

# SC

# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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### SANTA RIDES AGAIN

Track the route on  
facebook  
P4



### CHALLENGE YOUR BRAIN

with our new Puzzle  
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### BIKES FOR AFRICA

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to Sierra Leone  
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## SPREADING XMAS CHEER!

THIS YEAR'S SANTA RUN  
SEE PAGE 4

DEC/JAN 2019/20

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# FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection (Winston Churchill).

I am one of these people who indulges in a Christmas letter, rarely written in time for the card sending but produced over the holiday period and emailed to a few. I use it as a time for reflecting back over the year and its ups and downs. We live in uncertain times, but I hope this issue will reflect all the good things happening in our village.

The magazine has been a very positive challenge this time as there has been so much material provided, most of which I have managed to include with some judicial editing. From the Macmillan fund raisers, to the apple juicing, and not forgetting the invitation to Christmas lunch in the village hall. Our facebook page has additional material, such as the new exhibition at the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum. All the usual contributors appear, along with two new pages from the pupils at the primary school and our very own puzzle page. Jon and his bikes for Africa give us the opportunity to think about others less fortunate than ourselves.

A big thank you to those of you who have provided articles throughout 2019, please keep them coming.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and good health in 2020, from the whole team at the magazine. ●

The Magazine Committee wishes to apologise to Davis Tate for the misprinting of their advertisement in the last issue and any inconvenience it may have caused. The error was not discovered until the distribution of the magazine had begun.

*Diana*

**Diana Pearman** Editor

Email: [editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org)

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

Print: Rick Peedell  
Xplor Ltd  
rick@xplor-pm.co.uk  
07766 254422  
0118 9471955

Cover image: Santa Run

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.



## MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM ...



Diana Pearman



Christine Atkinson



Joan Grummant

## USEFUL CONTACTS:

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

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

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

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

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# MAIDEN ERLEGH CHILTERN EDGE

**Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge has made a tremendous start to this academic year and we are particularly delighted to welcome new Year 7 students who have settled in quickly and made a great start to their studies here at MECE.**

Particularly pleasing this half term is the range of partnership work. We recently welcomed Year 6 pupils from Sonning Common Primary School to take part in a Science and French workshop. The pupils proved themselves to be fantastic scientists, showing their skill with Bunsen Burners! In French they had va-va-voum as budding linguists. Two sporting events for primary pupils were organized by the PE team. More events are planned and Years 5 and 6 pupils from local primary schools will attend a matinee showing of our school production, 'Oliver' at the end of term.

Year 9 have worked with our careers partner, THALES, on a STEAM event and Year 7, 8 and 9 participated in 'Restart a

Heart' day with paramedics from South Central Ambulance Service. This event was combined with a non-uniform day raising nearly £500 for the South Central Ambulance Service.

Among our events this term, our Open Evening and Mornings where we welcomed with pleasure around 250 families at MECE. We are very proud of the students who hosted tours and spoke so eloquently to visitors at these events – the feedback was extremely positive.

Maiden Erlegh Trust continues its work in and for the school. Our roofing work is nearing completion. Colleagues from the Trust are present in school throughout each week and there have been key developments in assessment development and careers (not least the introduction of work experience for Year 10 students). ●

**MARY DAVIES**  
 Executive Headteacher



**Stop press: It has just been announced that Mr Andrew Hartley has been appointed as the new Headteacher. He will start in January 2020 and is currently Deputy Headteacher at Brakenhale School in Bracknell Forest.**

## SANTA RIDES AGAIN!

**On Thursday 19 December 2019 Father Christmas will be once again coming to visit Sonning Common on his tractor, driven by Paul Jenkins.**

Last year Father Christmas raised £885 for local charities, and this year will be raising money for Sonning Common Youth Club and Sonning Common First Responders.

Volunteers from the village are working hard and if you wish to get involved email Helen Coyne [teamsantasc@gmail.com](mailto:teamsantasc@gmail.com)

The route this year will be the same as last year, trying to cover as much of Sonning Common as possible during the evening. The final stop will be at the Butchers Arms, between 20.30 and 21.00, for Rob Blues mince pies to add to the festivities. Come and join us there.

Follow Santa on the night with live updates on Facebook at: <https://facebook.com/socosantaclaus/> and track him on a map as he makes his way around the village. ●



## POSTCARD FROM THE ALLOTMENT FRUITS OF THEIR LABOUR!

**The allotment team had a successful harvest cake and produce sale in October when they raised £136!**

Amy says "we sold squash, parsnips and had apples from the school site as well as the cakes. We still have lots of Cape Gooseberries ripening in the allotment. They have been very successful this year. We will be investing the money raised from the bake sale in a new roof for the potting shed so that it will be more weather-proof. We can then tidy it up and it can finally be put to good use by everyone using the allotment." ●



## SUCCESSFUL COFFEE MORNING FOR MACMILLAN

by Joan Grummant

**Three Sonning Common ladies Carol Johnson, Toots Gordon and Ruth Baxter organised a hugely successful Macmillan Coffee Morning on Thursday 26 September and the event raised a fabulous £1001 for the charity. The event was held at the Hare and Hounds in Sonning Common and landlords Claire and Mick Sugg kindly donated the premises, crockery and urn as well as generous use of their time. They deserve a huge thank you. It was the first time the ladies have tried such a venture and despite it being tiring, all said it was worthwhile and quite inspirational.**

The ladies were totally overwhelmed by the support of local cake makers, particularly June Fisher and Jenny Gyngell, as well as donations from so many of our local shops and businesses. Sales were boosted by a very popular Tombola and raffle. One lady had the original idea of making a cake edible for dogs and that proved very popular with the dog owners too! All left over cake at the end of the sale was transported around the village and was eventually sold.

The occasion proved to be so enjoyable that it is likely to be repeated next year because it demonstrated such recognition of the great work being carried out by the

charity. About fifty people supported the event and the ladies are hopeful that even more may attend in the future. ●



**Back: Mike Sugg, Claire Sugg  
 Front: Toots Gordon, Carol Johnson, Ruth Baxter**

## HENRY RAISES OVER £400 FOR CHARITY

**Former Sonning Common Primary School pupil, Henry Cook, age 11, likes to raise money for charity. Having Asperger's, Henry usually likes to make the National Autistic Society his charity of choice, with cake sales and a garage sale in the past, but in recent months he has also donated to other causes that mean something to him.**

In May Henry baked cakes for his classmates at the end of their SATS, and then sold more cakes in the playground after school, to raise money for Path Hill Outdoors. Henry attends Path Hill 3 days a week as an alternative to a more traditional classroom set up, in which he struggles to manage. His cakes sold out in 5 minutes and raised £50.

In September Henry was looking forward to taking part in his new school's Macmillan Coffee morning. But things didn't work out for him at the school, so he and his mum decided to host one at home instead. Much of the week leading up to Friday 27 September was spent planning, baking, preparing and inviting friends, neighbours and former

teachers to come along. Some of those friends were unable to attend on the day and asked to donate, so he set up a Just Giving Page.

Lots of cups of tea were made by Henry, and lots of cakes were eaten. Henry also sold door hangers and key rings that he had made, using pyrography to decorate. Both his mum and sister are crafters and earn money through selling their crafts and Henry has always wanted to be part of this.

Henry was pleased to count up the money and Just Giving donations, raising a total of £412.70. ●



## HOW SPOOKY IS THAT?



**For the third year the Johnson family have decorated the front of their house for Halloween and to raise funds for local charities.**

This year they chose Blue Cross and Shelter and have raised over £600.

They'd like to thank Ru Butler at Peppard Building Supplies who kindly donated towards the materials used to make the pumpkin for the entrance. ●

# FOSCL



If you feel the grey skies and dark evenings will never end, this beautiful picture of a combine harvester at work in the fields around Sonning Common may remind you that sunnier times are ahead. Taken by Helen Simic, Harvest Time was awarded first prize in the FoSCL photographic competition. Many thanks to Kathryn Fell, the local professional photographer who judged the competition and to Helen and Dave Tyldesley for allowing their photographs to be used in a series of cards produced by the Friends which showcase our wonderful village. Sets of six cards are now on sale in the Library for £3.50.

Knowing who isn't allowed to play monopoly helped the Two Hoots team win the FoSCL quiz, which raised almost £700 for library funds. Thanks to the Co-op, Laithwaites, the Herb Farm, the New Inn and Henley Picture House for their very generous support. Keep a look out in the New Year for details of a Murder Mystery evening on 28 February, which the Friends are staging with the Chiltern Players. And for those stumped by that question? Legend has it that the Queen is not allowed to play monopoly.

HELEN FORT



FRIENDS of Sonning Common Library

# RECYCLE, RECYCLE WI ENTHUSIASTICALLY INVOLVED

On the 14 September SCWI Members entered the Caple Young Challenge at Henley Show. The Theme for this year's Challenge was Recycle, Recycle. Entrants were required to make, a decoration, something for the garden, a vase and something made from old clothing, plus an additional six items of their own.

**Team One** Anne Driver, Jane Handley, Christine Marsh Beverley Porteous and Barbara Sadler

**Team Two** Marion Bayliss, Wendy Dean, Sue Hedges, Rose Prynne and Sandra Rhodes.

The ladies thoroughly enjoyed making a wide variety of recycled items, to name a

few, discarded jeans were turned into a smart Teddy Bear and a Beach Bag. We made Flower Pot Men, a Scarecrow, Rag Mug Mat, a Vase decorated with plastic spoons, a Dream Catcher, Sock Puppets and a flower container filled with chicken wire. The wire is kinder to the environment than floral foam.

Sonning Common WI is not all Jam and Jerusalem. The National Federation of WIs have ongoing Campaigns which include Litter, Climate Change and Plastic Sea Soup, Don't Fear the Smear and the Decline in Rural Bus Services. ●

**SUE HEDGES**  
Public Affairs Representative  
hedges.yewtrees@gmail.com

# APPLE JUICING FOR THE COMMUNITY

**Many of you will have seen the surplus of apples round the village. I know I have to put barrow loads on to the compost heap. Well Jessica Philpot and her sister Sarah decided to do something about this and organised an apple juicing session open to all on 13th October 2019. Sharona, enthusiastic proprietor of Heath and Watkins, provided the site and helpers included Helen Fort and assorted husbands - not to mention several children who seemed very happy to turn the press and see the juice flow. How many litres were produced is not known but lots of people went away bearing containers of various sizes and shapes with delicious tasting fresh apple juice.**

A normal garden shredder was used to produce the pulp which was put in the press borrowed from Watlington and the juice flowed. So with such a successful start there is now a suggestion that we, the community of Sonning Common, should buy our own press and shredder if the funds can be raised. If you would like to contribute then donations/pledges can be left at Heath and Watkins. I first wrote

about community apple pressing in the Sonning Common Magazine in August 2008, over 10 years ago. Little interest was shown then but now Jessica and Sarah have shown there really is interest perhaps we can do a little more to cut waste and make a small contribution to reducing global warming. ●

**GEOFF ADAMS**



# SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE

## Report on AGM for 2018 -2019 year

**Why did we hold an Annual General Meeting? For a start the constitution demands it but there is more to it than that. It is important to review the affairs of the past 12 months and note the lessons learnt. It is all too easy to let things slide until a small problem becomes a much bigger one and, of course, we must try to anticipate what might become problematical. It is also an opportunity for Sonning Common residents to suggest changes they think would be beneficial for the magazine and elect the managing committee.**

We met in the FISH offices on 17 October. 2018-19 was a successful year, 6 copies, each of 36 pages, were published and quality of content and presentation were good. We would like more input from younger people, adults and teenagers. Could we, should we, make more use of social media?

Jill West, Treasurer, presented the accounts which showed a small surplus for the year on which we would have to pay corporation tax. She had not needed to draw on the deposit account.

Helen Gavin oversees the distribution and said that there had been no major hitches in the distribution of the 2000 copies. The three new deliverers in Lea Meadow are very welcome and bring the team of volunteers who get the magazine through the village letterboxes to over 60. The cream tea organised for volunteers in May had proved popular and enjoyable.

Diana Pearman, editor, explained that the magazine had developed 3 broad

themes. These were the items on topical matters such as the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the regular news items from schools, churches and village based organisations and the reliable contributions which include the craft and recipe pages and Tom Fort's entertaining pieces. Our previous contributing school children had moved on and been replaced by book reviews prepared by children attending the library book group. Changes in the Parish Council office had resulted in a different format for their page.

John Pearman the Advertising Manager reported that although advert numbers were down the revenue had remained adequate to cover the costs of production. Almost all adverts were on a subscription basis. More adverts could be accommodated. Advertisers have told us that they usually get a good response and are good value for money.

As ever a very big thanks to all involved in the production and distribution of the magazine, around 80 people, and to our advertisers, the Parish Council and for donations from Nottakwire, without which the magazine could not be produced.

So what do we need to do to make things even better? If you value the magazine we do need more volunteers please, to help with the editorial side, to report on village events, to assist with distribution and to increase our social media presence. Contact the editor or chairman if you would like more information, our details appear on page 3. ●

**GEOFF ADAMS**  
Chairman

# ALL OUR YESTERYEARS

Beehive hair, backcombed with care,  
Pop festivals free to entertain you,  
The Mini car so small was desired by all,  
I'm glad I grew up when I did, aren't you?  
Policemen on bikes, their helmets  
so tight,  
Cannabis for money, that makes you  
feel funny,  
Red phone boxes stand, in the  
countryside grand,  
I'm glad I grew up when I did, aren't you?  
Apprenticeships and office jobs,  
university for posh bods.  
Skirts up to your bums, disapproved  
by mums,  
Tights not stockings, to cover the  
shocking,  
I'm glad I grew up when I did, aren't you?  
The contraceptive pill that could make  
you ill,  
Barbers shops setting trends. Anything  
for the weekend?  
Fishing baskets, bucket bags, behind the  
bike shed smoking fags.  
I'm glad I grew up when I did, aren't you?  
Gob stoppers huge and liquorice chews,  
Candy floss sticky that makes you feel  
dicky,  
Funfairs and fetes, sports days and  
roller skates,  
I'm glad I grew up when I did, aren't you?  
Climbing up trees and winters that  
freeze,  
The Routemaster bus, conductors  
that fuss,  
Charabancs for trips, sandwiches and  
chips,  
I'm glad I grew up when I did, aren't you?  
Changing jobs was easy, work normal,  
or sleazy,  
The Beatles the Stones and Bob Marley  
and Trends,  
I'm glad I grew up when I did, aren't you?  
Where's it all gone all the fun and the  
song,  
The innocence of youth the bad, the  
uncouth,  
I'm glad I grew up when I did, aren't you?

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**Christmas Day**  
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**Sonning Common Village Hall**  
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**12.30 for 1 o'clock Lunch**  
 Who's invited?  
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**Sonning Common Carers Group**

Meets: 2nd Wednesday of the Month  
 Time: 2pm - 3.30pm  
 Place: Abbeycrest Care Home, Kennylands Road, Essex Way, Sonning Common, RG4 9RG

Contact Sue Devine 07468 862177

Carers groups are here to help you connect with people who understand what you are going through. No-one has to care alone.

**GREEN HEARTS**

SHOW THE LOVE for the world, the life we all love and want to protect.  
 RECYCLE RECYCLE come to the SWAP SHOP of clothes and toys.

SATURDAY 8 FEBRUARY  
 Sonning Common Village Hall  
 2.0pm - 4.0pm  
 All Welcome

Green Hearts decorated by youngsters from Sonning Common After School Club, Bishops Wood School, Brownies, Cubs, Scouts, members of the Youth CLUB and caring WI members.

Refreshments will be available  
 Hosted by Sonning Common WI

**Bishopswood Special School Christmas Fair**

Saturday 7th December 1.30-4.30pm

Sensory Grotto - Mince Pies & Mulled Wine  
 Tombola's - Raffle - Children's Games  
 Adopt a Teddy - Lucky Dip - Lots More!

**Grand Auction at 3pm**  
 Please come to join us for plenty of festive fun at  
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**CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING** This year the Health Centre will be closed on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December and Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> December and then on New Year's Day Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

Please ensure you have adequate repeat medication for the festive period. If you need medical advice whilst the surgery is closed please contact the out of hours service on NHS 111.

*Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year*



**Regular activities in the Library**

Gadget sessions Thursday mornings from 10.00  
 Story time Saturday morning at 10.00 Christmas theme 14 December  
 Rhyme times for under-3s first and third Mondays of the month 10 - 10.30.00  
 Scrabble Club Friday mornings from 10.00  
 Craft Sessions for adults 10.00 last Friday of the month - bring your own project  
 Sonning Common Library Christmas opening hours  
 Monday 23 December closed at 5pm and open again on Thursday 2 January 2020  
 Rosemary Dunstan  
 Library manager

**HEALTH WALKS**

No official health walks between 21 December and 5 January 2020

January 2020: the new timetable is available from the library, the Health Centre, Herb Farm, or [www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable](http://www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk/timetable) or Chris Brook 924 2515

Rosemary Dunstan

**Torchlight procession Christmas Eve**

meet at Kidmore End Primary school 5.45pm  
 1/2 hour procession  
 Lanterns £5 from Heath and Watkins  
 Carols, mulled wine, mince pies at New Inn afterwards  
 Proceeds to Kidmore End primary school, St John's Church and CRISIS



**Sonning Common Women's Institute theWI**  
 INSPIRING WOMEN

**CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING**

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**WALKING NETBALL**

**Walking Netball being launched in Sonning Common!**

A series of introductory sessions will take place at Kidmore End Memorial Hall (5:30-6:30pm) on:  
 2nd, 9th and 16th December 2019.

**The emphasis is very much on having fun and being active!**

Cost per session: £5  
 For more information, please contact [amanda@activeleaders.co.uk](mailto:amanda@activeleaders.co.uk) or just turn up and play!




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Patient Participation Group (PPG)  
 Sonning Common Health Centre  
 Neil Frost and Catalina Borneo (Frost Borneo opticians) short talk on eye health  
 Palmer room  
 30 January 2020  
 1:30 pm followed by questions and answers.  
 Book your place [schcppg@gmail.com](mailto:schcppg@gmail.com) or complete a PPG contact form available from 2nd January 2020 at reception at the Health Centre.



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# ROTHERFIELD WALKING FOOTBALL

Rotherfield Walking Football won their first trophy on Sunday 15 September. They hosted a Charity Tournament with 3 other invited clubs, Chalgrove, Tilehurst & Rivermead at Bishopswood Sports Ground. This was the club's first venture in hosting such an event. On an unusually hot September afternoon Rotherfield ran out winners, beating Rivermead in the final 1-0. The event was part of a Memorial tournament organised every year by the family and friends of Joshua Smith who died aged 19 near Sonning Common in 2013. The tournament aimed to raise money for Cancer Research UK and Mind.



**Ian Massey of Rotherfield WF said,**  
*"We wanted to contribute to the annual tournament by offering a small manageable event which encouraged active participation of an older age range. It was a great success with nearly 35 players, mostly over 60 turning up to participate in the fund raising with each club playing four 15-minute games plus a final. We were pleased with the result not just because we won the trophy but for*

*the level of support from other clubs and our contribution to the raising of £400."*

**Team captain Mike Bowker,** *"The Rotherfield team really excelled. We came top of the league placings with three wins and one draw followed by the victory in the final. The team consisting of 6 players and two subs, in rotation, all played their part. Tudor Taylor (6 goals) and Roger Prismall (2 goals) enabled the victories, while the defence was a brick*

*wall, conceding no goals. It was an almost flawless performance"*

Squad members were Roger Prismall, Jim Bedding, Tudor Taylor, Mike Bowker, Ashley Ford, Graham Hards, , Dave Robinson, Michael Foxton,

Rotherfield Walking Football club meets every Monday evening at 6pm and Wednesday mornings at 10.00 am at Bishopswood Sports Ground. Contact is [ian.massey28@gmail.com](mailto:ian.massey28@gmail.com) ●

# YOUTH CLUB NEWS

**Since the last update at the start of the summer the Youth Club has enjoyed lots of fun, and had a makeover!**

An end of term treat was an amazing trip to a water park at Lagoona Park near Windsor. All the kids took on the challenges and had a great time. They then enjoyed a disco before the start of the new term at school, followed by a session in October learning how to DJ themselves run by DJ Thorn.

Peppard Building Supplies kindly donated bright coloured paint for the makeover and lots of volunteers came to help with the hard work. Sunny Smithers, youth club leader, said "Thank you to everyone that gave up their time to come and help us paint - a massive thank you to them! We almost ran out of paint and called Peppard Building Supplies and asked for more

paint and within 30 mins we had more, which is amazing. We could not have done this without all the amazing donations from you guys. So Thank you!"

Other activities over the last couple of months include making bath bombs and Halloween fun. The youth club also held a CAKE OFF to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support and thank everyone who came to support the charity and get some lovely cakes while doing so.

Sunny says "Thank you to all that donate to us to give our young people these fun opportunities." ●

**SUNNY SMITHERS**



*We've put the finishing touches in place at Henley Manor*

**...and now we'd like to show you in person.**

We're holding two open days for people to come and see for themselves what makes Henley Manor a care home with a difference.

Industry-leading residential, nursing and dementia care are just the beginning at Henley Manor. This care is supported by award-winning facilities that mean residents can carry on with their fulfilling lives - from gardening and baking, to enjoying the cinema and café right here within our community of care.

**Open Days:  
 Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January and  
 Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February,  
 10am to 4pm**

To see for yourself what makes Henley Manor a care home with a difference, make an appointment to visit us at **Henley Manor Care Home, Mill Lane, Henley-On-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 4HD**, call Henley Manor, on **01491 454204**, or for more information, go to [hallmarkcarehomes.co.uk](http://hallmarkcarehomes.co.uk)

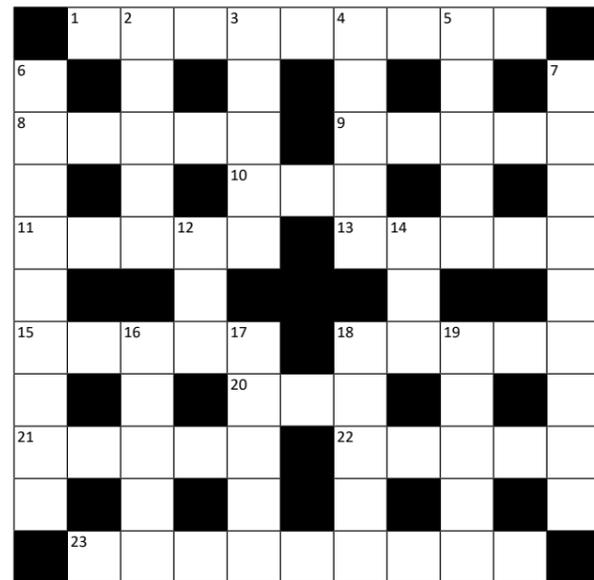
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# PUZZLE PAGE

By DAVID DUNSTAN

## Cryptic crossword



### ACROSS

1. Road in village where timber touches down (9)
8. Low point of drain, perhaps (5)
9. Tree where old reside (5)
10. Member returns with something to keep hair in place (3)
11. Enormous lager is stirred (5)
13. Small piece of earth found in this lettuce (5)
15. Confused wish with time for game (5)
18. Quit about comfort (5)
20. Oriole oddly smooth (3)
21. Love church article in sea (5)
22. In the middle of puréed mango (5)
23. Jet with extra lane in village (9)

### DOWN

2. Topless fringe instruction (5)
3. Elegy for broken ridge (5)
4. Garlic and oil – oil mixed in antipasti case (5)
5. Medic unwell – it's a practice (5)
6. Fireplace fuel is close in village (9)
7. Wee lights confused drive in village (9)
12. Petrol vapour (3)
14. Observe Oxford, for example (3)
16. Suggestion by lake is perfect (5)
17. 100 mph in charge is a boost (5)
18. Post about returning assertion (5)
19. Protective clothing has no right to romance (5)

## Sudoku

Grading: medium

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

## Cryptogram

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

NKQ YBLTQJ ND NKQ MJQYN HPQLNIDB ... DO  
CIOQ, NKQ PBIRQJLQ YBS QRQJXNKIBM ... IL ...  
ODJNX-NTD. — SDPMCYL YSYAL

## Quiz: countries

1. Which country is located between Austria and Switzerland?
2. Which country has the capital Tashkent?
3. In which country do they speak Amharic?
4. Which country used to be known as Siam?
5. Which country has the most lakes in the world?
6. Which country has the highest prison population in the world?
7. Which country owns the domain name .tv?
8. Which country produces most of the world's opium?
9. In which country is the town of Nokia?
10. In which country are the phone books listed by first name?

See answers on page 29

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# INTERVIEW WITH JON ABBOTT ABOUT HIS NEW VENTURE BIKES FOR AFRICA

Jon lived in Sonning Common all his life until going off to University in 2017. He is now doing a year in industry before returning to Nottingham for his final year. This is his latest venture.



## What is Oxon Bikes for Africa?

Oxon Bikes for Africa is a new initiative set up in 2019, aiming to collect, fix, and ship unwanted bikes from the Oxfordshire area to different regions in Africa. Our first project is to send 100+ bikes to Makeni, Sierra Leone. We have partnered with the Swiss Sierra Leone Development Foundation, and they are responsible for allocating the bikes to locals, with the aim of reducing their commute times, helping trade goods with other villages more easily, and also being a cheap mode of sustainable transport. The bikes will be gifted to a number of hospital workers, school students, and other locals once they arrive in Makeni.

The city has a population of 80,000+; but some of the more remote areas (where the bikes are heading) have similar population sizes to Sonning Common.

## Where did you get the idea from to start this venture? // How and when did you set it up?

It all started during a year 9 Geography lesson of all places after watching a Swedish physician, Hans Rosling, giving a TED\* talk on population. Hans talks about the difference a bike can have on helping people out of poverty and I wanted to contribute by getting my community involved.



I've sat with this idea in the back of my head for a number of years now but feel that I've now got the skills and knowledge to make a success of it - after my time at University studying Business Management with Marketing.

So, I had a play around with names and countries we could help. And landed on Oxon Bikes for Africa. I then went about getting my flat mate (who does graphic design) to help with the logo. After a week we had a logo, strapline, website but no Bikes!

After coming back home I did a few weeks work where I met Mo, who is heavily involved in charities in Sierra Leone. I told Mo about my idea and he put me in touch with 'The Swiss Sierra Leone Development Foundation'. They are responsible for distributing the bikes to those who will benefit most and so are key to ensuring our bikes don't end up in the wrong hands. Now we could be confident that they would be distributed to make the most difference.

## What do you wish to achieve with it?

We want to be a positive catalyst for change in the African continent. I know the difference a bike can have on people's lives and I would love to know that, as a community, we helped make a similar village's life easier. Be it reducing their journey to school, helping shorten their commute or meaning a nurse can visit more sick people in a day.

## How many people are involved?

There are three core people - Mo Bangura, Tai Bockarie and me. But I've also had friends help leafleting and collecting with me. Mo (who regularly visits his home in Sierra Leone) put me in touch with 'The Swiss Sierra Leone Development Foundation' and they are our men on the ground out there when Mo is back here.

## What kind of response did you get from your friends/family?

My friends and family have been really supportive of the project - especially my Mum, who very generously gives up her time in the evenings to help me collect

the bikes from various villages (thanks Mum). My friends have also helped spread the word and offer their help wherever they can - mainly collecting bikes and asking parents if they or their friends have any to donate. My Dad was slightly more realistic and keeps me focussed on actually delivering what we've promised to the locals there - something I need to keep on track.

## How many bikes have you had donated so far?

This operations update has a lot of information in it about the progress

we're making. But so far, we have 38 bikes that are under review for servicing and repairs, but we are currently still looking for a local cycle shop to help with servicing and repair costs. ●

If you know of anyone who may be able to help Jon with the cycle repairs please do get in touch via the website -

[www.oxonbikesforafrica.co.uk](http://www.oxonbikesforafrica.co.uk)

**OXON BIKES FOR AFRICA** Got an old bike?

Why not join us? We're collecting, fixing and shipping 100+ bikes from around Oxfordshire to Makeni, Sierra Leone, in partnership with The Swiss Sierra Leone Development Foundation.

Bikes will be gifted to Hospital Workers, School Students and other locals with the aim of reducing commute times, trading more freely with other villages, being a sustainable mode of transport, and lastly promoting healthy living and mobility amongst villagers.

We want to be a catalyst for positive change in the African continent, and with your help, we can fulfill this; one peddle turn at a time.

So if you have any unused bikes lying around at the bottom of your garden gathering cobwebs; why not consider donating it and giving it a brand new life in Sierra Leone?

Make a Donation!

Visit our website to find out more details about our new initiative. Discover ways you can get involved, and register a bike donation.

[www.oxonbikesforafrica.co.uk](http://www.oxonbikesforafrica.co.uk)

# HEALTH MATTERS

By SUE LITCHFIELD



## WHAT IS AN NHS HEALTH CHECK?

The NHS Health Check is a health check-up for adults in England aged 40-74. It's designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, high blood pressure, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. [www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/check-your-heart-age-tool/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/check-your-heart-age-tool/)

For more information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/>. You can enquire at reception if you are eligible and book an appointment also.

## VACCINATIONS AGAINST PNEUMONIA AND SHINGLES

**Pneumonia:** If you are over 65 you are also eligible to have a vaccination against pneumonia. So if you have already had it, you wouldn't normally need it again but please check.



**Shingles:** We are also offering the shingles vaccine to eligible patients. You are eligible if you are aged 70 to 77 years (born after 1st September 1942) or aged 78 and 79 year. Information copies are in Reception. If you are still unsure of your eligibility, please ask a nurse or GP here at the Health Centre.

## TAKE A LOOK NEXT TIME YOU VISIT THE HEALTH CENTRE

There are five original paintings for the first Health Walks created by William Bird in 1975. His aim was to improve people's fitness of body and mind, by encouraging use of the local countryside. They remain very popular in Sonning Common and throughout the UK and Europe.

They are in the corridor on the wall left of the main treatment room.

Unfortunately we do not know the artist despite efforts but if anyone knows please email Sue at [sue.hatt1999@gmail.com](mailto:sue.hatt1999@gmail.com) to correct this failure.

## STAY HEALTHY & WARM THIS WINTER

As we get older, changes to our bodies mean that cold weather and winter bugs affect us more than they used to. Colds, flu and pneumonia are all more common in winter. Last year over 60% of cases of flu that needed hospital treatment were in people over 65.

### What you can do

Everyone over 65 is entitled to a free flu jab from the doctor, the jab helps protect yourself and others. Wash your hands regularly. Simple but effective - washing your hands helps stop germs spreading.

### Stock up on cold and sore throat remedies

Your pharmacist can give you advice if you're feeling under the weather.

If you have medication on prescription, check that you have sufficient especially at Christmas and the New Year when the health centre will be closed. You can order online if you use a computer to save going out in the cold. Enquire at reception for instructions.

If the Health Centre and the Pharmacy are closed and you need advice call NHS 111.

Wrap up well when you go out in the cold, layering is best.

Make sure your home is warm enough.

The ideal room temperature you should be aiming for is about 21 degrees in your living room, and about 18 degrees in your bedroom.

### What you can do

Keep moving. Try not to sit still for more than one hour at a time. Even if just moving your arms and legs

Eat well. Aim for at least one hot meal every day as well as warm drinks throughout the day.

### Beat the bad weather with these simple steps

1. Keep an eye on the weather forecast.

If bad weather is forecast, make sure you have everything you need. Check you've got enough medication and stock up on food to keep in the cupboards or freezer.

2. Take extra care if the ground is slippery. Wear shoes with good grip and consider keeping salt and sand mixture handy to grit paths.

3. Plan ahead when driving. Try to avoid going out in the car in bad weather, make sure you follow advice on driving conditions near you.

4. Have a torch at home in case of a power cut. Don't forget to check the batteries!

5. Keep emergency numbers nearby. Your energy supplier if there's a power cut. You can register with your supplier so they'll call you in the event of a power cut.

6. You can obtain a FREE thermometer from Oxfordshire AGE UK call 0345 450 1276

7. FISH provides transport, shopping trips, tea parties, befriending and much more. Phone 0118 9723986 or Email: [office@fishvolunteercentre.org.uk](mailto:office@fishvolunteercentre.org.uk)

## CITIZENS ADVICE LAUNCHES ENERGY ADVICE DRIVE

Your local Citizens Advice is launching its annual initiative to help people in financial need who find it hard to pay their energy bills.

At an EAP appointment our advisers, depending on your particular problem, can do one or more of the following:

- Help you understand energy companies' tariffs and bills.
- Provide information and support on switching tariff or supplier, identifying any savings you might make.
- Give advice on energy efficiency measures and list any grants available to pay for these.
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help you apply for the Warm Home Discount and the Priority Services Register, if applicable.

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- Assist with any customer service complaints you might have against your energy company. ●

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)  
or 03 444 111 444  
or visit a local branch.

## HENLEY LIONS WINTER FUEL PROJECT



Henley Lions are appealing for donations now from anyone who feels they would like to help a local family or person facing financial difficulty. Weather forecasters predict a cold winter and the country faces uncertain times. Quite often the poorest suffer the most. Please help them keep warm and have enough fuel for cooking.

The generosity of local senior citizens, since 2016, who feel they do not need all their Government Winter Fuel Payment and prefer it goes to benefit someone trapped in fuel poverty has been significant.

Citizens Advice and local family charity NOMAD identify and qualify recipients. Money donated is ring fenced for this

project only and payments made direct to the recipient's fuel supplier.

### HENLEY LIONS ARE APPEALING FOR DONATIONS NOW

Online via [www.henleylions.org.uk](http://www.henleylions.org.uk) - click on 'Donate' and please identify your donation as 'Winter Fuel Project'

By cheque or bank transfer. Please email [donate@henleylions.org.uk](mailto:donate@henleylions.org.uk) or telephone 0345 833 7387 for information

For more information Contact:  
Ian Tritton  
Henley Lions Community Service  
07789 201760  
[communityservice@henleylions.org.uk](mailto:communityservice@henleylions.org.uk)

## SOUTH OXFORDSHIRE EMERGING LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Earlier this month the Leader of the Council received a temporary direction from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government regarding our emerging Local Plan 2034, which caused us to have to withdraw the Local Plan agenda item at a Council meeting on 10 October.

This meant that councillors and residents, who were due to take part in exercising their rights to be part of the local democratic process, were unable to discuss the plan.

Our officers are continuing to work constructively with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and all our local partners to work towards ensuring positive outcomes for all our residents and communities. ●





# PLASTIC FREE SONNING COMMON

By **LYNDSAY HENDERSON**

In the last couple of months, we have taken the first steps to becoming a Plastic Free Community and in October, the Parish Council agreed to support the scheme by approving a motion to form a working party. This is really exciting news and I hope we will be able to involve the whole community in reducing avoidable single use plastics.

The Plastic Free Community scheme is an amazing project involving all branches of the community to encourage, promote and support the reduction of avoidable single use plastics and raise awareness of the issues caused by single use items and what happens when they don't get disposed of responsibly. The Plastic Free Communities initiative was set up by the charity, Surfers Against Sewage, and we are one of over 640 communities working to or having gained Plastic Free accreditation across the country, both on the coast and inland.



## WHY ARE SINGLE USE PLASTICS A PROBLEM?

We live in a plastic filled world. It's a useful, versatile, cheap material. And it's everywhere, with one in every 10 barrels of oil now used to create new plastic. By focussing on action at a community level, we can be part of a network to make sure that we don't choke our village, countryside and wildlife with it. If it's on our street today, then it's in our rivers tomorrow, and our beaches and oceans forever or making its way into the seafood we consume. In Sonning Common, we can work together one step at a time to look at the avoidable plastics used and consumed in our community and take steps to avoid using these, introducing sustainable alternatives where necessary. This is not about going totally plastic free, it is about reducing our use of avoidable single use items.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Plastic Free Communities involve EVERYONE! A Parish Council Working Party is being set up involving members across the community - from Parish Councillors to local business owners and residents. The purpose of the Working Party is to manage the

project, liaise with community groups and businesses that we hope will become Plastic Free Allies, co-ordinate the volunteer team and of course, report back to the Parish Council and the village on progress.

The scheme will involve working with local businesses, amenities, community groups and individuals to help everyone reduce their single use plastics in the right way. For businesses this might mean reviewing the current single use plastics in their operations - what they use and what the alternatives are. For a community group, this might mean running a project to raise awareness across members. And for individuals, this will be sharing information and challenges to make changes on a day to day basis. Right now, we need help to roll out the scheme so if you are interested in joining the Working Party or volunteering please get in touch.

## WHAT CAN INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS CAN I TAKE RIGHT NOW?

Reducing your single use plastic consumption isn't always easy and it is important to consider the changes you make. Be aware that the choices you make might have a higher carbon cost, for example a cloth bag



has to be used many more times to have the same carbon impact as a plastic bag! Good places to start are by avoiding unnecessary packaging, carrying a bag/water bottle/coffee cup and reusing things that you have instead of buying new. Start small and aim to gradually reduce where you can, swapping out items as you finish them.

One great way to reduce single use plastics is to use a refill scheme, Heath and Watkins in Sonning Common have an extensive range of cleaning and household products available for refill. Sharona Fairweather told us more about it,

*"Avoidable plastic waste is what it says on the tin; avoidable, but only if the products are available in the right place, at the right price. Manufacturers will only take action when their sales are hit. As a retailer, I can do my bit by offering the choice. It's the customers who have the real power in this situation; by choosing to avoid products involving single use plastic whenever the option is there.*

*At Heath & Watkins, we sell household cleaners by weight, encouraging customers to reuse their old empty containers. Compostable kitchen waste liners. Eco friendly firelighters. And many traditional hardware items are*

*sold loose, in paper bags. We're also asking for empty, unbroken plant pots so we can reuse them in the future. And we are constantly looking for new ways to do our bit. "*

## WATCH THIS SPACE!!!

Finally, if you would like to do more, please speak to people across the community about the initiative and consider volunteering to help out!

## NEWS

On the Eco SoCo Facebook group, we have been sharing festive tips on reducing Hallowe'en waste and what to do with leftover pumpkins. We have set up a Second-Hand Santa Facebook group to make buying, selling and swapping potential Christmas gifts easier in the community. In early October, we held our first event at the Butcher's Arms, a kids' clothes swap and we are looking forward to regular meetups in the village to share skills, resources and learn

more about sustainable living. We will continue to share information on upcoming local events and our plans, if you would like to be involved with any initiatives or have any ideas you'd like to share please do get join our Facebook group (Eco SoCo) or email [ecosoco@sonningcommonmagazine.org](mailto:ecosoco@sonningcommonmagazine.org)

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# Church news

## WINE & SONG

A convivial evening of wine and music ushered in the autumn on the evening of 12th October at Kidmore End School. Now growing in stature, with its opulent 'bring and share' supper, this lovely event is becoming something of a pleasant institution.

After a rosé wine reception, wine connoisseur Nick Room led the evening with introductions to three white wines; the first being a non-alcoholic Riesling (as requested) which caused some mixed reactions! This was followed by a flavoursome South African Chenin Blanc, and a Sardinian Vermentino. As ever, people differing in their response to each wine, which led to some healthy debate.

Throughout the evening musical interludes were provided by the church choir and individual appearances peppered the occasion. The Rev James Stickings' lovely vocals were accompanied by Tim Walker on guitar, and our resident ukulele combo with John Merricks on cajon provided some rather more light-hearted entertainment, as did two fine and cheery songs from Janet Hallett and Linda Scottorn.

During the supper Nick treated us to a Spanish Garnacha, followed in the second half by three more reds - a Minervois La Laviniere, and a Rhône Syrah to compare to an Australian version of the same grape variety (from the Barossa, so called Shiraz).

The final number was a delightful homage to Nick's expertise - a piece by Franz Schubert arranged as a round with lyrics written by Frances Brewitt Taylor.

Such a lovely blend of wine, music and food sent punters home in a mellow mood, with the added satisfaction of knowing that £800 had been raised for church maintenance funds.

Following 32 years as Wine Buyer for Waitrose, Nick has set up his own company to keep him busy in the wine trade! ●

Find out more by visiting [www.rtwinesolutions.com](http://www.rtwinesolutions.com)

Rosemary House



### CHRISTMAS SERVICES

**CHRIST THE KING, SONNING COMMON  
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, KIDMORE END**

**Friday 20 December**  
7.30pm Carol Service at St John the Baptist

**Christmas Eve**  
4.30pm Christingle at Christ the King

11pm Midnight Mass at St John the Baptist

**Christmas Morning**  
9.30am Eucharist at Christ the King  
11.00am Eucharist at St John the Baptist

### SPRINGWATER

**Christmas Eve**  
'Carols by Candlelight Service' 4.30pm

### ST MICHAEL'S

**Our Christmas Masses this year will be:**

**Christmas Eve**  
5pm for families with young children.

7.30pm Carols followed by 'Midnight' Mass at 8pm.

**Christmas Day**  
10.30am

**Boxing Day**  
10am followed by coffee and cake

## SPRINGWATER CHURCH

Springwater with Kevin and Linsey, our pastors, has enjoyed a fruitful year. Friendships have grown deeper and new ones blossomed, we thank God for his grace and for every blessing received.

We have enjoyed seeing the Springwater community develop, meeting in church but also in pubs and homes. The Ark our toddler group, is strong and has supported the wider villages with a great Fun Day, plus the women's and men's gatherings are places of friendship and encouragement.

The Steering Wheel Fellowship meets regularly in Henley and they have enjoyed various visits to local and distant classic car events, with the support of Springwater and with great camaraderie.

Many people have enjoyed the free artisan bread making workshops which continue to be run on Monday mornings. This initiative has resulted in a team of women visiting India to train and become friends with girls rescued from slavery, giving them a valuable and enjoyable skill.

The church has also supported music

events in Henley initiated by our songwriters and musicians. We invite you to visit us on Sunday mornings at 10.30am when you will be able to hear some of them and share in worship and refreshments.

If you would like to know more about any of our activities please visit us, contact our office or check out the web site: [www.springwaterchurch.org.uk](http://www.springwaterchurch.org.uk) ●

Chris Girdler



## ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Happy New Year! This might seem a little premature for the beginning of December but the Church's New Year begins on the first Sunday of Advent, which this year falls on 1st December. For the coming year our focus on the life of Jesus during our Sunday Masses switches from St Luke's gospel to that of St Matthew. In preparation for Christmas, as well as our regular weekday and weekend Masses, the following events will be occurring to which all are invited:

7pm each Monday evening (2nd - 23rd Dec) an hour of quiet prayer and reflective music in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Come for a few minutes or the full hour.

7pm Thursday 19 December Service of Reconciliation at which visiting priests

will be present.

9.30am Saturday 14 December Christmas Flower Arranging Workshop. Contact the parish office to book a place.

We look forward to welcoming friends old and new over the Christmas season.

In January, St Michael's will be hosting the ecumenical service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at which all the local churches will be represented. Everyone from the local community is invited to join us.

For up to date information check the weekly newsletter on our website: [www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk](http://www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk) ●

Brian Theobald

## CHRISTINGLE 2019

Enjoy some magic on Christmas Eve with the children and bring them to the Christingle service at Christ the King at 4.30 pm. Carols, candles and Christingles - this began life as a wonderful Hungarian tradition which has become the curtain raiser to our Christmas celebrations in the centre of Sonning Common village.

A collection is taken for the Children's Society, a Christian led organisation, caring in a variety of ways for vulnerable and needy children and teenagers. A charity aiming to fight child poverty and neglect and help all children have a better chance in life, it runs schemes throughout the country and helps young people meet challenges in their lives. There are 3.9 million children in the UK living in poverty and more than 166,000 children who act as carers to their families. The Children's Society supports these young people.

Carols are sung by candlelight and everyone takes home an orange studded with sweets and fruit, symbolising the earth and its seasons which makes a lovely table centre for Christmas Day.

But now no more spoilers. Come and experience it for yourself. ●

Rosemary House

## Carve out a moment of peace

We are about to enter what is for a lot of people one of the busiest and most intense periods of the year. Being a priest brings with it the busyness of planning and taking services, but that's not really what I mean: rather it's the rather frenetic flavour that our lives take on in the run up to Christmas, with all the social and familial events, visits, and celebrations. And then there's the aftermath of January as things gradually get back to "normal" - whatever that looks like!

Without a doubt this period of celebration brings light to our lives amid the darkness of winter. But I think it's also worth listening to the reminders during the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany of the importance of peace. As the choir of angels sing in St Luke's Gospel: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men."

The challenge for many of us will be to carve out moments of peace during the busy holiday season. Do come along to any of our services and experience a breather: you are always most welcome! ●

Reverend James Stickings

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**ELF AND REINDEER PUPPETS**

These puppets are not only great to play with but double up as fun Christmas decorations.

**What you'll need:**

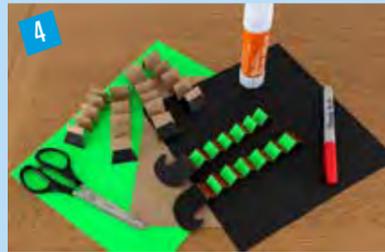
- Paper cups
- Scissors
- Glue
- Pencil
- Marker pens
- String
- Coloured paper
- Googly eyes
- Pom poms



1) Take two paper cups and paint, colour or cover with paper to create the base for your reindeer and elf. I chose brown and green but there are no rules where creativity is concerned!



2) Cut shapes from the coloured paper to make antlers and ears for the reindeer and a hat, arms, face and collar for the elf. Stick them to your cup base.  
 3) Add googly eyes and pom-pom noses and draw face details with the marker pens.



4) Cut 4 strips of paper for the reindeer legs and 2 for the elf. Decorate as desired adding shoes and hooves as appropriate.



5) Concertina the legs, folding the paper back and forth, and glue inside the bottom of the cup.



6) Under the watchful eye of a grown up, take a sharp pencil and pierce two holes into the top of each cup.



7) Cut a length of string and feed it into the cup, one end through each hole. Tie the string so that the knot is hidden inside the cup.



8) Hold the string half way down its length with one piece of string in each hand. As you pull your arms apart the puppet will jump from the floor and as you bring them back together it will land.



# CAN WE HAVE YOUR RUBBISH?

## What we are doing:

Sonning Common Primary School are collecting things that you can't put in your recycling bins. So far, we have raised £477 for our school by gathering the following;

- Crisp packets (including multipack bags)
- Pringle tubes (and lids)
- Toothpaste tubes and associated packaging
- Toothbrushes and electric toothbrush heads
- Flexible plastic tubes from beauty care products
- Personal care spray bottle tops
- Hair colourant kits (except ridged plastic bottles and packaging)
- Plastic roll-on deodorants
- Single-use pens

## How the scheme works:

This scheme is called TerraCycling. We take the items that you give us and put them into bags. Then we send them to Teracycle, who weigh the bags and calculate how much to pay us. Recently, with the £477 that we have received, Mr. Hirst (Headteacher) has bought some new equipment for the KS 1 and 2 playgrounds, such as a variety of balls and balance boards.

Even if you don't attend SCPS, you can still put your recycling in our eco-friendly bins. Our school has installed some in the Sonning Common Library entrance; they are labelled so you shouldn't have any trouble trying to work out which bins to put your items in!

If lots of Sonning Commoners start collecting for us, I'll design a target poster, so that everyone can see how much money has been raised for the Primary School. Thank you! ●

Alfie D  
Year 5, Sonning Common Primary School



# THE COLOUR RUN

On Saturday 28 September, Sonning Common Primary School held a colour run. It was to raise money for the school. It was a family friendly fun-filled fiesta.

Everyone ran around the field 16 times! People chucked paint at you, it billowed out in front of you and rose into the sky like a colourful cloud. The ground was covered in different colours of paint, my hair was like a rainbow!

There were people dressed up in multi-coloured tutus, and some were dressed in green wigs! There was one man dressed in a power ranger costume.

The organisers sold yellow, red, green, and purple paint. They also sold sunglasses because the paint can get in your eyes. Some people were wearing swimming goggles!

Everyone had lots of fun; some people looked like smurfs by the end of the run! We finished off by having a burger from the barbeque. Then we went home for a well-needed shower. ●

Eloise Hart



## Word Search

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

- |         |        |          |
|---------|--------|----------|
| COLOUR  | YELLOW | BLUE     |
| PINK    | PAINT  | FIELD    |
| RUN     | GREEN  | PURPLE   |
| RAINBOW | RED    | BARBECUE |

# A NIGHT AT THE CHÂTEAU



In August this year our family spent one night at an old chateau (which is French for 'castle') in central France. The original castle dated back to the 13th Century and is now often called "The Castle of Sleeping Beauty".

During the French Revolution the castle was declared a National Asset, which means that the current owners must preserve the buildings and gardens for future generations of visitors. A famous Dutch painter once lived here with his wife and two sons. Several of his works and her sculptures are still displayed in and around the castle grounds.



While we were there we had a good look round and saw all the amazing features of the castle, including lots of tall turrets, stone-framed windows and a front door with carved coats of arms. Inside the chateau there were stone staircases and colourful rugs on the tiled floors.

The kitchen had two long tables for the guests to eat breakfast. The ceilings were patterned and colourful and the walls had original, detailed wallpaper. Our family bedroom had a wooden floor, a gold-framed mirror and ornate cast-iron radiators.

We also went for a walk in the castle grounds and discovered that there was an old barn which had been filled with art. We also had time to play some pool in the lounge.



We stayed for breakfast and in the dining room a ginger cat sat by the window hoping for a snack from one of the guests. He would dance outside on the window sill and then press his face up against the window. He was very cute!



I thought that the chateau was very nice, comfortable and welcoming. My favourite part was the old barn behind the chateau which was built in 1881. ●

Isabel Nicholson  
Year 5, Sonning Common Primary School

- Quiz: countries
1. Liechtenstein
  2. Uzbekistan
  3. Ethiopia
  4. Thailand
  5. Canada (3 million lakes; 9% of its territory)
  6. USA (2.2 million prisoners; 7 per 1,000 population)
  7. Tuvalu (South Pacific)
  8. Afghanistan (95% of the world's opium)
  9. Finland (famous for its mobile phones)
  10. Iceland (they don't have surnames as such, just who your father was, e.g. Magnus Magnusson)

Cryptogram

The answer to the great question ... of life, the universe and everything ... is ... forty-two.

— Douglas Adams

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

## Sudoku

W	O	O	D	L	A	N	D	S	
I	R	I	I	I	R	I	W		
N	A	D	I	R	O	L	I	V	E
L	A	R	G	E	I	S	L	E	T
E	A	A							
W	H	I	S	T	C	E	A	S	E
O	D	O	I	L	M				I
G	N	O	A	M	A	N			H
C	O	C	E	A	N				D
A	V	A							I
B	L	A	C	K	M	O	R	E	

## Cryptic crossword

## Puzzle Page Answers

# Parish news

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## PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

Maintaining a website is a good way for parish councils to communicate with local people about their decision-making and the work that they do.

The current Sonning Common Parish Council website requires a refresh. In part, this is because the government has introduced new rules that oblige our website to be compliant with the WCAG 2.0 standard.

This standard exists to ensure that information published on the internet is accessible to people with disabilities. For example, by providing text alternatives to any non-text content. While the technical aspects are important, the refresh will also take into account how people use the internet to find information and to share it. In particular, more people use social media platforms, particularly Facebook, to find out what is going on.

The parish council already has a Facebook page. This means we can share news on Facebook groups, such as the SoCo Village Network and Sonning Common Gossip. In this way, items of interest to social media users will appear in their news feeds.

The refreshed website will keep the link to the South Oxfordshire planning portal. This link makes it easy for village residents to keep an eye on what proposals are in the pipeline. The aim is to make the new website simpler to use, with less clutter and with larger font size for ease of reading.

If you have some suggestions that you would like to share, please send a note to my email address: [nickshanagher@gmail.com](mailto:nickshanagher@gmail.com).

## VILLAGE CENTRE GRAND DESIGNS

The Village Centre Grand Designs project continues to gain momentum. Peter Brett Associates have now created a detailed schematic of the plan which is available for viewing in the Parish Office. Another Open Day is planned for the New Year 2020. Watch this space.

Stuart Howe  
Parish Councillor

## BENCH SEATS

The Parish Council has provided a number of benches throughout the village. By the One Stop shop on both sides of Wood Lane, Ilex Close, outside Batten House, on the Peppard Road by Lea Meadow, by the bus stop opposite Sedgewell Road and in Crowsley way. Plus a perch seat on the corner of Kennylands and Westleigh Drive. It is hoped the benches will provide a happy resting place.



## CLEANEST STREETS IN THE COUNTY

The Parish Council have bought Billy Goat for £1,925. Mark Weston is delighted and hopes to make our streets the cleanest in the county at least.



Sonning Common Parish Council  
Parish Office, Village Hall, Wood Lane, Sonning Common RG4 9SL  
T: 0118 972 3616

E: [clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk) (Phillip Collings)  
[deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](mailto:deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk) (Ros Varnes)  
W: [www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk)  
Reminder to all readers to use the Parish website for information

# TOM FORT VEG

There has been a quiet revolution in the eating habits of the Fort household.

A few months back both our daughters - concerned about the planet and appalled by the horrors of modern mass meat production - announced they were becoming vegetarian.

As chief cook and bottlewasher, I supported their stand - despite certain inconsistencies in the arguments - and was not prepared to prepare different meals for different tastes. Since then we have been a 90% veggie family - and, from the culinary point of view, it has been a liberation and a voyage of discovery.

I have learned to love the slimy aubergine, cherish the knobbly

celeriac, appreciate anew the virtues of the beetroot, marvel at the versatility of the humble cauliflower. I have developed intimate relations with foodstuffs of which I previously knew little or nothing - khimchi, tahini, chipotle, harissa, tamarind, to name but a few.

Last night we had cubes of paneer cheese cooked with tomatoes, onions and spinach; two nights before it was Badshah Kitchari, a curry with mung beans and lots of spices. I am casting my recipe net ever wider - Turkey, North Africa, the Caribbean, Armenia, Korea, they all have wonderful dishes to discover.

In general I do not miss regular and frequent meat. The food bill is down, the food waste bin smells a lot less

noxious, and - yes - I have lost a few pounds. The one thing I hanker for is a roast chicken - as much for what you can do with leftovers as for the dish itself.

The huge plus is that when we I do eat meat I really appreciate it. I mean REALLY appreciate it. Take the sausage, a succulent, meaty, well-seasoned banger, fried slowly and thoroughly (you should never grill a sausage). Just writing those words sends my saliva glands into overdrive. The thought of biting into one makes me positively swoon with longing.

Pass the ketchup. ●



# COOK'S CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

## HOOTS MON!

### COCK-A-LEEKIE SOUP - serves 12

- 1.75kg (4 lb) chicken thighs
- 2.5L (4 pints) water
- 1 onion, chopped
- 50g (2 oz) pearl barley
- 275ml (10 fl oz) chicken stock
- 7 leeks, sliced
- 2 sticks celery, sliced
- 1 sprig fresh thyme, leaves chopped
- small handful chopped fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt and 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper



In a large pot over high heat, combine the chicken, water, onion and pearl barley. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low and simmer for 1 hour. Remove chicken, discard the bones and skin, chop meat into bite size pieces and return to the pot. Add the chicken stock, leeks, celery, thyme leaves, parsley, salt and pepper. Simmer for 30 more minutes, or until all vegetables are tender. ●

### CRANACHAN - serves 4

- 5 tbsp porridge oats
- 150 ml (5 fl oz) whipping cream
- 150 g (5 1/2 oz) fromage frais
- 2 tbsp clear honey
- 2 tbsp whisky
- 400 g (14 oz) raspberries



Preheat the grill to high. Line the rack in the grill pan with foil and spread the oatmeal over the foil. Toast under the grill for about 3 minutes, stirring once or twice, until the oatmeal is golden. Set aside to cool for about 15 minutes. Put the cream and fromage frais in a bowl and whip together until thick. Stir in the honey and whisky, then fold in 4 tbsp of the toasted oatmeal. Reserve a few raspberries for the decoration. Layer the remaining raspberries with the cream mixture in 4 glass serving dishes, starting with raspberries and ending with a layer of the cream mixture. Decorate each dessert with a sprinkling of the remaining 1 tbsp toasted oatmeal and the reserved raspberries. Serve immediately (or keep in the fridge for up to 1 hour before serving). ●



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# DIARY DATES

## DECEMBER 2019

**Tuesday 3**  
2 - 3.30pm  
Bereavement Support Group.  
Fish Volunteer Centre

**Wednesday 4**  
10.30am - 12noon  
Christmas Coffee Morning  
hosted by Sonning Common  
WI. Open to all. Village Hall

**Saturday 7**  
2 - 3 and 4 - 5pm  
Nottakwire Christmas Carol  
singing. Village Hall

**Monday 9**  
2.30pm  
FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

**Wednesday 11**  
2 - 3.30pm  
Sonning Common Carers  
Group. Abbeycrest Care Home

**Wednesday 11**  
7.45pm  
Henley Philatelic Society  
- Chairman's Evening "A  
Miscellany of Stamps". Bix  
Village Hall

**Saturday 14**  
3 - 5pm  
Master Builders Club Childrens  
LEGO Workshop. Village Hall

**Monday 16**  
8pm  
Sonning Common Parish  
Council. Village Hall

**Friday 20**  
9.30 - 11.30am  
Master Builders Club Childrens  
LEGO Workshop. Village Hall

**Tuesday 24**  
5.45pm  
Torchlight procession. Kidmore  
End Primary School

**The FISH Volunteer Centre** runs regular door-to-door shopping trips to Henley and Reading every month. The programme of shopping and leisure trips is published and distributed on 20th of the preceding month. Copies of the programme are available from the FISH Office, the Library and the CCA shop and posted on all village noticeboards. If you would like to receive a regular copy by email please send the message 'bus programme please' with your name to [busmanager@fishvolunteercentre.org.uk](mailto:busmanager@fishvolunteercentre.org.uk)

The programme is also posted on the FISH website [www.fishvolunteercentre.org.uk](http://www.fishvolunteercentre.org.uk)

To book any trip call **0118 972 3986** any weekday between 09.30 and 11.30 a.m.

## JANUARY 2020

**Wednesday 8**  
7.45pm  
Henley Philatelic Society - An  
Evening of Postcards—up to 8 x  
A4 or 3 x A3 pages.  
Bix Village Hall

**Monday 13**  
2.30pm  
FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

**Thursday 16**  
11.30am  
FISH - Pub lunch

**Thursday 16**  
7.30pm  
Sonning Common Women's  
Institute: "From Foxglove  
to Fritillary - my journey in  
flowers: a floral demonstration  
by Erica Cunningham.  
Village Hall

**Monday 20**  
8pm  
Sonning Common Parish  
Council. Village Hall

**Wednesday 21**  
7.45pm  
Henley Philatelic Society -  
The Antipodes. Bix Village Hall

**Thursday 23**  
FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

**Thursday 30**  
1.30pm  
Learn about your eye health.  
Health Centre

# ADVERTISERS DIRECTORY

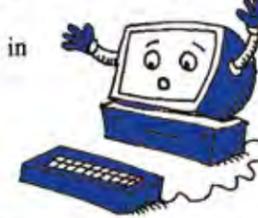
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LC Chauffeurs	33		
Mike Farina Auto Services Ltd	Back		
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