

Steeple Aston

August 2024

Issue No. 612

Life



- Church Fête photos • Richard III at Leicester Cathedral •
- SACS Summer Party • Woodpecker notes • Steeple People •

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Contributions are welcome. Please email editorsalife@gmail.com
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(photo by Catherine Crook)

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

All articles and letters to the Editor
editorsalife@gmail.com

COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline is the 14th of the previous month. This means the copy deadline for the September 2024 issue is Wednesday 14th August.

READ STEEPLE ASTON LIFE ONLINE
<https://www.steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine>

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Badminton (Thursday evenings)		Alison Moran	347033
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Deddington Guides		Maggie Rampley	07957 600755
Deddington Health Centre	Appointments	338611	
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	338847
	Out of Hours	111	
Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Head Teacher		340204
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Garden Club	Chairman	Richard Preston	340512
Golf Society	Chairman	Alan Brewer	340423
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Village Website	www.steepleaston.org.uk	Editor: Jenny Bell	943573
Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme		0300 3030125	
WI	President	Julie Hillier	349185



“...folly is not always folly.”
Jane Austen

Steeple Aston *Life*

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Editor: Robert Scott
editorsalife@gmail.com

Treasurer: Vaughan Billings
01869 340857

Secretary: Jenny Taylor
01869 340551

Advertising:
Charlotte Bartlett
01869 347347
salife.advertising@gmail.com

Deliveries:
Greg Elphick
07891 760176
greggles1262@gmail.com

Layout design:
Edward Dowler, Martin Lipson

Committee:
Jenny Bell, Nigel Francis

Editorial

On which side of the ‘digital divide’ are you? Do you own a good laptop (or tablet) with fast broadband and have the skills to use it all efficiently? Or have you, for various reasons, avoided computers and all they entail?

According to Age UK Oxfordshire, 40% of those aged 75 or more and 12% of those between 65 and 74 years are not online. This appears to be an average across the county, or possibly the country. In Steeple Aston, anecdotal evidence suggests that these percentages are lower. An excellent source of local news and information is the steepleaston.org.uk website, which can be viewed by computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone – but only if you have access to one of these devices.

All of which is a preamble to extol the virtues of ‘Steeple Aston Life’. It is delivered free of charge to every dwelling in Steeple and Middle Aston, whether or not broadband is available. Unlike a laptop, it does not require mains power or batteries. It is perfectly portable and can be read at the breakfast table, in a garden, or on a bus or train.

Behind this publication is a team of volunteers who work to ensure that it lands on your doormat every month. And from time to time, a vacancy appears which needs to be filled by another volunteer. Such is the current situation. A new Editor is required (see page 27). This is a rewarding role, allowing you to report village news and events (though much of the content is supplied by local contributors).

Previous editing experience, while useful, is not essential. The SAL Committee will help to ease the new Editor into their work, which can be done during the day or evening, and would look great on a CV for anyone not yet retired.

This is the 41st issue I have edited but, appropriately in the month of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, it is time for me to pass the baton. My very best wishes go to my successor and this newsletter, first published in 1973.

To paraphrase the legendary broadcaster John Ebdon, if you have been, thank you for reading.

Robert





Free information day, Deddington

Dementia Oxfordshire, a service provided by Age UK Oxfordshire, is holding an information drop-in event at the Windmill Centre, Deddington on Wednesday 4th September, 10am to 3pm.

As well as lots of information from Dementia Oxfordshire's own team of advisers about how to live well with dementia, there will also be a host of other organisations with helpful support for older people, including advice for family carers, how to avoid scams, where to access community activities and how technology can make life easier around the house. There will also be delicious refreshments, craft stalls, a Zumba taster session and musical entertainment.

Admission is free. For more information, please contact Katie on katiesmok@dementiaoxfordshire.org.uk or call 07827 235441.



Age UK Oxfordshire is a local independent charity supporting older people in Oxfordshire. They have a variety of services available to help you to live independently and live life to the full. Services range from support at home to helping link you into your community, from foot care clinics to exercise classes. They offer a free information and advice helpline, as well as one-to-one support if you have been a victim of a scam.

To find out more about how they can support you visit:
www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire, call 0345 450 1276 or email contactus@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

General Election result

Sean Woodcock is the new Labour MP for Banbury (including Steeple Aston). In the General Election on 4th July he beat Victoria Prentis, our previous MP and Attorney General in the Conservative government, by more than 3,000 votes. From 1922 until now, Banbury had an unbroken record of returning Conservative representatives.



Steeple Talks

We have had several good talks and are pleased with the response to these jolly evenings. Do you have a subject you'd like to share? Or know someone with an interesting story to tell? Please nudge likely suspects and let us know – either Eileen on 340099 or Martin on 340906.

Road closure in August

Steeple Aston Road between Steeple Aston and Middle Aston will be closed to traffic for repairs from 7th to 9th August. Limited access only will be provided to frontages within the closed section, depending on the progress of the works.



Chatty Café

The 'Chatty Café' has begun at The Grain Store, Middle Aston. Look for the 'Chatter & Natter table' on Mondays from 9am to 11am. The Chatty Café is a great way of encouraging people to talk to others.

The scheme is the brainchild of Alexandra Hoskyn, who founded it after a miserable day at a supermarket café with her infant son, where she noticed that no one was talking to each other. She found that by simply putting 'Chatter & Natter' signs on tables in cafés, it created a space for people to talk.

Who can join in? Anyone... if you're on your own, in a couple, with a friend, if you're a carer why not sit there with who you care for, mums and babies, dads and babies, grandparents and babies, young people, older people and anyone in between! It's a great way to meet new people in your community.

Stay for five minutes, or longer, while you have your drink. It's not about making life-long friends, just having good old-fashioned human interaction!

It's official! The Chatty Cafe Scheme is reducing loneliness and social isolation by getting people chatting! Coventry University has published its May 2022 initial report and the key findings are that 100% of Chatter & Natter table users said it made them feel less lonely and socially isolated, plus 97% of venues feel that the Chatter & Natter tables are encouraging community spirit.

The Chatty Café Scheme commented that, "The coronavirus pandemic has highlighted those experiencing loneliness and we know that simply having a chat can brighten someone's day". For more information, visit their website: <https://thechattycafescheme.co.uk/>

Annual Show

Bank Holiday Monday, 26th August, will be our 132nd Annual Show. As a child, this was always the climax of my school holiday with weeks of my mum saying, "you could do something for the show" to keep me occupied. Now, it is me saying this to parents in the village. We have classes to enter for all ages. Things that can be done ahead – a painting, a jar of jam, a photo, to name a few. Not everything has to be a last-minute panic. Although the show also meant the new school term wasn't far away, I do have very fond memories, and I hope your family feels the same.

Please enter something, it is so much more fun to be part of the event, and come along to the fête part in the afternoon – homemade teas, ice cream, bowling, vintage tractors, bouncy castles and so much more.

For copies of the classes please find the schedule on the village website steepleaston.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Annual-Show-2024.pdf or a paper copy can be picked up from the village shop. Please contact me if you have any questions or need support: vmcstedman@btinternet.com

Trade stands are welcome – £15 pitch fee. Please contact Claire Coysh: clairecoysh@hotmail.com

Good luck and we look forward to seeing you on the day.
Vicky Clifton, Show Secretary



New arrival

Tom and Becca Coker are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Ludo Michael Octavius, born on Monday 8th July at the JR weighing 8lbs 15oz. Imogen and Magnus are thrilled with their baby brother and he looks forward to meeting everyone.



Steeple Aston Cricket Club

There is no Cricket Report in this issue as the last two games were cancelled. The report will return as soon as games have been played.

Housing Needs Survey

All households in Steeple and Middle Aston should have received a Survey Form from Community First Oxfordshire. This is being done at the request of your parish council and parish meeting to help us understand the extent and nature of Housing Need in the two parishes.

You may already know that we're supporting the setting up of a Community Land Trust to help deliver affordable housing on sites chosen by local people. This aims to focus on the housing needs of the community, including those who might wish to downsize from their existing homes, and reduce the villages' dependence on commercial developers for new housing.

So we're asking you to please complete and return the form on behalf of your household (in the Freepost envelope provided) – even if you are not currently in housing need – to help us to move forward with proposals. The survey form is not available online, so please return it by post. The deadline is 11th August.

Many thanks.

On behalf of Steeple Aston Parish Council, Middle Aston Parish Meeting and Steeple and Middle Aston Community Land Trust steering group.

Falling bush

On 9th July Yoni Kinory was walking along the western footpath on Paines Hill, opposite Brookside Cottage, when he heard a creaking on the other side of the road. Glancing across he saw a bush tilting over slowly and falling onto the footpath and road. Yoni photographed the scene and sent the picture to SAL. If you capture any local events, please send details to editorsalife@gmail.com



Nature Notes



We have three species of woodpecker around the village, but one of them, the Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, is much smaller than the other two (about the size of a sparrow) and not at all common, so can be quite difficult to find.

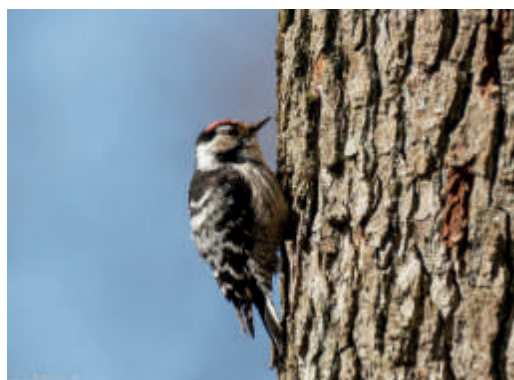


The largest of the three is the Green Woodpecker. You are likely to be alerted to its presence by its laughing 'yaffle' call, but it can be hard to spot as its green plumage provides very good camouflage in its usual location, on the ground foraging for ants. It can be easier to spot when it takes flight as its yellow rump shows up well. All three woodpecker species share similar flight characteristics, an undulating wave-like motion, each wave showing more 'bounce' the smaller the species.

Although the main food of all the three woodpeckers is invertebrates, the Greater Spotted Woodpecker has also learned to take advantage of garden feeders, enjoying fat balls, nuts and seeds. It is also very much an opportunist and will prey on small nestlings, enlarging holes in nest boxes to take chicks, or even using its sharp bill to make another entry hole.



Both the Spotted Woodpeckers have predominately black and white plumage, but the Greater Spotted has large white shoulder patches while the Lesser Spotted has a 'ladder' pattern across its back.



All of them nest in cavities in trees, usually making a new cavity each year. They all prefer broadleaved trees, but are adaptable to what is available. The larger two prefer living wood, the tiny Lesser Spotted preferring softer rotten wood. The drumming sound heard in spring isn't the sound of excavating holes, it is the call of the one of the Spotted Woodpeckers to announce their presence, warn off rivals, and to attract a mate. The Green Woodpecker doesn't tend to drum but may tap gently around the nest hole.

Nesting in a cavity gives the young birds good protection against predators and adverse weather conditions, so woodpeckers have a high success rate of raising young. As the nestlings are out of sight within the nest cavity, they are usually first seen when they fledge, when they are almost adult size. The juveniles all resemble their parents in appearance, but with more mottled, muted markings, only gaining their adult plumage after moulting in their first autumn. Subtle differences in the red markings around the head area also distinguish adults from juveniles and males from females.

Bridget Lewis

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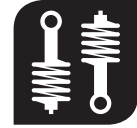
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The ARTS Page



Poem of the Month suggestion comes from John White (Southside)

'Fireflies in the Garden' by Robert Frost
*Here come real stars to fill the upper skies,
And here on earth come emulating flies,
That though they never equal stars in size,
(And they were never really stars at heart)
Achieve at times a very star-like start.
Only, of course, they can't sustain the part.*

Robert Frost, born San Francisco 1874, won four Pulitzer Prizes for poetry. He lived for a time in Beaconsfield and read at JFK's inauguration. John has a prize-winning book of poetry out recently – 'Attachments'. Look it up on templarpoeetry.com He will give a presentation in Steeple Aston later in the year.

This from Margaret Bulleyment: "I sang in a 200th anniversary concert for Beethoven's 9th in St. Edburg's, Bicester, in July. (I did not realise there were that many top 'A's!) We were conducted by Sam Laughton. The orchestra is called Trinity Camerata and is now based in Bicester. Their next event is on Sunday 13th October at 4pm in St. Edburg's and is a Family Concert: Berlioz 'Carnival Overture', Britten 'Young Persons' Guide to the Orchestra', Dvorak 'Carnival Overture', Stephen Bulla (arr) '007: Through the Years' and John Williams 'Jurassic Park' highlights. (trinitycamerata.org). Adults £10 in advance from Coles Books, Bicester, £12 on door. Under 16s free."

It looks a terrific concert and it is always good to hear directly from readers – more please!

Just in time to flag up the 'Wilderness Festival' at Cornbury Park, Oxfordshire – 1st to 4th August. "Perfect escape – eclectic line-up of music and arts". (wildernessfestival.com)

Mikron Theatre gave a marvellous performance in North Aston of 'Common Ground' – a romp through the history of land access in England. If you missed this, it is well worth going when they are in our area (Wolvercote/Thrupp/Lower Heyford/Adderbury) in the first week of August – see mikron.org.uk for details. They alternate 'Common Ground' with 'Jennie Lee'. Married to NHS founder Nye Bevan, in 1929 she was Westminster's youngest MP. She was instrumental in the founding of the Open University and the expansion of the Arts Council. Maybe our best Arts Minister!

A shame Thangam Debbonaire lost her Bristol seat – she would have been the first professional cellist to be Arts Minister. But let's hope that Lisa Nandy will fight for more arts funding alongside the Education Secretary for music and the arts in schools.

I am planning a concert for Steeple Aston Church on Saturday 9th November at 7pm, with the Aston Singers, two talented local instrumentalists and some readings. It is the day before Remembrance Day and that will be the theme. If you have any requests or suggestions, or personal memories from family members, please be in touch soon as I am planning the programme. Also, please save the date.

I gave some ideas for the holidays last time, but notice there is still time and availability for various exciting workshops at the New Theatre, Oxford. (atgtickets.com/venues/new-theatre-oxford/)

The Oxford International Song Festival (oxfordsong.org), originally the Lieder Festival, is now a firm fixture on the international stage. 11th to 26th October – as they say, book early to avoid disappointment.

I look forward to recommendations for future Arts Pages and to a Poem of the Month for the September edition.

Nick Cleobury
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Meet *Lucinda Fuoco*

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???? Mind Games

Word Pairs Puzzle

(submitted by Cathy Lawday)

For each pair of words below, find one word that completes two phrases.

For example: seaside romance – the answer is 'holiday' and it makes the phrases 'seaside holiday' and 'holiday romance'.

Clue: all the phrases are linked to summer holidays.

1. hold inclusive
2. bus over
3. sun beauty
4. day adviser
5. foreign surfing
6. sandy umbrella
7. security -in
8. excess handler
9. rip- -season
10. capital break

Answers on page 44.



Looking for fun, **wraparound care** once school is over at Dr Radcliffe's, Steeple Aston?

With a blend of outdoor play to indoor sports, alongside crafting and baking, Fun Club has established itself as the club children want to belong to.

For 2 hours from the end of the school day, term time only.

Fun Club is bookable per term. Limited spaces.

If of interest, please email steeplefunclub@gmail.com

Or contact Antonia 'Toe' Maclean mobile 07867 516 518

Steeple Aston Church Fete

The Steeple Aston Church Fete was, once again, a resounding success. The day was kicked off in style by parish councillor and Carwow YouTube channel celebrity, Mat Watson, who arrived in the sleek new MG Cyberster. It joined a host of other classic vehicles ranging from tractors to old Fords.

The opening of the fete was swiftly followed by some electric performances from the Joanne Mills School of Dance, Banbury, who wowed the crowd in the centre of the arena, showcasing local talent and adding to the lively atmosphere.

The Red Lion pub hosted a delicious BBQ, serving up mouth-watering burgers and refreshing drinks, much to the delight of attendees, whose food was complimented by the joyous sound of the Jubilee Brass (Oxford) Band.

The fete, which narrowly avoided the typical grey clouds expected of a British summertime, buzzed with community spirit and an abundance of children's activities. From face painting to traditional games, there was no shortage of fun for the younger visitors, ensuring smiles all round.

A memorable highlight was the tug of war, where the village team triumphed over the fire brigade, igniting cheers among the spectators and children involved.

In total, the event raised approximately £4,000 for the Church, a testament to the generosity and dedication of the community. A heartfelt thank you goes out to all who attended, participated and volunteered, making the Steeple Aston Church Fête a wonderful day of fun.

Charlie Boobyer

(photos by Catherine Crook)





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The Gardening Spot

It's that time of the year again!

Think of your plants before going away for a few days or weeks. If possible, get a neighbour or friend to make sure that the greenhouse is ventilated when needed and the planters have some water. Failing that, it is possible to invest in an automatic watering system and automatic vents.

Whatever you decide, try to make some arrangements for your plants so that they can carry on through the next few months and give you enjoyment and possibly some fresh produce. August, after all, is the month when the vegetable plot will be producing lovely fresh fruit and vegetables for you to enjoy.

With the likes of runner beans or courgettes, keep picking regularly as they can go old very quickly and then the crop is wasted. Watch out for the dreaded caterpillar as he is always waiting patiently for the opportunity to eat the best and youngest leaves of your brassicas. And in those few minutes you have to spare, deadhead fading flowers as that will encourage more flowers throughout the remainder of summer and into autumn.

August is a great month for collecting free seeds from your garden or, in my wife's case, other people's gardens – but I should add, with the owner's permission! Take the stem of a plant that has gone to seed, bring it into the dry and hang upside down for a time until the seeds start to fall on their own, then place in a paper bag and keep in a dry place until next year when, almost by magic, you have some seed that did not cost £4.99 and will probably germinate much more easily.

A few days ago, when it was raining and I had little else to do, I was searching the World Wide Web for pieces of information about my grandfather, who was head gardener of The Grange from 1890 until 1938. Although I knew he was well respected in the gardening world around Steeple Aston, I did not realise how much further afield he had ventured. I found him giving talks to gardening groups well beyond the Oxfordshire boundary. He welcomed gardening groups to The Grange and gave guided tours of the estate and judged at various flower shows around the county.

Although I never knew my grandfather, I was lucky enough to have a mother who lived and breathed gardening and told me many stories of her childhood, being brought up in the head gardener's cottage, here at Steeple Aston. One of the things she used to tell me was about the flower show which at that time was held within the grounds of The Grange and later near the Village Hall. The annual flower show, which has been in existence since the 1860s, is one of the main attractions to the village's calendar.

This year, there is a number of new people on the committee arranging the show and the only way the show will continue is to support it and them. They need your support and that can come in two ways. First, enter something. There are so many classes that you should be able to find something that appeals. Second, attend the show on August Bank Holiday Monday where you will be amazed at what local villagers can produce, but also find a welcoming experience which makes our village that little bit special.

One final bit of information. What do you get when you cross a dog with a rose? A Collie-flower!

Happy gardening.

Richard Preston

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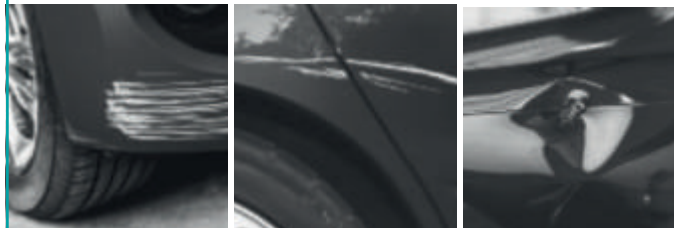


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Elaine Kelly



How long have you lived in Steeple Aston? I moved here with my family 13 years ago. It was a great central location for my work at that time.

What do you like best about living in Steeple Aston? The friends we have made, the lovely walks on our doorstep – and not forgetting The Red Lion!

As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up? I always wanted to become a veterinary surgeon.

What do you do for a living now? I started my own business in 2014 – Eldon Friends. I am a private carer who supports adults to live independently in their homes.

What is the best job you have done? This is the best job I've done, as I get to meet so many different and interesting people. Long may it continue.

What is your secret/guilty pleasure? Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and Cillian Murphy (Irish actor).

What's your favourite piece of music? Unfinished Symphony by Massive Attack.

What is your all-time favourite book? 'Gone with the Wind', by Margaret Mitchell.

If you became Prime Minister, what law would you pass? I would make it mandatory that you didn't have to work on your birthday. I've worked so many over the years.

Who is your hero? Which person do you most admire and why? Undoubtedly my late mother, Maureen. She deserved a medal for tolerating my teenage antics. Sorry mum!

If you were on a desert island, what would you miss most? Apart from my family, I would miss music. It's my lifeblood.

Tell us something about you that most people don't know. I'm related to the late actor, Sean Connery, through my maternal grandfather.

What do you get grumpy/mad about? People behaving rude and acting entitled to hospitality staff.

What makes you the happiest in the world? I am happiest when I'm with family and friends and, quite a rare occurrence lately, when the sun is shining. I need the vitamin D.

Tell us a good joke. I'm useless at jokes, but my husband Don told me this one. "Have you heard about the new restaurant that's opened, Karma? There's no menu, you get what you deserve."

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



There was something of a downpour on the evening of July's Parish Council meeting so I was surprised to see so many members of the public in attendance – four (including me). The meeting started with public participation and a complaint about the noise suffered by Townend residents. We learnt the most significant noise was generated as cars came through the narrow section by the Red Lion and then seem to 'open up' as they left the village. One councillor noted that the 20mph limit only came into force this very day and we're waiting for OCC to change the settings on our digital sign. In fact, it transpires that we can move one of our digital signs, so it was suggested that a sign is moved to this troublesome spot. The Parish Council agreed to ask Highways to push the national speed limit sign back past the Telephone Exchange, which everyone agreed seemed to be a good idea.

The next bit of public participation also came from Townend residents and involved noise – this time from the bottle bank in the car park of the Red Lion. This subject has been discussed at recent meetings and the Parish Council had canvassed local residents (who didn't live at Townend) who all said they used the recycling facility regularly and were not affected by the noise. The PC is committed to being a 'green and environmental' village, so removing such a facility is very much at odds with that aim. Townend residents agreed it was a very well used facility and wondered if it could simply be moved. They argued that the shape of our village has changed and moving these bottle banks would free up more car parking space for the pub. Finally, it was agreed that those unhappy with the current position of the bins would go away and research a new proposal for another site which could be discussed at another meeting.

Kerbside recycling (as in glass being collected along with our blue bins) could be a solution – and apparently OCC has been considering this. But they've been considering this for ages and no changes are imminent.

Still on the subject of bins – apparently the brown bins by the Village Hall have finally been emptied. The Clerk said she'd been thanked for this and admitted she'd done nothing because Cherwell were still deciding whether we were commercial or residential or something else! So it was felt that the bin men were just in a particularly good mood that week.

Next we heard from our County Councillor Arash Fatemian who told us that because of the large amount of rain we've had this year 'Fix My Street' was inundated with reports of flooded drains. (You might say they were flooded with complaints!) They decided they couldn't fix them all, so simply marked them all as 'resolved'. Arash did point out to them that marking the problem as 'resolved' didn't actually mean that it was really resolved – so he urged us to report any problems again!

He also told us that apparently OCC only has a 39% approval rating and was surprised it was even that high. He recognises that many villages feel ignored and went on to talk about 'the spare seat school bus' scheme. This is where seats that aren't being used on school buses can be used (and paid for) by children who need them. Arash said that the council only seems to focus on children eligible for a free bus seat and that he (and others) has tried to get them to obtain quotes for a larger bus so they can get an idea of costs. He said if there are 20 children eligible for a free bus seat the Council will just tender for a 20-seater bus. One parish councillor went on to say that some of the existing rules were quite ridiculous as we're in the catchment for the Warriner School, but there are no buses there. If a bus came to the village for Heyford Park School then only half the village would be eligible to ride on it (as you have to live at least three miles away to qualify for a seat) so some children would be sat on the bus driving past (and waving!) at children on their doorsteps who were not allowed a spare seat!

Once the groaning had finished our councillors thanked Arash for the grant that paid for the Blandford Fly report we commissioned (more on that later).

Next on the agenda was the co-option of a new councillor – and one of the public participants had stayed around for this and to put his hat into the ring. He had already shared his 'extensive résumé' which seemed to be well-received and had already spoken to one councillor who hadn't managed to put him off! He's already a Parish Path Warden and said he was keen to get stuck into village life. Nothing seemed to put the guest off, so one councillor offered to co-opt him there and then, but procedure wouldn't allow – our PC and the candidate need time to reflect.

Continued....

Parish Council Meeting Notes



The Community Land Trust has made its application to the Financial & Conduct Authority so will soon become a legal entity. Then there'll be a membership drive – so get ready to get involved!

The Neighbourhood Plan has investigated a new Local Green Space – the land just off Cow Lane with a pond. The pond is owned by a local resident while the field is owned by the Oxford Diocese. Meanwhile, Cherwell has decided that Heyford can have its own Neighbourhood Plan which will happen in due course, and Cherwell will continue with their 2040 Local Plan review.

Next our own Parish Council had a brief discussion on new financial regulations which involves them producing and working with a three-year forecast. It felt like a sensible idea to me.

On to Highways & Footpaths where one councillor noted the weeds seemed to be particularly bad. Our Clerk confirmed that two lots of 'Weed Patrol' had been carried out so far this year with another due in September. One knowledgeable councillor did say it had been particularly good growing weather for weeds and you needed at least two hours for weedkiller to take hold before any rain – and let's face it, we have had a lot of rain this year!

Next came the topic of our Play Areas. Firstly, the Parish Council wanted to thank the volunteers who recently helped with bark spreading – it was very much appreciated. It was also noted that we need lots of bark and were there any cheaper quotes out there (in particular any that could be dropped off without pallets)? The latest RoSPA report seemed to highlight quite a lot that needs looking at in our wonderful playground and the general feeling from the councillors was that it was all looking a bit tired with some issues being a bit of an embarrassment (for example, poor and damaged seating). But it was also pointed out that it is incredibly well used (in fact someone had spotted a minibus that morning dropping off a dozen children).

I felt the need to pipe up with my 'public participation' hat on here and declare my belief that this is a great asset which the village should be proud of and say that it's wonderful we have local volunteers to help maintain it and hopefully this merry band will grow! And, in fact, if ever fundraising was needed we should have plenty of people far and wide who would contribute what they could. I then remembered I needed to take notes.

One councillor wondered if we should add BMX track strimming duties to our village grasscutter's duties (and does he know anything about fixing benches too?). Is there anyone in the village who is or knows a friendly odd-job contractor who might be up for helping? In the meantime, we're getting several quotes for updating this playground and also the Pocket Park – so hopefully September's meeting will have some more positive park news!

The Blandford Fly team from Bournemouth University have been and assessed sites from Bodicote to Kidlington (including several in Steeple Aston) and they will come back with a report and suggested treatment program. They estimate this will cost £45k over three years – and given the first plan in Dorset many years ago was £80k for just one year, our councillors hoped this estimate wasn't a typo! These experts also said that "Cherwell was a perfect location for these flies", so it is hoped that the County Council might foot the bill...

Next, we heard about a Planning Application to build a new house in a section of the walled garden at Primrose Cottage. The councillors seemed to have several concerns (if not objections) that would be passed on to Cherwell.

The councillors then briefly discussed plans that have been announced to build a huge £300m 'historical theme park' in Bucknell (near Bicester). I had already heard about these plans because my friend has been to the original Puy du Fou theme park in France and said it was amazing, so I must confess to being secretly a little bit excited about it all. That said, the councillors did raise some interesting points – that should these plans go ahead we will inevitably see more traffic – would there even be a new junction on the M40, along with more housing and more people – and would this generally open up the area massively?

And on that note of doom the meeting ended. Until the next time, 16th September at 7.30pm (there is no meeting in August).

Mrs Miggins

This report is the personal view of the SAL reporter and is not intended to be a complete record of the Council meeting. The official record – once approved – will be available at www.steepleaston.org.uk

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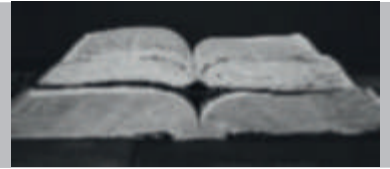
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Poetry Corner



Summer Rain

Ah, the English summer
Has come round once again
We're planning barbecues and picnics
Day trips by bus or train
But instead of sunny weather
We've just got b****y rain.

Farmers are watching in dismay
What's happening to their grain
'Cause instead of sunny weather
We've got more b****y rain.

There are gallons of water
Swirling down the drain
And instead of sunny weather
There's just more b****y rain.

The kids are stuck indoors
They're driving me insane
They can't play in the garden
Because of all this b****y rain.

What can we do about it?
I've been racking my poor brain
Now I've thought of a solution
The answer is quite plain
Abandon the English summer
And take a holiday in Spain!

Cathy Lawday

Night Shift

In bed I've changed position
stopped laying on my right
I've rolled on to my left side
it happened overnight
it moved me to the centre
It took me from the edge
it's given me more comfort
it feels less like a ledge
it's funny how things alter
just shifting left it seems
has suddenly changed nightmares
to somewhat sweeter dreams

Peter Wild

*(My Scrabble dictionary lists over 125 six-letter words starting in 'b' and ending in 'y'.
Take your pick! – Editor)*

Renaissance man

John Ebdon (1923-2005) – see page 5 – was a writer, broadcaster and astronomer. Born in Brussels, he was educated in Switzerland, then at an English public school, at London University and was accepted into the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, where his contemporaries included Nigel Green, Robert Shaw, Cyril Shaps, Barbara Jefford, Dorothy Tutin, John Neville and Paul Daneman. He spoke Ancient and Modern Greek, French, Middle English and Swahili.

During his wartime service in the RAF he suffered flash blindness. On trying to return to the stage after the war, the bright lights caused such problems that he was forced to seek an alternative career.

He had a gift for noticing the absurdities of human life. For over 25 years, from 1961 to 1987, he compiled and presented programmes from the BBC sound archives for Radio 4.

In 1968 John Ebdon became Director of the London Planetarium, a position he enjoyed for 21 years. He could never understand why many scientists lost their faith in God. "As man probes deeper and deeper into outer space," he wrote, "increasingly more of its secrets will be given up. Yet, paradoxically, the more man learns, the more he will realise how little he knows. The newly acquired knowledge should also bring about a great realisation of God."

Robert Scott

Steeple Aston Choral Society



A Colo(u)rful Summer Party

'Come and sing your socks off with SACS' had been the invitation to Steeple Aston Choral Society's Summer Party and even on an evening of multiple events including an England football match, enthusiastic villagers and visitors spilled into the hall to do just that.

(One wag had suggested that the football could be shown on the hall screen, with the choir providing the sound. You can take your pick from the pieces sung as to which would have made the best accompaniment.)

The audience settled in with wine, strawberries, nibbles and brightly-coloured table napkins, as the choir launched into the powerful unison opening of *Go down, Moses*. This set the tone for *The Gospel Train* medley, which segued into *Oh, happy day* (not yet) and *Ain't no mountain high enough*, whose exuberance contrasted with the final, quietly fervent, *Standing in the need of prayer*.

Vocalise, a beautiful arrangement by Paul Herrington, SACS arranger and accompanist, of J.S. Bach's *Air*, from his Suite No. 3 followed. There are no words, as the voices are vocalising instrumental parts. This piece, commonly known as *Air on a G String*, has been *Procol Harumed*, *Swingled* and used in films and advertisements, but still comes up smiling. It was casually mentioned, by a soprano, that all the hard work in this piece is done by the sopranos, who are nimbly executing the melody above the solid harmonisation of the other parts.

A sweeping Simon and Garfunkel medley of, arguably, their three greatest songs, followed – *The Sound of Silence*, *The 59th St. Bridge Song (Feelin' Groovy)* and *Bridge Over Troubled Water*. By now, the audience was bursting to join in and the reprise of *Bridge Over Troubled Water* was a great success, bringing the first half of the evening to a satisfying conclusion.

The second half began with the announcement of the football result. This had everyone smiling, as Paul Herrington struck up the overture to *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.

The medley that followed had been specially arranged by Paul, from the original show score, which he knows very well. The original *Joseph*, just fifteen minutes long, had been commissioned by a London prep school for their end of year concert, following on the success of a previous commission. A 20-year-old Andrew Lloyd-Webber, the son of a friend of the school, was given the commission and an advance of one hundred guineas. The piece was such a success that gradually more music was added until it became a full-length musical, but it kept its school beginnings by having a troupe of children in every show. Paul Herrington's pupils had successfully auditioned to be one of those troupes for the *Palladium* production, with Jason Donovan, and later Phillip Schofield, as Joseph.

The choir brought the story to life, with five numbers from the show and heart-felt solos from Andrew Smith and Philip Livings. Then, once again, it was the turn of the audience to sing *Close Ev'ry Door* and *Any Dream Will Do*, bringing the medley to an enthusiastic conclusion.

The evening finished as usual with the *Summer Sing-a-Long*, bursting with wonderful melodies from Rodgers and Hammerstein, Burt Bacharach and Jerry Bock.

Our thanks go to the two Pauls – our conductor Paul Badley and our arranger Paul Herrington – our Patron, Heather Cleobury, who sadly could not be with us and to the audience, whose singing gets better every year.

Please join us for our **Autumn Concert on Sunday 24th November, 7pm in the Church**. This will be a concert of seasonal music including *Fantasia on Christmas Carols* by Vaughan Williams; J.S. Bach's, *Wachet Auf!* (*Sleepers, Wake!*) and audience carols.

The party audience was given a preview of the Bach, for the benefit of those who thought they had never heard of it, when Paul Herrington played a short chorus, which had everyone *Swingling* along.

Steeple Aston Choral Society



The audience left sockless.*

**The exact origin of this expression is not known, but one possibility is from Ancient Greek theatre where comedy actors wore socks (light shoes with very thin soles) and tragedy actors wore buskins (built-up boots). The tragic actors could strut slowly around looking down on everyone, while the comic actors scurried about acting and singing so enthusiastically their shoes came off. You may know a different story.*

SACS rehearsals (7.45pm to 9.30pm) begin again on Monday 2nd September in the Village Hall. If you would like to come along contact Margaret Bulleyment on (01869) 347346 or mtheb749@gmail.com

(photos by Sue King and Phil Davies)



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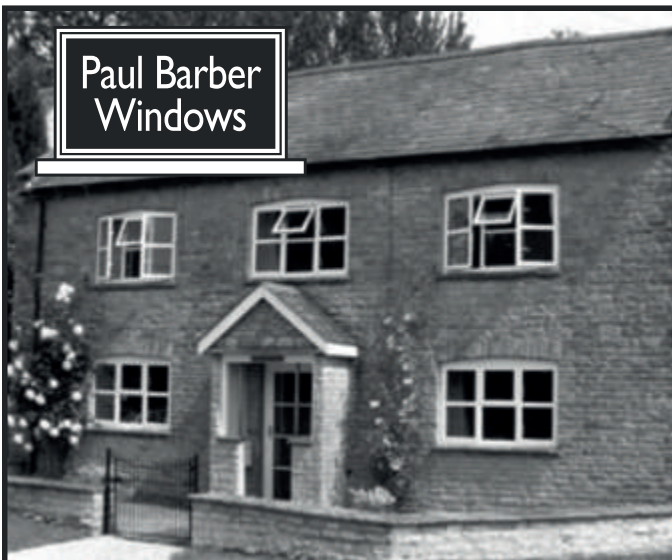
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SAL needs a new editor!

Following Robert Scott's resignation as Editor of SAL, we are urgently seeking a volunteer – or more than one – to edit the magazine. As things stand, there will be one more issue in September, but after that it's difficult to see how the magazine can continue. Without an Editor, there is a real risk SAL will have to close – at least until a volunteer is found.

SAL is delivered free of charge to every household in Steeple and Middle Aston each month. Lots of villagers prefer to read the paper version, but it's also available online on the village website. It has been published every month since 1973 and is currently on issue number 612. It would be very sad if it has to fold after all this time.

If necessary, the job could be shared by two or more editors. We had two people editing in alternate months a few years ago and it worked well.

Experience of writing, editing or publishing would be useful, but not essential. Lots of support will be provided by members of the committee and others.

Please have a look at the job description below. It's a very rewarding role, providing a real connection with every aspect of village life.

If you are interested, or know someone who might be, please get in touch as soon as possible. You can contact Robert to find out more about what's involved on 01869 340356 or email editorialife@gmail.com. Or talk to any member of the SAL Committee.

Job description for the SAL Editor (or Editors)

The voluntary post of SAL Editor involves working on the magazine around the time of the copy deadline, which is the 14th of the month.

It includes:

- Commissioning and compiling articles from contributors
- Editing articles and photos which are sent in
- Page planning
- Working with the designers on content
- Liaising with the advertising manager

It is up to individual editor(s) how much additional time they spend on writing articles and taking photographs themselves.

The job does **not** involve detailed proofreading, preparing layouts, dealing with advertisers, issuing invoices or organising distribution and delivery. Members of the committee and others handle these tasks each month.

It also does **not** require specialist computer skills, though general competence in word processing, internet searching, etc, are necessary.

The Editor also attends a monthly committee meeting, usually held early in the month. This lasts around an hour and includes discussion of plans for the next edition as well as a look back at the previous one.

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Spanish trek for charity

A couple from Steeple Aston are preparing to walk the 800km (500 mile) Camino de Santiago in Spain, to help change the lives of disadvantaged street-connected children in Kolkata, India.

Emily and Greg Elphick plan to start their challenge at the end of August. In doing the iconic walk, they aim to raise funds for The Hope Foundation (HOPE), which works to change the lives of disadvantaged children and families living on the streets of Kolkata. Emily and Greg already support the charity as child sponsors. Emily said, “We heard about The Hope Foundation whilst watching Sue Perkins travel across India in the BBC programme ‘The Ganges’. We were inspired to support a child who lives on the streets. Over the last few years, we have seen the difference HOPE makes to children's lives.

“I heard about the Camino de Santiago via some friends. I was keen to take on a challenge when I finished my 30-year police career to mark the start of my new life. I connected with many inspiring people and loved the ever-changing scenery. I loved it so much I am keen to walk it again. To help with my motivation – as it is a very long way – I wanted to help others by raising some funds for the amazing charity The Hope Foundation.”

Emily and Greg have launched a Just Giving page: justgiving.com/page/gremilysadventureshope2024

HOPE was set up 25 years ago by Irish humanitarian Maureen Forrest. The organisation initially supported 13 vulnerable young women, who were living on the streets of Kolkata, through its protection programme. Today, HOPE implements 57 programmes in the city and has positively touched the lives of three million people.

Juliette Whittaker, Head of Fundraising at HOPE UK, added: “We are very grateful to Emily and Greg for taking on this epic challenge to raise funds and awareness for HOPE. Please do support them if you can by donating to their fundraiser, as the funds raised will help make a positive difference to the lives of many disadvantaged street-connected children in Kolkata, India.”



The Camino de Santiago, or the Way of St. James, is a renowned pilgrimage route that has drawn travellers from around the globe for centuries. Originating in the Middle Ages, the Camino culminates at the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain, where tradition holds that the remains of St. James the Apostle are interred. This journey is more than just a physical trek; it is a spiritual and cultural odyssey that encompasses various paths, with the most famous being the Camino Francés, starting in the French Pyrenees and extending across northern Spain.

Pilgrims, or peregrinos, embark on this journey for myriad reasons: spiritual renewal, personal challenge, or the allure of adventure. Along the way, they traverse diverse landscapes, from mountainous regions and lush forests to arid plains and coastal paths. The route is dotted with albergues (hostels), churches, and historical landmarks, providing both solace and community. The Camino de Santiago has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site, highlighting its cultural and historical significance. Each year, hundreds of thousands of people from different backgrounds and faiths walk the Camino, sharing in an experience that fosters reflection, camaraderie, and a deep connection with the traditions of the past.



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In July, Jonathan Genevaux came to the club to talk about his love for waterscapes. Being born and bred in South West France, in a little town surrounded by canals and rivers, it is no wonder that Jonathan has such a love and respect for waterscapes.

Jonathan is now based in Bristol, with a backdrop of the Clifton suspension bridge. He runs workshops and takes clients all over Europe and up to the Scottish Highlands, sharing his love of landscape and waterscape photography. He showed us many pictures of his hometown where the water topography changed from nice calm canals and estuaries to the wild waves of the Atlantic Ocean. He also shared many photos taken by his drone, which show a higher perspective of the ocean area.

Jonathan's photography features long exposures of rocky shores and stormy waves. He enjoys using his Sony a7 IV and advised that it's best to use a remote release to reduce camera shake and ensure a sharp photo. He also stressed how important researching your intended location is by using tools available to everyone such as Google Maps and OpenStreetMap. He advised us to check tide times and think about how crucial they were to the photo.

He said it's best to plan for natural light using a program called PhotoPills, a smartphone app combining sun and moon prediction, location shoot planning and instant calculators for exposure and depth-of-field. Always check weather forecasts. In terms of wind conditions, Jonathan explained offshore winds create nice waves for fast shutter speeds and onshore winds are for choppy waves requiring long exposure times. Equally, a lack of wind can create beautiful photos in harbours.

In conclusion, arrive early, observe, think about composition and focus on the foreground. Jonathan left us with one parting thought: "you can only get the shot if you are out there!".

We welcome new members to our Society nights on the first Wednesday of each month. Website: addphoto.co.uk or find us on [facebook.com/add.photosoc](https://www.facebook.com/add.photosoc) for further information!

Courtney Killpack

Steeple Aston Garden Club



The weather came up trumps for us for our visit to Denton House Garden on 10th July. Not only were the trees, orchard, herbaceous border, topiary and rolling lawns looking wonderful, the croquet lawn and lawn tennis court looked good as well. All this, and the wonderful countryside around, set off this lovely Georgian mansion.

The gardener gave us a very knowledgeable tour, dating the Ginkgo tree back to the earliest collectors and a 100-year-old Bramley apple tree. We were also told how the box caterpillar had been successfully dealt with. Late in the afternoon we sat in the sunshine chatting with the owners Mr. & Mrs. Luke, with tea and cake of course. A little bit of heaven.

Our next visit is on Thursday 8th August to Bunker's Hill Nursery, Kidlington, at 6.30pm, which includes a talk by the owner and 15% discount on plant purchase that evening! So please make a note in your diary.

For further information about becoming a member of the Garden Club, just get in touch with me on 01869 347192.

Chris Clarke
SA Garden Club Secretary



Dr Radcliffe's Church of England School

Fir Lane, Steeple Aston, Bicester, OX25 4SF

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E: office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk

www.dr-radcliffes.org.uk

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Term-time only

12 hours per week after school

Mondays to Thursdays

Pay Grade 4

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Our school after school club, 'Night Owls', needs an enthusiastic and caring after school playworker to start as soon as possible. This will be to assist with the planning, day to day organisation and operation of the club, providing high quality play opportunities and care for our children.

We are part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust www.odst.org.uk and enjoy a rural location in North Oxfordshire.

The successful candidate will:

Have a true passion for working with children.

Have previous relevant experience (or a willingness to learn, if not).

Be committed to working in a school which seeks to meet the needs of each child.

We are looking for a play worker who will enjoy working in our school. Visits to the school are welcomed and encouraged. If you want further details on the role available, including application forms, please call the school on 01869 340204 or email office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk

Please apply as soon as possible for consideration for interview.

'Pupils care for and help each other, which builds on the very strong support that staff give pupils.' (OFSTED March 2022)

Dr Radcliffe's CE Primary School, as a member of ODST, is committed to safeguarding children and young people. All post holders in regulated activity are subject to appropriate vetting procedures, reference checks and a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced check. Online checks may also be carried out to comply with Keeping Children Safe in Education provisions.



THE VALENTINE CLUB

In June, what a revelation it was to welcome Rosie, who sang so many songs from the 60s and 70s, with a few requests thrown in for good measure. She came at extremely short notice as our planned performer had broken his ankle the day before. I am sure she will be back sometime in the future.

Our visit to Painshill and Denbies at the end of June was absolutely great as we had possibly one of the hottest days of the year and an excellent meal at the winery. If anything, it might have been a bit too hot as the cutlery actually felt like it had just come out of the oven!

Painshill Park was a revelation, having never been before. The park was superb and the architectural landscape just stunning. Denbies provided us all with a taste of just how this large estate developed and how they produce the variety of wines. And as with any visit to a vineyard, we had to sample some of their wines.

By the time you read this, we will have visited Rousham for a chance to look around the fabulous gardens and enjoy tea provided by Ann, Sue and Jane. We will also have travelled a bit further afield during July when we went to Weston-Super-Mare. More about that next month.

August is, yet again, a busy month. First, we will be visiting Trentham Estate in Staffordshire where, apart from viewing the magnificent grounds, we have the opportunity to spend our pension money at some of the 80 discount stores on-site or visit one of the largest garden centres in the country. Then for our monthly meeting we welcome Alan Lavender MBE who was chef to four prime ministers. Fairly appropriate following a general election!

Now I know this is possibly what you might call 'holiday season' and so, with that in mind, we have decided to organise another holiday, this time for 2025. To my great surprise and asking for a 'speedy response' from members, we have provisionally booked a break at Studley Castle in Warwickshire for autumn next year. All 49 of us!

Although we have a waiting list, we simply can't get more than 100 in the Village Hall and sat down, we are always keen to hear from prospective new members and will add them to the list. If you are on that list and we have spaces, there might be the opportunity to join us on one of our trips or holidays.

To find out more about The Valentine Club, simply visit our website at www.valentineclub.wixsite.com/aston or keep up-to-date by looking on the village website www.steepleaston.org.uk or use that old-fashioned thing called a telephone and call me on 01869 340512.

If you would like to support The Valentine Club and all the great things we do, have a go at CherwellLottery.co.uk/support/the-valentine-club where you can participate in the Cherwell Lottery and hopefully, like many of our supporters, become a winner.

Richard Preston – Group organiser
richard.preston5@btopenworld.com – telephone 340512

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People of all ages and skills are encouraged to enter the show.

For full details of how to enter

follow the link or scan the QR code:

www.steepleaston.org.uk/clubs-societies/gardening/



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HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

Leicester Cathedral

Leicester Cathedral is where the body of our last Plantagenet king, who lost his life at the battle of Bosworth in 1485, was given Christian burial in 2012. (Incidentally, I learnt that it is also the cathedral where our Rector was ordained in July 2010.) The cry of “A horse! A horse! My Kingdom for a horse!” put into the mouth of actors playing the part of Richard III in Shakespeare’s play of the same name, rings in our ears. Shakespeare has probably sealed Richard’s reputation in our national consciousness – but don’t believe all you hear about history from William Shakespeare. Remember, he was writing for dramatic effect and to please the monarch of his day!

After the battle of Bosworth, the king was buried, probably rather hastily, in Greyfriars Priory in Leicester city, with little publicity. After all, he had just lost the battle so it would not have been politic to venerate the grave of a defeated monarch. Few records existed and by our century – over 500 years since Richard’s burial – no-one knew where his grave was. Everyone was amazed when archaeologists, persuaded by a woman, Philippa Langley, who had carried out research into Richard III, excavated a car park in Leicester where they almost immediately found (most of) a skeleton with a spinal scoliosis. Confirmed by DNA testing that it was indeed Richard III’s skeleton, and after some wrangling about where its final resting place should be, in August 2012, 527 years after the battle of Bosworth, the body was placed in a lead-lined coffin and brought to Leicester cathedral for burial.

Extraordinarily, Richard III’s coffin was made by a descendant of his sister, Anne of York. The specially designed tomb is dignified and made of a large block of Swaledale Fossil stone (if you look carefully you can see little fishes) surmounting a polished black marble plinth. It is simple, but striking.

In its peaceful position at the east end of the cathedral, before the chapel of Christ the King, the tomb is a fitting monument to this king whose motives, purposes and principles continue to be a mystery. I’m very pleased that friends and I made an expedition to see the tomb. We were all rather moved by it.

Leicester Cathedral is in the centre of the city. There is an NCP car park nearby – about a five-minute walk away.

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Village Hall News



Please note an amendment to the June Village Hall news of the committee members listing and the group they represent. It should have read: Deborah Morris – WI, Sally Cooper – Village Rep.

Forthcoming events (more details to follow):

Tuesday 5th November: Fireworks spectacular.

Sunday 8th December: Wassail evening.

Saturday 18th January 2025: Annual Quiz Night.

Our letting agent is Mrs Angela Smith - 07734 112967.

Please do not call this number between 6pm and 8pm unless urgent.

Email steeple-aston-village-hall@hotmail.com

Collect keys from 'Mijas' South Side, Steeple Aston OX25 4RU.

Barbara Brewer – chair
savh.org.uk

Steeple Aston Golf Society



We had another good day at the Bicester Golf Club in June, apart from trying to find our way around this redeveloped 9/18 hole course! The winner was Eric Blincoe, with 36 points playing off 25. Eric will be cut one shot next time out. Nigel Mills was runner-up with 35 points off a handicap of 20. Nearest the pin on the 3rd was Alan Brewer and in two on the 10th was Tony Giles. No birdie 2s. We had not played Bicester for some years and all those attending enjoyed the course along with the fish and chips that followed.

If you would like to join us on the 16th August, we are at Wrag Barn in Wiltshire, just a 45-minute drive away from Steeple Aston. It is a noon meet for a 1pm start. The usual numbers for more information are Alan 340423 and Chris 347173.

I find that preparation is key when playing golf. Always check your golf bag before starting off: driver, wedge, irons, putter, binoculars, compass, weedwhacker and snorkel.

Happy golfing

Alan Brewer

*The photo shows the winners left to right:
Nigel Mills, Eric Blincoe, Alan Brewer
and Tony Giles.*



Was it supposed to be a warm summer evening in July? Never mind, we started our evening with a nice hot cuppa tea with delicious flapjacks and biscuits, and to sign up for forthcoming WI events in September – a lunch at the Yurt sounds good!

Julie commenced the meeting, regaling us about her trip to the Royal Albert Hall in June for the WI annual meeting – she was representing our group of WI's: The Heyfords and Bucknell. (Yes, the Albert Hall venue of the famous cake cutting by HM the Queen some years back!) The motion 'Dental Health Matters' was carried with 4,578 for and only 214 against.

The main speaker was Nazir Afzal OBE, a Chief Crown Prosecutor for NW England, Chief Executive of the country's Police & Crime Commissioners etc. (what credentials!). As prosecutor he had dealt with cases such as forced marriages, honour killings, rape and abuse and spoke with great passion about his work, moving many in the audience to tears. The second speaker was Melanie Brown (formerly of the Spice Girls).

Julie shared her good news, a win of £20 in the WI 400 Club lottery – under the heading, 'that you have to be in it to win it' – (I have yet to have a win!).

A cricket session in Oxford was the surprise offering from Janice, together with another trip to Oxford, maybe a choice of Ballet or something else? Debs, our representative on the VH committee, enthused about the new lighting system due shortly and the newly-installed and the now fully operational sound system linked with the projector! All we need now is Wi-Fi!

Our speaker Julie Macken was introduced as 'Neve's Bees' (see photos on next page). She explained 'what bees do for us especially in the sphere of skin care'! She plied us with facts and figures about the number of bees in a swarm – tens of thousands; how many bees in a hive colony – 60,000 to 70,000. Mind boggling stuff! We were enlightened about which insects are our pollinators and how essential they are for two-thirds of the vegetables we eat. Thanks to the bees, oh and the other insects!

She described who lived where inside the hive and how many 'boxes' could be stacked up, as well as how much honey was harvested, etc. The colour of honey depended on where the foraging bees had found their pollen and varied the colour from pale yellows through to black, even! Questions during the talk were encouraged and naturally there were plenty of them! At the end of her presentation, we had the opportunity to purchase some of her honey and honey-derived skin products. Plenty of enthusiastic members swarmed around her products!

On a final note – bees are becoming scarcer due to the usual culprit of habitat loss, but also she warned us to watch out for the Asian hornet that bites the heads off the bees – ugly chaps with yellow faces, yellow legs, smaller than our hornet but far more vicious!

August will see us in our WI Gazebo at the Horticultural Show selling WI cakes and some quality bric-a-brac. Do please make a point of coming over to our stall to say hello and, of course, purchase a cake at the very least!

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 10th September at 7pm in the Village Hall with a talk entitled '19th century Women Travellers & Explorers' by Dr Katherine Bradley, co-founder of Oxford's International Women's Festival.

If you would like to find out more about our WI, please contact me or come and talk to us at our WI stand at the Summer Show!

Merrill Bayley





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Winning and celebrating success

For sports fans, this summer has been an exceptional festival. Along with the annual competitions, such as Wimbledon and the Tour de France, we have been treated to the Euro 2024 Football Championship. As we journey from July to August, we will be able to enjoy the Paris Olympics and, at the end of the month, the Paralympic Games, with athletes competing across a wide breadth of different sports, from sailing to athletics, from football (including blind football) to Boccia (a form of bowls).

I love watching sport, but so often the images that stick in our mind are an athlete's reactions when they realise they have won! Their sudden release of emotions, shock, surprise, elation and sometimes sheer disbelief, is very moving.

As inspiring and amazing as winning an Olympic gold medal is, we should also remember and celebrate all our wins, be these winning an 'egg and spoon' race, or 'potato in the bucket' at a local gymkhana. Success looks very different depending upon your starting point and your goal. Later this month will see the publication of A-level and GCSE results, with the focus being on youngsters with numerous results. My congratulations to them, and especially those who achieved an exam or a grade above what they had hoped and dreamt of. Equally, winning might look like getting dressed today, or getting through the day without succumbing to temptation. Every win is worth celebrating.

Other very memorable sporting moments are when great sportsmanship is demonstrated. The shared joy when an athlete breaks a world record, as seen when Mark Cavendish won his 35th stage of the Tour de France. Alternatively, when the fierce, intense rivalry is momentarily set aside, even in the middle of a race, waiting to check others are okay, as between Vinegaard and Pogacar on Stage 18 of the 2022 Tour de France, after Pogacar crashed.

Sportsmanship and Fair Play are important throughout the whole of life. When we respect and value others, celebrating their successes, we move forward as a society. At Italia '90, France '98 (jointly with the hosts) and Qatar 2022, England's football team won the FairPlay award. Being known and respected for our behaviour and values is an area we can all aim to win in.

Harriet Orridge



The Rector at the Church Fete. (Photo Geoffrey Orridge)

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	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley
Sunday 4th August	9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)	11.00am Holy Communion (BCP)	5.30pm Evensong
Sunday 11th August		10.30am United Benefice Holy Communion	
Sunday 18th August			10.30am United Benefice Holy Communion
Sunday 25th August	10.30am United Benefice Holy Communion		
<p><i>www.sntchurch.com</i></p> <p><i>The church buildings are open every day. Feel free to visit at any time.</i></p>			



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Word Pairs Puzzle answers
(see page 13)

1. holdall / all-inclusive
2. bus stop / stopover
3. sunbathing / bathing beauty
4. day trip / trip adviser
5. foreign body / body surfing
6. sandy beach / beach umbrella
7. security check / check-in
8. excess baggage / baggage handler
9. rip-off / off-season
10. capital city / city break



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Non-Village (over 6hrs)	£160 (Plus Refundable Deposit £300)

Off-Peak – all hire before 6pm

Hourly Rate	£10/hr (or £30 for 4 hours)
Plus Refundable Deposit	£200

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Others	£17 (up to 3hrs)
plus Refundable Deposit	£200

Committee Room

Represented Clubs	£6 (up to 3hrs)
Others	£12 (up to 3hrs)
Letting Agent	Angela Smith (07734-112967)
Chairperson	Barbara Brewer (01869-340423)
Secretary	Margaret Bulleyment (01869-347346)

Represented Clubs must nominate a trustee to attend Village Hall committee meetings.

Discounted rate for represented clubs – 15% for six block bookings.

Steeple Aston Sports & Recreation Centre Letting Charges

Social Function peak times: (Daily up to 6 hours, from 6.00pm)	£55.00
Social Function off-peak times: (Daily up to 5 hours, up to 6.00pm)	£27.50
Meeting of represented clubs: (Daily per session, max 2 hours)	£11.00
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Treasurer – Chris Cooper	Tel : 01869 347173

BUS TIMES

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0703 0817 0920 1020 1620 1737 1840 1932 2022 2147 2253

Saturdays

0721 0821 0931 then hourly to 1531 1641 1746 1849 1937 2037 2216
0809 0909 1019 1619 1729 1834 1932 2022 2147 2253

Sundays and most public holidays

0907 1037 1207 1337 1507 1637 1806
0953 1123 1253 1423 1553 1723 1852

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Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)

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0837 0947 1045 1545 1703 1809 1909 2006 2053 2142 2242 0009

Saturdays

0758 0908 1008 then hourly to 1608 1718 1828 1927 2025 2113 2213 2341
0837 0945 1045 1645 1755 1905 1958 2053 2142 2242 0009

Sundays and most public holidays

0917 1044 1214 1344 1514 1644 1814 1944
0956 1122 1252 1422 1552 1722 1852 2022

Times subject to change. Before starting your journey please check the timetables at www.stagecoachbus.com/timetables E&OE

OURBUS BARTONS

OurBus Bartons offers services through Steeple Aston to and from Lower Heyford Station (Monday to Friday), to and from Chipping Norton (Wednesdays) and to and from Bicester (Fridays). See <https://ourbusbartons-org-uk.stackstaging.com/> for details and times.

Steeple and Middle Aston rubbish bin collection day is Thursday.



August 2024

1 st	Green
8 th	Blue and Brown
15 th	Green
22 nd	Blue and Brown
29 th	Green

September 2024

5 th	Blue and Brown
12 th	Green
19 th	Blue and Brown
26 th	Green

Food caddy is collected weekly

Batteries and small electrical items packed in clear plastic bags and placed on the top of any bin lid are collected weekly.

Steeple Aston Calendar

Check the village website at steepleaston.org.uk/home/calendar for any changes.

Please send details of events for July and August to editorsalife@gmail.com

August 2024			
Wednesday 7th	AD&D Photographic Society: Linda Bembridge: 'Abstracts from Landscapes'	Adderbury Institute	7.30pm
Wednesday 7th	Valentine Club. Coach trip to Trentham Estate, Staffordshire		
Thursday 8th	Garden Club. Visit to Bunker's Hill Nursery	Kidlington	6.30pm
Wednesday 14th	SAL September 2024 copy and advert deadlines		
Friday 16th	Golf Society. Wrag Barn	Wiltshire	12 noon for 1pm
Tuesday 20th	Valentine Club. Alan Lavender MBE: Chef to four prime ministers	Village Hall	2.30pm
Saturday 24th	Deddington Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Saturday 24th	Sustainable Steeple	Deddington Church	9am to 12.30pm
September 2024			
Tuesday 10th	Wl. Dr. Katherine Bradley: 19th century Women Travellers & Explorers	Village Hall	7pm for 7.30pm
Wednesday 11th	Valentine Club. Coach trip to Stratford-upon-Avon		
Tuesday 20th	Valentine Club. Ventriloquism & Magic Show with David	Village Hall	2.30pm
23rd to 27th	Valentine Club. Holiday to Eastbourne		
Saturday 28th	Deddington Farmers' Market	Deddington	9am to 12.30pm
Saturday 28th	Sustainable Steeple	Deddington Church	9am to 12.30pm
SAVE THE DATE!			
5th November	'Fireworks Spectacular'	Robinsons Close	
9th November	Remembrance Day Concert	SA Church	7.00pm
16th-17th November	SAVA Exhibition	Village Hall	
24th November	SACS: Autumn Concert	SA Church	7.00pm
8th December	Wassail Evening	Village Hall	

Choral Society Rehearsals. Village Hall - 7.45pm - Mondays
Badminton. Village Hall - 10am -12.30pm - Tuesdays
Bell Ringing practice. Church Tower - 7.30pm - Tuesdays
Walking Netball. Village Hall - 10.15am - Wednesdays
Brownies. Sport & Rec Centre - 6pm - 7.30pm - Wednesdays
Toddler Group. Sport & Rec Centre - 9.30am -11.30am - Thursdays
Badminton. Village Hall - 8pm - Thursdays
Village History Centre (SAVA). 10am - 12 noon - Saturdays

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