churches for the Walk of Witness around the village. In the afternoon (3pm) we will celebrate the Lord's Solemn Passion. The highlight of the week is the Easter Vigil on Saturday evening (8pm) when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus and renew our own baptismal promises. Masses will be celebrated on Easter Sunday at 9am and 10.30am. You are warmly invited to join us for any of these services

For up-to-date details nearer the time please check the weekly newsletter on our website: [www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk](http://www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk)

## DOES EASTER CHANGE ANYTHING?

The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was earth shattering. At midday, it went dark for three hours; the earth shook; and graves opened to release people raised from the dead.

So what changed?

Everything changed for everyone forever.

God intervened to deal with people's greatest needs: guilt, misery, disease and death.

The death of Jesus, the Son of God, absorbed our punishment for rebellion against God. His resurrection was God's validation that the sacrifice is completely acceptable, and a promise that God will raise to life those who believe in Jesus.

So death is conquered; guilt is pardoned; and misery and disease will

be eradicated. God has taken all of the action necessary to achieve this.

How do we get to benefit? God says He will give all of this to us if we trust Him to do it. Come to Me, Jesus says, and I will give you rest - and peace, and everlasting life, and heaven.

This was predicted 750 years before it happened: 'Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ... He was pierced for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His wounds we are healed.' [Isaiah 53, The Bible]

Find out more: Easter service, 16:30, Sunday 9 April, Chiltern Evangelical Church, Grove Road, Sonning Common

Carolyn Jenkins  
Ben Densham

Chiltern Evangelical Church

## BRENDA DAMP

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# VIKTORIA – A HOSTAGE TO CIRCUMSTANCES



As you know almost 8 months have passed already since our arrival in the UK and a lot of things have happened during this period of time. I have got a job at Abbeycrest and my son attends Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge school. He plays football at Rotherfield United Football Club firstly with the Wasps team for under 13 year olds now with another team, the Bees. He goes regularly to training sessions and participates in the football matches within the local league. At weekends we go to the gym and swimming pool at Rivermead Leisure Centre.

All this became possible due to our kind and caring hosts, who provided us with temporary accommodation in their hospitable house and have become a real family for us. They have been providing us with all kinds of support and assistance during the period of our stay with them. We have also benefitted from the generosity of a neighbour who financed Bohdan's training for the whole season and membership of RUFC. Being part of the club helped him to overcome the stress and depressive mood caused by having to move from one country to another. I am very grateful to the talented and experienced football coaches, Thomas Spencer and Ian Leath, who have supported Bohdan and provided transport to training sessions

and matches. Thanks also to the teachers and classmates at MECE, who have made Bohdan feel welcome; their kindness and understanding have helped Bohdan at all stages of his adaptation to the UK. Finally, many thanks to my parents for constantly praying for us from afar as they extend their loving protection to us all the way from Ukraine.

All this helps us not to give up in a country where we are completely alone. We do not feel so alone amongst these people mentioned above. A lot has happened since July, with many problems solved, but we know there are still a lot of tasks ahead. One of the most important for all Ukrainian people in the UK is housing, of course. We have direct connections with Sonning Common because of my work at Abbeycrest and Bohdan being a student at MECE school and we would like to find somewhere to live in the village. I am grateful for support from Olha Purych (SODC) and Tetiana Sazonova (Diocese of Oxford). However, it has so far been impossible to find a rental property here that we can afford. I am hoping for help from the local council and, although I cannot demand special privileges, I would be very happy if any kind of help could be provided. I have always counted on myself and my strength to do my best and not to burden anyone else but unfortunately

this is not enough. Another problem to be solved is the language barrier for Bohdan; the school has organised additional English classes for him and, when his English is a bit better, we're hoping that he will be able to take part in the ENgin programme which pairs Ukrainian youth with English-speakers for free online conversation practice.

Life goes on and the next step is to prepare for moving on, as the Homes for Ukraine hosting period comes to an end. As we start our independent lives in the UK, we will build on all the valuable experience we have gained since we arrived in July. As for our plans for the future, we can't think too far ahead as very little depends on our hopes and desires – we, like many other Ukrainians, have become hostages of circumstances. Nobody knows when it all will end so we continue our little struggle for our life here while a great battle for freedom is taking place in our country. We really believe in a victory for Ukraine so that the deaths of my 27 year old nephew Valeriy Rudenko and many other heroes who gave their lives in this war, were not in vain.

I want to finish my story with these words: "Glory to Ukraine and all heroes fighting for us!" ●

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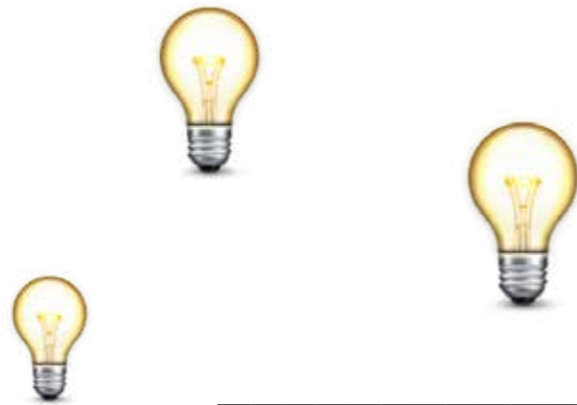
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PUZZLE PAGE ANSWERS FROM PAGE 25



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

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

**Quiz: Rivers in England**  
 1. Severn [Thames is 215 miles]. 2. Kennet.  
 3. Loddon. 4. Great Ouse. 5. Trent. 6. Tyne.  
 7. Mersey. 8. Wye. 9. Tamar. 10. Derwent.

**Proverbs 15:17 ESV**  
 BETTER IS A DINNER OF HERBS WHERE LOVE IS  
 THAN A FATTENED OX AND HATRED WITH IT.

Cryptogram

Sudoku

Cryptic crossword

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				Wood Lane Dentistry	11

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