

Steeple Aston

November 2024

Issue No. 615

Life



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Cover: Hannah Clifford with Tawny Owl at Steeple Aston Community Orchard Open Day. (photo by Nigel Francis)

Contributions are welcome. Please email editorsalife@gmail.com

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 December 2024 issue is Thursday 14th November.

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

ADVERTISING

All adverts and all advertising queries (availability, prices, dimensions, suitability of illustrations, etc.) to **Charlotte Bartlett**
salife.advertising@gmail.com

01869 347347

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The deadline for adverts is the 14th of the previous month.

ADVERTISING RATES

1/4 page - £8
1/2 page - £15
Full page (village events only) - £17.50

Steeple Aston Directory

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|--|--|-------------------------------------|--|
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| Archive (SAVA) | Chairman | Stuart Cummins | 01869 349155 |
| Badminton (Tuesday mornings) | | Barbara Brewer | 01869 340423 |
| Badminton (Thursday evenings) | | Alison Moran | 01869 347033 |
| Beekeepers (Swarm collection, advice) | | Paul Honigmann | 340665, 07512 224700 |
| Bell ringers | | Graham & Dorothy Clifton | 01869 347273 |
| Handbell ringers | | Victoria Clifton | 07817 025948 |
| Brownies | | Fiona McLoone | 01869 340132 |
| Catholic Church - St. Teresa's | Charlbury | Father Clive Dytor | 07484 158642 |
| Cherwell District Council | Bodicote House | 01295 227001 | |
| Choral Society | Chair | Geoffrey Cotterill | 01608 641654 |
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| | Churchwardens | Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton | 340099 / 347273 |
| Methodist Church – Tackley | | Rev'd Paul Carter | 01865 243216 |
| | Steward | Tim Bailey | 01869 331516 |
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| | | Cllr David Rogers | 07900 998555 |
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| Deddington Health Centre | Appointments | 338611 | |
| | Repeat Prescriptions | 10am - 3pm | 01869 338847 |
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| Golf Society | Chairman | Alan Brewer | 01869 340423 |
| Horticultural Society | Show Secretary | Vicky Clifton | 07817 025948 |
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| Steeple Aston Walking Group | | Penny, Stuart, Sue and Graham | sawgox25@gmail.com |
| Toddler Group | | Bryony Rowcliffe | steepleastontoddlergrp@gmail.com |
| Valentine Club | | Richard & Daphne Preston | 01869 340512 |
| Village Hall (see advertisement) | Letting Agent | Angela Smith | 07734 112967 |
| Village Emergency Telephone System | | 690691 | |
| Village Website | www.steepleaston.org.uk | Editor: Jenny Bell | 01869 943573 |
| Volunteer Connect - Community transport scheme | | 0300 3030125 | |
| WI | President | Julie Hillier | 01869 349185 |



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

Steeple Aston *Life*

November 2024
Issue No.615

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Editorial

As I write, news reports are flooded (pardon the pun!) with severe weather warnings of rising water levels in the UK, hurricanes battering the US and other extreme natural phenomena wreaking havoc across the world. It serves as a salutary reminder never to underestimate the sheer power of nature. Yet our natural world also has the ability to fill us with a sense of wonder and excitement, it calms and soothes us after a bad day, and is able to lift our spirits in the simplest of ways. A walk through a sunlit field of wildflowers, hearing the high-pitched chirrup of a tiny wren, or seeing the first soft snowfall of winter with its promise of fun and frolics.

This issue celebrates our natural world, with contributions from the recent Community Orchard event with joyful apple games and majestic birds of prey, as shown on our charming front cover. Bridget's ever-informative Nature Notes bring fascinating facts, plus we look to the skies for a spot of stargazing – who would have thought that on a clear night villagers could even spot the Aurora Borealis! We send hearty congratulations to Greg and Emily Elphick for completing their epic 500-mile charity trek across Spain, so discover more about their incredible achievement.

This month, there are many delights to relish, including the annual bonfire night extravaganza on 5th November, plus the SAVA environment exhibition in mid-November featuring all aspects of our local environment with a few fun games thrown in for good measure. Enjoy!

Carol Neville & Kate Symondson



Could you be our next Advertising Manager?

The SAL Committee needs to find a new Advertising Manager for the magazine as soon as possible. Charlotte Bartlett has been doing the job very efficiently since 2018, but sadly has decided she wants to retire at the end of the year. We are very grateful to her, and need a volunteer to take on the role from January.

Without advertising revenue, SAL could not be delivered free to every home in Steeple and Middle Aston. So, managing the advertising for the magazine is an important and essential job. However, it doesn't require an enormous time commitment and could be done alongside a full-time job or other responsibilities. Also, no advertising experience is required.

The post involves:

- Answering queries from potential advertisers by phone or email.
- Giving advertisers details of the sizes and prices of adverts, the deadlines for submission and how to present their advert for printing.
- Receiving adverts and passing them onto the Co-Editors.
- Informing the Co-Editors each month which adverts are to remain unchanged, which are to be updated, which are to cease and which new ones are to start.
- Sending out invoices to advertisers and checking their payments on the bank statements.

The Advertising Manager will also join the SAL Committee and contribute a report for the monthly meeting. If you're interested in this role, please contact the Co-Editors at editorsalife@gmail.com Or for more information about what's involved, contact Charlotte at salife.advertising@gmail.com or call 01869 347347.

Christmas Cover Competition!

The team at SAL invite all young artists of Steeple and Middle Aston to get your colours out, smocks on and get creating what might become our Christmas front cover.

What does Christmas look and feel like to you? You might want to recreate your favourite Christmas memory or depict the elements and people that make the day magical. Perhaps you're a dab-hand at drawing Christmas creatures or brightly decorated spruces by the fire. What you paint or draw is entirely up to you, your imagination and creativity. All we ask is that your artwork is Christmassy, extremely colourful, and in a portrait configuration (so it suits the orientation of the cover).

Entrants up to 12 years old can enter. A selection of entries will be featured on our village website, and the winner will be featured – in colour – on SAL's December front cover. We are delighted that local artist, Niki Thomas, will be our esteemed judge. The deadline for entering is **Sunday 17th November**. Please include your name, age, email address or family phone number. Either scan and email your artwork (in jpeg format, 300mb) to editorsalife@gmail.com, or drop it off at Barley Port, Home Farm Lane, Middle Aston (the cottage with the sheep sign on it!).



A reminder: Autumn & Winter Jabs

Now is the time to get your Flu and Covid vaccinations if you are eligible to do so, to protect yourself during the cold winter months ahead. Don't delay and book your vaccinations via the NHS website, NHS App or call 119 for free. You may also be contacted by the GP surgery inviting you to book your jabs if eligible.

Stay healthy!

Letter to the Editors

Dear Editors

In response to the Parish Council's statement that they are looking into the removal of the Red Lion bottle bank, I'd like to point out that this would be extremely unfair on villagers without cars. It would mean most of them having to lug their bottles and jars up Paines Hill in order to use the facilities at Robinson's Close. The Townend residents' claim that noise generated by the Red Lion bottle bank is 'incessant' is obviously a gross exaggeration, and the complaint that it's 'unsightly' could presumably apply to the Robinson's Close bottle bank as well. Supposing those using the playing fields, village hall and car park start denouncing the bins as unsightly? And if the capacity there is increased, won't residents living nearby have cause to complain about the increase in noise? Where will it all end?

Yours in exasperation

Michele Bowden-Maunder

SAL welcomes letters to the Editors, but it should be noted that the views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editors, nor the SAL Committee

Calling all readers/book club members: we would love to hear what you're reading at the moment. Why not share your thoughts with fellow bookworms. Is it exciting, uplifting, humorous, downbeat? Would you recommend it to others?

Email your book reviews to editorsalife@gmail.com

Local couple home after epic Camino walk for charity

Greg and Emily Elphick are back home in Steeple Aston after walking 800km on the Camino de Santiago raising money for a charity supporting street children in India.

The couple, who moved to Townend in April 2023, practised walking with their 10kg weighted rucksacks on local walks with Poppy, their sprocker spaniel. Poppy was left behind with a friend when they set off on their pilgrimage from the pretty French town of St Jean Pied de Port, about halfway up a Pyrenean mountainside near Biarritz on Wednesday, August 28th. They finally arrived at their destination, Santiago de Compostela in North-West Spain, in the pouring rain on Wednesday 25th September. Their 500-mile hike certainly had its highs and lows which are recounted in Greg's detailed account of their adventure (see page 9).



The lows included sharing sleeping accommodation with lots of noisy snorers, food poisoning for Emily, days of torrential rain (very wet socks) and on three nights arriving in a village that was completely shut so they had to go to bed without any dinner! The upsides though were inspiring.

They walked 25 to 30km a day, travelling through beautiful countryside and small rural towns and villages, meeting lots of people from all over the world on the way. After the first difficult few days Greg writes: "Carrying the rucksacks became second nature and our legs got stronger every day. We passed through the beautiful city of Burgos, left the urban landscape behind us and headed out onto the near silent, open expanse of the Meseta."

There was also a real sense of achievement. For example, when they were later faced with the wild and rocky Cantabrian mountains, unlike some others, they were up for the challenge. According to Greg, “Though the Pyrenees provided a tough start to the Camino, the undulations and high passes of the next five days before we entered Galicia were quite brutal. The climbs to the mountain hamlets of



Foncebadon and O’Cebreiro were particularly steep. Those without the stamina needed could take a horse ride up to these peaks if they wished. Shame be upon them...”

The final 150km were different with many more pilgrims walking often in larger groups. Greg writes: “The last 100km or so didn’t quite offer the sense of adventure, occasional solitude and pure wilderness that had gone before, but we were on the home stretch. We were lifted in spirits every single day by family and friends wishing us well.” Their supporters followed their travels on WhatsApp.

They would certainly recommend the experience to others. Says Greg: “We would genuinely encourage anyone with the time to walk all or part of the Camino (ideally the first, second or third weeks for the exercise and views). It’s hard work but people of all

ages, from all over the world are always out on the trail. You’ll definitely meet some lovely people and have your faith in human nature restored.”

Greg and Emily have raised more than £1,500 in sponsorship for The Hope Foundation UK, which works towards providing lasting positive change in the lives of street-connected children and slum communities in Kolkata, India.

Emily explains why they support this cause: “We found out about this charity via a travel programme presented by the actress Sue Perkins. She is also a long-term supporter along with Olivia Colman. We have been supporting a young child through education for many years now and we have seen the difference their work makes.”

You can donate to The Hope Foundation on Greg and Emily’s JustGiving page at

[justgiving.com/page/gremilysadventureshope2024](https://www.justgiving.com/page/gremilysadventureshope2024)

It’s worth reading Greg’s detailed account of their journey – ‘The mad Peregrinos, Greg and Emily’. A peregrino is a pilgrim! It has some lovely colour photos and can be found on the village website:

steepleaston.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Camino.pdf

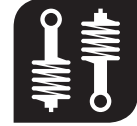
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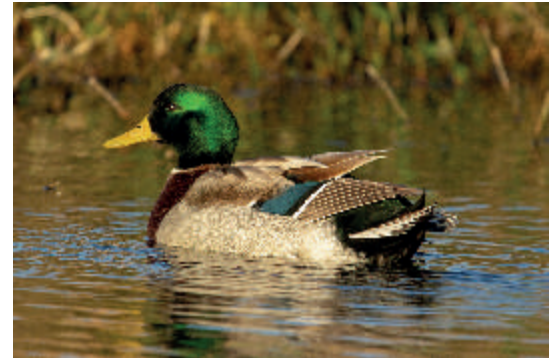
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Nature Notes



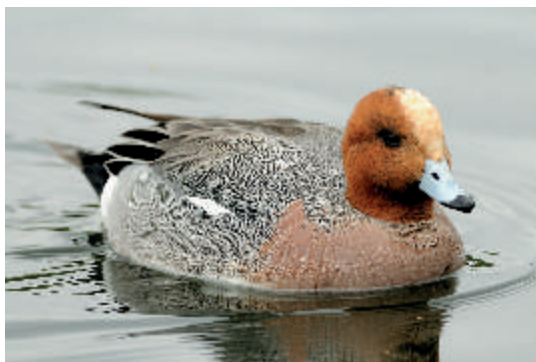
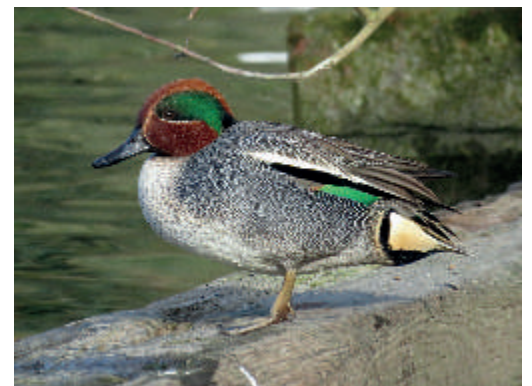
Many of us will be familiar with our commonest duck, the Mallard. Along with its characteristic 'quack', it is also recognisable by its plumage, especially that of the drake (the male duck) in breeding plumage, when his head feathers are bright bottle green. After breeding, the ducks moult into their 'eclipse' plumage which is much plainer, more like that of the female. In general, male ducks tend to have the more colourful, highly marked plumage, with the females being plainer so they can be well camouflaged on the nest.



The Tufted Duck is just as striking to look at. The head feathers are beautifully glossy, surrounding a bright yellow eye, and extend into a tuft on the back of the head. The body is also distinctively marked, the bold white patches showing well against the black body. Again, the female is plainer but still sports the characteristic tuft.

Both Mallards and Tufted Ducks are present all year, but their numbers are boosted in the winter by birds migrating here from the continent.

As winter approaches, and the migrant birds arrive, there are a couple of other ducks to look out for: the Teal and the Wigeon. The Teal has a well-marked head pattern, the main chestnut colour interrupted by a patch of iridescent green. This green also occurs on the speculum (a coloured area on the secondary flight feathers) but is often harder to see than the comparable blue speculum of Mallards. In both Mallards and Teal, although the females are generally brown rather than colourfully marked, they do have the coloured speculum, characteristic of each species.



A very pretty migrant duck is the Wigeon. Over the winter, large flocks of Wigeon can be encountered but often not on the water, where you would expect to find ducks, but grazing in fields, behaving more like geese. Once again it is the male duck that has the more distinctive plumage, the broad creamy yellow stripe running from the base of the bill back over the top of the chestnut-coloured head. Well worth looking out for over the coming months.

Bridget Lewis

Photo credits: Mallard © Dennis Church; Tufted Duck © Ian Preston; Teal © Nick Smith; Wigeon © Kev Chapman.

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Meet

Lucinda Fuoco

A North Aston native and an alumna of Steeple Aston School, she is a highly motivated individual who approaches each transaction with unyielding dedication and professionalism.

Recognising the gravity of buying or selling a property, she tirelessly works to ensure clients attain the best possible outcomes. Lucinda's passion lies in the challenges of acquiring, renovating, and selling properties, cultivating a profound understanding of the property market.

Her wealth of experience allows her to offer clients invaluable insights and advice, making Alistair Redhouse Property Partners your go-to source for navigating the dynamic property landscape. Beyond her professional pursuits, Lucinda finds joy in spending time with her family and indulging in her passion for horse riding.



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Choose Alistair Redhouse Property Partners, where Lucinda Fuoco goes beyond being your property partner – she becomes your advocate and guide at every step of your property journey.

The ARTS Page



It was in the middle of working on the 9th November Steeple Aston Remembrance Concert, that I conducted an Orchestral Evensong in Coventry Cathedral. There were memories for me, as I sang as a Chorister in the Opening Service on 25th May 1962. Choirs were brought from the dioceses surrounding Coventry, from which land was taken to make the new diocese of Coventry in 1918. My choir was from Worcester Cathedral.

A thought came to me that Evensong Day. Britten's 'War Requiem' (premiered in the Cathedral five days after the Opening Service), joining the Latin Mass for the Dead with poems by Wilfred Owen, could be a model for our concert. Benjamin Britten was a pacifist and conscientious objector. Owen did fight, but was horrendously conflicted about war and the position of the church and was killed a week before Armistice Day in 1918. The Arts were truly cherished by the new Cathedral. Basil Spence's wonderful building, commissions from Jacob Epstein, John Piper, Graham Sutherland and others and a Festival of the Arts, also featuring a visit by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and the Première of Michael Tippett's 'King Priam'. He quotes Kandinsky at the end of the score, "May Fate grant that we never turn our inner ear away from our soul's lips".

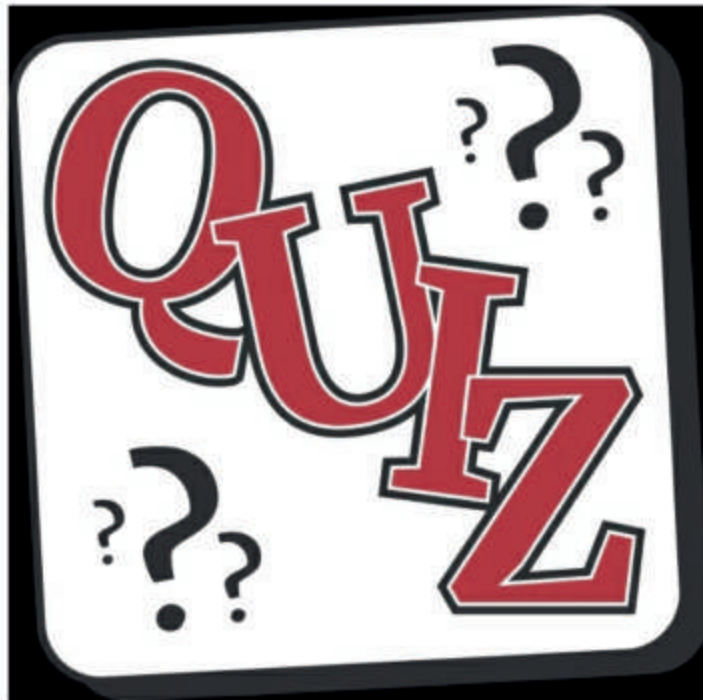
Budget and the size of the church precludes us from performing the 'War Requiem', but it has influenced me in building some of the programme. For example, the juxtaposition of Owen's 'At Calvary' with the 'Agnus Dei'. Here with Byrd's Agnus Dei from his Mass for Four Voices. Poems by Rupert Brooke, Philip Larkin and Siegfried Sassoon, and music from Bach and Beethoven, to the Christmas Truce and World War Songs for all to sing! The background to all this is "Reconciliation and thanks for the sacrifices made".

"Music has a healing power" - Elton John. Poetry too! At the 11th hour before the print deadline, I went to a Poetry Reading in Summertown, put on by Creation Theatre (creationtheatre.co.uk). Check out their December show 'Hansel and Gretel', and Live Canon (livecanon.co.uk), new to me, but well worth a look. It was a wonderful evening, with four poets reading their work, including our own Carl Tomlinson. It was high quality, full of imagination and verbal dexterity, with a terrific turnout from Steeple Aston! I picked up a leaflet there for 'The Exuberant Trust' (exuberant-trust.org.uk), an Oxfordshire charity supporting young people's aspirations in the Arts. New to me, but looks good.

Never too early to book a Pantomime. Near us, Chipping Norton and Oxford Playhouse have excellent reputations, but there are others. Visit bigpantomimeguide.co.uk, go to Find a Panto and scroll to Oxfordshire - or indeed anywhere in the country. The oxfordmagazine.com has a comprehensive list of activities right up to and beyond Christmas, including plenty at Blenheim Palace. Also Oxford Theatre (oxford-theatre.com) has a panoply of events, concerts etc.

As well as the Remembrance Concert on Saturday November 9th (SA Church 7.30pm), Steeple Aston Choral Society have their Autumn Concert on Sunday 24th (SA Church 7pm). Local singing is in fine fettle.

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**Q
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Friday 29th November

7pm for 7.30pm start

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£10 per person inc. light supper

Bar available. In aid of Church roof appeal.

Bring some friends, max of 6 in a team.

Have a laugh! 

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carolineinmaston@gmail.com

Steeple People



Martin Lipson



- **How long have you lived in Steeple Aston?** 25 years.
- **Where did you move from?** A little village called Fingringhoe near Colchester, but before that my wife, Caroline, and I lived in Wandsworth, South London.
- **Give a potted history of yourself – in 40 words or less.** Worked as an architect rebuilding Alexandra Palace, then to a London Council and Essex County architects' departments. A national role followed, advising Councils on building new schools across England and Wales. Meanwhile, I always seemed to be volunteering to help run various community organisations.
- **How do you see yourself, in 5 words or less?** Useful, and a bit rebellious.
- **How do others see you, in 5 words or less?** Knowledgeable, good at explaining, pompous.
- **What do you do for a living now?** Retired in 2012 when I turned 65, but somehow managed to continue working just as hard in community organisations such as SAVA and Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan. My heart attack in 2019 failed to slow me down much.
- **What is the best job you've ever done?** Probably being Chair of the neighbourhood plan Forum – an unpaid role. To have brought so many people from the local parishes to work together on planning the future of our area, not an easy task, gives me great satisfaction.
- **Tell us about any interesting hobbies you have?** I learnt woodcarving many years ago, and still occasionally have a go at producing something.
- **What's your favourite piece of music?** At the moment it's 'O Magnum Mysterium' by Morten Lauridsen. Hearing it sung live by a choir is amazing.
- **Who would you most like to have dinner with – dead or alive?** Leonardo da Vinci, just to see how he reacts to seeing that so many of his prescient ideas have come to pass; and Ray Bradbury, whose early science fiction stories were so imaginative; oh, and Juliette Binoche.
- **If you were on a desert island, what would you miss most?** Trees (or am I taking the question too literally?).
- **What do you get grumpy/mad about?** The media's obsession with 'celebrities', and too many peoples' senses of entitlement and narcissism. A bit more emphasis on people looking after each other rather than themselves would make the world a better place.
- **What makes you happiest in the world?** Seeing our son settle down with his lovely partner and learning the skills to create a brilliant garden on their steeply sloping site.
- **Tell us a surprising thing that you are really good at:** I'm a bit rusty now, but I was an expert mycologist, identifying many kinds of fungi.
- **Tell us something about you that most people don't know:** When I turned 70 my family treated me to a flight in a 2-seat Spitfire at Duxford. After twenty minutes of breathtaking aerobatics, the pilot banked sharply to avoid some bad weather and I blacked out, recovering just as we bumped back on to the grass runway.

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HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

The National Herb Centre

The post-war culinary world in which I grew up didn't pay much attention to the use of herbs in cooking. We grew mint, of course, which was a sort of all-purpose herb – chopped into mint sauce with a teaspoon of sugar and malt vinegar, or a sprig boiled with new potatoes and just occasionally a small bunch steeped into hot water to make a digestive cup of tea. If we were having a party (trying to show off?)

sandwiches and sausage rolls might be anointed with a few tasteful sprigs of parsley but that was the limit of where you'd encounter herbs in our house. Sage and onion or parsley and thyme stuffing appeared regularly to eke out the Sunday joint, but came from packets and sage and thyme weren't much thought of as fresh herbs but as a tasty accompaniment.

Then came Elizabeth David and the Mediterranean Diet and suddenly we became more adventurous, and flavour was more important with herbs and spices bolstering unfamiliar vegetables. We discovered

aubergines and avocados, pasta and pesto and gradually one's collection of little jars of dried herbs and spices grew. Later, kitchen windowsills became home to fresh herbs flourishing in assorted containers and flowerpots. I remember keen gardening friends in the late 70s talking of the gap in the market which was going to make their fortune – and it certainly brought them an income even if not exactly a fortune – as they grew and supplied fresh herbs to restaurants and hotels in London. Now it's easy to source pretty much any herb you need for a particular recipe and many of us use herbs, fresh or dried, without much thought.

A visit to the Herb Centre at Warmington, about 4 miles beyond Banbury on the A4100, might nevertheless surprise you. The range and quantity of different herbs is amazing. Founded in 1997 by Peter Turner, a former chair of the British Herb Trade Association, it is not only a sort of super garden centre where you can purchase herbs, but also a place to find out about herbs and their uses, both culinary and medicinal. It's slightly overwhelming to find that there are 22 different kinds of thyme, and a similar number of mints, parsleys, basils, lavenders, rosemarys all displayed carefully labelled on specially constructed units set on a hilltop site with marvellous views of Warwickshire. The herb centre is no longer involved in research; however, the healthy plants I saw suggested that wherever research has been done, growers are able to produce good results!

As well as herbs, there are woodland walking trails, a children's playground, shop and a bistro with seating inside or outside near the herbs and of course the splendid view of English countryside. The Herb Centre post code for Sat Nav is OX17 1DF. Opening times Monday – Saturday 9.00am-5.00pm; Sunday and Bank Holidays 10.30am-5.00pm.



Eileen Baglin-Jones

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Remembering

Once again, the seasons are turning, we have just moved our clocks back an hour, as the nights and weather close in. November with its beautiful autumnal colours is also the month of Remembering.

At the beginning of the month there's the special Service of Remembering, as we remember those who we love who have died. Everyone is very warmly invited to join us at St Nicholas Church in Tackley on 3rd November at 5:30pm for this quiet, poignant/reflective service.

Sunday the 10th of November is Remembrance Sunday when, as a nation, we remember those who have given their lives in service to our country. As an Act of Remembrance, we buy and wear Poppies (raising money for the Royal British Legion) and at 11 o'clock we will stand in silence as we remember. When we remember a loved one, we remember their quirks, some funny, others possibly annoying. We remember special moments shared together, holidays and celebrations. We also remember those times we didn't get to share, the things we didn't say, and the moments they didn't see.

As we stand unified in silence on Remembrance Sunday, what do we remember? Falling silent at 11 o'clock on the 11th day of the 11th month, we are invited to remember the guns falling silent over a hundred years ago. An event which now lies beyond living memory. Then people remembered the loved ones who didn't come home. The war had a very personal impact, which can be heard as the list of those who died is read out. It was meant to be the 'War to end all wars'. Sadly, that was not the case. Twenty years later the world was at war again, and the threat of nuclear war dominated the second half of the 20th century. Wars continue around the world today, currently attention is focused on the Middle East.

This year as we fall silent let us again remember both the personal cost of war, the people killed, homes and lives destroyed and that violence only begets more violence. If we want peace, then we have to work at it, beginning with learning to be at peace with ourselves. Jesus offered us this peace, when suffering violence (death on the cross) rather than revenge, or hatred, he loved and forgave us. Let us remember too, that we are all beautiful, loved, redeemed children of God every day.

God Bless

Harriet

Church Clock

A few weeks ago, I was contacted by a couple of keen-eared village residents to say the Parish Clock on the church tower was not striking in sync with the hands. In fact, the strike was three hours behind. I quickly reset the striking but within a day or so was told it was wrong again. I then stopped the clock from striking while I investigated the problem, which turned out to be a faulty mercury switch that starts and stops the striking motor.

The clock we have now was installed in 1951 by the firm Potts of Leeds. It is a fairly early all-electric turret clock and generally does not require much attention. It does tend to lose time in the summer when the metal pendulum gets longer and lose time in the cold weather when the pendulum gets shorter. I managed to locate a new mercury switch and so far, the clock appears to be behaving itself. I know from comments I have received that a number of people find the clock a comfort during the night when they cannot sleep.

If you enjoy hearing the clock perhaps you might consider making a donation towards its upkeep. Please contact me on 347273. With thanks.

Graham Clifton

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AUCTIONEERS AND VALUERS SINCE 1788

Letter from *Westminster*



SAL's bi-monthly epistle from our MP, Sean Woodcock

It is a real pleasure to get the opportunity to speak to you about what's going on in the House of Commons and how I've been working on your priorities.

One of my first contributions in the chamber was to flag up to the Secretary of State for Health, Wes Streeting, the dossier raised by the Keep the Horton General campaign, highlighting examples of poor care for expectant mothers at the John Radcliffe Hospital. The Horton Hospital is a priority for people in Banbury and it is a priority for me, after years of neglect and downgrades.

Alongside raising this question, I have met with representatives from the Royal College of Midwifery to learn more about issues in the sector as a prelude to further dialogue on how improvements can be made to benefit residents here.

In July, as the election concluded, the Prime Minister stood on the steps of Downing Street and said the work of change would begin immediately. He meant it, as do I.

Over the summer, I've been on doorsteps meeting as many of you as I can. This will continue as I go forward over the coming years and I'll be holding regular surgeries across the constituency.

Now is the time for politics as public service. I am determined to deliver.

Sean Woodcock MP

Member of Parliament for Banbury (including Chipping Norton, Charlbury and the North Oxfordshire Villages)

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA Email: sean.woodcock.mp@parliament.uk

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monument
octopus
parcel
quarrel
relations
stillness
upheaval

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Answer on p39

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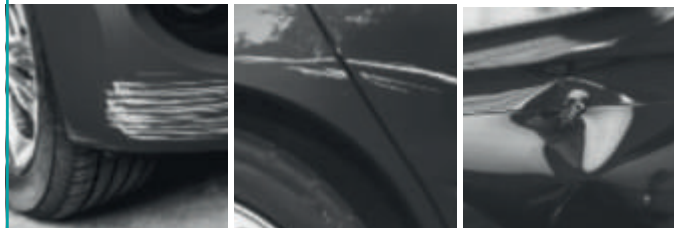
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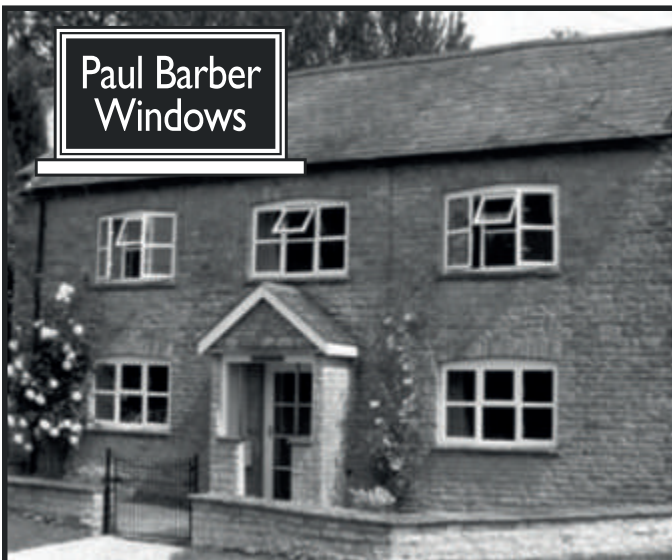
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What to See in the Night Sky this Season

Looking East

Jupiter is rising up by 9pm. Its unmistakable steady glow is brighter than all the nearby stars including those of Orion and Taurus, two of the winter constellations. The four main moons of Jupiter (discovered by Galileo) can be seen by binoculars or spotting 'scope, if held steadily.

Mars is moving into Cancer and may be seen fairly clearly in the East by midnight. Mars has a characteristic reddish hue caused by oxidised iron in the rusty rocks. On 8th December, Mars reaches a stationary point in the sky, and then does an about-turn, moving back towards Gemini. This is, of course, only the apparent motion as viewed from Earth.

Looking South

Saturn, the furthest planet visible to the naked eye, is already in our southern aspect by 8pm. The rings are presented nearly edge-on to us, so Saturn appears dimmer and less prominent. This effect was seen by Galileo, but he was unable to understand the reason for the change in appearance because the nature of 'rings' was unknown. Huygens, in 1655, was the first to see the rings clearly. Next year, the Earth will pass through Saturn's ring plane (a ring plane crossing). Under these circumstances the edge-on rings will apparently 'disappear' for a short while in March.

Venus is hugging the S/SW horizon from November after sunset, moving through Sagittarius and then Capricorn by December. It is the brightest planet, reflecting 70% of the sunlight.

Looking North

It's been a good season for the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) and hopefully this will continue while the Sun is active. Solar activity follows an 11-year cycle and is currently at near maximum. I use the Aurora Watch UK app to alert me when Aurora might be visible.

The richest meteor shower in the calendar are the Geminids which reach their peak of activity on 13th/14th December. The Moon is near full this year, but the brighter 'shooting-stars' might show up. Look up and keep your eyes peeled. I suggest looking between NE and NW away from the Moon light.

Stargazer



Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



The village hall is no longer cut off from the outside world. Its new Wi-Fi system is up and running. This will be welcome news for people hiring rooms there and at the Sports and Recreation Centre. Absent of any mobile signal, they will nevertheless benefit from twenty-first century technology and this will enable them to tap into the miraculous global communication network that is sometimes called the Internet.

Connectivity having been established in case of urgent need, the October meeting opened by revisiting a complaint about speeding traffic on South Side. The Council agreed to move the speed indicator device from Heyford Road to a pole at the other end of the village, near the entrance to Hill House, but pointed out that it was powerless to change the speed setting. It will therefore continue to smile at motorists driving at speeds up to 30mph, unless and until the County Council can be persuaded to reset it to 20mph. It will only monitor traffic driving into the village unless and until the County Council can be persuaded to put up another pole on the opposite side of the road to detect cars speeding away from the village.

There was an update on the bottle bank at the Red Lion, following last month's deputation from Townend residents who do not like the sound of breaking glass. It transpires that the Red Lion is not keen on the bottle bank either, so the Council will now find out whether there is capacity to increase the size of the recycling facility at the village hall, rather than look for an alternative second site elsewhere in the village.

The latest news on doggy doos, also known as poo, is that a bin with a lid has been

installed at the Tchure. The old bin that was there will now be used to replace one that was burnt out beyond the kissing gate on Fir Lane.

The eight-year old who wrote to the Council asking for the table tennis table to be fixed will receive a letter explaining that the wet weather has hampered the search for a solution, despite the valiant efforts of at least one councillor, who reported that wood filler said on the packet to be 'suitable for outdoor use' turns out to be best used during a prolonged dry spell.

The results of the housing needs survey carried out in the summer are now in. Community First Oxfordshire produced a questionnaire which was distributed to all households in Steeple Aston and Middle Aston in July. It aimed to find out the extent of affordable housing needs in the two villages, and the level of support in principle for its provision. 150 surveys were returned, a response rate of 31 per cent. Of the 150 who responded, 78 per cent said they supported the principle of providing housing to those in need with local connections, and 71 per cent said they would support a site being developed to provide such housing. 21 respondents identified their own households as likely to need affordable housing, and 11 of them specified what they would need, either to rent or to buy. The council agreed that the survey results should be made public, as they provided evidence of the demand for affordable housing, as well as support for the principle of providing it. The average selling price for detached houses sold in Steeple Aston in the last 12 months was £1.5 million, and there were hardly any private rental properties available.

Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



The Council also agreed to permit the newly formed Community Land Trust (CLT) to approach the owners of possible development sites identified in spring this year. As well as the owners of the two leading sites from the Neighbourhood Plan process (one opposite Townend on South Side and one on Fenway), the CLT would contact the owners of two possible 'rural exception sites', meaning sites that would not get planning permission except for affordable housing with community support. The aim would be to establish whether or not these sites should remain on the list of possible options for development. It was separately reported that the CLT website is now being launched, and its intention is to build up its membership over the next few months.

Meanwhile, Cherwell District Council is to launch its own Local Plan in the next few weeks, which may come up with a new ruling on whether individual villages will still be required to provide certain numbers of houses. Consultation on this document, in February 2025, will delay the next round of consultation on our own Neighbourhood Plan. The District's Local Plan is thought likely to promote Heyford Park as a major growth centre, following Dorchester Group's proposal for 6,000 more homes there. As previously reported, our own Neighbourhood Plan no longer includes Heyford Park.

A playground sub-committee is considering quotations from suppliers for improvements to the play area, to include soft surfacing, sleepers around the perimeter, repairs to existing equipment and possibly provision of new facilities for children with disabilities. There is approximately £46,000 available from Section 106 funding already contributed by

developers, but the Council agreed that all the costs of improving the play area must be established and approved by Cherwell District Council before it could seriously consider a brief for the pocket park at Nizewell Head.

A request from some local parents that cycling on the BMX track should be banned between 3.15pm and 3.45pm to make it safe for young children was not agreed. Councillors said the track was needed for its original purpose, which was cycling. They would restore clear signage designed to ensure its safe use.

One final request from a member of the public was for something to be done about the Himalayan Balsam, an invasive pink flowering weed that seems to be gaining ground in moist areas, shading out other vegetation and stifling native plants. The Council heard that its Environment and Sustainability Sub-Committee had expressed some reservations about taking this on, in the absence of a clear Council policy. However, the Council felt that the Sub-Committee had been set up precisely to deal with items of this nature, and should therefore be asked to come up with a response.


The next meeting will be held on Monday 18th November at 7.30pm in the Sports & Recreation Centre. As always, the public and the press are invited to attend.

Steeplejack's Apprentice

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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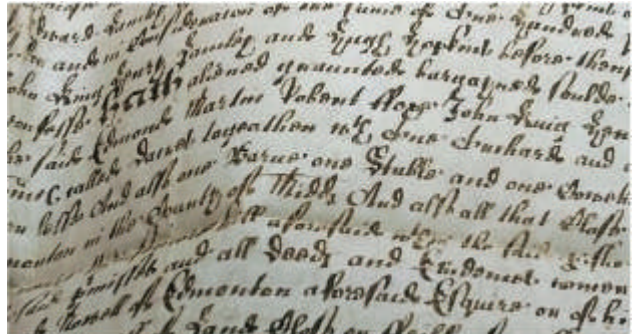
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Trip to Oxford regarding Dr Samuel Radcliffe

A group of children from Years 3 to 5 attended a trip to Oxford in the summer term regarding our school founder, Dr Radcliffe.

We visited New College, Brasenose College and the University Church. Dr Radcliffe was the Principal of Brasenose from 1614 to 1648 and it was fascinating to visit their archives and see documents including 17th century



gifts from Dr Radcliffe to the school trustees (including provision for £10 a year for the headteacher) and 19th century school timetables. It is believed that Dr Radcliffe is buried in the University Church and we got to see the likely place of burial.

Thanks to Mrs Harris who was instrumental in the conception and organisation of the trip and was a knowledgeable and engaging trip leader on the day itself. We look forward to more children having a similar trip next year.

Well done also to the children, with whom it was a real pleasure to spend the day, including on the S4 buses on which we made the journey. For more information on the archive at Brasenose, please see: bnc.ox.ac.uk/about-brasenose/history/archives



'STEM' Day

Thanks to all our parents who kindly volunteered their time for our recent Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths Day.

The children had a great time with each class working with parents from a wide range of work including thermal engineering, power cells, theatre and film lighting, solar energy, rockets and computer software. It is great for the children to see some of what they learn applied – it can bring real purpose to their learning as well as being inspiring and fun.

Thanks to all the parents for putting so much effort into the planning and delivery, as well as such extensive efforts to gather and prepare resources. We look forward to seeing you and others next year at our next STEM Day.

As ever, if you wish to get involved in Dr Radcliffe's school life, please contact us at: Office.3828@dr-radcliffes.oxon.sch.uk

Rob O'Malley
Headteacher - Dr Radcliffe's C of E Primary School



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Chairperson 2025

The Village Hall Trustees are still looking for someone to take over as Chairperson from May 2025. The function of the committee is to ensure the village hall is run and kept in a good condition for the benefit of the village and indeed improved as funds allow. This is, therefore, a good opportunity for someone to network into the community and get involved. If you feel you are that person, you would be very welcome to come along to one of our monthly committee meetings and see what is involved. If you're interested, please call me on 340423 for more information.

Steeple Aston Village Hall Trustees need a volunteer to undertake active marketing duties. We have an opportunity for a Volunteer Marketing Co-ordinator who would work as part of the management team. This role will cover various areas of marketing with a focus on supporting the Trustees to achieve increased bookings for the Village Hall. Once set up we anticipate that a couple of hours a week will be needed, depending on the enthusiasm of the volunteer, to undertake the duties. The main duties will be to:

- Attend monthly meetings of the Trustees to discuss and agree marketing ideas and progress.
- Create engaging and targeted copy for our websites.
- Plan, create and deploy marketing campaigns.
- Create and keep third party listings up to date.
- Take on any associated duties agreed with the Trustees. The post will be an unpaid voluntary position, suitable for a trainee (particularly good for a CV) or a retiree with a marketing background or interest.

Contact Richard Preston on 340512, or John Coley on 347882 for more details.

Forthcoming events 2024 - more details to follow:

Tuesday 5th November 'Fireworks spectacular'

Gates will open with food available from 6:15pm; Bonfire lit from 6:30pm approx. Fireworks at 7pm

We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible to enjoy a spectacular evening of fireworks and refreshments. The Recreational Trust and Village Hall Committee will present a great display in a safe environment. **Please do not bring fireworks, laser pens, sparklers or alcohol to this event.** Glow Sticks will be available for sale at the gate, £1 each, **cash only**. Ticket price includes our special home-made soup together with sausage in a roll and squash for the very young. **Please do not dump any wood or rubbish outside the gate or in the field prior to the event.** If anyone has any wood to burn, please contact a Village Hall/Recreational Trust Committee member.

All children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult throughout the event.

Ticket prices: bought in advance are £14 family, £5 single. On the gate £16 family, £6 single. **If you are purchasing tickets on the gate and to avoid a long queue, if possible, please come along with the correct money, cash only.**

Tickets available from Barbara (01869 340423) and Steeple Aston village shop from Monday 21st October. NB: Ticket sales from the village shop will close at 3pm on the day.

Continued...

Village Hall News



Sunday 8th December Wassail evening

Enjoy a light-hearted evening of mulled wine, soft drinks, mince pies, carols, readings, hand bell ringers and Christmas music. This is an opportunity for everyone - families, young and old - to join in some community singing. So come along and join us as everyone is welcome. **Free entry.**

Saturday 18th January 2025 Annual Quiz Night

Please book your teams early to avoid disappointment, more details next month.

Saturday 10th May 2025 "We'll Meet Again" - 6pm

From 'The White Cliffs of Dover' to 'The Lambeth Walk' - a red, white and blue family event in music, words and dance, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

For more information contact Margaret Bullement, tel: 01869 347346 or email mtheb749@gmail.com

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 Garden Club



At our October meeting in the Village Hall, we were treated to a wonderful talk on encouraging birds into our gardens, by Howard Drury. The photography was indeed superb and with a personalised presentation just for Steeple Aston Garden Club, this all made a very pleasant evening. The talk was professional and informative. We learnt how a little thought to what we plant in the garden, goes a long way to feeding our songbirds all the year round, mahonia and pampas grass being at the top of the list.

To find out more on this subject you can go to Howard's website:- thedrurys.com

Our next meeting is Tuesday 19th November 7pm for 7.30pm in the Village Hall. Our speaker is Katherine, known as The Teabreak Gardener, with 'Gardens created from the Blitz' - sounds intriguing! Come along even if you are not a garden club member and enjoy the evening with us.

Don't forget it is our Christmas Lunch on Wednesday 11th December @ The Holt Hotel, confirmation required by the November meeting.

Chris Clarke
SAGC Secretary

Steeple Aston Community Orchard



Families flocked to the Steeple Aston Community Orchard last month to celebrate the changing of seasons as the leaves began to turn.

Forest Ranger Alison Seymour shared her wealth of knowledge, inspiring children through activities such as making Watling sticks, hunting for bugs and toasting apples over a log fire. Chrissie's Owls from Stonesfield brought two feathered friends, a Barn Owl and a Tawny Owl, to pose for photographs, both of them veterans at preening themselves in public. There were also plenty of traditional apple games for the children to have fun with. Stuart and Richard cranked up the village apple press for people who brought apples to turn into mouth-watering fresh juice and then, of course, there was plenty of tasty tea and cakes to enjoy.

The Community Orchard is there to be enjoyed throughout the year, and the orchard group is always looking for more people to help take care of it and ensure its future in the years to come. If you're interested, please email the secretary annie.stogdale@gmail.com - who would love to welcome you to the team. The AGM will take place on Wednesday 13th November at 6.30pm in the Village Hall Committee Room.



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For October's meeting, we were treated to a fantastic talk and practical workshop by Andrew Buchanan, who came to us to discuss his photographic journey. Andrew first picked up a camera at a young age and despite his secondary school report card of Art class as 'no artistic talent, go do Geography!', Andrew persevered and went on to dabble with photographing the members of his school play. Later on, he was lucky enough to join the Army where he found plenty of opportunity to take landscape photos, sports photos and a variety of travel photos and often forego taking out a rifle to taking out his camera!

His travels with the Army also took him to Belfast during the IRA days in the early 70s, and he was fortunate enough to not get caught taking photos, despite wearing civilian clothes! He also travelled to Sierra Leone, near to the Diamond mines, and he enjoyed taking pictures of the eclectic markets and local villagers. Andrew later ventured into Portraiture photography and was invited to photograph various military events for his regiment which were later published in military publications.

Andrew spent a lot of his life living in the beautiful South of France where he found a love of photographing the French Alps and taking his camera with him when out hiking with like-minded friends. Andrew recently discovered HDR (High Dynamic Range) imaging where he transforms basic flower photos into creative and colourful images. Andrew admits his passion is still flowers and enjoys the creative, composition side, and spends his time pressing flowers and photographing them on his tabletop lightbox.



We had one new visitor join us on Wednesday & one new member, and we hope that they felt welcome and will return for our next meeting in November on Wednesday the 6th at 7.30pm.

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The Cricket Report



BazBall and Steeple Aston CC...

I have been getting up at 6am every morning this week to watch England play Pakistan in Multan. What a joy to watch my two favourite Yorkshiremen, Joe Root and Harry Brook, bat with such composure, skill and at times brutality. How can a team win a Test when their opponents have scored 556 in their first innings – simply incredible. So, what has this got to do with Steeple Aston CC I hear you ask? Well, we have also won six out of our last seven games with only one defeat, just like England. This year, four of our batters have averaged more than 50, with two over 100! Jack Leach is back to his best as England's number one spinner, just as Paul Longman is back to his best too. Jimmy Anderson has retired to great applause and an amazing send off, worthy of one who is, arguably, our greatest bowler ever*. I suspect I am also approaching my own retirement, though without any fanfare, or frankly ability! In fact, the only difference between the two teams is that we tend not to drop our catches.

Looking back to 2003...

I think I have one more game in me, although it may involve bowling one over of spin, batting at number 11 and fielding at first slip. However, it has caused me to reflect on the last 22 years of SACC cricket. Here are some stats:

We played 185 games from 2003 to 2024 and won 64% of them. In the first four years, we were a bit 'hit or miss' and won 53% of our games, but in 2007 all the regular players left the village. I remember the wonderful Neil Powles saying to me "Pete, me and Janet are retiring to Somerset, my boys are moving on too, so there is nobody left but you to skipper the side". Thanks, Neil, I think that is what is known as a Hospital Pass!! Secretly of course I was flattered to be asked, though there was literally nobody else.

I skippered for three years (2007-2009) before passing that ball onto skippers Jon Scotchbrook, Greg Renk, Nige Doggett and Jeremy Farrar. With help from Honorary Fixtures Secretary Phil Chesser, we have fashioned a team that is very hard to beat. Much of that has to do with our children rather than us, obviously, but it has been for me an unalloyed joy to play cricket with local friends and family.

Who is better Bazball England or Steeple Aston CC...?

In the last 18 seasons (2007-24) SACC's record is:

Played 149 Won 96 Drawn 5 Lost 48 Win Rate 66% (1/2 point for a draw)

And England's Bazball record under Ben Stokes is:

Played 23 Won 14 Drawn 1 Lost 8 Win Rate 63%

Unlucky, Ben, keep trying - the stats never lie!

With best wishes to all.

Peter Higgins - Chairman SACC

***Author's Note:** Of course, if you're from Yorkshire, you might still say it was Fred Trueman!

DUNS TEW DRAMA GROUP PRESENTS

KING ARTHUR

THE PANTO



DUNS TEW VILLAGE HALL - 7:30PM

FRIDAY 6TH DEC

SATURDAY 7TH DEC


FRIDAY 13TH DEC

SATURDAY 14TH DEC

TICKETS: £17.50 - INCLUDES 2 COURSE MEAL

DOORS / BAR OPEN FROM 6:45PM - CARD PAYMENTS ACCEPTED

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Steeple Aston Golf Society



SAGS were blessed with a sunny, rain free day at Ladbrook Golf Club on Friday 11th October. A new course for many, but an interesting challenge in terms of the length of many of the holes. The second nine posed added excitement with ditches criss-crossing the fairways making for tactical decisions as to how to reach the greens. Nigel Mills won the day with 29 points with Alan Brewer coming second with 27. The consensus over a very tasty and substantial sausage and mash was that Ladbrook would be a good venue to return to both in terms of the course quality and the hospitality in the clubhouse. Asked why he had a new putter Tommy Bolt replied “Because the other one didn’t float”!

This was SAGS last game of the season, so many thanks for taking time to read my reports. I hope you have enjoyed it and hopefully this has whetted your appetite in joining us next year.



Golfers pictured are: from left to right seated, Graham, Eric, Chris, Nigel. Standing Alan, Richard, Tony.

Alan Brewer (chair)

Route Finder Answer

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THE VALENTINE CLUB

What do you become when you reach the grand old age of 65? If you are a member of The Valentine Club, you become an 'overgrown teenager'. As part of this elite society you are treated to monthly meetings, around six or seven coach trips each year and, more recently, holidays. Life begins at 65! So, what has happened since I last wrote in SAL? Thirty-five members took a five-day holiday to Eastbourne. I was going to say sunny Eastbourne but that might be pushing it a bit, but at least we didn't have the rain that Steeple Aston experienced. After a very wet start to our journey, we travelled into much drier conditions and found our hotel only a few yards from the sea and the pier. The location was great, as was the food, and the staff were amazing. Our visit to The Weald and Downland Living Museum was enjoyable with plenty to see, and the sun shone. A day spent in and around Eastbourne gave us all a chance to explore our surroundings, relax watching the sea, walk to Beachy Head or take a bus tour. Before returning home, we had a chance to explore Brighton with many members visiting The Royal Pavilion and The Lanes. In no time at all, we were soon back home looking forward to our next break.

For our October meeting, we enjoyed fish and chips, followed by some amazing puddings supplied by members. So as not to tax the brain too much, we played a few games of Bingo with prizes that took me back to the days of The Generation Game.

Many of our members will soon be packing their suitcases yet again for a few days in Norfolk, looking forward to visiting Thursford, the world-renowned home of The Christmas Show with over 100 artists singing and dancing plus much more.

Our meeting in November might prove somewhat disturbing as it will cover the sad case of Domestic Abuse that is possibly hidden, but all around us.

Now for some really good news. Redrow South Midlands has very generously awarded our club £850 towards the work we do through their community fund for 2024. Thank you so much, Redrow! Although December is a while away, the shops are full of Christmas crackers and the like, and we are planning to see 2024 out in style. We start December with a visit to The Marriot Hotel in Warwick to enjoy a three-course meal, entertainment based around Motown and plenty of Christmas cheer, then on 17th December, the club will be celebrating Christmas with our annual dinner and entertainment in the village hall.

To find out more about The Valentine Club, simply visit our own website on www.valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston (access via the village website; go to 'clubs and societies' and click on The Valentine Club link) 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, why not have a go at the 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 – Tel. 340512

PS. Whilst I was at a group meeting for seniors in Cherwell a few weeks ago, it became apparent that, while many senior clubs are struggling or indeed have fallen by the wayside, The Valentine Club is flourishing. Not only do we have 100 paid-up members with an average attendance around 70 at each meeting, but we also have a waiting list that is becoming ridiculously long. As I said, this is the age of the overgrown teenager!



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3rd - 21st December 2024

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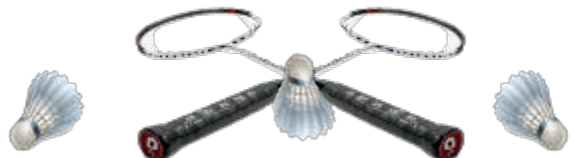
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sheila.churchill@humanistceremonies.org.uk
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Tuesday morning Badminton

Are you at a loose end and in search of a bit of relaxed fun and exercise? Why not come along to badminton on Tuesday mornings at Steeple Aston Village Hall between 10.00am and 12 noon. We are a friendly group who meet every week (apart from school holidays), for a few games and a chat. We normally play doubles, and mix the pairings up during the sessions so that everyone gets a turn. No previous experience required as we are all of differing standards and tend to learn as we play!

Anybody over 18 years of age is welcome, and you can come as little or as often as you like. The cost is £2 per session and you don't need to sign up in advance. Wear trainers and comfortable clothing, and we can lend you a racquet at first to see if you like it. If interested, simply turn up on a Tuesday morning at 10:00am or telephone Barbara Brewer in advance on 01869 340423.



The October meeting was well-attended, with a new member and a couple of visitors joining us too. We enjoyed refreshments, provided by Julie Smith and Joyce Atkins, as we digested all the information that was on offer on the various sign-up sheets for activities organised by OFWI and by our own branch. Details of these are given below. There was also a sale of second-hand books, and several members had brought warm clothes which will be sent to Ukraine as Christmas presents for wounded soldiers there.

This year, the Pat Meades Memorial Trophy competition is to enter a poem about your branch of the WI. After giving out notices, President Julie Smith asked me to read out the poem I have written as the Steeple Aston WI entry. Julie then introduced our speaker for the evening, Rachel Hicks, co-founder of Skywave gin. Rachel's talk was fascinating. She and her partner, Andy Parsons, began distilling gin just six years ago, but won an award for the world's best gin after only a few months. They then faced the challenges of Covid and lockdown but their company, based in Bicester, has nevertheless gone from strength to strength, winning many more awards during its short existence.

We learnt what makes an alcoholic drink specifically gin (the addition of juniper); how long it takes to distil gin; what botanicals are; how many different botanicals make up the special flavour of gins (13 different flavours in one variety of Skywave gin, including marshmallow root and seaweed!); why a gin is called 'London Dry' even though it is made in Bicester; and more. We had the chance to taste a delicious rhubarb and raspberry gin and a London Dry gin. It was an interesting - and flavourful - evening.

Events coming up in the next couple of months are:

Walking netball every Wednesday morning, 10.00am start - contact Merrill for details.

Cricket at the Westgate shopping centre, organised by the Oxford Federation.

Keyring competition.

Trips to the ballet (**Nutcracker** and/or **Romeo & Juliet**) - contact Janice for details.

Christmas door wreath-making, November 30th, 10.00am - 1.00pm; Members £10.00.

Chutney-making workshop, November 9th, 10.00am - 1.00pm; Bring a chopping board and knife and any clean jam jars with lids. Members £10.00.

Christmas Dinner & entertainment, December 10th, 6.30pm

Next month's meeting on the topic of dinosaurs is shrouded in mystery, but we are told it will be surprisingly entertaining. Perhaps the speaker will have live examples? See you there.

Cathy Lawday



Steeple Aston Choral Society

Presents



Light in the Darkness

Come and join us for an evening of seasonal music,
with mince pies and refreshments

Vaughan Williams – *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*

J.S.Bach – *Wachet Auf (Sleepers, Wake)*

Monteverdi – *Beatus Vir*

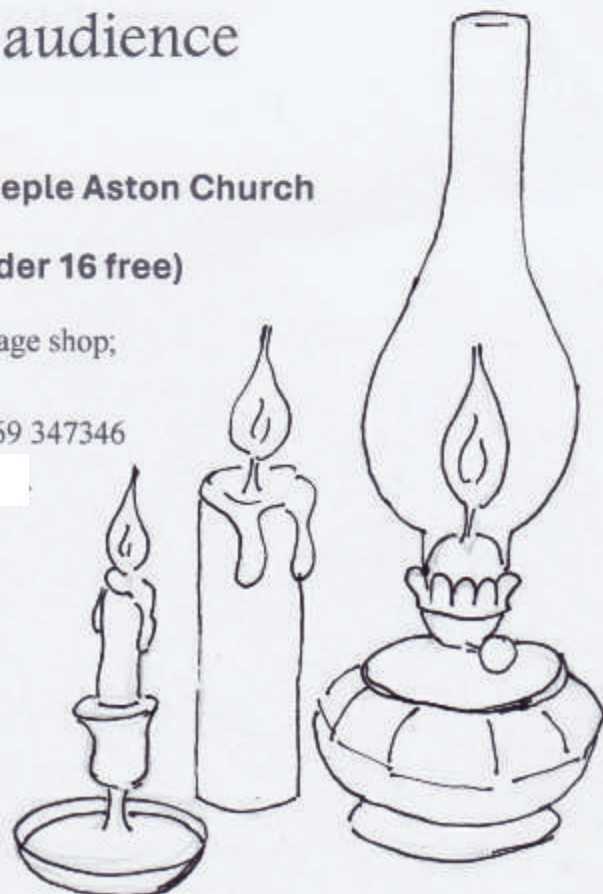
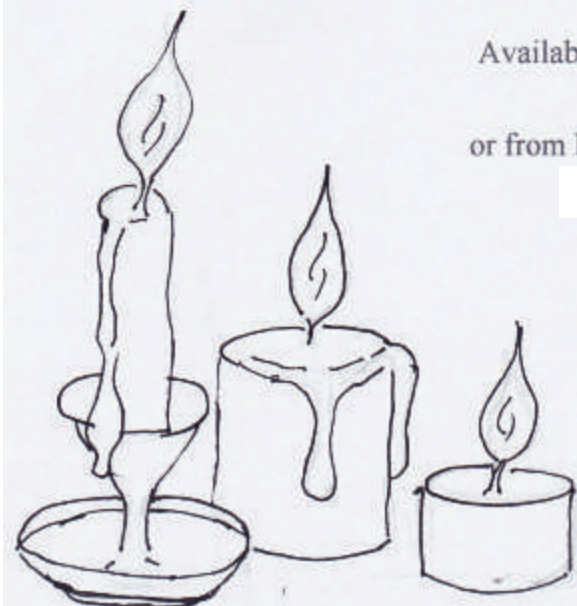
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mtheb749@gmail.com





I Need to Write a Poem

I need to write a poem
To go in this month's 'Life'
I think it would be easier
To eat peas off a knife*
I've got no ideas, no motivation
I can't think of a topic to choose
My imagination fails me
I've totally lost my muse
My life is full and interesting
It has variety too
But none of this inspires me
To come up with a verse or two

I procrastinate. I find displacement chores
That must be done right now
I clean the house throughout
Like an OCD Hausfrau
The windows are all sparkling
You could eat lunch off the floors
I've cleared out all the cupboards
And tidied all the drawers
I've put it off for long enough
I must come up with a rhyme
Oh, there's no more space on the page
I'm off the hook - until next time!

Cathy Lawday

**Note: It used to be a mark of unsophisticated 'northerners' that they ate peas off the knife, and this practice is mentioned in a poem of 1944 by an unknown author:*

*I eat my peas with honey
I've done it all my life
It makes the peas taste funny
But it keeps them on my knife*

Order

Great deeds lie before us and noble we are
the hawk and the sparrow and worm
ascend to great heights
sing in the trees
burrowing earth in its turn
a linear scale as the hawk plummets down
the sparrow knows not of its fate
the worm it ascends to the beat of the rain
the sparrow will feast afore late

Who will survive at this rendezvous
they all need each other it seems
except for the worm who's cast far below
the lowest it seems in the chain
we all have our place
some up some below
the noble the singer the digger
yet all on our own without due regard
then none of us can be a winner

So, whether a hawk, a sparrow, a worm
forget not we all have to dwell
so don't take too much
just get what you need
or heaven will turn into hell

Peter Wild

Book Review: 'Free Spirits of Oxfordshire' by Julie Ann Godson (ISBN: 9798362433253 – Alley Cat Books)

As someone who is often drawn to the unusual, extraordinary things in life, I was instantly attracted by the title of this book. It tells the true stories of twenty 'free spirits' from Oxfordshire. The dictionary defines a free spirit as 'a person who thinks and acts in an uninhibited way without worrying about normal social rules'. The eccentric characters in this book certainly celebrate this and two are included from Steeple Aston. Villagers may recall the Donkey Man, Fred Abel, who toured the area during the 1950s-1970s with his One-Man Circus. His hoop-topped tent on wheels was pulled by two white donkeys, and he offered donkey rides, a flea circus in which a flea rode a tiny chariot, a Jack Russell danced on his hind legs, plus mice performed manoeuvres on miniature circus equipment! Another Steeple character was former rector, Richard Duckworth, who arrived in spring 1680, and appears to have set his own agenda regardless of the needs and wishes of his parishioners, spending much of his time hiding away in the Rectory! He did have strong principles, however, and his love of campanology culminated in his writing of 'Tintinnalogia' or the Art of Ringing, published in 1668, the first book published on the art of change ringing, for which he is still renowned across the bell-ringing world.

This book is easy to read, and ideal if you're someone who likes to dip in and out, as each character's chapter is only about 10 pages long. It is an uplifting celebration of the strength of these colourful characters, and is supported by historic photographs and drawings that help to bring them to life. An entertaining read, especially if you're interested in local, social history.

Carol Neville

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Awards are made based on the financial needs of the applicant, so family household income is considered, but there is no restriction as to family income; each case is considered individually. Young people can apply any year that they are eligible regardless of whether they have received an award in the past.

Applications for the awards must be made by 11th November. Any late applications will only be considered in exceptional circumstances. The scholarship committee then reviews the applications and aims to make awards during December.

To simplify the application process this year we are asking young people to apply electronically via a Google form. The link to this is given below as well as a QR code. The link can also be found on the Steeple Aston website and Facebook page.

<https://forms.gle/vKsMAw4u7M5ogDiw9>



If you need help with the application process or need more information then please contact me, Tina Ferguson. My email address is tina.merlins@gmail.com

Church Services



| | North Aston | Steeple Aston | Tackley |
|---|--|---|--|
| Sunday 3rd November | 9.30am Holy Communion (BCP) | 11.00am Holy Communion (BCP) | 5.30pm All Souls Service |
| Sunday 10th November | 9.30am Remembrance Service | 10.50am Remembrance Service | 5.30pm Remembrance Service |
| Sunday 17th November | 9.30am Holy Communion | 11.00am Holy Communion | 5.30pm Family Service |
| Sunday 24th November | 9.30am Morning Prayer | 11.00am Morning Prayer & Baptism | 9.30am Family Communion & Baptism |
| <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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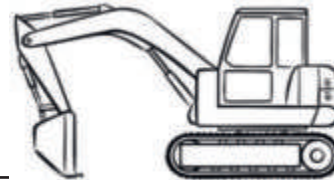
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| Non-Village (over 6 hrs) | £160 (Plus Refundable Deposit £300) |

Off-Peak – all hire before 6pm

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| Plus Refundable Deposit | £200 |

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

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|-------------------|------------------------------------|
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| Others | £12 (up to 3 hrs) |
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| Chairperson | Barbara Brewer (01869 340423) |
| Secretary | Margaret Bulleyment (01869 347346) |

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| 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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| Block Bookings for Social Events: 15% discount for 6 or more bookings in advance. | |
| Letting Agent Angela Smith Tel : 07734 112967 E-Mail to rec.trust@googlemail.com | |
| Chair – Torquil McLusky | Tel : 01869 347914 |
| Treasurer – Chris Cooper | Tel : 01869 347173 |

BUS TIMES

STAGECOACH S4 BUS SERVICE

This timetable is effective from 10th March 2024

From Steeple Aston (outside Post Office) to Oxford (arrival time in italics)

Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)

0619 0721 0831 0931 then hourly to 1531 1645 1754 1849 1937 2037 2216
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

From Steeple Aston (outside Post Office) to Banbury (arrival time in italics)

Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)

0758 0910 1008 then hourly to 1508 1624 1732 1835 1933 2025 2113 2213 2341
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.

November 2024

7th Green
14th Blue and Brown
21st Green
28th Blue and Brown

December 2024

5th Green
12th Blue and Brown
19th Green

Refer to
cherwell.gov.uk/recycling
for collection days during the
festive season

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 December and January to editorsalife@gmail.com

| | | | |
|---|---|---------------------|----------------|
| November 2024 | | | |
| Tuesday 5th November | Fireworks Spectacular | Robinsons Close | 6.15pm |
| Saturday 9th November | WI Workshop: Chutney Making | Village Hall | 10.00-1.00pm |
| Saturday 9th November | Remembrance Day Concert | SA Church | 7.30pm |
| Tuesday 12th November - Thursday 14th November | Valentine Club holiday | Thursford Xmas Show | |
| Wednesday 13th November | SA Community Orchard AGM | Village Hall | 6.30pm |
| Thursday 14th November | SAL December copy and advert deadlines | | |
| Saturday 16th November and Sunday 17th November | SAVA Exhibition on the Environment | Village Hall | 12.00 noon-5pm |
| Monday 18th November | Parish Council Meeting | S & R Building | 7.30pm |
| Tuesday 19th November | Valentines: What is a DA friend? | Village Hall | 2.30pm |
| Tuesday 19th November | Garden Club: 'Gardens Created from the Blitz' | Village Hall | 7.30pm |
| Friday 22nd November | Christmas Fayre | Heyford Park School | 5.00-8.00pm |
| Saturday 23rd November | Farmers' Market | Deddington | 9.00-12.30pm |
| Sunday 24th November | SACS: Autumn Concert | SA Church | 7.00pm |
| Friday 29th November | Church Quiz | Village Hall | 7.00pm |
| Saturday 30th November | WI Workshop: Xmas Welcome Rings | Village Hall | 10.00-1.00pm |
| December 2024 | | | |
| Saturday 7th December | Christmas Fayre | Village Hall | 12.00 noon-4pm |
| Sunday 8th December | Wassail Evening | Village Hall | TBC |
| Tuesday 10th December | WI: Christmas Dinner | Village Hall | 6.30pm |
| Wed 11th December | Garden Club Christmas Lunch | The Holt Hotel | |
| Thursday 12th December | SAL January copy and advert deadlines | | |
| Tuesday 17th December | Valentine Club Christmas Dinner | Village Hall | 1.00pm |
| Saturday 21st December | Farmers' Market | Deddington | 9.00-12.30pm |

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

Steeple Aston Life is published by Steeple Aston Life Committee

Printed by: Joshua Horgan Print & Design

Unit 2 Glenmore Business Centre, Range Road, Witney, OX29 0AA Tel: 01865 246762

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