

Steeple Aston

December 2024

Issue No. 616

Life



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* SPRUCED UP LOO ROLLS *

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To see photographs and adverts in colour, please visit the digital edition at

www.steepleaston.org.uk/sal-magazine

Previous issues of SAL are also available on this site

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Cover: Artwork by Rose Williams, age 8

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 for the January issue is earlier
than usual, on **Thursday 12th December**

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

ADVERTISING DEADLINES

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

ADVERTISING RATES

¼ page - £10

½ page - £18

Full page (village events only) - £20.00

With effect from January 2025 issue

Steeple Aston Directory

Allotments (Church) SACAA		Amanda Rodgers	07793 553150
Angling Club		Antony Morley	tonyriver_83@hotmail.com
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
Church of England (St Peter & St Paul)	Rector	Rev'd Harriet Orridge	01869 932224
	Churchwardens	Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton	340099 / 347273
Methodist Church – Tackley		Rev'd Paul Carter	01865 243216
	Steward	Tim Bailey	01869 331516
Councillors - Cherwell District Council		Cllr Andrew McHugh	07515 120470
		Cllr Eddie Reeves	
		Cllr David Rogers	07900 998555
Cricket Club	Chairman	Peter Higgins	01869 347493
Crimestoppers		0800 555111	
Deddington Guides		Maggie Rampley	07957 600755
Deddington Health Centre	Appointments	338611	
	Repeat Prescriptions	10am - 3pm	01869 338847
	Out of Hours	111	
Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Head Teacher		01869 340204
Football Club	Secretary	Nick Cameron	nickcameron@live.co.uk
Garden Club	Chairman	Richard Preston	01869 340512
Golf Society	Chairman	Alan Brewer	01869 340423
Horticultural Society	Show Secretary	Vicky Clifton	07817 025948
Parish Council	Clerk	Cathy Fleet	07989 398838
Police	24hr Call Centre	(non emergency)	101
Post Office & Harris Stores		Raj	01869 340201
Pre-school			01869 340863
Public House	Red Lion		01869 389174
Robinson's Close	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
Scouts Group		Colin Cassford	01869 243038
Sports & Recreation Centre	Letting Agent	Angela Smith	07734 112967
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*

December 2024
Issue No.616

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and Carol Neville**

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Editorial

As I look forward to Christmas, I reflect on a month that has brought both challenge and solace. My beloved old banger, Leonard, was badly vandalised at Bicester Village train station. Some of you may have seen me rattling through the village in my stormy blue, fiat Panda who happens to be older than my thirty-something sister. Leonard is a characterful little car, capricious in the changing weather and refreshingly analogue in the face of the ubiquitousness of computerisation. So, when I woke up to news of what appears to be a mindless act of violence, I felt like a dear friend had been wounded. Yet, this has also been a month where I have been moved by the kindness of folk within and beyond our community.

From the police to the classic car garage to the community of panda fanatics on Facebook who have pulled together to help me find obscure parts, there has been an abundance of people demonstrating that there's 'nought good as folk, as my gramps would have said. Editing SAL fills me with a similar sense of the uplifting power of community. In this issue we remember Sheila Side, a stalwart of Steeple life who will be sorely missed by many. We meet a relative newcomer to the village, Kristie Pickersgill. And we explore our school's ancestry, tracing our roots to communities beyond.

Carol and I thank all the artists who submitted gorgeously imaginative and colourful works for the cover competition. Our esteemed judge, Niki Thomas, had a tough job trying to pick a winner, and our hearty congratulations go to Rose Williams, whose work, says Niki, is not only 'beautifully drawn and full of colour, it has a sense of community about it'. You can see the other brilliant entries on the village website. Thank you to Niki for her aesthetic eye and time.

And finally, it would be remiss not to mention December's main event. In Church Matters, Harriet asks us whether we have thought about what we would like for Christmas. The present I would love above all is to be buzzing about in my dear Len, again. Do give us a wave if we happen to pass you as we putter into the new year.

Happy Christmas, Kate



Leonard the panda and Otter the dog



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.

Poetry and music night

John White, winner of iOTA Shots Award 2023, will be reading a selection of his poetry, with contributions from Carl Tomlinson and Gareth John. The event will take place on 16th January at the Red Lion pub at 7.30pm.

John is a local poet and Steeple resident (South Side), and will be reading mainly from the book, *Attachments*, currently on sale in the village shop and elsewhere, and with copies for sale at the event. Local poet Carl Tomlinson will also be doing some reading, and Gareth John will be providing the music during the interval. Gareth is a musician and singer at the school John works at, The Iffley Academy, who hails from Ceredigion in Wales. This promises to be an enjoyable night for all, and one to blow away the January blues.



Accessing pharmaceutical health services

We are pleased to see more NHS services are being offered by some local pharmacies. Minerva Pharmacy at Heyford Park is a close alternative for those struggling to access free services elsewhere. There are seven common conditions, for instance, that you can seek help for in these pharmacies, including sinusitis, sore throats, earache, infected insect bites, impetigo, shingles, and UTIs.

Poker at the Red Lion

Red Tooth Texas Hold ‘em Pub Poker tournaments have been played at the Red Lion for the last 3 years. These nights give every player the chance to win one of 100 free tickets to the MGM Grand Hotel Las Vegas for a week every year to play for the title of the UK Pub Poker Champion.

At the pub on a Monday evening, we play a 13-week league and everyone who participates gets 10 points for the league. The winner collects 100 points; second, 80; and third, 70. Points go down by 10 to 20 for the player who is 8th.

The points are added together and the top 4 players are then invited to play in a free Redtooth tournament together with another 180 players from pubs across the region. The prize for the winner is the trip to Las Vegas next May.

The current league finished on the 14th October and 3 local players – Rob Preston, Simon Bailey, myself and a player from Bicester, Sandel Ciocan – all qualified to play in the next Regional Final at the Grosvenor Casino Luton on 7th December.

Fingers crossed one of us can win it!

Our weekly tournaments are very friendly to play in, and, if you are a beginner, learn the game with a lot of drama, laughter, excitement and, I’m afraid, disappointment. If you would like to join us, registration is from 7.15pm, with play starting at 7.30pm. Repeat beginners are more than welcome.

Andy King

Early deadline for SAL contributions

To all our feature, letter, and advert contributors: owing to the Christmas holidays, the deadline for submission for the January issue is earlier than usual. Please have all submissions to the editors - editorsalife@gmail.com - and advertising manager - salifeadvertising@gmail.com – by **Thursday 12th December**.

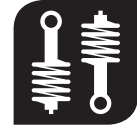
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Letter to the Editors

FIREWORKS

November 5th might be just a fading memory for many of you, but I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who made the firework and bonfire display such a great success and to all those who came to enjoy the display.

Personally, I would like to say thank you to Robert, Kevin, Alan, Chris and Jimmy for helping me ignite the fireworks without any mishaps. But that is just a small part of the team that puts on this display or provides all the refreshments, manages the gate, lights the bonfire or stewards the area.

The event started many decades ago as an incentive created by the late Roderick Nicholson, who felt a community bonfire would be safer and bring villagers together. It has grown somewhat since then but is still what our village is all about. What a legacy!

With best wishes,

Richard Preston

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

Chairperson 2025

The Village Hall Trustees are still looking for someone to take over as Chairperson from May 2025. This could be an opportunity for two people to combine their skills as co-chairs.

The function of the committee as a whole is to ensure that the village hall is run and kept in a good condition for the benefit of the village and improved as funds allow.

This is an ideal opportunity for someone to get involved and network with the local community. If you feel you are that person, you would be very welcome to come along to one of our monthly meetings and see what is involved.

If you are interested, please contact Barbara Brewer on 01869 340423 for more information.



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A tribute to Sheila June Side 9th June 1928 to 30th October 2024

It is possible that many people in the village knew Sheila only as the increasingly frail, eccentric, but often charming and impossibly ancient woman who lived, against the odds, on her own in Manor Court opposite the church. Others who knew her longer, or better, will remember someone who seemed to be at the centre of so much of village life.

Sheila June Whittington was born in June 1928 in Watford. Soon after she was born, her father started showing increasing signs of paralysis. Medical knowledge not being then what it is today, and there being no NHS, it took years to diagnose multiple sclerosis. He was forced to retire, still in his thirties and was confined to a wheelchair. One of her earliest memories was of him falling out of the wheelchair when only he and a very young Sheila were in the house. Unable to get himself back in, he kept talking cheerfully to her so that she wouldn't be scared, until her mother came home and put him back. Sheila was 13 when he died in 1942.



She attended the Royal Masonic School for Girls, which remained one of the most important things in her life, and where she made many friends with whom she stayed in touch for the rest of her – or their – lives. The war was central to the memory of her time there. There were many nights spent on wooden benches in air raid shelters. She writes in her diary in 1945 of doing cartwheels on the lawn on VE day for sheer joy. She was just coming up to her 17th birthday. She lived for nearly 80 more years.

She went to work as a secretary at a solicitors in Lincoln's Inn. Her mother died in the 1954, worn out, Sheila always maintained, by having to look after her father. For some time, she continued to live on her own in Watford, commuting to London on the 8.15am train. Also on the train was a young man called Victor. They married in 1956.

They moved through a series of houses - Hampshire, Essex - following Victor's work, had two children, Karen and Richard, eventually in 1962 found Manor Court, opposite the church, and knew immediately that was where they wanted to stay. And they did. Sheila stayed there for the next 62 years, nearly two thirds of her life.

With calamitous timing, Victor became seriously ill with heart disease shortly after setting up his own business as a Chartered Surveyor. His chances of survival were not high. Sheila was left with two small children, a business that was hardly existent, and a husband moving from one hospital to another while they attempted to diagnose and then treat the problem. He spent two Christmases in hospital. She must have had a terrible sense of history repeating itself. Typically, she just got on with it, visiting Victor in hospital every day, ferrying Karen and Richard to school in Oxford, still finding time to be involved in village life.

Victor survived, and his business thrived. He worked initially from offices in Woodstock, then converted the ruined pigsty at the bottom of the garden into an office and worked happily on his own from there before retiring. He died in 2006.

The Steeple Aston WI was a fixture in Sheila's life. Look through any village archive and photos of her keep popping up. Going out to meetings was a welcome relief from being stuck at home with two children and looking after the house. She was President of the WI twice for a total of six years, vice president for four years, and secretary. She was also President for a time of the Horticultural Society, and of Oxford Inner Wheel. She was no slouch when it came to taking the reins. She was also a member of the Oxford Flower Arranging Club, Oxford Luncheon Club, the village choral society under Michael Hayter, the rector at the time, as well as doing flower arrangements for the church, helping maintain the churchyard, and throwing herself into various pantomimes in the Village Hall, taking on lead roles, and making all the costumes for the nativity plays in the church. Christmas, and the Flower Show, were the two highlights of her year. She continued to enter for the latter until a few years ago. It seemed to bring out a competitive streak in her.



She and Victor enjoyed his retirement, both remaining very active. She had a wonderful knack of keeping small children entertained, and really enjoyed her time with her grandchildren, Barry and Sarah, and later Will and Joe. On the day they should have been celebrating their golden wedding anniversary, she buried Victor's ashes in the churchyard here, overlooking the house. It was difficult to believe she was in her eighties, she always seemed so alert, spry, and well-dressed.

Although the amount of care she needed gradually increased, she continued to maintain that she could look after herself. She always greeted everyone with her wonderful smile and was genuinely happy to see them. She rarely forgot her manners, often struggled to the door to see people off and thank them for coming. She could talk at length about her childhood, her family, and could name most people in ancient photographs. She often said how lucky she was, even in her final days. She was truly appreciative of what people did for her. Above all, she retained her sense of humour, and was able to laugh, even at herself.

She always said she didn't want to go into a care home, and she didn't. She died after a short stay at the Horton Hospital. She will be much missed.

Richard Side, Sheila's son



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Meet *Lucinda Fuoco*

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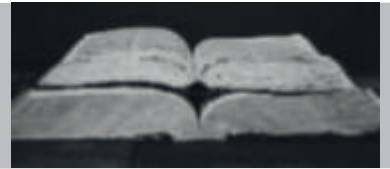
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seasonal songs and carols, together with
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STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL
Sunday 8th December 2024 at 6.00 pm





On ageing

I lost a friend today
I'm coping with rejection
I looked into the mirror
and saw my own reflection
the friend that was my face
has marched off to a war
and where there once was grace
now looks like me no more

when I was just a boy
I wanted to grow old
to face up to the world
to show that I was bold
those times have quickly passed
my boyhood wish came true
I wish now I was young
to live my life anew

now hold up just a moment
that's not exactly true
there're times when you are smiling
and that young lad shines through
the mirror shows what could be
as well as what is now
and what you see as craggy
I see a noble brow

the lines upon my face grow deeper
the power in my arms goes slack
my hair is slowly turning grey
there's bowing in my back
the lines upon your face are deeper
your arms don't have the strength they had
but count the richness of your life
instead of feeling sad

Peter Wild

Two Steps to a Starlit Stable

I have a little gift to give
It's in a wrapped-up box,
It's nothing like potpourri
Or a pair of woolly socks,
It's not a shiny cookbook,
Or a little furry pet,
And it's for a tiny baby
Who I haven't even met
Cos an angel came to me and said,
A special baby's born today
If you follow this massive great star,
You'll find him in some hay,
Amongst his parents,
And a smelly old ox,
She said "Give him a present,
But don't give him socks"

Gilly Seymour, aged 8





Kristie Pickersgill

- **How long have you lived in Steeple Aston?** One year.
- **Where did you move from?** Kidlington.
- **What do you like best about living in Steeple Aston?**
The community spirit and the abundance of trees.
- **Where do you think of as 'home'?** Skipton, North Yorkshire.
- **Give a potted history of yourself – in 40 words or less.**
I grew up in the Yorkshire Dales and studied Chemistry at York University. I worked for many years at OUP while living on a canal boat in Oxford. Now I write children's non-fiction books.
- **Early bird or night owl?** Early bird.
- **Cat or dog?** Dog.
- **Optimist or pessimist?** Optimist.
- **What was the best thing about being a child?**
Adventure playgrounds.
- **What is the best thing about being an adult?** Wine.
- **What is the best job you've ever done?** My current job.
- **What is the worst job you've ever done?** Grouse beating. No grouse were actually beaten, but they were unfortunately shot.
- **Tell us about any interesting hobbies you have?** I don't get to do it very often anymore, but I love canoeing. As a teenager I was part of a school expedition canoeing the Yukon River.
- **What is your all-time favourite book?** Hyperion by Dan Simmons.
- **What's your favourite food?** Curry (Bagara Baingan).
- **If you became prime minister, what law would you pass?** Universal basic income and/or a four-day working week.
- **If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?** Peru.
- **What do you do to relax?** Swimming.
- **What do you get grumpy/mad about?** 'Friendly' dogs that are out of control.
- **What makes you happiest in the world?** Being on or in the water – canoeing, sailing, paddle boarding, swimming.
- **Tell us a good joke.**
Roger Federer was asked 'What's the best thing about being Swiss?'. He said, 'Well, the flag's a big plus'.



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HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO.....?

Oxford University

Many Oxfordshire villages have links to a particular Oxford University college. Ours is an important one to Brasenose because Dr Samuel Radcliffe was not only the principal of Brasenose (in 1614 onwards), he founded the school in our village in 1640 which is still named after him of course. Brasenose College is the patron of our church and so has an important role when a new Rector is appointed. It's wonderful that the college still has well preserved documents relating to Dr Radcliffe and the trust he founded which continues to support so many young people who have attended his school or lived in the village.

I've never been lucky enough to visit Brasenose but Mrs Harris who lives in Cuttle Mill was a student there and is particularly interested in the generosity of Dr Radcliffe. She is a parent of children at the school and is delighted that closer links are being developed. Mrs Harris sent the excellent article below written by William Lewis to me and to our present Rector. It is William's account of the visit he made with Mr O'Malley which we thought would interest many SAL readers - and make them wish that they could visit Brasenose College!



My trip to Oxford

I was one of 15 children chosen for the Oxford New College and Brasenose trip this summer. We had the trip to learn about Dr Samuel Radcliffe and his history, and his connection with our school which he founded in 1640 as well as Oxford University where he was the Principal of Brasenose College. I felt extremely proud to be representing the school.

When the day came, my heart was popping with excitement as I walked in at 8.30am. I saw lots of excited people talking about the trip. When Mr O'Malley came to pick us up for the trip at 9.00am, I couldn't wait to be on the bus.





As we clambered onto the bus I got my first surprise – instead of the normal coach I realised we were on a public bus! The journey to Oxford was about half an hour.

When we finally got there our first destination was New College.... It was deadly quiet. Finally, someone told us (I think it was the porter) that the exams were on today. We went first to the New College Chapel: it was gargantuan! We saw where the choir would sing at services. There were wooden carvings on the walls of angels and saints.

Next place was ... lunch. We sat in the peaceful garden and talked and ate in the shade.

Next, we went to the New College cloisters; they were positioned in a square shape. It is a place to relax and think. There were plaques decorating the walls for the teachers who had died. Mr O'Malley found a plaque for his teacher.





We finally left and came to Brasenose College. There we were split into two groups and did different activities. The first was visiting the archives and seeing lots of documents relating to our school including Dr Radcliffe's will and an old school timetable. We went up to the archives at the top of the tower via a beautiful winding staircase to the old Treasury. When we entered, we saw an enormous chest in one corner and bookshelves and the cabinet in the middle. The will and timetable were in a glass and wooden cabinet. In the will, Dr Radcliffe clearly stated that money should be given to the school each year. He also said that a trust should be set up for the school. Also, there was an arrangement that two students each year from the school should go to Brasenose College, but unfortunately that doesn't exist now! The second activity was to have a tour around the College – it was massive and very beautiful. I particularly loved the library. We also saw Dr Radcliffe's painting in the dining hall and even got to visit the JCR!

Finally, we went to the University Church and learned how Dr Radcliffe might be buried under the stone there. We saw the predicted spot but we don't know where he was buried for sure. This is because he lived during the Civil War and he was on the Royalist side so after the Parliamentarians won they tried to take the College for themselves but he refused to let them, so when he died they didn't mark his grave. We said a prayer with Hannah the priest to remember him and what he did for our school and the College.

On the bus back, I reflected on the day and about how much I had learned. I would love to study at Oxford University, probably Brasenose, after my visit.

That was my fun, fabulous and fantastic day out!



Eileen Baglin-Jones and William Lewis, aged 8 - class 4

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This month, our very own member, Lindsey Smith spoke to the club about her various trips to Scotland, with her talk entitled 'Scotland's Wildlife & Landscapes'.

Lindsey's photography trips started us in the Cairngorms, in Aviemore which is home to various robins, chaffinches, goldfinches, blue tits, siskins (part of the finch family), tree creepers and spotted woodpeckers.

Lindsey also went into the Caledonian pine forest where she found grouse, lapwings and red squirrels, which can easily be found feasting on acorns. Lindsey explained that the best photos of the squirrels were taken in a purpose made hide.

Lindsey's quest was to find mountain hares and, although she was successful, the ones she found were in the midst of shedding their white winter coats. Her trip was made even more special with her stay at Aigas Field Centre which is an award-winning Field Centre focused on nature study and wildlife holidays. Whilst there she photographed mountain goats, beavers and hooper swans, which over-winter all the way from Iceland to Scotland to breed. Lindsey showed photos she'd taken of pine martens and badgers, which were taken from a hide and also explained about a re-wilding program of wild cats which Aigas is hoping to reintroduce into Scotland.



Lindsey's photos also included sunset and sunrise landscape photos which also included snow-capped Mountains of Glencoe and included a trip to the gorgeous Kilchurn Castle, a ruined structure on a rocky peninsula at the northeastern end of Loch Awe, in Argyll and Bute.

Lindsey was also lucky enough to trek up the mountain to photograph Eilean Donan castle and then travel onto the lighthouse at Neist Point and the Old Man at Storr (a 55-metre-high pinnacle of basalt rock which is all that remains of a 2,800-million-year-old volcanic plug). She went over to Ardnamurchan, the UK's most westerly point, where she found some beautiful Scot Argyle butterflies, sandwich terns and red deer. Travelling over the bridge to Mull, she found much flora and fauna to photograph including black guillemots in Oban harbor wall. Lindsey then jumped on a boat to photograph white tailed eagles catching fish with their feet and which have an amazing 8 foot wingspan!

Next Month Martyn Pearse is showing his photos entitled '[The People and Places of Rajasthan](#)'. Everyone welcome.

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Christmas Quiz

1. What is the largest Magi-inspired sized bottle of wine called?
2. What devil rides on horseback?
3. What friendly ghost shares a name with one of the wise men?
4. What is a rangifer tarandus more commonly known as?
5. In Japan, which fast food takeaway is considered a traditional Christmas lunch?
6. What island off Australia served as an 'Immigration Reception and Processing Centre' from 2001 to 2018?
7. What Christmas hit has sold the most records globally?
8. Which Christmas classic book begins with 'One Christmas was so much like another...'
9. What makes a cracker make a 'bang'?
10. What does Scrooge buy for the Cratchit family at the end of 'A Christmas Carol'?
11. Who is generally credited with introducing the Christmas tree to Great Britain?
12. Which famous local author wrote letters, later published, from Father Christmas to his children?
13. Which American humorous writer, living in Sussex, once worked in a department store in New York as a Christmas Elf?
14. When did it last snow in Oxfordshire on Christmas Day?
15. When did England last win the Boxing Day test in Melbourne?
16. Which country has a tradition of decorating their Christmas trees with spider webs?
17. Which country donates a Christmas tree to Trafalgar Square every year?
18. What was Jesus's native language?
19. In literature, which fictional character says 'It's always winter but never Christmas'?
20. What connects Annie Lennox, Humphrey Bogart, Alistair Cook, Isaac Newton and Shane MacGowan?
21. Which band had a Christmas number one in 2009 with 'Killing in the Name'?
22. Which Italian city has a whole street dedicated to making and selling highly elaborate Nativity scenes all year round?
23. How many Christmas messages did the late Queen broadcast during her reign? (Including the earlier radio broadcasts, before her message went out on television)
24. Which 1980s film is hotly debated regarding its qualification as a Christmas movie?
25. What instruction, owing to popular demand of attendance, was given to audience members at the first performance of Handel's 'Messiah' (regarding their sartorial choices)?

1. Melchior, 2. Bacon, 3. Caspar, 4. Reindeer, 5. KFC, 6. Christmas Island, 7. White Christmas, 8. Dylan Thomas's 'A Child's Christmas in Wales', 9. Gunpowder (a mix of charcoal, sulphur and potassium nitrate), 10. Turkey, 11. Prince Albert, 12. J. R. R. Tolkien, 13. David Sedaris, 14. 2010, 15. 2010, 16. Ukraine, 17. Norway, 18. Aramaic, 19. Mr Tumnus in 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', 20. They were all born on Christmas Day, 21. Rage Against the Machine, 22. Naples, 23. 69 (and, interestingly, 1969 was the year she did not broadcast a message), 24. Die Hard, 25. That gentlemen should not bring their swords and ladies should wear dresses without hoops

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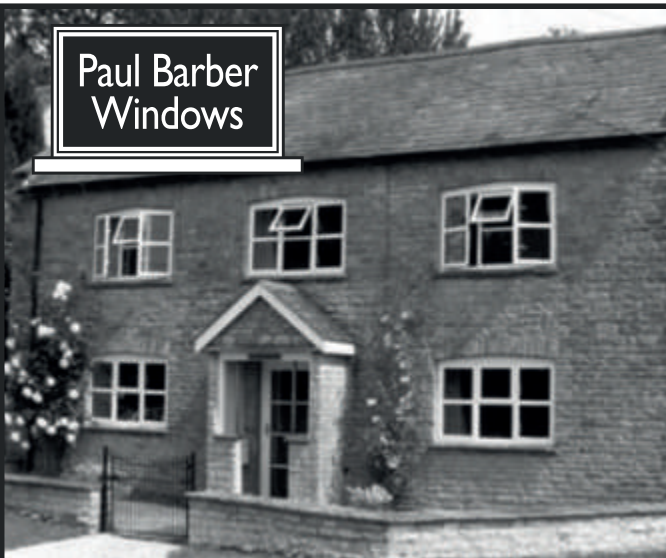
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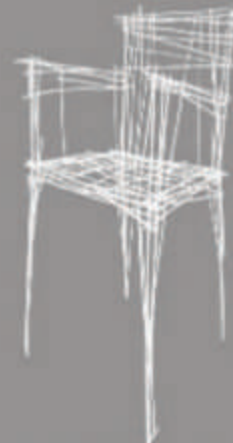
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Village Hall News



Chairperson 2025

The Village Hall Trustees are still looking for someone to take over as Chairperson from May 2025. This could be an opportunity for two people to combine their skills as co-chairs. 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 improved as funds allow. This is 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 are interested, please call me on 340423 for more information.

Marketing Coordinator Opportunity

Steeple Aston Village Hall Trustees need a volunteer to undertake active marketing duties. We have an opportunity for a Volunteer Marketing Coordinator who would work as part of a 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 listing 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 information

Guy Fawkes

We had a great turn out on a perfect evening for our annual bonfire and fireworks evening, and with so many other local displays happening on the same evening. We watched a great display of fireworks and a wonderful Guy Fawkes burn on top of the bonfire made by the children of class 4 & 5 at Dr Radcliffe's School, along with hot soup, squash and sausages provided by the VH Committee.

Our thanks to the willing helpers of the Recreation Trust, Village Hall committee, Simon Thatcher and team of helpers for building the bonfire, Richard Preston and his team for the display, Raj and Parry at the shop for selling tickets, and Bob Bickley for the use of his paddock for the bonfire. Thanks also to the very generous local companies who kindly sponsored the event: Lakeside Farm Business Park (David & Robert Fry) Middle Aston Ltd (Mr Charles Sandy and Mr Patrick Bradshaw) and five anonymous Village donations. Without their support and help we could not have offered such a splendid display of fireworks.

Forthcoming events 2024

Sunday 8th December - Wassail evening, 6.00pm start

Enjoy a lighthearted evening of mulled wine, soft drinks, (CASH BAR ONLY) mince pies, carols, readings and Christmas music. This is an opportunity for everyone – families, young and old – to join in some community singing. Carols may be part of the church service, but they can also be enjoyed as part of the joy of Christmastide. So come along and join us. Free entry.

Saturday 18th January 2025 - Annual Quiz Night - 7.00pm

Ring Barbara on 01869 340423 to book your team.

Entrance fee £2.50 pp, maximum 8 people to a table. Entrance fee at time of booking please. 7.00pm for a prompt 7.30 start. There will be a licensed bar so please do not bring your own drinks to this event. Only 12 tables will be available for this event so please book early to avoid disappointment.

Saturday 10 May 2025 "We'll Meet Again" - 6.00pm

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 Bulleyment – 01869 347346 or mtheb749@gmail.com

On behalf of myself and the Village Hall Committee we would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a safe, joyous New Year.

Our letting agent is Mrs Angela Smith – 07734 112967. Please do not call this number between 6pm and 8pm unless urgent.

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Church Matters



What do you want for Christmas?

This is a question that is currently frequently being asked in our house. I wonder if you have been asked what you want for Christmas this year?

If you have, what answer did you give? Have you got a long list ready? Have children written their wish list to Santa? If you were able to respond to the question with ideas, what sort of things did you ask for? Were they things you needed, like a new set of car tyres to urgently replace the current ones and keep the car on the road? Perhaps you asked for things you wanted like various books, or items for your hobby like paints?

Like many people I have a list of items I'd like for Christmas, including new jumpers, books (I'm particularly enjoying Louise Penny Inspector Gamache books), to items for my bike. However, as I reflect on the question about what I want for Christmas this year, I would really like peace. Whilst I'd love world peace, with wars around the world being resolved, that is beyond me. Unlike Donald Trump, I don't claim to be able to resolve the war between Russia and Ukraine swiftly. But even so, I can work for peace within my own sphere of influence, building relationships of love.

Christ came, born as one of us, precisely because God wanted peace between himself and us. God loves us so much that he wanted a relationship of peace, so we know how much we are loved by him. A peaceful loving relationship where we know we can always turn to him, in every situation. Last year on Remembrance Sunday we heard the poem 'Say No to Peace' by Brian Wren, which spoke about peace being more than the absence of war. Peace is the 'shouting of children at play, the babble of tongues set free.' So, this Christmas I want peace, I want the laughter of people at play, and the babble of conversation round the Christmas table.

I pray that you too will have peace this Christmas and in the future.

God bless

Harriet

Health Centre News



Patient Participation Group - Deddington Health Centre – Latest News

At our recent meeting, the PPG has been looking at missed appointments that can sometimes happen because life gets in the way. If you have an appointment and are unable to attend, please try and let the surgery know as soon as possible so that the appointment can be offered to someone else. Even 30 minutes notice can be valuable to reallocate an appointment on the day.

There is a dedicated PPG box in the surgery just by reception to leave feedback if you prefer not to use our email address. We are unable to respond to personal matters.

The huge pharmacy dispensing machine is ten years old and is about to have a systems upgrade to eliminate the need to print and sign prescriptions, thus allowing GPs more time for consulting with patients.

The triage system has been running for a year now. It has given better access to GP appointments since its introduction. The PPG is aware that there are still some misunderstandings about how the system works, especially for those who may struggle with completing an online form. The surgery is always ready to help those who do not have access to the internet but if someone is able to help you use the system it can speed up contact. The PPG will be working with Practice staff at our next meeting to help introduce and explain to patients how best to make the appointment system work for both patients and the Practice.

Finally, the PPG and the surgery staff would like to wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.


Anne Hunsley Deddington Patient Participation Group
ppg.deddington@gmail.com

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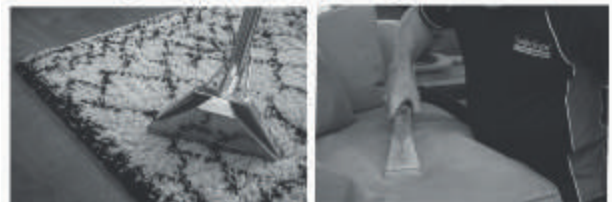
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Remembrance, Respect and Reconciliation

'*Remembrance, Respect and Reconciliation*' was the theme on the eve of Remembrance Sunday, with the church packed in anticipation of a performance in words and music from the Aston Singers and friends, devised by Nicholas Cleobury.

The audience was not disappointed as without a printed programme, the idea was to be surprised and satisfied by the thoughtful links that Nicholas had curated so beautifully, showing us the power of words and music across the centuries.

We began with Siegfried Sassoon's poem, *Everyone Suddenly Burst out Singing*, commemorating the ending of the Great War, followed by the Aston Singers' vibrant performance of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*, from his Ninth Symphony. The latter was sung in German – as were all the evening's pieces originally written in that language. This felt appropriate given that it is an ode to peace and all mankind uniting in harmony, as well as being in the spirit of reconciliation.

The mood then changed dramatically with Wilfred Owen's poem, *Dulce et Decorum Est Pro Patria Mori*, describing the agony of a soldier who has been gassed in the trenches, enhanced by Elizabethan composer, William Byrd's sublime *Agnus Dei* which followed, in which the repeated *Miserere (Have mercy on us)* takes on a poignant significance. Wilfred Owen died just a week before the Armistice.

At a Cavalry Near the Ancre, another Owen poem, he likens a French roadside cross to the scene of the Crucifixion and this was followed by a hauntingly beautiful performance of the theme from John William's, *Schindler's List*, by violinist, Holly Viner. There was a moment of hesitation. Should we applaud here? It was so moving, we did.

Call to Remembrance by Tudor composer, Richard Farrant, *O Remember Not the Sins and Offences of My Youth*, took us to two settings of three stanzas of Lawrence Binyon's poem, *For the Fallen – They Shall Not Grow Old, as We that are Left Grow Old* – written in 1914, at the beginning of the Great War.

The first setting, by Sophie Cleobury, was sung fervently and confidently by four students from Dr. Radcliffe's School – Charlie Simpson, Nathaniel Prigent, Arlo Robins and Freddie Thompson. The second, by Douglas Guest, Nicholas's mentor at Worcester Cathedral, was composed for the Choir of Westminster Abbey and satisfyingly complemented the first.

In 1960, Philip Larkin wrote *MCMXIV (1914)* describing the years following the Great War. It ends with *Never Such Innocence Again*, at which point, Charmian Bartlett, cellist – a very welcome newcomer to the village's musical scene – played an eloquent *Arioso*, from Bach's Cantata 156, *I stand with One Foot in the Grave*. This was another 'we must applaud' moment.

The choir continued with a Charles Stanford motet from 1905, *Justorum Animae (The souls of the just are in the hand of god)* which was followed by Rupert Brooke's, *The Soldier (If I should die...)*

During the Second World War, pianist Myra Hess gave lunchtime concerts in the National Gallery to relieve the 'cultural blackout.' These concerts were very popular and the audience's favourite was Myra's version of Bach's, *Jesus Bleibet meine Freude (Jesus, Joy of Man's Desiring.)* Holly and Charmian played this joyous work, with the choir singing the chorale melody above.

The story of the 1914 Christmas Truce when on Christmas Eve, German soldiers started singing *Stille Nacht* and the British joined in with *Silent Night*, from their trenches, followed. The moment was re-enacted, with the choir singing in German and the audience singing in English.

Benjamin Britten's, *War Requiem* was referenced by Nicholas, who had sung at the opening of Coventry Cathedral, where, five days later, the first performance of the Britten was given. This and Michael Tippett's, *A Child of our Time*, informed his thinking when preparing the programme.

The Tippett was written in response to the events of Kristallnacht 1938 – 86 years ago to our concert night – when the Nazis unleashed violence against the Jewish community, after a diplomat had been assassinated by a Jewish refugee. Whereas, a Bach cantata has chorales (hymn tunes) for reflective moments, the Tippett work has spirituals and the choir sang one of them, *By and By*, with a notable solo by Miranda Doggett.

The evening ended with a sing-a-long from both World Wars – *Pack up your troubles; Who do you think you are kidding Mr Hitler?* with Martin Corporal Jones Dale; *The White Cliffs of Dover*, sung beautifully by Rebecca Lewin and *We'll Meet Again*, with Nigel Doggett and James Taylor.

Many thanks, to all the Aston Singers 'small in number, but mighty in sound and quality,' for their versatility across five centuries; Dr Radcliffe's young singers; Holly and Charmian; Tom Coker, Eileen Baglin-Jones, Heather Cleobury and Tina Ferguson for their eloquent readings and to Nicholas Cleobury, for putting together such an enjoyable, poignant and thought-provoking programme.

The quality of the talented musicians and performers we have within our small community, never ceases to amaze me. £1174 was raised from ticket sales and donations for the *Royal British Legion* and the Church Roof Appeal.

Margaret Bulleyment



Remembrance Sunday was marked with a well-attended service in Steeple Aston church and at the War Memorial this year. Nigel Francis took these beautiful photos that speak to the beauty and solemnity of the day, and the ceremony of wreath laying.





THE VALENTINE CLUB

My dear old mother used to say, “as you get older, time passes much more quickly” and I used to think, what a load of rubbish, but as I find myself in what can best be described as more senior years, I have to say she was right! It seems no time at all since I was writing this article for December last year. I guess it must be a combination of being a busy time of the year and getting a bit slower but there seems to be a lot going on.

After devouring plates of fish and chips during our October meeting, we started off November with a holiday break to Norfolk, Hunstanton to be precise, where we made base for a couple of days whilst visiting Thursford for what is described as the largest Christmas Show in Britain and possibly Europe. As I am writing this just before we leave so I will tell you more next year. Oh gosh, that will be 2025!!!!

Our monthly meeting welcomed Emma Teasdale to tell us all about domestic abuse and, like Thursford, I will have to tell you more in the next edition of SAL.

Early on in December we take a full coach to The Marriott Hotel in Warwick where we will be entertained with some music from Motown and enjoy a three-course meal accompanied by a glass or two of wine and wonderful company. Talking of wine, I have just placed the order for a few gallons to help the Christmas meal down ready for Tuesday 17th December when we are catering for around 90 members to celebrate the holiday period. Entertainment has been arranged and all we need now are a few turkeys!

At present we are compiling a programme of speakers, entertainers, day trips and a couple of holidays. Already arranged is a holiday on Hayling Island in May and a hotel vacation in October. Maybe the sun might shine a bit more come next summer!

Now for some amazing news. Thanks to the support of both Oxfordshire Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA) and Community First Oxfordshire, we have been awarded a grant of £2,500 via The Connected Community Fund towards next year’s programme of events. I can’t tell you how much this will mean; to say thank you to such supportive organisations does not feel enough.

Although I am writing this in mid-November and yes, the shops are full of Christmas crackers and the like, may I, on behalf of all the members of The Valentine Club, wish you a very merry Christmas and a healthy New Year.

To find out more about The Valentine Club, simply visit our website on valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston (easiest way to log-on is go to the village website, go to ‘clubs and societies’ and find The Valentine Club and click on the link) or keep up to date by looking on the village website steepleston.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, 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

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Crafty Corner



Upcycling and Christmas are two of my favourite things, so, I set myself a challenge to find an item everyone has at home that could be transformed into something festive. Introducing: the humble toilet roll tube! There are endless possibilities for transforming this usually recycled item. Here, I've narrowed it down to three: Stars, Angels and Gift Boxes.

You will need: Toilet roll inners, scissors, ruler, pencil, glue (either: PVA, glue-gun, glue dots, or double-sided tape (you can get recycled/ recyclable tape), ribbon/ string (preferably re-used), and colourful pens.

Stars (1 tube makes 2)

1. Flatten the toilet roll tube with your hand
2. Measure and cut tube into 6 even pieces
3. Cut a chevron into both ends of each section of toilet roll, making sure to leave a section at each edge attached (don't cut all the way to the edge as you want the two sides of the toilet roll to remain connected)
4. Take 3 sections and decorate however you wish using coloured pens for instance dots, stripes, stars....
5. Take 1 section and pop a dot of glue on the inside of each side of the tube
6. Slide a second section inside the first, to create a cross, press down to glue the outside of the second section to the inside of the first
7. Repeat step 6 with the third section, attaching it to the inside of the second section, to create a star
8. Pop under a book or similar until dry
9. Using ribbon or string tie a hanging loop through the top of one of the chevrons



Gift Boxes (1 toilet roll tube makes 1)

1. Flatten the toilet roll tube with your hand
2. Decorate both sides as you choose
3. Fold in each side of each end (approx 1/1.5cm down) to form a 'box'
4. Insert gift, and tie with ribbon



Angels (1 tube makes 1)

1. Flatten the toilet roll tube with your hand
2. Measure and cut the tube into 7 even pieces
3. Take 3 pieces and attach them to each other at the top
4. Take 3 more pieces and fold each one in half and glue in the middle (to create two loops)
5. Glue each of the 3 pieces from step 4 to each other
6. Attach the 3 pieces from step 5 to the three pieces in step 3
7. Take the final loop and cut it in half. Put one half to one side and glue the two ends of the other together to form a circle
8. Glue the circle from step 7 to the top of the body created in step 6
9. Cut a small star from the piece of card put to one side and glue to the point where all pieces of the angel come together to hide your joins (you can do this on both sides if you wish)





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Dried fruit decorations

If, like in Home Farm Lane, you have had a windfall of apples roll onto your road, why not rescue the apples from the rot and create some festive decorations. Oranges work excellently too.

First, thinly slice your apples and oranges – around 1/4 inch thickness. Slice the apple horizontally, as this will leave a star shape in the middle of each slice, likewise with the orange.

1. Squeeze as much juice as you can out of the orange slices but try to keep the shape.
2. Dip the apple slices into a mixture of salt and lemon juice – this will stop the apple from turning brown. Leave them in the solution for 15 minutes.
3. Take the apple slices out of the solution and pat them dry.
4. Lay out the orange and apple slices onto a baking tray lined with baking paper.
5. Make a small hole in the top of each slice.
6. Place in the oven at 150°C for 4-6 hours. Keep the oven door slightly open, to allow the air to circulate. If you have an aga, pop in the simmering oven overnight.

Once dry, you can use ribbon or garden twine to turn them into decorations, or why not collect ivy and berries and create a garland or wreath festooned with fruits.

To make a garland you will need:

Garden twine or string

Florist's wire is helpful but not essential

Scissors or pruning shears

Armfuls of foliage – branches with bronzed leaves make a nice addition

Your "here's one I made earlier" dried fruit

Making the garland is simply a case of getting a length of string (or ribbon) that will form the basis and tying each branch of foliage to it. Make the base string the length that you want the garland to be, with a bit left at each end for tying. Tie the foliage so it hangs down from the string. If you want to conceal any gaps or messy tying, you can arrange and tie some of the foliage horizontally. Tie the fruit and any other decorations you fancy once you have constructed a garland body you are happy with.

Kate Symondson



Parish Council Meeting *Notes*



The meeting started with a gentleman from Townend expressing his disappointment at vehicles leaving the village at speed which he felt caused excessive noise and disturbance. He wants village speed signs moved and even suggested the PC could fork out for a new speed indicator. After THIRTY minutes discussing this topic my patience (and sympathy) was wearing thin and I was beginning to wish my water bottle was filled with something stronger... Finally, the idea of resurrecting a Community Speedwatch group was mooted – if you're interested then do contact our Clerk. We then heard from a Councillor who had audited the contents of the PC's shed. We have 15 bags of emergency salt (which given subsequent snowfall could come in useful) and also 20 large slugs that had congregated together around the lock. Photographs were available for anyone interested. Chat moved onto Super Users. These are volunteers who use Fix My Street and then have powers to fill in certain potholes. One councillor volunteered to be our Super User – but we're waiting for clarity on just how super his powers will be. We're still waiting to hear if we can expand our recycling provision at Robinson's Close (and then close the one by the Red Lion which some villagers feel is too noisy). This caused some councillors to note that there was a letter in last month's SAL suggesting Townend residents should stop moaning... (Not to mention the idea that any reduction in parking near the school could add even more pressure to the parking situation for the school run). Perhaps, though, this is a Rectory Homes problem as they should have provided better green screens and it'll be 5

years before the hedges there will offer any sort of effective barrier.

In good news - Cherwell is offering us the opportunity to recycle our coffee pods. We then had a rare appearance from our Cherwell District Councillor, Cllr Andrew McHugh who said he's spending a lot of time trying to pull together flood reports from various villages. He was aware of issues in Water Lane and Bradshaw Close. He'll miss January's meeting as he's spending the month in Sicily (but was open to receiving emails).

Next, we had an update on the Playground Project. This wasn't as exciting as I'd hoped and mainly involved talking about boundary fencing, sleeper posts and the various benefits of recycled plastic versus oak. This part of the project could cost as much as £14,000 +VAT. Apparently the toilet needs keeping an eye on and after some deliberation on wording the BMX sign was being ordered ("non-bikers should not use the track while in use").

The 'Great Blandford Fly Spray' is set to get under way in Spring. The Environment Agency has no issues and Thames Water has said they have no drinking water extraction points on the Cherwell, they simply use it for dumping sewage (my attempt at satire!). There aren't many spray points in our village and landowners will be notified. Regarding Highways and Footpaths, a councillor had a super idea for Remembrance next year. She suggested buying a number of large poppies to be hung outside the homes where brave fallen soldiers once lived; as seen recently in Deddington. From this thoughtful plan discussion turned to the inability of another

Parish Council Meeting Notes



councillor to find the correct location to put a new bin, despite the fact that there were scorch marks where the old bin used to be. Fortunately, he found a suitable alternative location. Meanwhile the PC is waiting for Highways to review the white lines in our village and have also been informed of a new campaign to reinstate our lollipop person. I wouldn't hold your breath for either.

The newly created Community Land Trust now formally exists, and membership is growing. People are being generous with their donations and they're now in the process of speaking to landowners and identifying potential sites.

The Cherwell Local Plan is being scrutinized and is expected to go under consultation from Christmas. There seem to have been some changes. Previously, villages each had several new dwellings they were expected to build. However, Kirtlington has mysteriously gained a different status and is no longer included in the new houses count, leaving Steeple Aston as the only Category A village in the group.

MCNP have now been told that the 11 villages in the neighbourhood group will need to provide 100 new dwellings between them by 2042. Steeple Aston had previously agreed a realistic goal of around 30 – 35 homes, but now the context is that we are to be the major contributor to the 100 homes expected. If the other 10 villages all agreed to 7 dwellings each, that would leave us with the original goal of 30. It felt like there was some politics going on behind the scenes. As Cllr McHugh said, these are proposals; many applications can ultimately go ahead on appeal anyway, regardless of what Local or Neighbourhood Plans say.

During discussion about overgrowing foliage in the park there was plenty of chat about

“trimming bushes”, “giving bushes a good seeing to” and even just giving them “a little tickle”. At this point Cllr McHugh made his excuses and withdrew from the meeting. Policy around Church Clocks has changed in recent months and PCs can now support the maintenance of such clocks. I think regardless of faith, the church clock is an important part of our community, and the school run could be even more chaotic if it wasn't running to time! The general feeling was that the PC would contribute to maintenance costs but that the Church still had some way to go with their roof fundraising appeal. Is it just me, but is the roof fund thermometer always stuck at £30k? A potential national policy change that may allow virtual PC meetings and proxy voting reminded me of the viral scenes featuring Jackie Weaver... On a more serious note, though, this move could enable more involvement from a wider group of people. Finally, we heard the Community Orchard's recent AGM was well attended with an informative slide presentation. They are by all accounts an active and well organised group (with, in my opinion, a most delicious apple juice!).

Our Parish Council is still looking for another councillor, so if you're interested, please do contact the Clerk or come along to the next meeting (20th January).

All the best, 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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Christmas Colour



Our president, Julie Hillier, was recovering from major surgery on 12th November, the date of our meeting, but she joined us via video link. Many members took the opportunity to chat with her. We all send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery.

In her absence, Merrill Bayley chaired the meeting. She started by welcoming the many visitors who had joined us - no doubt having heard that something special was in the pipeline. Merrill drew our attention to sign-up sheets for several upcoming events (see below for details). She asked us to sing "Happy Birthday" to those members whose birthdays fell in November, and she reminded everyone of the walking netball every Wednesday morning. She also informed us of the death of Sheila Side, who was a member of the WI for 70 years and was twice President of the Steeple Aston branch. Hildy Frenken gave a brief report on the boxes of goods that members had donated as Christmas gifts for injured soldiers in Ukraine. These were en route to Poland and thence to the Ukrainian border.

Finally, we reached the part of the evening we had been waiting for. To introduce the topic, I read a poem which Janice Kinory had commissioned specially for the occasion:

Dinosaurus

There was a time long long ago
When dinosaurs roamed the earth
There wasn't much else going on
And a total lack of mirth.

The dinosaurs were not a jolly lot
You wouldn't want to meet one
And the steak would be extremely tough
If you tried to eat one.

There was a great variety
Many different kinds of beast
I guess most of us can recognise
Half a dozen types at least.

Giganotosaurus was very big
Megalosaurus was the same
You could easily have guessed that
The clue is in their name.

Spinosaurus had a very bad back
Triceratops was three times blessed
Baryonyx thought he was of noble blood
Tyrannosaurus ruled harshly over the rest.

Iguanodon looked like a lizard
Carnotaurus would only eat meat
Microraptor was really tiny
And Oviraptor had smelly feet.

The dinosaurs each had their quirk
Their own distinctive twist
But their idiosyncrasies didn't save them
And now they don't exist.

So I'll never see a dinosaur
I'm feeling quite bereft
You'll never see one either
Because there are none left.







This was followed by a talk about dinosaurs. The speaker started by telling us about fossils, showing several examples. He then moved on to show us a wide variety of shapes and sizes of dinosaur eggs, some teeth, a stegosaurus' spinal plate, and gave us fascinating facts. One such concerned the size and strength of the bite of a tyrannosaurus. We learnt about the diet of dinosaurs, their various means of self defence against predators, how fast they grew, and to what enormous sizes. But the highlight of the evening was meeting several dinosaurs - a baby triceratops, a very cute stegosaurus, a young spinosaurus and an enormous tyrannosaurus rex. The creatures were very lifelike, able to move their bodies, eyes and mouths. Several members were very taken with them; though others practically fled the room when tyrannosaurus rex approached! All in all, an informative and entertaining evening.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 8th December Wassail Evening in the Village Hall. Members of the WI will be performing. Do come along and support us.

Tuesday 10th December Christmas dinner and entertainment, Village Hall, 6.30 for 7.00pm.

- There will be a cash collection on behalf of Katharine House Hospice on the night so please bring money for a donation.
- Christmas Competition: Make a star, suitable for hanging, in any medium.

Tuesday 7th January Talk by Stuart Cummins 'Left a bit right a bit': anecdotes on how things have changed during his career as a Civil Engineer.

Thursday 16th January: meal at The Red Lion, Steeple Aston

Finally, I wish all our members a happy, healthy Christmas.

Cathy Lawday

Church Services



	North Aston	Steeple Aston	Tackley
Sunday 1st	9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)	11.00am Holy Communion (BCP)	5.30pm Evensong
Sunday 8th	9.30am Morning Prayer 2.30 – 3.30pm A Time to Remember	11.00am Family Service	5.30pm Holy Communion
Sunday 15th	9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Holy Communion	5.30pm Family Service
Sunday 22nd	3.00pm Carol Service	11.00am Holy Communion (said) 6.00pm Carol Service	5.30pm Carol Service
Tuesday 24th	6.00pm Carols on the Green	4.00pm Crib Service	4.00pm Crib Service
Wednesday 25th	9.30am Holy Communion	10.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 29th			10.30am United Benefice Holy Communion



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0809 0909 1019 1619 1729 1834 1932 2022 2147 2253

Sundays and most 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

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0956 1122 1252 1422 1552 1722 1852 2022

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Steeple and Middle Aston rubbish bin collection day is Thursday.

December 2024

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



January 2025

Dates yet to be published

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

December 2024			
Fri's 6th, 13th, Sat's 7th, 14th	King Arthur Panto	Duns Tew Village Hall	7.30pm
Saturday 7th	Christmas Fayre	Village Hall	12.00 - 4pm
Sunday 8th	Wassail Evening	Village Hall	6.00pm
Tuesday 10th	WI Christmas Dinner	Village Hall	6.30pm
Wednesday 11th	Garden Club Christmas Lunch	The Holt Hotel	
Thursday 12th	SAL January copy and advertising deadline		
Tuesday 17th	Valentine Club Christmas Dinner	Village Hall	12 noon
Friday 20th	Carol Sing Along	Red Lion	6.30pm
Saturday 21st	Farmers' Market	Deddington	9.00am – 12.30pm
SAVE THE DATE!			
2025			
Thursday 16th January	An evening of Poetry and Music with John White and friends	Red Lion	7.30pm
Thursday 16th January	WI Meal	Red Lion	TBC
Saturday 18th January	Annual Quiz Night	Village Hall	7pm for 7.30pm
Sunday 30th March	SACS: Spring Concert	TBC	TBC
Saturday 10th May	"We'll Meet Again"	Village Hall	6.00pm

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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