

Steeple Aston *Life*

April 2025

Issue No. 620



* Environmental survey * Dr Radcliffe's Trust * Theatrical talent *

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Contributions are welcome. Please email editorsalife@gmail.com

'Church & Magnolia' photo by Nigel Francis

Steeple Aston *Life*

COPY

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

COPY DEADLINES

The copy deadline for the May 2025 issue is Saturday
12th April, due to Easter.

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 **Zazi Barrell**
salife.advertising@gmail.com

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The deadline for adverts for the May issue is 12th
April, due to Easter.

ADVERTISING RATES

¼ page - £10
½ page - £18
Full page (village events only) - £20.00

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
Cherwell District Councillors		Cllr Andrew McHugh	07515 120470
		Cllr Eddie Reeves	07445 395166
		Cllr David Rogers	07900 998555
Choral Society	Chair	Bev Davies	01869 347684
Church of England (St Peter & St Paul)	Rector	Rev'd Harriet Orridge	01869 932224
	Churchwardens	Eileen Baglin-Jones, Graham Clifton	340099/347273
Church (Methodist) – Tackley		Rev'd Paul Carter	01865 243216
	Steward	Tim Bailey	01869 331516
Cricket Club	Chairman	Peter Higgins	01869 347493
Crimestoppers			0800 555111
Deddington Guides		Maggie Rampley	07957 600755
Deddington Health Centre	Appointments	Patient Triage	01869 338611
	Repeat Prescriptions	<i>Deddingtonhealthcentre.co.uk</i>	
	Out of Hours		111
Dr Radcliffe's C of E School	Headteacher	Rob O'Malley	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	Editor	Jenny Bell - <i>steepleaston.org.uk</i>	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*

April 2025
Issue No.620

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Editorial

As I write, we have just enjoyed a glorious week of early spring sunshine and frosty nights. How delightful to take a stroll without donning an overcoat, and see buds and blossom emerging in the hedgerows, the first Brimstone butterflies tentatively on the wing and newborn lambs dotted in the fields. Bees are also beginning to stir and local apiarist, Paul Honigmann, shares his extensive knowledge, including how to deal with failed hives as encountered by former editor, Kate, and her partner, Will. Take a few moments to complete the short Environmental Survey to help influence matters in your community.

We showcase the talents of the MYCO musical youth theatre, so read all about villager Ollie Watkins' fascinating journey and see him and fellow Steeple Aston resident, Izzy Kinchen, on stage at the Oxford Playhouse from 9th-12th April. We also include two school related articles. Learn about the history behind Dr Radcliffe's Trust, which provides much support to the local community; and we are pleased to feature our Headteacher, Rob O'Malley, in this month's Steeple People.

As well as celebrating Easter this month, we mark St George's Day on 23rd April, patron saint of England, whose cross features on our national flag. The photograph below shows the St George's Day Parade in Steeple Aston during the 1970s, as they passed Church Corner, Cow Lane.

Wishing you a very Happy Easter & St George's Day!

Carol

St George's Day Parade in the 1970s at Church Corner, Cow Lane (photo courtesy of SAVA).





Earlier deadline for May issue:

Please note that, due to the Easter break, the deadline for the May issue will be **Saturday 12th April** (not the 14th) for both adverts and editorial contributions. Please can you ensure that all are submitted by this date, as we cannot ensure inclusion of late items. Thank you.

April update on the Poppy Cascade!

Well done to great knitters, crafters and people who are nimble with their crochet hooks!
The Poppy Cascade project is coming along well.
Enormous thanks to all who have contributed.

We are working towards the second thousandth poppy – might it be one of yours? We are now starting to attach poppies to the netting. It's very exciting to watch the development of the Cascade, but **WE STILL NEED MORE POPPIES!**

So, keep going, won't you?



Patient Participation Group - News from the Health Centre

It was interesting to meet and discuss the triage system with staff from the Health Centre. Dr Speight presented the reasons for introducing the system eighteen months ago and the tweaking and reviews that are constantly in progress to make improvements and efficiencies to get the best out of the system for patients and staff. The most important factor with triage is that a request is seen by the GPs who work on the system each day. They make the decisions on the urgency and send appropriate links to try and speed up diagnosis and treatment. It may be that, after submitting a triage request, you might receive a questionnaire for further information. This is to try and ensure you are linked to a doctor covering that area of expertise or simply to expand on the urgency of the request. You may receive a link to book a test prior to a face-to-face appointment, so that the results can be in place before seeing the doctor. Be assured the Practice staff are continually monitoring the numbers of appointments available each day to ensure maximum efficiency for patients. Do remember, that if your request is urgent, then you can ring the Health Centre where the details will be input into the system by the Patient Services team. Triage can be used via the NHS app, if you have it, or via the Deddington Health Centre website. Next time, find out more about the Dispensary, and Pharmacy First.

The government wants your views, experiences and ideas for improving the NHS. You can have your say to shape a 10-year health plan for the NHS via the ***change.nhs.uk portal***.

Anne Hunsley - On behalf of the Patient Participation Group

Editor's Letterbox

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

Dear Editor

I read the response from our Parish Council with some considerable interest. In January, I posed two simple questions. Was the Emergency plan activated? If nothing happened - why? Neither question was answered. Instead, we have a lot of words which do not address the issue at all, except to admit that the PC have not kept the Emergency Plan up to date. There is no word of regret that we had an outdated Plan, and no apology for those who were let down when there was a 29-hour power failure and they had no heating.

Although, as the PC letter explains, they are "powered by our community" (and "empowerment" incorporates responsibility to the "empowerers"), they are also the third and last tier of Local Government. According to the National Association of Local Government (where I was a member of their Management Committee for a while), "Parish councils ensure that local voices are heard on critical issues, from planning and development to health and safety." So, **was** the Emergency Plan activated, and if not, why not?

Oh, and I am prepared to act as a Street Warden for Paines Hill, if required.

John Coley



Dear Editor

I read Abigail Boisot's letter in the March copy of SAL with great interest and agree whole-heartedly with her sentiments. I often walk my dog down Cow Lane and, on returning towards the village, am constantly shocked by the 'sandy monstrosity' that now dominates our Medieval Church. How can this have been passed by the Conservation Officer - more Virginia Water than Steeple Aston surely?

However, lest you think me a Nimby, I do fully support the requirement for more housing in our wonderful village. We do need more people to support our fabulous village shop, our pub and the local clubs and societies (especially the football and cricket clubs) that make living here so special. I am, of course, no Conservation expert, so I will leave you all with this picture (above) of the carbuncle blotting out our church, and let you decide for yourselves whether this fits the Steeple Aston Conservation Area.

Yours faithfully
Peter Higgins



80th anniversary of VE Day

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mtheb749@gmail.com or

The Village Shop

Steeple People



Rob O'Malley



- **Which village do you live in and how long for?** Tingewick, Buckinghamshire for 8 years.
- **Where do you think of as 'home'?** London NW10.
- **A potted history of yourself in 40 words or less:** I have lived in London, Ireland, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. I have two children aged 15 and 16, and my wife is also a teacher but at secondary level.
- **How do others see you in five words?** Wanting everything to be ok.
- **What do others find most annoying about you?** Changing plans at or beyond the last minute.
- **Early bird or night owl?** Cat or dog? Neither. Cat.
- **Town or countryside? Gym or ramble?** Town. Ramble.
- **Optimist or pessimist? Fast-paced or relaxed?** Optimist, travelling at medium pace.
- **Technology – friend or foe?** Both, but certainly more of a friend.
- **What was the best thing about your childhood?** 'Playing out' with my friends.
- **What is the best aspect of being an adult?** Driving and the independence that brings.
- **What did you want to be when you grew up?** A criminal lawyer.
- **What was your first job? And your current job?** Picking up glasses in a social club. Headteacher of Dr Radcliffe's School.
- **What is the best/worst job you have had?** Best - teaching. Worst - a temporary summer holiday office job when I was 16. I lasted one day.
- **What's your guilty pleasure?** Non-league football. Winslow United of the Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division specifically.
- **Tell us about your hobbies:** Reading. Walking. Non-league football. Retro computer gaming.
- **Who is your favourite musician and track?** The Cure. A Forest.
- **What is your best loved book & your favourite author?** Book - The First Circle by Solzhenitsyn. Author - Saul Bellow.
- **What food do you most enjoy eating?** Turkish.
- **Who would you most like to have dinner with?** Angela Merkel.
- **Who do you most admire and why?** The Coen Brothers. Inventive film making.
- **What law would you pass if you could?** People who are funny should receive state funding for their contribution to the common good.
- **If you won the lottery, what would you splash out on?** Sponsoring a non-league football team.
- **If you could travel anywhere, where would it be?** Japan.
- **What was your favourite holiday destination & why?** Berlin. It's an exciting city.
- **If you were marooned on a desert island, what would you miss most?** Football.
- **What makes you happiest in the world?** My family.
- **What in your view makes a good friend?** Their ability to lead the conversation.
- **Something surprising that you excel at?** Playing pool.
- **Something surprising that you're very bad at?** Parking a car.

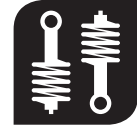
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Dr Radcliffe's Trust



Countless generations of young people from Steeple Aston have reason to be extremely grateful to Dr Samuel Radcliffe.

Samuel Radcliffe was an Oxford academic who became Principal of Brasenose College, Oxford in 1610. A few years later, he also became the Rector of Steeple Aston. Today, combining two jobs like this would be unthinkable, but he seems to have devoted some time and thought to Steeple Aston. He established the school here in its original buildings on Northside in 1640, as well as the almshouses, also on Northside. Upon his death in 1648, he bequeathed property and money to both his college and to support the operation of the school, as well as to fund the education of young people in the parish. That very generous donation to the village now forms the Dr Radcliffe's School Foundation. The Trustees of the Foundation have carefully managed the money for nearly 400 years to ensure that it continues to generate income to support the village school, the young people of the village, the almshouses and the preschool. We are absolutely committed to ensuring that it will be able to continue to do this for future generations of young people in the village.

The school moved in stages to its current site on Fir Lane. Over many years, the Trustees have been able to provide funding to the school for improvements and repairs that would not be covered by the normal government funding of schools. The result is that the school has classrooms that provide the very best opportunity for our children to thrive in, and pupils can be supported appropriately in their learning. In recent years, the Trust has helped with remodelling and extending several classrooms and outdoor play areas, creating a permanent stage in the hall, improving the staffroom facilities and the building of the Samuel Radcliffe building, which is used for Wrap-around Care, with a Breakfast Club (Early Birds) and an After-School club (Night Owls), as well as small group sessions for children during the day. The grant from the Foundation also funds an element of staffing, which means that the school has the benefit of Teaching Assistants in each classroom to provide the very best opportunities for all children. This academic year, the Foundation is giving nearly £123,000 of its generated income to the school, adding 10% to overall funding. At a time when school funding has been cut to a minimum, this is more important than ever before and makes a huge difference to the school.

The Foundation also provides annual awards to young people aged 16-25 to help support them in education and training. Two years ago, we transitioned to an online application process to increase accessibility for young people. This academic year, we were able to make awards totalling about £20,000 to young people at college, university or in apprenticeships. It is a real privilege to be able to help these young people make a start in their future careers. The Foundation has also supported the maintenance of the almshouses.

The Foundation is managed by a group of local trustees who are appointed by different interested parties as set down in our constitution. We try to ensure that we have a balance of skills amongst the Trustees. We now have a Clerk, Alan Stubbersfield, who lives in the village and can be contacted at this email address: radcliffesclerk@gmail.com.

In the Autumn, the Chair of the Trustees, Kate Tomlinson, resigned. She has been an amazing Chairperson, particularly in steering us all through the difficult times of Covid. Anna Thatcher has now taken over as Chair of the Trustees, and we warmly welcome her to the role.

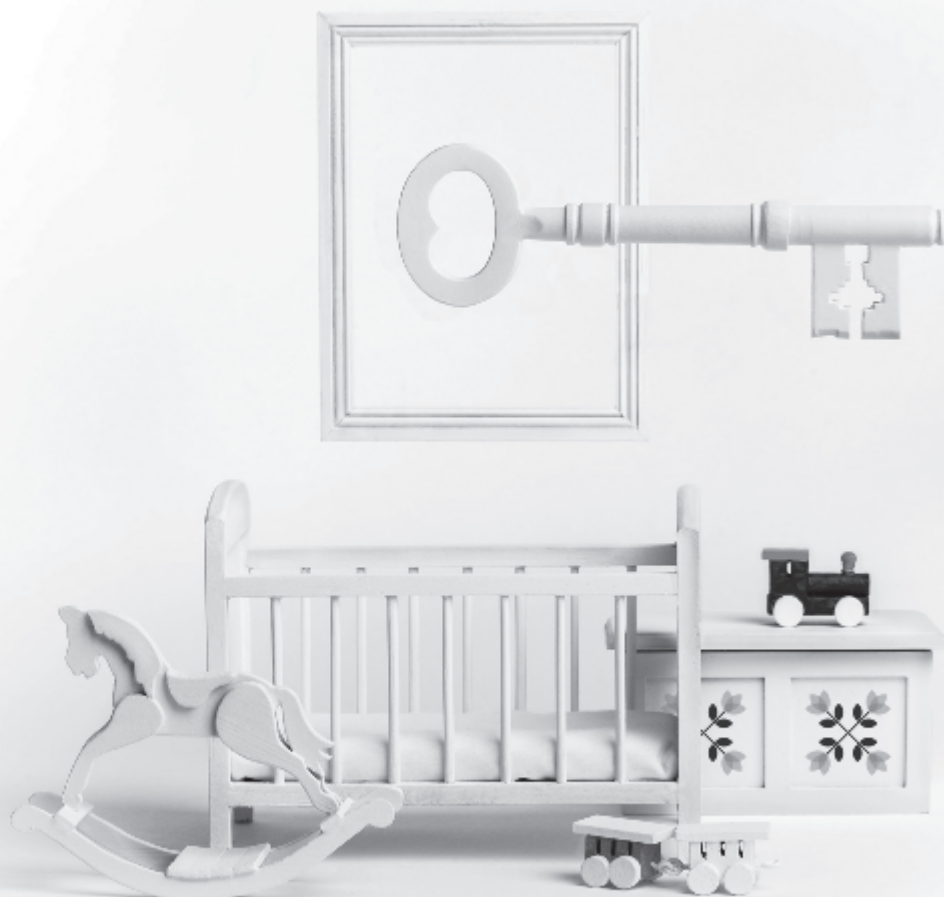
Tina Ferguson



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Letter from *Westminster*



SAL's regular epistle from our MP, Sean Woodcock

It's time to take back our town centres from antisocial behaviour and crime. I am proud to say that the Labour Government has announced tough new action in our Crime and Policing Bill. Too often crime is dismissed as low-level. But it doesn't feel low level when it's our town centre in Banbury that is being plagued by antisocial behaviour, our high street facing an epidemic of shoplifting or your phone being snatched from your grasp. These types of offences make people stay away from town centres and feel scared on their own streets. For far too long, the last Government wrote off those crimes, and disregarded how they made ordinary people feel. They ignored the crisis of young people carrying knives, and the epidemic of violence against women and girls.

But this Labour Government is going to change all that. We will restore trust and reduce serious harm. Our Plan for Change has committed 13,000 additional neighbourhood police and PCSOs across the country. Our Crime and Policing Bill introduces Respect Orders to crack down on repeat offenders of antisocial behaviour. It gives the police special warrantless powers of entry to premises, so they can move fast and take back stolen phones, and it ends the Tories' ludicrous £200 limit on shoplifting, which has left so much shop theft ignored. We will crack down on the online sale and delivery of knives, with stringent age checks and tougher penalties for anyone who sells these deadly weapons to children. And we will protect women from stalking and spiking, stop sex offenders changing their names and impose tougher sentences on dangerous predators who groom children.

I want to leave all my constituents in no doubt. This Bill is ambitious and wide-ranging. We will work with the police and communities to make our streets safer again. We will never write off crimes that make people afraid and we will take back our town centres from the thieves and thugs.

Sean Woodcock MP
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA



Football *Focus*

STEEPLE ASTON FOOTBALL CLUB

Concerning our recent ad in the March edition of SAL, I'm pleased to report that our AGM will be in the Sport and Recreation building on Monday 12th of May at 7.00pm. The AGM signifies the end of the club's 2024/25 season. It is also the meeting where we begin to look forward to the new season and hopefully receive nominations for the following positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, plus up to five other members who will form the Club committee. As yet, we have not received any interest in either the Chairperson or Secretary role, as previously mentioned in the March Life, which will become vacant on the 12th May. These two roles are a fundamental requirement of our League and County Association and, without them, unfortunately Steeple Aston will not have a football club. That will be an awful shame, as we have been providing football for the local community for 125 plus years. If you feel you could help in any way, please contact us, so we can have a chat. Or just turn up on the 12th May, you'll be very welcome.

Very many thanks,
Alan Peckham - Chair S.A.F.C. Tel: 01869 347756 / 07927 760460

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Kings Sutton Bridge Club

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We are currently looking for one cleaning operative to join our cleaning team at **Dr Radcliffe's C of E Primary School** in **Steeple Aston (OX25 4SF)**. The ideal candidate will be energetic and able to operate effectively in a fast-paced environment. We are looking for someone who can clean without supervision and has experience maintaining a tidy facility with no supervision. It would be desirable for the successful candidate to have previous cleaning experience.

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- Ensure that the building is clean and well kept.
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Should you be interested in the position, please contact **Linda** of Yorkshires Cleaning Services Ltd on **07961 687370**.

SAVA 25 years of the Millennium Project



Who can cast their mind back to the days of the ‘Millennium Bug’ when we were told all our technology might fail at midnight on December 31st 1999? The year 2000 certainly promised much. One resident of Steeple Aston, Paul Hotston, decided to record that year in pictures. A professional photographer, Paul took his camera around the village and produced a unique black and white record of not only the major events of that year, but the daily life of those going about their business and the changes in seasons in the countryside.

SAVA were honoured to be given Paul’s collection for the benefit of future generations and, 25 years later, it is an opportune time to dust it off and open it up to public viewing again.

This is where YOU can help us. Most of these photographs are of people from the village and we need your help to identify some of them. If you have an hour or so to spare any Saturday morning between 10.00am and 12.00 noon, please pop into the Village History Centre, next to the village hall and look through the three albums and help put names to faces. Even if, like me, you did not move here until after this date, please feel free to browse and see what life was like in 2000!

We look forward to seeing you.

Stuart Cummins - SAVA

Exploring Local History The Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock

VCH Oxfordshire (Victoria County History) is planning to hold a series of five workshops at the Oxfordshire Museum in Woodstock between 28th April and 9th June on Monday mornings from 10.00am to 1.00pm. Topics include: archaeology & settlement; vernacular buildings; farming, estates & communities; religion; and market towns. The series costs £40, although individual sessions can be booked for £10. Full details and booking information are available from:

oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/museums-and-history/oxfordshire-museum/whats

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Hedgehog Walk

Why not take part in the 3km challenge of the Hedgehog Walk, that coincides with the period when hedgehogs typically come out of hibernation. Taking place from March 31st until 13th April, the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) aim to get people out walking, wheeling or rolling to raise funds for wildlife conservation. Participants are encouraged to cover the same distance a hedgehog normally wanders in a single night, and can sign up online to receive a range of downloadable activities, including a Hedgehog Walk poster, spotter sheets and litter-picking guides. Those raising more than £30 for wildlife will win a special prize. Children's TV presenter and ambassador for The Wildlife Trusts, Maddie Moate, says "All of nature is so important, and getting everyone involved, no matter how young, is necessary – little feet can make a big change so let's make every step count".

bbowt.org.uk/news

The speaker booked for the March meeting cancelled, so we had a social evening instead, which was both pleasant and productive. Merrill drew attention to the sign-up sheets.

- Thurs 20th March: Supper at The Unicorn, Deddington
- Weds 9th April: Easter Wreath-making Workshop, Tackley
- Fri 25th April: Walk - route to be confirmed
- Thurs 22nd May: Ukraine Now and Then, Milton-under-Wychwood

The committee felt training in CPR and the use of the defibrillator would be useful. Janice has been investigating the possibilities and will hand over when she leaves. Well over 1,000 poppies have been donated for the cascade so far. Members are encouraged to help provide the remaining 2,000 still required.

Annual subscriptions of £51.00 are now due. Of this, SAWI receives £25.10; OFWI receives £12.05; and NFWI £13.85. It was felt the local WI is not getting value for money. We have had no reply from NFWI to recent correspondence asking for details on how the money is spent and what happened to the proceeds of the Denman College sale.

Sales of Sally Cooper's homemade jam, marmalade and chutney generated £45 for Katharine House Hospice. Janice Kinory gave the answers to her quiz, which required members to name the 21 famous women described in written clues and to match them to portraits displayed on the wall.

After celebrating the 107th birthday of Steeple Aston WI with a delicious cake, made by Linda Needle, we were divided into groups and given a questionnaire which stimulated discussion about the form that SAWI should take in future. Lively debate followed and the opinions given on the questionnaires will be collated and brought to the next meeting, on Tuesday 8th April at 19.30.

Cathy Lawday

BLAST from the past



WI outing to Wembley exhibition 1925 (photo courtesy of SAVA)

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THE VALENTINE CLUB

It is always good to be able to report on a story of success, and I think this could be described as ‘success’. The club arranges six or more coach trips each year and, with the cost of a coach hovering around the £850 mark, it is somewhat of a gamble when you offer trips, not knowing if there will be enough takers to make it worthwhile. This year, we have six coach trips organised, and the smallest group we are taking on a 53-seater coach is 46. The largest is 69. As those of you with a maths degree will have worked out, 69 does not go easily into a 53-seater coach. There are three options. You tell some members they can’t go as there are not enough seats. Not an option! You can throw a few of the more disruptive members in the hold. I have been told, that is not an option! Or you hire another coach. I will leave you to decide which option we should use, but the opportunity of using spare space in the bottom of a coach appeals to me, although I have been told, there would not be any windows, but then most of the passengers are chattering so would it really be that bad?

Our March meeting brought the return of Lee Wilkinson, a very talented performer with both his vocal and guitar skills. Mixed along with a great sense of humour, a wonderful afternoon was enjoyed by all. Even more poppies were brought to the club to help with the poppy appeal to create a cascade from the top of the church tower, so well done to all who have spent hours knitting. This month, we welcome Chrissie and her owls to the hall for what should be a very informative and entertaining afternoon.

As always, I add this next paragraph in to remind you of how to keep up with the club and maybe support us by having a go at the Cherwell Lottery. Over the past 12 months, Cherwell Lottery has provided the club with over £1,200 in revenue which makes an enormous difference to what we can do with the club. You might also like to know that we have had some winners over that period ranging from free tickets for the next week to £250. Sadly, no-one has won enough to retire, but you could win £25,000 so why not give it a try? If you would like to support The Valentine Club and all the great things we do, why not have a go at CherwellLottery.co.uk/support/the-valentine-club where you can participate in the Cherwell Lottery and, hopefully, like many of our supporters, become a winner.

To find out more about The Valentine Club, then simply visit our own website on valentineclub.wixsit.com/aston (easiest way to log on is go to the village website; go to ‘clubs and societies’, find The Valentine Club and click on the link), or keep up to date by looking on the village website steepleaston.org.uk or use that old-fashioned thing called a telephone and call me on 01869 340512.

Richard Preston – Group organiser (for lack of a better description) Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com – Tel. 01869 340512.

Steeple Aston Garden Club



On Tuesday 1st April, we will be holding our AGM in the Village Hall, 7.00pm for a 7.30pm start. Annual membership fees will be due, £10pp & £15 for families. Any new members will be welcome. Our new programme of visits & speakers will be available. The AGM will be followed by drinks & nibbles and a gardening themed quiz, so please organise yourself into a team beforehand. We will also have a ‘plant swap’, so bring something along to place on the swap table, and then help yourself to whatever takes your fancy.

Christina Clarke
S.A.G.C Secretary

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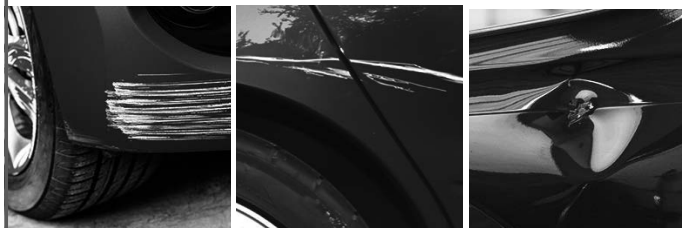
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Village Hall News



Chairperson 2025

We are still looking for someone to fill the role of Village Hall Chairperson. Please contact me or Richard Preston if you're interested. Further information is found in the article below.

Saturday 10th May 2025: 'We'll Meet Again' - 6.30pm in the Village Hall

From 'The White Cliffs of Dover' to 'The Lambeth Walk' - family event in music, words and dance, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of VE Day. Come and sing the music that kept people going through the war; enjoy a song or two from Vera Lynn; listen to the wartime bells; hear stories of villagers during the period and strut the Lambeth Walk – Oi! You can wear whatever you like, but feel free to come in 40s dress; or red, white or blue. There will be a bar (cash only) and nibbles. Tickets: £5 (under 16s free) will be available from the village shop and Margaret Bulleyment 01869 347346 or mtheb749@gmail.com

For more information, contact Margaret Bulleyment – 01869 347346 or mtheb749@gmail.com

Monday 12th May 8pm: Village Hall AGM followed by committee meeting.

Forthcoming events:

Wednesday 5th November: Annual bonfire and firework evening.

Sunday 7th December: Wassail evening.

Saturday 17th January 2026: Annual Quiz Night.

Our letting agent is Mrs Angela Smith – 07734 112967. Please do not call this number between 6.00pm and 8.00pm unless urgent.

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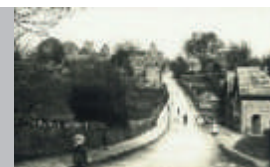
It is always easier to 'leave it to someone else', especially when you think it might incur some effort. We have all been in this situation, and spare time is becoming so valuable these days that it is not always possible to 'volunteer' for something. On saying that, following my plea for help a month ago via both SAL and the village website, the response to find a new chairperson for the village hall served up a ZERO response. It might have been the way I wrote the article, or maybe you guessed someone else would jump at the opportunity. Whichever it might have been, it leaves the village hall in real jeopardy. Can it continue? Does the village actually want a village hall? These are just a couple of questions that could be asked.

The position of chairperson for the village hall is not that demanding. It will enable you to meet other community volunteers, and be part of a team that enables this wonderful old building to continue in its present form and we are able to retain a village hall. I can promise you, the amount of work involved is entirely down to you, and with a wonderful team working alongside, it does not have to be in any way demanding. If you think you might be able to help, give me a call and I will try and answer any questions you might have. Absolutely no obligation!

Richard Preston – a village hall trustee and retired VH chairman.

Richard.preston5@btopenworld.com or telephone 01869 340512

Parish Council Meeting Notes



24th February meeting (report held over from last month's SAL)

Your faithful reporter was not the only member of the public at the February meeting. There was a surprise visitor in the shape of Adam Nell, who is hoping to regain a seat on Cherwell District Council at the by-election expected to take place in Deddington on 1st May. Recently, District Councillors have generally been noticeable by their absence from our PC meetings, but Mr Nell said that, if elected, he would make a real effort to attend regularly. Our very active County Councillor, Arash Fatemian, also joined the meeting in his capacity as our Oxfordshire representative, as he often does.

The PC is now updating Steeple Aston's Emergency Plan, designed to keep everyone safe in the event of an emergency such as prolonged power outage, hurricane, flood, train derailment, terrorist attack or a crash landing by a plane. Oxfordshire Resilience Officer, Paul Mann, gave a presentation, saying that the County Council would consider grant applications of up to £20,000 for resources, such as places that can provide shelter, tea, blankets and first aid, not to mention nappies and dog bowls (I couldn't help thinking that portable generators and batteries might be even more useful). However, the first steps will be to identify local risks and then:

1. Form a Local Response Group. This will consist of worthy people who will spring into action when there is a trigger like an extreme weather warning.
2. Update the PC's list of people who can help by providing useful things like snow ploughs, sandbags, chainsaws and medical expertise.
3. Update the list of vulnerable people who may need help and who wish to be listed (including over 65s and under 5s).

Councillors expressed concern about people working their fingers to the bone knitting poppies to form a cascade from the church tower this summer. The plan was to mark the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, but they are being asked to put their needles on hold by some who believe poppies are only for Armistice Day on 11th November, in memory of World War I. The PC will not be involved, either way. The meeting approved the playground refurbishment costs (approximately £32,000) which means the work could start before the end of April, *insh' Allah* (meaning, in this context, 'if supplies are available'). The public toilet, which costs the PC around £7,000 annually, needs a camera survey to identify a suspected blockage in the soil pipe. The meeting agreed that this was a pain, but that coughing up for a survey would be better than replacing with a Portaloo.

The dreaded Blandford Fly returned to bite again. As reported, the PC planned to trial an eradication programme this March by spraying the larvae in the Cherwell near Heyford Bridge, and was hoping to persuade other councils along the river to follow suit. It has already spent £5,000 on a survey by Bournemouth University boffins calling themselves BUG, who had been allowed by the Environment Agency to carry out a similar eradication programme in Dorset. River campaigners in our area, however, have demanded baseline surveys before any spraying can take place, so that its impact on other species can be scientifically measured. As a result, the Environment Agency has withdrawn its permission for the trial. Exit BUG, at least for the time being, with £5,000 but no accolades. Baseline surveys might take several years, and the PC will now have to decide whether it is worth persevering with the project.

The Head of Oxfordshire's Highways Community Engagement Team has visited Steeple Aston to see why the PC wants more white lines on Fenway and South Side. Intriguingly, she commented that some white lines elsewhere in the village had been 'privately painted', but the meeting was not told where they were – only that they were 'erroneous'. Do not DIY, in other words. The meeting was assured that Highways plan to change the speed on the smiley signs in the village from 30mph to 20mph. The 38 people who attended the Community Land Trust meeting in January came up with many ideas and a long wish list. The CLT Chair reported that some do not involve land or property, and will be passed onto other groups like the PC's Environment and Sustainability sub-committee. Watch that space for action on public skips, electric vehicle charge points, pool cars and bus routes. No solution is in sight to the vexed issue of the lack of mobile signal in the village. The PC decided it would not be appropriate to try to compensate by subsidising WiFi in places open to the public. Good news: the noticeboard opposite the village shop will be repaired free of charge by a kind volunteer with a spanner and washer.

Parish Council Meeting Notes



17th March meeting

Just a short report from me this month on the March meeting – which, with only three Councillors present, was helpfully a relatively short meeting. I'll do my best to share the highlights.

Thursday was identified as a good day to put up our new village bin (as the temperature is due to soar to 17°C).

Reports were circulated by our District and County Councillors (who were both present) – Cllr Rogers said simply “it’s all doom and gloom in my world”.

Exciting renovation work is due to start on our playground soon (hopefully to be timed after half-term holidays), and scheduled to take 2-3 weeks to complete, so some areas will be out of action for a little while. The Parish Council are also keen to put some money towards improving our Pocket Park and ‘youth facilities’ in general – adult exercise equipment and ping pong tables were mentioned.

The Blandford Fly only had a brief mention this evening – apparently the Blandford Fly might be innocent after all, and another very similar-looking fly could actually be the one doing all the biting! Given news of a Tribute Festival happening in Middle Aston this summer, one councillor declared that perhaps we have a “Tribute Band-ford Fly” on our hands.

We then had quite a chat regarding blocked drains on Water Lane (I was tempted to dig out my knitting at this point), and then onto a ‘huge’ pothole at least “six feet long and a foot deep” which has been marked by residents on the road between Middle and North Aston. Cllr Fatemian bravely said he’d investigate it on his way home – I hope he’s OK.

Next topic was like something from the future (or perhaps ‘The Archers’) and involved the possibility of EV charging points in our village. Not just any old EV charging points – our Chair introduced the notion of ‘bi-directional charging points’, which are capable of feeding electricity back to the grid, or it was suggested, that in an emergency situation they could even charge the SRC/Village Hall! In a seamless move along the agenda, one Councillor then confirmed he was reviewing our Emergency Plan which should be ready for debate next month. The future uses of Robinson’s Close was next up for discussion, given the sad decline of Steeple Aston FC. A group of relevant parties, including Dr Radcliffe’s Trust, are being brought together to discuss ‘wider facilities for our youth’. Ironically many local teams are thriving and need more pitches to play on, so it might be that we do still see football being played in our village as we hire out our facilities.

Correspondence this month included letters regarding the building work going on in Cow Lane with comments saying “the view of the church has now been blocked”, that it was “a scheme out of control” and was “surely in breach of planning in such a conservation area?” There was an email expressing disappointment in the volume of new homes being built in rural areas with “our villages being stuffed with too many houses”. And another showing concern for road safety on the path near The Red Lion.

The next meeting isn’t until 28th April.

All the best
Mrs Miggins

Steeple Aston Parish Councillors

Angharad Lloyd-Jones (Chair)
Martin Lipson (Vice Chair), Planning, Mid-Cherwell
Neighbourhood Plan Forum

Peter Dammermann
Greg Elphick (Transport rep.)
Charlotte Powell, Sports & Recreation Centre, Environment
Mathew Watson
Cathy Fleet – Parish Clerk
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My amazing MYCO journey

I was delighted when I auditioned and got into MYCO (Musical Youth Company of Oxford) in April 2019, when I was almost 12. In September of that year, we started rehearsing the musical ‘Chess’ and it was all totally ready to go in March 2020, but then the pandemic struck so it had to be cancelled, which was really sad after all that work had gone into it.

During lockdown, the MYCO committee were great and organised weekly Zoom quizzes, which really cheered us up as we couldn’t get together in person. We even had an awards evening online and dressed up, and the MYCO committee had baked cakes which they dropped off outside everyone’s houses! They also organised various online workshops in singing, dancing and acting.

Sadly ‘Chess’ had to be cancelled again the following year as there was another lockdown. In 2022, we were luckier and managed to stage ‘Legally Blonde’, which was great fun. I was a Delta Nu (one of the dancing troupe), so had a lot of extra dance moves and songs to learn. The following year, we put on ‘The Addams Family’ which was totally different but also fun, and then last year we did ‘Me and My Girl’, which went down really well too.

This year, we are again putting on something totally different – ‘Everybody’s Talking About Jamie’ - the story of Jamie Campbell, a Sheffield boy who, at 16, ‘was jealous that all the girls got to go to prom in these amazing, glamorous dresses,’ and his wonderful mum, who didn’t see any reason he shouldn’t wear one too, if he wanted to. I am playing the part of Jamie’s dad, who sadly doesn’t remotely accept his son as he is. The scenes I play are hard to do as this character comes out with such nasty, cutting words, but I am enjoying the challenge of playing a role very different to my own character.

I will be really sad to leave MYCO this summer as, after A-levels, I am hoping to go to university to study drama. Please do come and watch ‘Everybody’s Talking About Jamie’ as, despite the best efforts of my character, it’s a really uplifting, fun musical.

Ollie Watkins

*‘Everybody’s Talking About Jamie’ is on at the Oxford Playhouse from
Wednesday 9th – Saturday 12th April 2025.*




Left: Ollie Watkins as Jamie’s father, and Hannah Peel as Jamie’s mother, Margaret (photos courtesy of MYCO).

Right: A rehearsal shot of Ollie and Hannah.

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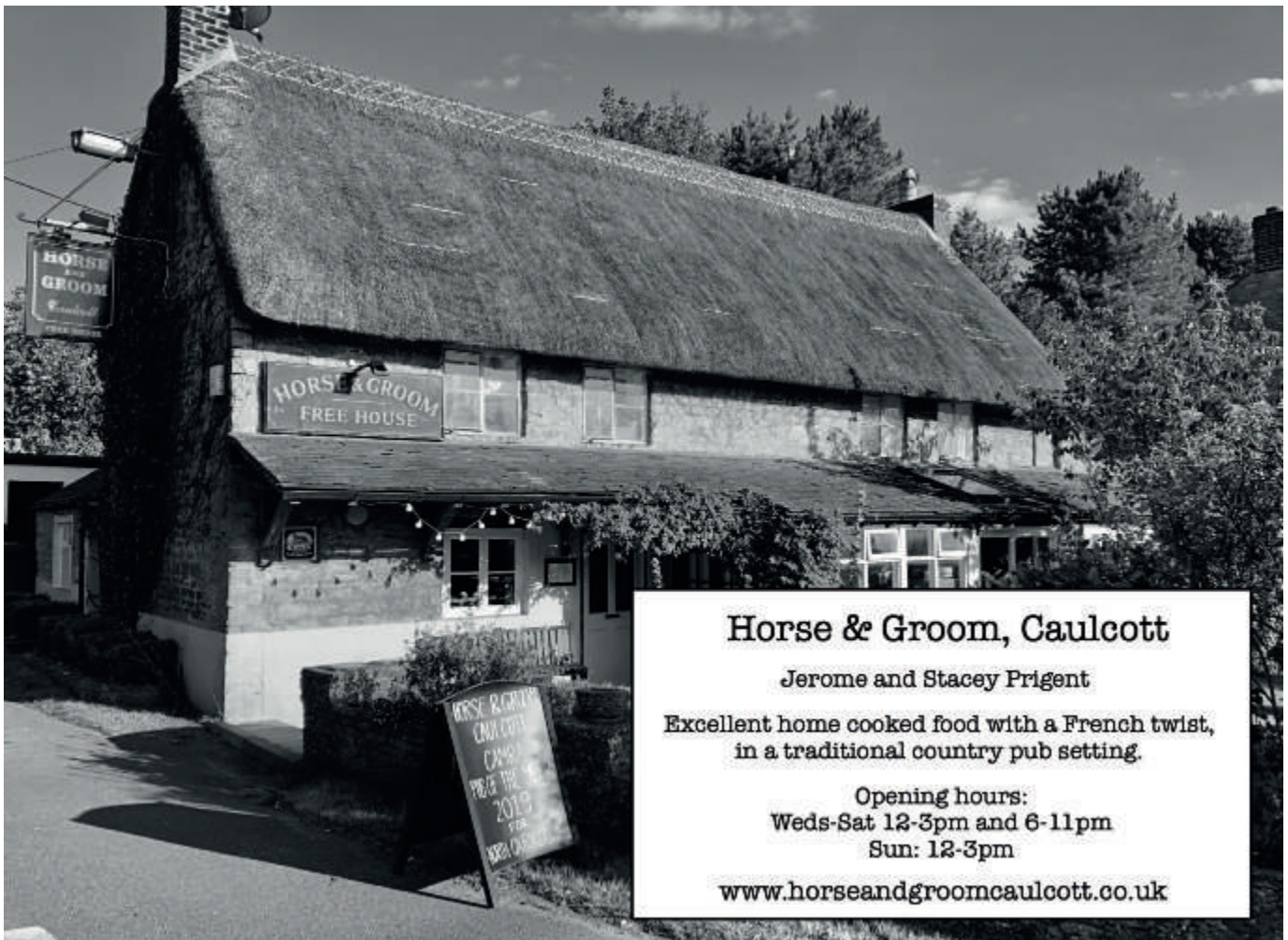


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The Cricket Report



Steeple Aston Cricket Club

Fixtures for 2025 Season

Here are the fixtures for the 2025 season. Please remember that our Home Matches are at Great Tew Cricket Club. Here is the full address: Great Tew CC, Ledwell Road, Great Tew, Oxfordshire OX7 4AG Telephone: 01608 683896

Sunday 18 th May 1pm	Minster Lovell	<i>Away</i>
Saturday 14 th June	Pete Higgins XI	<i>Tew</i>
Thursday 19 th June	King's Head (evening T20)	<i>Away</i>
Sunday 22 nd June	Ascott-under-Wychwood	<i>Tew</i>
Sunday 6 th July	Blenheim Park	<i>Away</i>
Sunday 27 th July	Strollers	<i>Tew</i>
Sunday 3 rd August	Great & Little Tew	<i>Tew</i>
TBC	Milton	
TBC	Oxford University CCC	

Undoubtedly the highlight of the season will be the 20th and final Chairman's XI match on Saturday 14th June. The game will be played on the Tew 1st XI pitch and should be a fitting farewell to all my friends from school and university, who have gamely continued playing cricket, despite the protestations of their bodies. I expect Steeple Aston CC to thrash us, but it will be a lot of fun! Jack Hobbs played his last Test Match when he was almost 48, so I have beaten him by 15 years! I just need another 197 centuries to equal his record.

We do serve wonderful tea & cakes around 3.30-4.00pm, so very much hope to see you on the boundary this summer. And it's free!

With best wishes to all

Peter Higgins - Chairman SACC

Steeple Aston Golf Society



Dear fellow golfers, this is Steeple Aston Golf Society's 37th year and we have got off to a great start with our first meeting of 2025.

Tuesday 20th May meeting is at The Vale, Bishampton, Pershore WR10 2LZ. It's a 12.00 noon get-together for a 13.00 start. Set in 300 acres of stunning countryside, The Vale Golf & Country Club offers golfers fantastic golf. With superb views over the Malvern and Bredon Hills, The Vale is situated in a natural amphitheatre of mature woodland in breathtaking scenery. This course offers an American-style layout, with large greens, trees, bunkers and several water hazards. Its rolling fairways provide a testing round.

If anyone fancies playing at this Jack Nicklaus designed course, please call Alan or Chris, who will let you know what goes on during the day and for the rest of the season on 01869 340423/347173.

Please reserve these dates in your diaries:

The Vale: Tuesday 20th May - 12.00 meet for a 13.00 first tee

Hearsall, Coventry: Tuesday 17th June - 10.00 meet for an 11.00 first tee

The Springs: Friday 18th July - 12.00 meet for a 13.00 first tee

Wrag Barn: Friday 12th September - 12.00 meet for a 13.04 first tee

Olton: Friday 10th October – tee time awaited

Alan Brewer



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OPEN GARDENS

Unfortunately, after decades of unbroken open gardens under the National Garden Scheme, Steeple Aston will not be hosting such an event this year. The village has raised thousands of pounds for such amazing charities as Cancer Research and Macmillan Nurses and hopefully, in the years to come, the village can resume the tradition and continue to support so many worthwhile charities. The main reason not to open is that many of the gardens that have opened for years need a break. Some have changed hands and are not in a position to open, whilst others have a few changes in view or simply need that well-earned break.

The good news is that Middle Aston is opening some of their gardens on **Saturday 7th June** in aid of the church roof appeal. So hopefully, many of you can see some different gardens this year and support the essential work required to our church.

Maybe there are some gardens in the village that would like to consider opening under the NGS scheme in 2026. Having done so for over 20 years, I can assure anyone, it is a most rewarding thing to do, as it attracts genuine gardeners from all over the country to have a look at your garden and have a chat over gardening in general. If you want any more information on the NGS, please give me a call on 01869 340512.

Thank you all for your past support of Steeple Aston Open Gardens and let us hope the tradition will return in the very near future.

Richard Preston

Poetry Corner



Chocaholic

There is no doubt about it
If I had to choose
To save my son or a bar of chocolate
My child would surely loose.

It's not that I don't love him
He is a lovely little boy
But he doesn't give me what chocolate does
That sheer, unbridled joy.

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As it melts upon the tongue
There simply is no other food
From which such pleasure can be wrung

I know that chocolate isn't healthy
It doesn't do you good
But that just adds to its attraction
Knowing it's a naughty food.

Though cocoa beans are a vegetable
And must count as one of your five-a-day
And if you have fruit and nut
You're not going far astray

It is said of middle-aged English women
That they like gardening more than sex
Well, I think chocolate's even better than both
(Or it was last time I checked)

So, let's hear a cheer for chocolate
That provider of positive feeling
it should be available on the NHS
For its infallible powers of healing.

When chocolate finally kills me
As it eventually will
I will leave this world with no regrets
I'll know I had my chocolate fill.

When you plan my funeral
Include in your accounting
The cost of providing at my wake
An enormous chocolate fountain.

If I go to heaven
I'll meet St Peter at the gate
And I hope he'll welcome me to paradise
With a box of After Eight

And if I wind up in the other place
Well, that has advantages too
The flames of hell will work a treat
On my chocolate fondue.

Cathy Lawday





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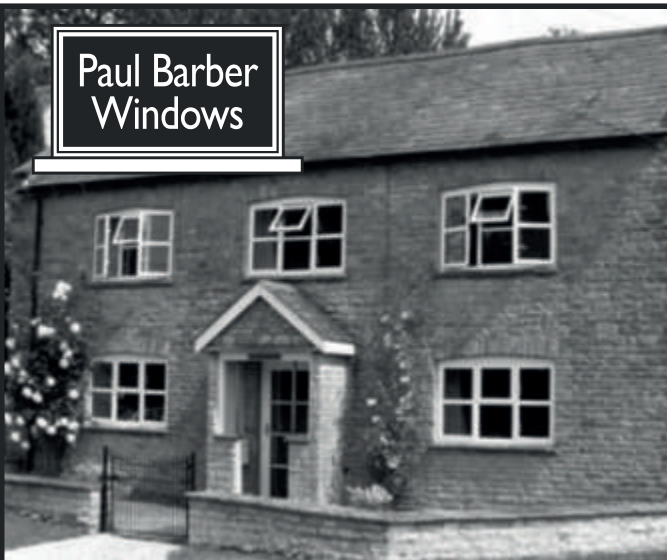
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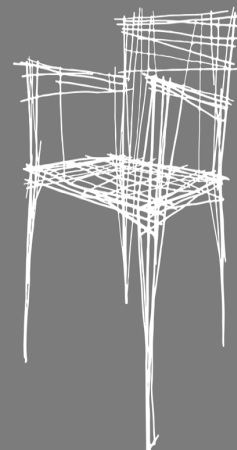
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The ARTS Page



The Arts Page is evolving, with contributions from others welcomed to widen its scope. Please accept this as an invitation! Avid readers will have amassed a list of websites over the years, for many of the events in our area. Alongside, these first three cover a wide range.

Allevents.in - put in your local town/city and a plethora of events come up.

dailyinfo.co.uk has comprehensive information on everything under the sun, in and beyond Oxford.

oxfordmagazine.com is countywide and really informative e.g. Oxfordshire Summer Music Festivals - Witney, Truck, Wilderness etc. So, a few random mentions.

oxfordliteraryfestival.org - March 29th to May 6th

campdenmayfestivals.co.uk - Literature April 25th /26th and May 3rd to 10th - Music May 12th to 24th, all present a mouth-watering array of talent.

banburymuseum.org has the best of the Travel Photographer of the Year 2024 exhibition on until July 6th, not to mention everything else they offer. A gem.

artweeks.org - Oxfordshire Art Weeks has a fantastic website, informing us of the UK's oldest and biggest artists' open studios and pop-up exhibitions and events (3rd - 26th May). Go to west Oxfordshire (17th -26th May) numbers 380–387 to see very local exhibitions, but there is wonderful work across the county.

I've always cherished the work of Anselm Kiefer, a towering figure of postwar art, and it is wonderful that the Ashmolean has an exhibition of his early work (ashmolean.org) until June 15th. 'Among the 1st generation of Germans to confront the country's troubled past and national identity'.

On Thursday April 10th, I will be giving that month's 'Steeple Talk' in the church at 7.30pm: 'My life in Music'.

Nick Cleobury

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# Oxfordshire Artweeks Exhibition

**17 - 26 May 2025**

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**Local Artist - Sue King**

**Invites you to her**

**new open studio at:**

**Venue 383**

**9 Bradshaw Close, Steeple Aston,  
OX25 4SA**

**Opening times:**

**11.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. (17-20 May)**

**2.00 - 8.00 p.m. (22-23 May)**

**12.00 - 6.00 p.m. (24-26 May)**

**FREE ENTRY**



Instagram #sueking4207

Sue's mobile: 07803 831497

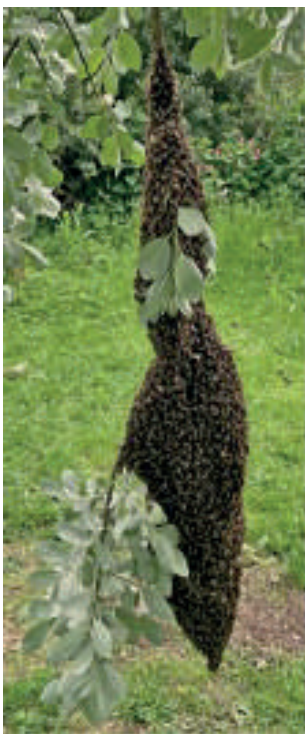
Email: [sue\\_king2@icloud.com](mailto:sue_king2@icloud.com)



# The Bees of Steeple Aston

I have lived in the village for over 30 years and kept bees for around half that time. Observing insects has made me much more aware of our local environment and changing patterns throughout the year. Right now, all the pollinators are feasting on nectar, and bringing home pollen (protein and fats) for their growing young. Their activity has been stepping up as days lengthen and the weather warms. Around now it is getting into full swing as the plants offer up more food; and towards the end of Spring, we can expect swarms of honeybees looking for new homes.

Steeple Aston is in many ways an ideal environment for insects due to the abundance of food – trees, plants, hedges – and wild nesting sites in old trees, crumbling buildings and walls. Whenever you walk around the village, in spring and summer, look up and along the edges of the roofs of our older houses. There against the brightness of the sky you may see activity as the bees come and go from their home (they can reside in some of these old cavities for many generations, causing no problems and often without being noticed at all). I know of, and monitor, around ten wild bee nests within the village as part of a citizen science project, so am always interested to hear of more.



But you may notice that, like songbirds, there are far fewer insects around than a decade or two ago. I once found eleven wasp nests within 100 metres of my house, but I'd only expect one or two now. Climate change has disrupted weather, tricking insects out of hibernation before nectar and pollen is available, or killing them with unseasonal cold snaps. Have you heard that 2024 was the worst ever for bumblebees? Animals require predictable seasons; and while the climate is a more intractable problem, we can help our local pollinators by making insect-friendly garden environments and in particular reducing pesticide use. There's no such thing as bee-friendly insecticides or lawn treatments: they're all broad-spectrum and many modern ones persist in soil for years. Try to avoid them, but if you have to use them, avoid spraying plants when in flower.

However, despite all of the above, our village honeybees are generally doing better than average. This may be because we have our own local ecotype, the Cotswold Bee. This landrace is well adapted to the area and is in tune with the local forage patterns, and so it has extra resilience – for example, by the Queen adjusting her laying rate in tune with local forage availability. These adaptations mean they have avoided being overrun by imported 'pure bred' commercial strains, and are now attracting interest as a 'survivor population' untroubled by the pests decimating larger managed commercial colonies. We are lucky to have them.

So, in addition to monitoring wild nests, I am also involved in conserving this Cotswold Bee landrace, by catching swarms emanating from wild nests and propagating their tough 'survivor' genes. If you notice a swarm of bees in the village or general area, please let me know.

**Paul Honigmann**

SA Beekeeper, coordinator of the *Oxfordshire Natural Beekeeping Group*, author of *The Observant Beekeeper*

## Bee hives autopsy

I first encountered Paul when I joined my partner for what was, sadly, a post-mortem of his two hives. Having been something of a mentor for the establishment and cultivation of Will's bee colonies, we asked Paul to help us get to the bottom of why both had failed. Working methodically and forensically, Paul prised open the hive's boxes and removed the sticky frames one by one, each with its remarkable hardened waxy comb. In the first hive, Paul observed greyish mouldering, and deduced that overly damp conditions were the cause of this one's demise. Given that the hives were kept in Lower Heyford, a stone's throw from the river, this made sense. The second was more foxing, with no immediately apparent cause and required several tools to delve deeper. Paul recorded each stage of the process, taking images for future learning purposes. Ultimately, by process of elimination, he found that the most likely cause was queen failure, where the queen bee is unable to produce enough fertilized eggs to sustain the hive.

Having harvested the honey and wax, we will soon move one of the hives to higher, dryer ground and, as before, await a swarm of local bees to repopulate it. The second one, however, already has new inhabitants – unfortunately, without the frames in place, which is creating a beautiful chaos of comb. We will let the bees 'be' and allow them to decide their own fate.

**Kate Symondson**

*Exploded bee hive*

*Photo: Paul Honigmann*



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## Environmental Survey – Please help

Since its establishment in 2022, Steeple Aston Environment and Sustainability Committee has succeeded in accelerating the introduction of a 20mph limit to the village, enabled residents to identify energy savings through the loan of a thermal camera, and made wide-ranging contributions to the (badly delayed) Mid-Cherwell Neighbourhood Plan. We are currently exploring the potential to install public EV chargers in the village. But we need to do more and we need your help to decide our priorities for future action. Please help us by completing this very short survey, which can be accessed via the link or QR code below. If you would like a printable copy, please email [carltomlinson1967@gmail.com](mailto:carltomlinson1967@gmail.com).

[forms.office.com/e/uYXqQ4cgm3](https://forms.office.com/e/uYXqQ4cgm3)

Thank you in advance for your participation.  
Carl Tomlinson, Chair, Steeple Aston ESC



## STEEPLE ASTON SPRING CLEAN 2025

The Great British Spring Clean is the nation's biggest mass-action environmental campaign. Last year, over 400,000 bags of litter were collected by volunteers around the country.

This year, Steeple Aston's Spring Clean litter pick will take place on 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> April. Litter pickers, bags, gloves and hi-viz vests will be provided.

If you would like to volunteer to remove litter from the verges and hedges around the village, please contact Carl Tomlinson ([carltomlinson1967@gmail.com](mailto:carltomlinson1967@gmail.com)) for details of where to collect your kit, and where to leave the filled bags.

---

## Pothole season is back

Now that the weather is starting to improve, we can get on with tidying up after winter and fixing potholes again. In Steeple Aston, we use the Fix My Street system and, as your PC was an early supporter of the scheme, we are well established with the Highways Authority and are very fortunate to have excellent support from them to get defects fixed quickly, but how does it work?

The FMS system is very effective. Either go online and enter details of any potholes yourself, or contact Cathy, our parish clerk, with details which she will pass onto me. I am what is referred to as an FMS SuperUser, who can carry out the necessary checks to make sure the pothole can be repaired using what is now the standard cut and fill repair process. Provided it complies with the criteria, then I can directly action the repair by council contractors without requiring a Highways Department inspection, making the process quick and simple. Repairs will then be made within 28 days, usually much less, the record is the same day!

When filling in the FMS report, please try to keep the details concise and, most importantly, accurate, as exaggerating the severity of the problem does not help, nor does making extravagant claims or wild accusations. Short and simple is best, and will ensure the quickest response. The minimum criteria for a fault to be actioned on the FMS system is that it must be deeper than 40mm deep and at least 150mm across. If less, then it will not count, although we do have other facilities for filling less severe defects in special cases. If you believe that yours is one of these special cases, then please let Cathy know rather than wasting an FMS report as, if it does not comply, it will be rejected immediately. Let's get reporting!

Graham Porcas





## **Steeple Talks**

**April 10<sup>th</sup> In the Church – 7.15pm for 7.30pm**

**An Inspiring Evening with the  
Maestro of Steeple Aston**

**Nick Cleobury**

# **My Life in Music**

**Refreshments from 7.15pm**

**Retiring Collection in aid of the church roof repairs**

**All Welcome**



# Church Matters



The seasons are again changing, thankfully. We have been treated to a few warmer days and nights. A few weeks ago, snowdrops covered the churchyard and now bright yellow daffodils are nodding their heads in the breeze, heralding spring. The clocks have changed, jumping forward an hour, bringing longer and lighter evenings. In our world, things are constantly changing, sometimes at a pace faster than we would like. The rate of change in the world of technology is particularly rapid, with certain pieces of technology being invented, superseded and made obsolete within a few years. The way we listen to music, for instance, moving from records, to audio tapes to compact disc and MP3 players, and now using music platforms via our phones or other devices.

As our world constantly evolves and changes, we can find ourselves appreciating and valuing things that stay the same, such as traditions, as they can help keep us rooted and grounded. On the fourth week of Lent (this year on the last Sunday of March), we celebrated Mothering Sunday. The celebration has shifted over the years, with more of a focus today on celebrating mothers. Traditionally, it was a celebration honouring 'Mother Churches', returning to where we were baptised/christened. The fourth Sunday of Lent is also known as Refreshment, when the lenten fast would be relaxed and celebrated with a Simnel Cake (a light fruit cake) decorated with two layers of marzipan and eleven eggs (one for each of the apostles minus Judas who betrayed Jesus).

Traditionally we celebrate Easter with chocolate eggs, although confectionery companies are coming up with a range of alternative ideas. This formed the basis of one of the challenges for the contestants on Lord Sugar and the BBC's Apprentice programme this year. The eggs are a reminder of new life that we see all around us in Spring. Equally, the empty shell of the egg is a reminder of the empty tomb that first Easter morning, and the gift of chocolate a reminder of the gift of Christ and the new life we are promised through his resurrection. As we move forward, we carry with us the traditions of the past, blending and shaping them with today's world. However we celebrate Mothering Sunday and Easter this year, I pray that you will know God's love for you and those you love.

God bless,

Harriet

[www.sntchurch.com](http://www.sntchurch.com)

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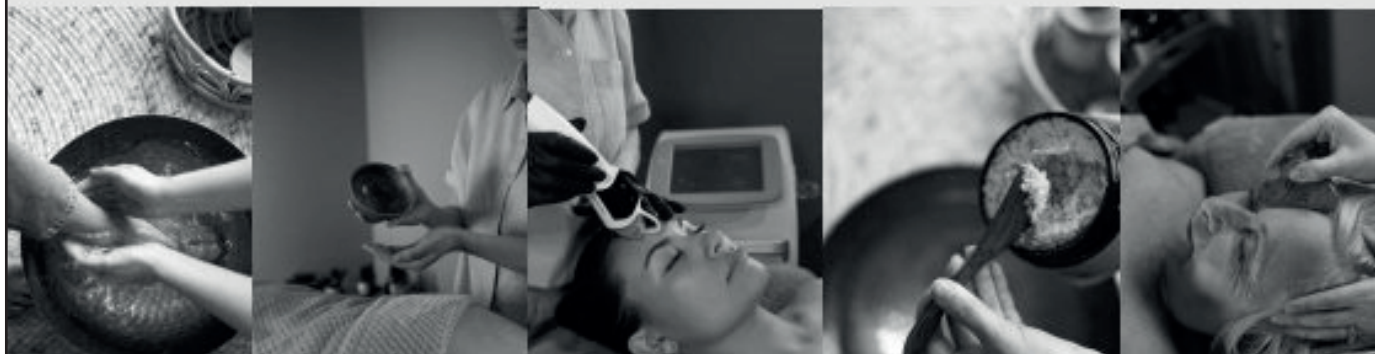



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# Church Services



## April 2025

| Date                                                   | North Aston                                                       | Steeple Aston                                                    | Tackley                                                     |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sunday<br/>6<sup>th</sup> April</b>                 | <b>9.30am</b><br>Holy Communion<br><i>Book of Common Prayer</i>   | <b>11.00am</b><br>Holy Communion<br><i>Book of Common Prayer</i> | <b>5.30pm</b><br>Evensong                                   |
|                                                        |                                                                   |                                                                  |                                                             |
| <b>13<sup>th</sup> April<br/>Palm Sunday</b>           | <b>9.15am</b><br>Morning Prayer<br>From The Green to<br>St Mary's | <b>11.00am</b><br>Family Communion                               | <b>10.30am</b><br>From The Green to the<br>Methodist Church |
|                                                        |                                                                   |                                                                  |                                                             |
| <b>17<sup>th</sup> April<br/>Maundy<br/>Thursday</b>   | <b>6.00pm</b><br>Holy Communion                                   |                                                                  |                                                             |
|                                                        |                                                                   |                                                                  |                                                             |
| <b>18<sup>th</sup> April<br/>Good Friday</b>           |                                                                   | <b>2.00pm</b><br>An hour at the cross                            |                                                             |
|                                                        |                                                                   |                                                                  |                                                             |
| <b>Sunday<br/>20<sup>th</sup> April<br/>Easter Day</b> | <b>9.30am</b><br>Holy Communion                                   | <b>11.00am</b><br>Holy Communion                                 | <b>9.30am</b><br>Family Communion                           |
|                                                        |                                                                   |                                                                  |                                                             |
| <b>Sunday<br/>27<sup>th</sup> April</b>                | <b>9.30am</b><br>Morning Prayer                                   | <b>11.00am</b><br>Holy Communion                                 | <b>5.30pm</b><br>Evensong                                   |

## BUS TIMES

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0703 0817 0920 1020 1620 1737 1840 1932 2022 2147 2253

**Saturdays**

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

**Sundays and most public holidays**

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0953 1123 1253 1423 1553 1723 1852

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**Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays)**

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

**Saturdays**

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

**Sundays and most public holidays**

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0956 1122 1252 1422 1552 1722 1852 2022

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# Local Info



## STEEPLE ASTON VILLAGE HALL

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

### Our hall is available to hire:

- Ideal site for parties, receptions, seminars, exhibitions and workshops
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**For hire charges and bookings** see our website or call Angela on 07734 112967

### Steeple and Middle Aston rubbish bin collection day is Thursday.

#### April 2025

3<sup>rd</sup> Blue and Brown  
10<sup>th</sup> Green  
17<sup>th</sup> Blue and Brown  
24<sup>th</sup> Green

#### May 2025

1<sup>st</sup> Blue and Brown  
8<sup>th</sup> Green  
15<sup>th</sup> Blue and Brown  
22<sup>nd</sup> Green  
29<sup>th</sup> Blue and Brown



### 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 Sport & Recreation Centre and Field

| Letting charges                                                                                        |              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| Social Function peak times<br>(Daily up to 6 hours from 6pm)                                           | £55          |
| Social Function off-peak times<br>(Daily up to 5 hours before 6pm)                                     | £27.50       |
| Meeting of represented clubs<br>(Daily per session up to 2 hours)                                      | £11          |
| Caution money for private lettings                                                                     | £100         |
| Block bookings for social events<br>15% discount for 6 or more bookings in advance                     |              |
| Contact us if you wish to hire the field or use the changing facilities                                |              |
| Letting Agent – Angela Smith<br><a href="mailto:rec.trust@googlemail.com">rec.trust@googlemail.com</a> | 07734 112967 |
| Chair – Torquil McLusky                                                                                | 01869 347914 |
| Treasurer – Chris Cooper                                                                               | 01869 347173 |

- The Sport & Rec is available to hire
- The "Friendly" space - the ideal venue for smaller parties, children's parties and get togethers
- Need more space? Hire the Sport & Rec and Village Hall together
- Fantastic playground just outside
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- Car Parking
- Regular events include Home Education, Babies & Toddlers, Brownies, After School Club, Bridge and of course the Football Club (it's been going since 1898!)
- Next event Race Night  
...more details to follow!





# Steeple Aston Calendar

Check the village website at [steepleaston.org.uk/home/calendar](http://steepleaston.org.uk/home/calendar) for any changes.

Please send details of events for May and June to [editorsalife@gmail.com](mailto:editorsalife@gmail.com)

| Month               | Event                                                  | Venue              | Time                   |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| <b>April</b>        |                                                        |                    |                        |
| Tuesday 8th April   | WI: History of Science                                 | Village Hall       | 7.00pm                 |
| Wed 9th - Sat 12th  | 'Everybody's talking about Jamie' (see advert p.26)    | Oxford Playhouse   |                        |
| Thursday 10th April | 'My Life in Music' - Nick Cleobury, Music Maestro      | SA Church          | 7.15pm for 7.30pm      |
| Saturday 12th April | SAL May copy & advert deadlines                        |                    |                        |
| Saturday 12th April | St John Passion-JS Bach-Chipping Norton choral society | Deddington church  | 7.30pm                 |
| Tuesday 15th April  | Valentines: Chrissie's owls                            | Village Hall       | 2.30pm                 |
| Saturday 26th April | Farmers' Market                                        | Deddington         | 9.00-12.30pm           |
| Monday 28th April   | Parish Council Meeting                                 | S & R Building     | 7.30pm                 |
| <b>May</b>          |                                                        |                    |                        |
| Monday 5th-9th May  | Valentines: Holiday to Sinah Warren                    | Hayling Island     |                        |
| Saturday 10th May   | 'We'll Meet Again': VE Day-80 <sup>th</sup>            | Village Hall       | 6.30pm                 |
| Wednesday 14th May  | SAL June copy & advert deadlines                       |                    |                        |
| 17th-26th May       | Oxfordshire Artweeks Exhibition (Sue King)             | 9 Bradshaw Close   | See advert for details |
| Sunday 18th May     | Deddington Four Farms Challenge - Fun Run for charity  | Deddington         | See advert for details |
| Monday 19th May     | Parish Council Meeting                                 | S & R Building     | 19:30:00               |
| Tuesday 20th May    | SAGS match                                             | The Vale, Evesham  | 12 noon                |
| Tuesday 20th May    | Valentines: 'Yesterday's Childhood'                    | Village Hall       | 2.30pm                 |
| Thursday 22nd May   | Valentines: coach trip: Oakham Treasures               | Somerset           |                        |
| Saturday 24th May   | Farmers' Market                                        | Deddington         | 9.00-12.30pm           |
| <b>June</b>         |                                                        |                    |                        |
| Saturday 7th June   | Middle Aston Open Gardens in aid of church roof        | Middle Aston       | 2.00pm-6.00pm          |
| Saturday 14th June  | SAL July copy & advert deadlines                       |                    |                        |
| Monday 16th June    | Parish Council Meeting                                 | S & R Building     | 7.30pm                 |
| Tuesday 17th June   | SAGS Match                                             | Hearsall, Coventry | 10.00am                |
| Tuesday 17th June   | Valentines: Songs of the 50s & 60s                     | Village Hall       | 2.30pm                 |
| Saturday 21st June  | SACS Summer Party Concert                              | Village Hall       | 6.30 for 7.00pm        |
| Wednesday 25th June | Valentines: Coach trip to Severn Valley Railway        | Severn Valley      |                        |
| Saturday 28th June  | 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**

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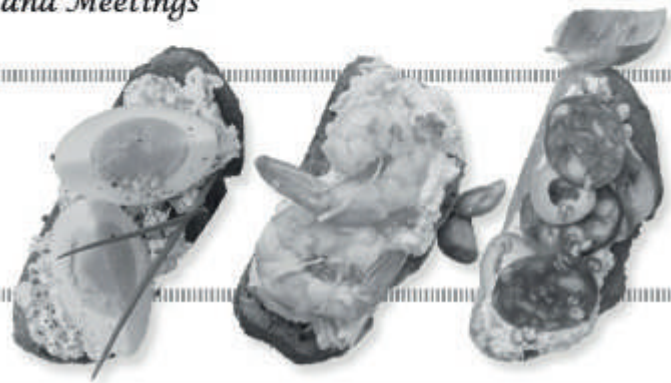
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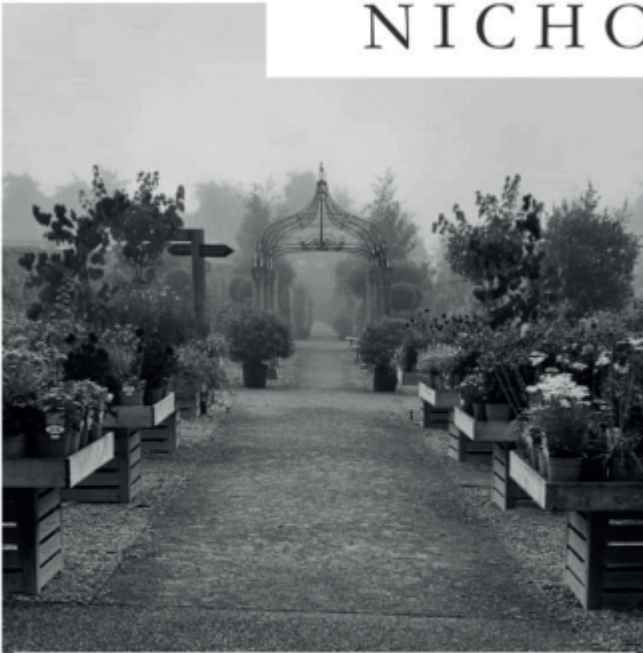
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