



Spring has sprung ...

The photographic competition this year on the subject of 'Signs of Spring' received a good range of entries and we are pleased to show you the first placed photograph which is by Simon Blower.

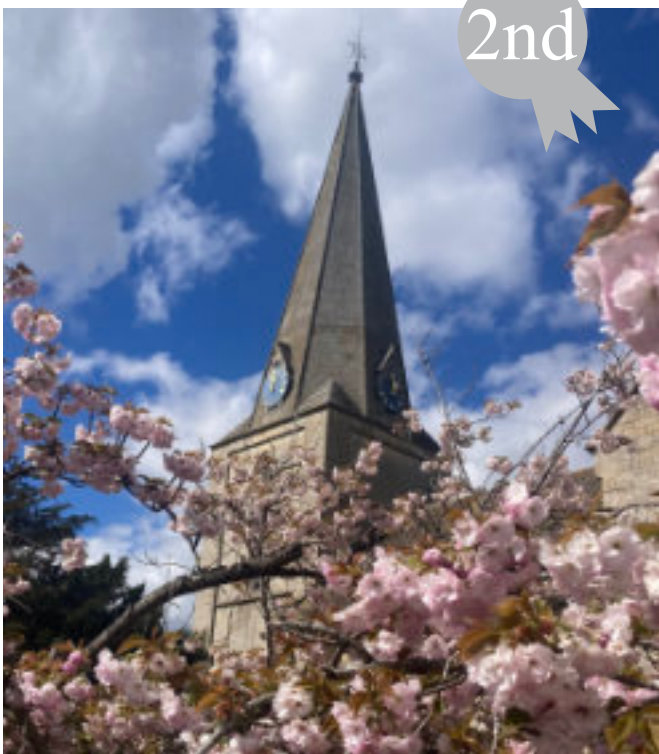
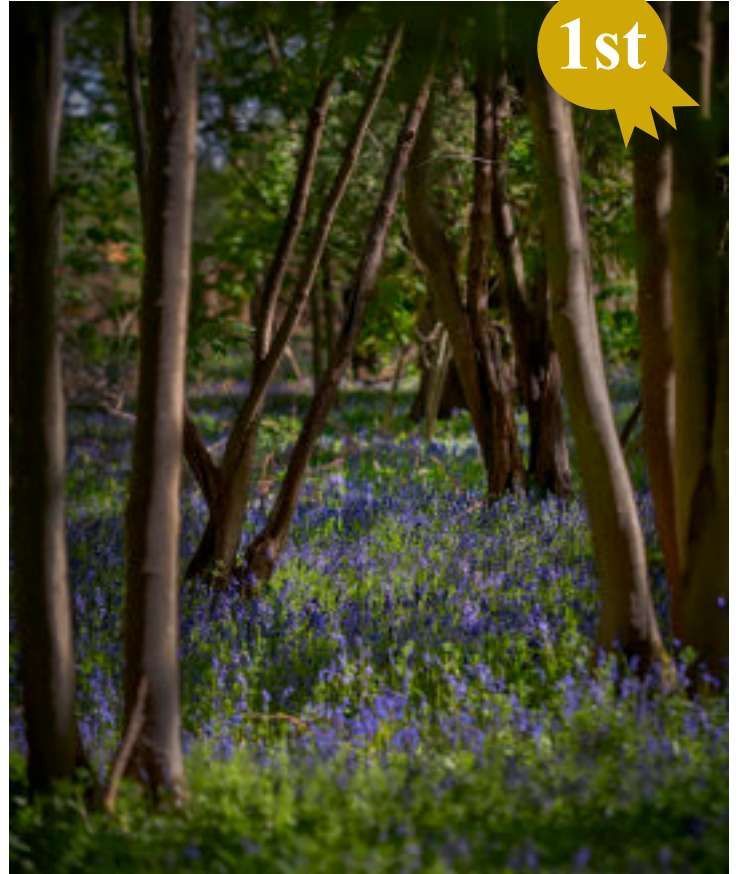
Our judge, Paul Lock, who is a semi-professional photographer himself, chose this from the 45 entries. He said "I really love the way that this has been framed to draw the viewer into the image – bluebell woods are the very essence of Spring to me. Beautiful work." Simon wins an M&S voucher for £25.00.

The photograph judged in second place is by Sam Parry. Paul chose this because he considered it a "Really clever composition, combining wonderful blossom, a colourful sky and our lovely church in the heart of the village. Great shot."

Third choice is by Kirsty Jackson. Paul commented that "This shot shows that there is far more to Spring than the beautiful flowers that we see everywhere. Great timing, perfect focus and a good eye to catch these two at rest. Brilliant."

Many thanks to Paul for taking the time to judge the entries. There are more to see on the centre spread. Maybe you will be inspired to have a go next time. Let's hope we have a glorious summer and plenty of opportunities for some wonderful photographs.

The Editors



Next Edition ...Next Edition...Next Edition

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Dear Editors,

Edward (Ted) Baughan passed away peacefully at home on 6th March 2024, surrounded by his family, just as he had wished.

Ted was born in Aston on 24th December 1935. He was raised on the farm, at Kingsway, and spent his full working life and much of his retirement working the farm. He met and later married Dorothy in 1956 and they went on to have four children, ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Ted loved Aston and the countryside around him. There is very little of this parish that he did not know about and often his wealth of knowledge was called upon. He would always offer a hand to support his village community. For many years, he was chairman of the Parish Council, concerning himself in the preservation and development of the village. Throughout his life, he was involved in the Allotment Committee, the Drainage Board and the preservation of Bampton Library to name but a few. Over the years, the village would take advantage of his fields for the Carnival and Bonfire Night, as well as utilising the barns for barn dances and for preparing trailers for the float processions.

Ted took an active role in the farming community. He was a life-long member of the Ploughing Match Society and oversaw the heavy horses. He was actively involved in the National Farmers' Union and was never afraid to raise his voice for what he believed in. Ted was passionate about farming but also about conservation. He farmed in a different era, when there were numerous farms in the village; when there was a balance between the animals, the land and the natural environment; when fields were smaller, rivers cleaner and hedges more profuse.

At heart, Ted was a family man and the Baughan house was filled with love and laughter. As a family, we were able to continue loving and laughing with him until the end.

Dorothy and family would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the many kind words expressed and cards received. They have meant a great deal.

Catherine Souch



Ted Baughan

Dear Friends,

My family and I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you for all the wonderful messages, cards and visits we had to mark the passing away of my husband, Bob.

The WI were particularly wonderful for the marvellous spread they put on in the Village Hall after the funeral.

He will never be forgotten by us and many others.

Thank you again.

Miriam (Mim) Williams, Simon and Alex.

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Gill Long and the Women's Institute

It isn't all Jam and Jerusalem. The Women's Institute does so much more.



This year Gill Long stepped down as president of Aston and Cote WI. I took this opportunity to talk to her and to find out more about Aston and Cote WI.

When Gill Long came to live in Aston in 1987 one of the first things she did was join the WI. This way she made herself a wide circle of friends in the village at a stroke. Today, she tells me, newcomers to the new houses in the village are doing the same thing. This is good to know. When I first came to live in Standlake from a town, the idea of joining the WI filled me with horror – my cooking skills wouldn't bear scrutiny when compared to all these culinary wizards. Little did I know what I was missing. Although the first image that springs to mind with the WI is catering – parties, weddings, coach trips all beautifully prepared food, yet their interests encompass so much more. Gill tells me their county office at Tackley provides a list of speakers on a huge range of topics from blood bikers, to tapestry making - Take a look at the WI's tapestry of Aston in the village hall. It even includes Bob Harper's pigs.

The WI originated in Canada and came to the UK in 1915. Its original aim was 'to educate rural women' although, today, the largest membership numbers are in towns and cities. There is no age limit on joining and members as young as 15 are on the books. Jam and Jerusalem aside, the WI has now become a 'big hitter' on more serious topics and each year submits a resolution/motion to Parliament. All branches are invited to submit resolutions and these are finally whittled down to one.

This year the motion will focus on NHS dentistry – or the lack of it. Apparently, the WI views carry quite a lot of weight in Parliamentary circles these days – as I have always found – "A Force to be Reckoned With!"

The hymn "Jerusalem" is sometimes sung – unaccompanied - at WI meetings. Gill says this can be very moving. Clearly "Jam and Jerusalem" is misleading in this day and age. The WI encompasses so much more.

Gill is now succeeded as president by Gillian La Forte. There are also new committee members and the aim is to build the group and encourage new members.

Brenda Smith

Trip to Sandhurst

The W.I. are arranging a coach trip to Sandhurst Royal Military Academy on July 28th.

In order to fill a coach and make the trip viable, the organisers are opening up the trip to anyone in Aston interested in taking part.

The coast will be between £42 and £47 per person. This includes transport and tour. Take your own picnic lunch, drinks etc.

Please contact Liz Hook on 01993 702411 or email to let her know you are interested. richardhook@farming.co.uk

Many Thanks

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Sports Report from Aston and Cote School



The Boccia Team

children kept calm and relaxed throughout the match, rolling some superb balls to get ours closer to the jack, or even knock opposition balls away. It came down to the last ball of the last leg which Aston took a single point from to win 5-3 overall and win the Witney Boccia League for the first time.

After winning the Witney School Games cross country race and finishing third in the West Oxfordshire School Games race, Millie was our schools only representative at this years County Finals. This race took place in the beautiful setting of Radley College, not that Millie was able to admire the views as she was too busy powering her way to an amazing 13th place in her race.

Later that day our U11 hockey team also played their School Games County Final. The children breezed through their group games, winning all three of them convincingly led by captain Jess from midfield. Another comfortable win in the quarter final set up a semi against local rivals Batts. After a back and forth game they eventually won 2-1 to proceed to the final. Aston scored a quick goal which left our opposition searching for a reply.



The U11 Hockey Team

group games, with many girls scoring their first ever goals for the school. We qualified for the semi final against North Leigh and comfortably won 6-1 to set up a final against West Witney. The final was a well fought match with both teams getting plenty of chances. The girls battled hard but struggled to score past their amazing keeper. Eventually with ten minutes left to go in the match, Lily-Mae poked the ball into the net to give Aston the lead. The girls then repelled everything West Witney could throw at them. With the last play of the match West Witney struck the post, only for the ball to be cleared away by captain and top scorer for the season Bella to give Aston the win and once again become Witney Schools Girls League Champions!

Mr Hook

Recently we have had lots of sporting success here at Aston and Cote primary school. Our Year 6s entered the Witney School Games tag rugby tournament hosted by Witney Rugby Club. After a narrow loss in their first game, the team then went undefeated for the next five games to finish second in an incredibly close tournament.

Our Boccia team entered the Witney Schools Boccia League and won both of our group games against Batts and Queen Emma's to set up a final against Hailey. The



Millie at Cross Country

After two amazing goal line stops from Kacie, our opposition started to over stretch and two more counter attack goals from Dillon and Teddy helped to make Aston School Games County Champions!

The U11 girls football team were hungry for success after the boys won their league earlier in the season. The girls went undefeated throughout their group games with wins over Blakes and Queen Emma's and a draw against Madley. The girls scored plenty of goals in the



The U11 football team

Community Trust News



With the improvement in the weather and contractors booked, I am pleased to report that maintenance work at the Village Hall is moving on at a pace. Fitting of the new facias, soffits and guttering is almost complete as I write this. The car park has been cleared, jet washed and now has marked parking bays, as per safety regulations.



Regarding the MUGA, Multi Use Games Area, we have asked for a planning extension because of delays and concerns over the environmental impact. Hopefully, this will be resolved soon.

The committee is looking into funding for a number of projects including the fire alarm system, possible solar panels and e.v. charging points.

The main hall and John Ordish Room are both available for hire.

Our rates are very reasonable and village users have a reduced hire rate.

Please check the website for further news and contact details.

Or contact Vicky Fuller -

contact@astoncotevillagehall.org.uk

Thank you for your continued support for this vital facility.

*Ian Dunstan
Chair of Aston
and Cote
Community Trust*



Skittles at the Church



The Winner Rob Taylor

The final total raised for the evening will be announced once it has been finalised. It looks to be around £400. The winner was Rob Taylor. Well done all involved in a fun evening.

John Ordish

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Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council Chairman's Annual Report 2023/24 - Summary

Redacted for editorial reasons. The full report may be found on the Council website, www.astonoxon.com

Our Parish Council The Responsible Finance Officer (Deborah Shenton) is a new, cost-neutral post, established this year to ease the workload upon the Parish Clerk. Due to new employment and associated redeployment reasons, Alex Chapman will be standing down at the Annual Parish Meeting. We are most grateful for his sterling contribution. There will be an associated councillor vacancy for which we would be delighted to consider volunteers (residents of the Parish only) for co-option.

Flooding and Drainage Given the demonstrably worsening situation regarding sewage discharges in the Parish, we continue regular direct contact with Thames Water on a number of concerns. Work to rectify the misconnection of storm water to the foul water network at St Joseph's Court will commence on 20th August, for completion by end-September. However, work promised this year to upgrade Bampton Sewage Treatment Works has been postponed for at least 12 to 18 months. Given the direct causal link between housing development and sewage discharges, this may have implications for the enforcement of conditions for, amongst others, the Brier Furlong housing development. More generally, it is not the capacity (allegedly sufficient) of the sewage network to handle foul water that is the problem, but rather the deluge of rainfall-induced infiltration that rapidly overwhelms it. To address this, Thames Water have installed flow monitors north and south of the Bull Street Pumping Station as a first step to identify the source(s) of infiltration.

Housing Development and Planning Issues Whilst it is WODC

that determines all planning matters, the Parish Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications in the Parish (23 this year) and exercises a degree of influence accordingly. Wary of inexorable development 'creep', a recurring concern for us is to highlight the sustainability requirement for all development, noting the 33% increase already in housing stock over the past 5 years in Aston, the Conservation Area status of much of the Parish, and stressing (especially) the inadequacies of the already overloaded drainage and sewerage system.

WODC Local Plan 2041 In our response to the WODC Local Plan 2041 public consultation, we welcomed the opportunity to engage on this vital issue, stressing the need for a seamless transition, and urged evolution not revolution, there being much that is entirely fit for purpose in the current plan. We would welcome anything that would help redress the current greed/democracy imbalance in the local planning system and urged WODC to make good on its promise of 'stronger, more meaningful engagement with parish councils'.

Terra Appeal Upheld - Greed Trumps Democracy In July, the Planning Inspector allowed the Terra Appeal and granted planning permission for the 40-house development north of Cote Road, thereby overruling the unanimous, democratic view of the Parish and District councils. Nevertheless, we engaged with this appeal as a Rule 6 Party with realistically modest expectations of success and believe that we performed very well in our task of 'adding substantively to WODC's case'. So, not the decision

we had all hoped for, but we stand ready for the next, inevitable development 'punt' and would like to thank again all those residents who offered invaluable practical, moral and financial support, for which we are most grateful.

Terra have now handed over responsibility for the site and having been asked by the developer for a proposed name, we have suggested 'Brier Furlong' - the field name in the 19th Century tithe map, an approach consistent with the naming of Marsh Furlong and Pound Field Road. Meanwhile, groundwork proceeds apace, with first occupations expected early next year and completed by Summer. The Parish Council remains firmly focused upon insisting upon absolute compliance with all planning conditions and obligations - no ifs, no buts. For example, following multiple breaches of the construction traffic management plan, we invited WODC to engage accordingly and an Enforcement Officer has been appointed. In the meantime, we would therefore be grateful for the continued assistance of residents in the prompt reporting of any alleged transgressions or issues.

Formal Expression of No Confidence in WODC Planning Officers Following WODC's risible handling of the Terra Appeal, compounded by serious failings since, we have written recently to the Leader of WODC, formally expressing the Parish Council's loss of confidence in WODC planning officers and seeking from them a more professional, collegiate, cooperative and transparent approach. A response is awaited.

North Farm After a prolonged hiatus, due in part to regime change at OCC, details have begun to

emerge of a proposed layout of 9 houses plus (subject to confirmation - a probable prerequisite for WODC approval) an affordable housing unit. The Parish Council believes that this provides an acceptable basis to continue, subject to ongoing refinement and negotiation. An outline planning application is likely to be made this Summer. If approved, construction will begin late-25/early-26. We will continue its close liaison with OCC on this matter and keep residents informed accordingly.

OCC Children's Home on Back Lane The Children's Home is now complete and operational.

Traffic Calming Traffic calming rightly remains a major local concern that we continue to monitor closely. Most recently, there is ongoing public consultation on the potential for 'build-outs' on approach roads into Aston. We were most grateful for the extensive, often passionate views of residents, both for and against, on the new 20mph speed limits, introduced peremptorily by OCC in November 2022, without final consultation with the Parish Council.

Royal Matters Following the coronation of HM King Charles III on 6 May, we plan a permanent memorial to this historic event through the procurement of a commemorative side access gate from Church Lane to St James' Church, complementing the existing front gate that commemorates the Silver Jubilee of 1937.

Finance The Parish remains in very good financial state, as confirmed by our external auditors in 2023. Following its bold decision not to increase the Precept last year, the Council continued to exercise financial prudence and operated comfortably within its agreed budget of £31, 308. Total Section 106 potential receipts over the period 2020-30 will total some £248, 391. Financial grants, donations and projects in the financial year (totalling £3, 667) included the Day Centre, Voices magazine, grass cutting for Cote Chapel and the church of St James, Aston

Community Trust, Cleanslate, Royal British Legion and Citizens Advice.

The Budget for Financial Year 2024/25 was agreed at the Parish Council meeting in December 2023. In sharp contrast to successive, inexorable Council Tax rises (at the maximum permitted level) at county and district level, we were delighted, for a remarkable **sixth** consecutive year, to be able to make no increase to the Precept at all. This, at £30,395 keeps the Band D equivalent household at £49.74 (around 3.6p/month for each parish resident). As with all Council business, full details may be found on the Council website, including fully audited annual accounts.

Testimonial - Ted Baughan Following the recent passing of Ted Baughan, we would wish to formally record our appreciation of Ted's outstanding record of public service in our Parish, including as Chairman of the Parish Council for a remarkable 20 years, from 1983 to 2003.

*Russell La Forte CBE, Chairman
Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney
Parish Council, 23 April 2024*

Where in the Parish?



Answer is on page 27.

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Aston Football Teams

Here are the Aston Teams. Photographed by Tom Angus.

We hope to have a report on their seasons in the next edition of Voices.



Aston Mens First Team



Aston Mens Reserve Team

Aston U14's



Aston's U14's are the youth football club's longest running team - formed in 2016 from the "Mini Dribblers".

They have had their most successful season so far, setting all sorts of team records and winning their division of the Oxfordshire Youth Football League. The team, like the club, is oversubscribed and everyone is enjoying playing and learning together. Well done girls and boys!

Submitted by Elaine Tuffery on behalf of the coaches

Nature Natters How to be a weed.

Spring brings hope and warmth to all of us, but especially to gardeners. Spring also brings weeds. Unfortunately, a lot of gardening, particularly vegetable gardening, involves clearing the ground for the crop and that is as good as posting an invitation to weeds. So, things like groundsel appear out of nowhere and having appeared, they set about flowering and producing seeds. Those feathery seeds can fly a long way to the next bit of free ground working much like dandelion seeds. They don't even need a child to blow them into the air, but it helps. So even if you get your garden groundsel-free, the seeds will still blow over from your neighbours.

Buttercups adopt a different strategy and aren't as good as groundsel at finding new territory to colonise. So, you can almost dream of getting buttercups out of your vegetable patch. But once established they are hard to shift. You've got to clear them away first and that's not too easy because buttercups send out runners that produce new plants all around the parent plant. In a remarkably short time buttercups can cover what was open ground, and you've got to do a lot of digging to get their roots out.

There is an important difference between the strategies typified by the groundsel and the buttercup. The separate plants that make up a solid carpet of buttercups are cloned from the parent plant, so they are all genetically identical. The seeds of the groundsel are produced from the pollen and ovaries in the flower, so they are genetically variable, and this enables them to colonise different situations. Don't be too smug about the buttercup clone's lack of genetic variability because they also produce their seeds sexually so they can thrive in a wide variety of conditions too.

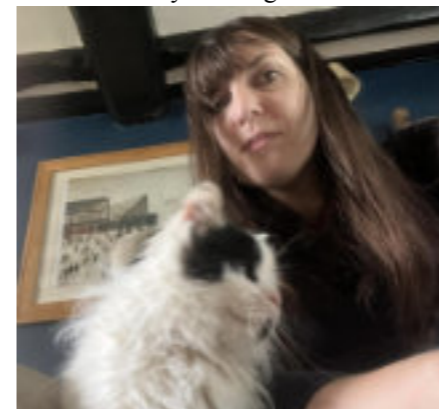
James Gray

Rocky Comes Home

Some of you may know that in January our cat went missing. It was a very cold night (minus 5 degrees) and we feared the worst. We put up fliers, posted information on Facebook and were constantly looking round the village for him, calling out his name and anything else we could think of.

The weeks went by. Nothing, no one had seen him. We were all but giving up hope of his safe return, when out of the blue our Catherine was contacted by Becky Coles. She had seen Rocky's picture and thought he may be with the farm cats at Kingsway Farm. We thought it may have been a false alarm, but no, Rocky was at Kingsway. We were all relieved. So, armed with a cat basket, family members set off to the Bampton Road to retrieve poor Rocky. But Rocky, always a nervous little fellow had other ideas. But at least we had seen him!

It was a month before Gill managed to coax him back. Every day, twice a day, someone from the family would go down to the farm. The Sunshine Cat Rescue Charity lent us a trap. It worked after a fashion. We caught four cats and a hedgehog! but not Rocky. Finally, at the end of April, the cat was captured and finally came home.



Catherine with Rocky safely home.

He seems very happy and none the worse for his adventure. We would like to thank those who helped find and look after Rocky, especially members of the Baughan family.

The Long family

Parish Information Panel

I am sure, when on your travels, you have looked at an information board. Sometimes there is a "You are Here" arrow to help you to make sense of what you see. Aston has no such illustrated board or panel to welcome the visitor and point out things of interest.

However, there are many things in the parish of which we can be justly proud. And so, to bring them to the attention of the visitor the Parish Council and the History Group have set up a steering group to explore the feasibility of a Parish Information Panel. We have looked at the precise purpose of the panel or panels, their design, cost and location. It's an exciting project and will take time to bring to fruition. Watch this space!

Andrew Long

Easter Bunny Winner

Thank you so much to everyone who entered our recent prize draw to name the Easter Bunny. We had lots of entries. Congratulations to Elijah who was the lucky winner and has named the bunny "Doctor Binor". Look out for another bunny to name next Easter!

Aston Community Shop



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Eating Out Slaughters Manor House, Lower Slaughter

I mentioned in my last review that I'd try to meet the challenge of finding more affordable places, but also that this next review wouldn't fit that bill by any stretch. One of the Christmas gifts from our daughters was a three-course dinner with glass of champagne for two at Slaughters Manor House Hotel. We've had lunch opposite at the Slaughters Inn a couple of times, and whilst that is not cheap, the Manor House is whole new level, with the gift costing £97.50 per person (£85 without champagne), so with pre/post-dinner drinks, a couple of sides and a good bottle of wine you could probably fork out up to £250 for two.

So, was it worth it? Well, we were shown into either the bar, or as we chose, the library, where we settled in large leather sofas by a big fireplace awaiting our champers. This would also be a nice place for after dinner drinks as they had beautiful antique looking wooden board games such as scrabble, Monopoly, chess and others.

Menus are brought to you and you are not shown to your table until shortly before your food is ready. When it came, we were surprised to see a pre-starter Amuse-Bouche not shown on the menu, comprising a mushroom or ham hock croquette with mushroom cream in a thin pastry oyster shell, which were very tasty.

Our starters were Seared Orkney Scallop, Bonito and Buttermilk, dill for me and Bang Bang Cornish Crab, crab bread and butter, and peanut for my wife. She loves all fish and said her's was fabulous. When you see just one scallop, the obvious thought is that for the price, two or three wouldn't go amiss, but it was lovely.

Sticking with fish, my wife's main was Cornish cod loin, Lobster, gem lettuce, lightly curried shellfish sauce (very popular and kept on the changing menu by all accounts), whilst I had the Creedy Carver duck, crispy leg, carrot, blackcurrant jus with salami gravy. The breast comprised two smallish portions cut to blocks rather than a whole duck breast but was absolutely perfect, pink and tender, and two crispy leg mini spring roll-type portions added a different and delicious variation. The plate was beautifully presented, but as usual with high-end fare, the pretty small portions were spread around so you really do need a side dish unless you eat like a sparrow, so of the selection offered I chose heritage carrots and Lyonnaise potatoes for us to share.

Before dessert, there was another Amuse-Bouche consisting of mango puree, coconut cream, a small butterscotch tuile. This was followed by Baked Tonka custard, Yorkshire rhubarb, Jamaican ginger cake, Advocaat ice cream for my wife and layered chocolate and brown sugar torte with gold leaf, white coffee ice cream for me. Both desserts were simply divine and by the end, it balances out so you are very satisfied but not stuffed, so maybe one scallop was enough, but still ...!

Most places now add 12.5% service charge, but the Manor House was 10% optional, so it's your choice.

The Manor House is a beautiful building with lovely grounds, especially when lit up at night as we had for dinner, and perfect for weddings, especially with St Mary's Church right next door. Whether it was worth the cost depends on your point of view and wallet, and whilst you couldn't fault the food, it's not the type of place most people could justify, but if you are prepared to fork out for a very special dinner or maybe you're a husband after some brownie points for one of the myriad things you did wrong without even knowing, I'd highly recommend it.

Russ Avis
Amuse bouche - a single, bite sized hors d'oeuvre, not ordered from the menu.



FACS Aston School Music Quiz

The FACS Aston school music quiz returned to the school hall on Friday March 22nd and was a tremendous success, beating last year's figure by raising a fantastic £1320 on the night for school projects.



The winning team

A total of 23 teams took part including a good number of new teams who hadn't had the 'Smashy and Nicey' quiz experience!

Hopefully, they will return to take part in future quiz events. As well as the quiz itself the night's events included a raffle, Heads and Tails and a 'Brucie' bonus of Play Your Cards Right. Indeed, this was a great fundraiser as the final two contestants were wiped out by both going lower on what seemed a cert, only for the dealer to cut an ace!

The prestigious Elvis Presley Gold Disc trophy was presented to 'Never Mind the Wallocks' who were clear winners by seven points from joint second placed 'Three and a half Men' and 'The Near Death Experience'. A big thanks to everyone who turned up on the night to support the event, it really does make a difference for the children.

Special thanks must go to the FACS team of Rachel, her mum and brother and Katie, who worked tirelessly on the night serving drinks and running the raffle.

We would also like to thank our loyal scorers, Sian and Fiona, who have been with us at every school quiz since we started in 2006. With the night being such a success, hopefully Smashy and Nicey will return in 2025.

Rob 'Smashy' Taylor and Keith 'Nicey' Jones

Computing for All

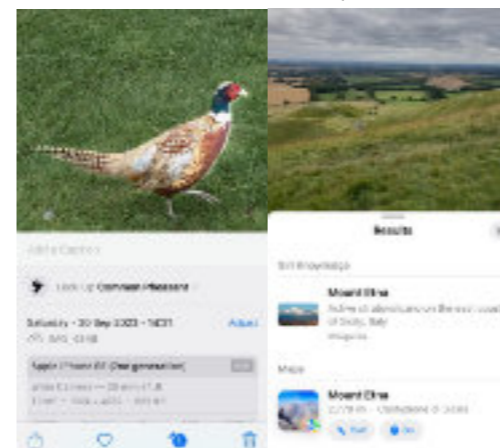
Out in the Field

I remember there were indispensable items for family walks when I was growing up. Beyond the obvious, like the map and compass and the food and drink, we always included a number of small field guides on plants and insects we might see.

With the increasing prevalence and accuracy of image recognition software, it's unsurprising that there are now a range of phone apps that provide identification of various forms of nature. Apple's iOS 15 introduced Visual Look Up, which allows you to swipe up on a photo. Often there is something or someone it recognises, but in my experience the results are a little patchy. It can be good at landmarks, though seems to think that some views of White Horse Hill are Mount Etna!

We've had somewhat more success with dedicated apps. The Picture This app is generally very good at recognising plants, though slightly US biased. However, it does need a phone signal and a subscription. In a similar vein, there is the "Picture" series of apps from Next Vision which we've not tried. These cover insects ("Picture Insect"), fish ("Picture Fish") and so on. There is even a rock identifier (obviously called "Rock Identifier: Stone ID" to be consistent!)

It's amazing the diversity of apps that are now available. One that has been recommended to me is Merlin, which identifies bird song. However, it came with the caveat that it failed for the water fowl down at Chimney the other week.



Apple iPhone Object Recognition?

Perhaps less obvious are apps to recognise dog breeds and even bank notes! If you are out and about after dark, I would recommend the star recognition app Stellarium, which allows you to identify stars and even satellites on a star map by pointing your phone towards them. Ham Lane is great for this if the lights at Brize aren't on.

Happy searching!

Tom England

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W.I. News

At our meeting in March we had a return visit from Reverend Janice to talk about how and why she joined the church after her career as a physiotherapist. She said that she hadn't been religious in her early days but due to a friend's influence who saw that she was capable and would be suitable she went for training.

She talked about how she and her family had moved around parts of the UK, so taking up an appointment in the parish of Bampton didn't become too much of a shock. Her talk was very informative and at times quite humorous. We are very lucky to have her here and so far she doesn't have any intention of moving on so maybe next year she can give us another subject to talk about.



Owing to an unfortunate incident, our planned speakers were unable to come at the last minute however we were lucky to have Helen coming to our rescue. She always has something up her sleeve and this time it was short quiz with all the answers related to the history of the WI. In addition she bought all the pieces to enable us to make a moving caterpillar on a paper leaf, some of us were better than others. It involved a straw, cut out paper and coloured pens.

For our meeting for May we have a talk from a serving Metropolitan police officer so we better be on our best behaviour.

We meet every second Wednesday at 7.30pm in the village hall so join us for some interesting and fun evenings.

Lesley Brown

theWI

Going Green The plastic presence!



It's birthday season in our house which means presents (and VERY excitable children; an early start to Bank Holiday Saturday morning; and a sad younger sibling who hasn't fully grasped why he doesn't have anything). This created two juxtaposed situations in our household that, from an environmental perspective, highlight the dilemmas and 'small wins' many of us confront in micro-ways each day.

On one hand, the presents. Small but meaningful presents were discussed as ideal for an avid artist and my wife went off in search of the best combination of items on a tight budget. A delighted child resulted, but from an environmental perspective it was a mixed picture. Some items are recyclable, but many are not, and *everything* was wrapped in plastic, despite one item also being wrapped in a card sleeve and having two clasps! It is unnecessary and wasteful. Sadly, we get so used to this it can pass us by.

It was Earth Day recently and the focus this year was around plastic, at a time when world nations are trying to agree a global treaty on reducing plastic pollution. With so many everyday items being over packaged it is a necessary and noble aim. I'm increasingly tempted by the German way of leaving excess packaging in the store as a message to producers to improve their efforts. But, for now, the first challenge is to try and choose items with the least amount of plastic.

Back to the birthday morning juxtaposition: I then watched my six-year-old dismantle a padded envelope. After telling him to stop shredding paper everywhere, I was informed that it was important to separate the paper and the bubble wrap so that it could be recycled. At least some things I say appear to be sinking in!

Richard Bloomfield

1st Aston Brownies.

The unit has just started the new summer term, and we are hoping to be able to get outside more as the warmer weather



comes along. Some badges we are working on together on Mondays are the theme award badge, Express Myself.

The 90-minute Monday evening is broken down so that we do some practical work, also allowing time for the girls to show their

own work and of course we have plenty of the traditional Brownie games as well as some new games too.

I have attached a photo taken this week showing some of the girls practising a scene from George and the Dragon along with Bea and Chloe two of our Duke of Edinburgh girls, who are currently assisting us in the unit.

We encourage the girls to use their badge books to see if they can work toward any of the interest badges at home, then bring their work in to show us or, if this is not possible, photograph the work and send the images to me. It is really great when the girls bring their work in to see just how focused they are on a particular subject. If anyone wants to become a volunteer helper on Monday evenings for 90 minutes then please get in touch, or maybe a volunteer leader like myself, then Guiding would provide all of the relevant training at no cost to yourself, again please do get in touch with me so that I can pass your details on.

For more details on becoming a Brownie please check out the Girlguiding website where you can register your daughter onto the waiting list, also feel free to contact me on 07887974468 or karenthegardener123@gmail.com

Stay safe.

Karen Stay. Unit Leader.



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Aston History Group



Group member Russell La Forte provided our March talk. "By Endurance We Conquer" was the motto of the Shackleton family. Russell told us the story of Ernest Shackleton's attempt to cross the 1,800 miles of Antarctica from north to south via the South Pole. Leaving Plymouth in 1914 in his ship 'Endurance', via South Georgia, the experienced explorer headed for Antarctica with arrangements in place to have his expedition resupplied. Trouble came in

the form of ice; trapping, crushing and eventually sinking the ship. After living on the ice for a time Shackleton led his team to Elephant Island in three small boats.

From there, in one boat with six men, he crossed the 1,300 miles of ocean to South Georgia to get help. He then returned to rescue the remainder of his team. After two years, instead of the intended five months, the attempt had failed but all the team were safe.

Historian Bill King returned to Aston in April to tell us about when the Romans came to Britain. They came briefly in 55 and 54 BC, landing in Kent and exploring across the Medway and as far as the Thames. Almost one hundred years later they came in 600 ships to stay for 400 years. They came for tin, copper, gold and slaves to send back to Rome. The Roman way of life influenced every aspect of life in Britain with many features still with us today. However, problems in Rome led to a withdrawal from Britain and the coming of the Anglo-Saxons.

Next meetings:

May 30th - Visit to the Bodleian Library

June 27th - 'Trench Humour in the First World War' a talk by Stephen Barker

Martin Bowley



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Le Jardin

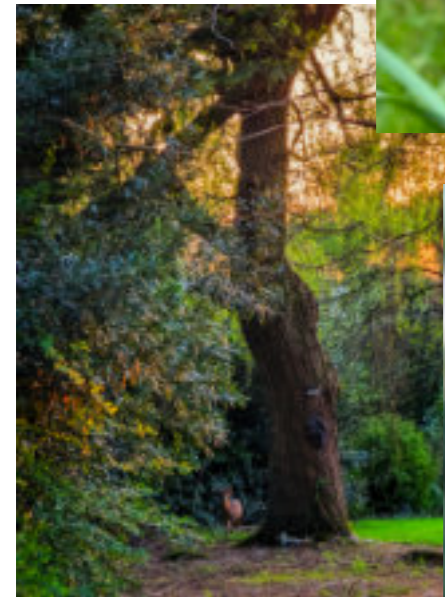
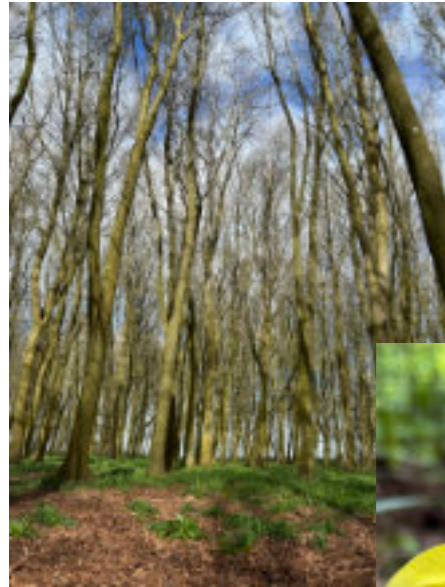
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Signs of Spring



Clockwise from top left:

Catherine Long

Sarah Lee

Tom England

Clemmie Tattersall

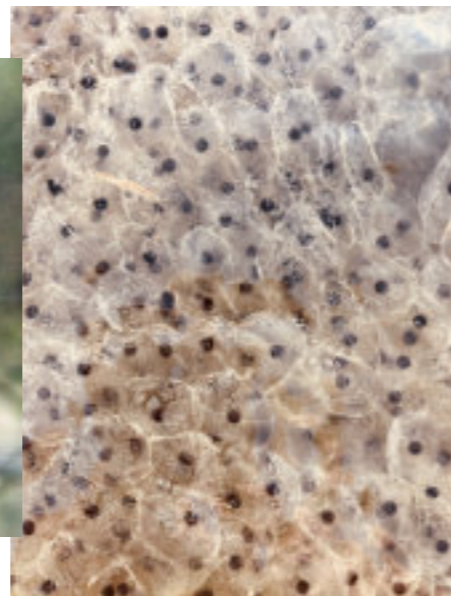
Popps Hoskins

Oli Crusher

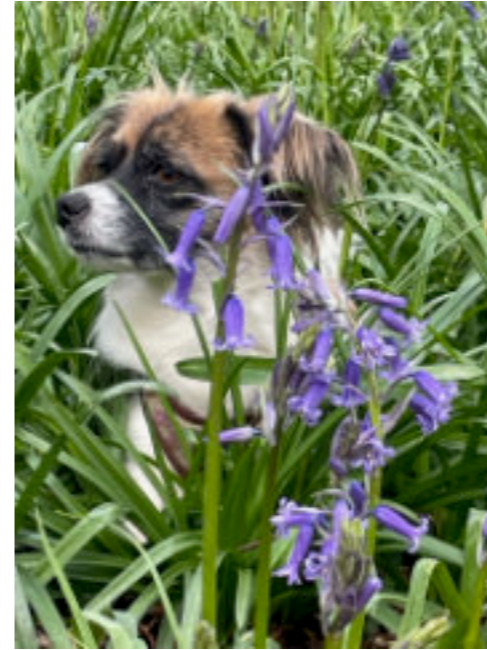
Ilona Tanner

In centre:

Leila England



Photography Entries



Clockwise from top left:

Justine Manning

Jenny Harris

Gina Salmon

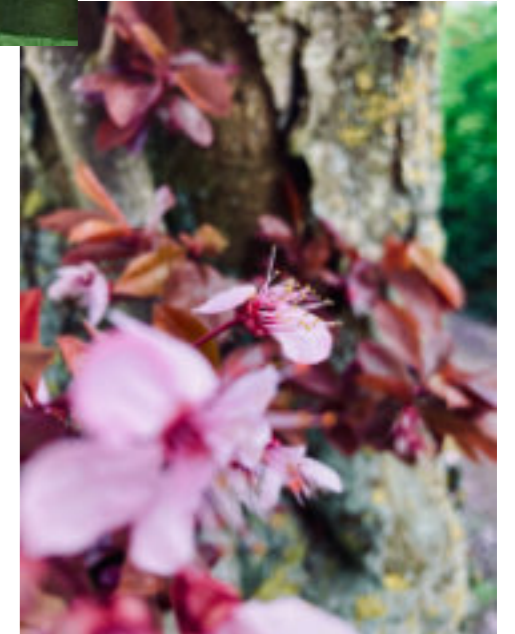
Flis Tattersall

Rachel Holt

Melody Parry

In centre:

Jane Digby



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The Rise of the Aston U12 Reds

The team started their journey together in the Oxford Mail D league and have since worked their way up to A, winning all of the Knock Out Cups along the way.

Aston kicked off 2024 with their Quarter Final cup game against Wallingford and Crowmash, winning 2-0. They then started their A league campaign with their first ever loss as a team away to Hayford Park, but in true Aston style they didn't let that phase them and the next week beat Benson away 2-1.



The cup semi-final was a home Semi Final match against Benson. Aston won 1-0 to go through to the final against league leaders Abingdon. The last time Aston met Abingdon was in the league, winning 3-0. Before their Aston defeat Abingdon hadn't lost a game in three years, so Abingdon came into the final with a score to settle!

On a rainy, wet Sunday afternoon many supports for both sides turned out to watch the two best U12's teams in the Oxford league go head-to-head. In the first five minutes Abingdon took the lead and was quickly followed up by another goal putting them two goals ahead.

Shortly before half time, Aston were given a free kick which was taken by Charlie Glaister. With what was one of the best free kicks he has ever scored.

Aston came back out for the second half with the belief that they were going to win. Their second goal, set up brilliantly by Finely Horne to George Hamilton who ran past their defence and calmly slotted it into the corner of the net.

Abingdon's forward line didn't make it easy, fighting just as hard for the win, but Aston's defence stood strong, with Harry Whittington the goalkeeper making some great saves.

15 minutes before the end, defender Jack Rackham made a remarkable run from the back down the wing and crossed over to Toby Gidlow who drilled the ball home to put Aston in the lead for the first time. The last few minutes left the supporters holding their breath as the time slowly ticked by, with Aston having to fight with all they had left until the final whistle was blown. Aston were crowned Champions of the U12's Knock Out Cup. This was huge achievement as no one from West Oxfordshire has ever won the cup since it started in 1965!!

Kate Clark

Oxfordshire Art Weeks

While North and West Oxfordshire Art weeks only run until the 12th of May, there are plenty of opportunities to meet artists, view their galleries

and buy their work, right up until May 27th. You will have to travel to other parts of Oxfordshire but it is well worth the effort.

Chatting to artists enables you to get their story and enjoy their passion for whatever medium they work in - any piece you buy then has an additional facet to it.

Maybe visit a National Trust or English Heritage property as part of your exploration of an area. Alternatively, try to visit more than one artist in the same outing.

Putting yourself on the Art Weeks map is an open invitation to see the studios and workspaces of local artists.

Please show your support by visiting.

If you decide to buy, then that's a bonus for you and the artist.

Helen Wheaton



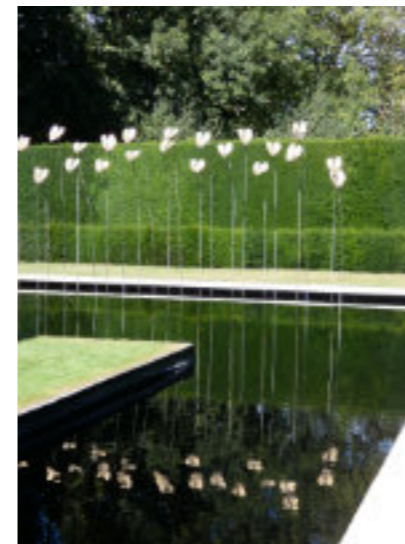
Garden Ramblings

Kiftsgate Court Gardens

With spring now embedded and the promise of warm, sunny days ahead it gives us the opportunity to explore Cotswold gardens and be inspired.

With that in mind we had a lovely trip to Kiftsgate Court Gardens near Chipping Campden. The terraced gardens sit below a honey-coloured house built in late 1800's and is still a home occupied now by the third generation of the same family. The ladies of each of these generations have been inspirational in the garden's planting and design.

There is ample parking and, on entrance, a map is provided which encourages you to follow a route level with the house, first encountering the white Sunk Garden. Head along the rose border then take time to wander through the orchard and up the mound which reminds me of an amphitheatre. On route you will no doubt have noticed the famous Kiftsgate Rose. This tremendous specimen, planted in 1938, is a white, scented climbing rose and is said to be the largest rose in Britain. One can believe that when it rambles over walls and a cowering beech tree. Retracing your steps the path leads you to a stunning water garden with a fascinating water leaf sculpture to enhance a modern style pool.



Heading back towards the house the route allows you to enjoy the Yellow Garden before entering a Pine Wood - the trees looking even taller because of the sloping ground beneath them. As you descend the terraced banks there are wonderful views ahead of the surrounding countryside.

The downward path eventually leads you to a delightful semi-circular pool with suitably placed seats to take a break and enjoy a moment of tranquillity.

A walk back up can be rewarded with tea and cake from the small café in the house and a chance to sit on the terrace and enjoy the atmosphere and delightful planting of this lovely garden.

N.M.D

Knit and Natter

Do you enjoy crocheting, knitting or cross stitch, or perhaps always wanted to learn? Please come along and join our friendly *Knit and Natter* group on the

first Thursday morning of every month 10am until 12pm in The Red Lion.

Whether you're a total beginner or bit of an expert, we share hints, swap patterns, teach each other, make new friends and of course enjoy a good natter. Everyone welcome, £5 for bottomless tea, coffee and lots of biscuits.

We are currently making a charity blanket from six-inch squares made by the group.

Gilly Peters-Parr



Christine shows her knitted jacket



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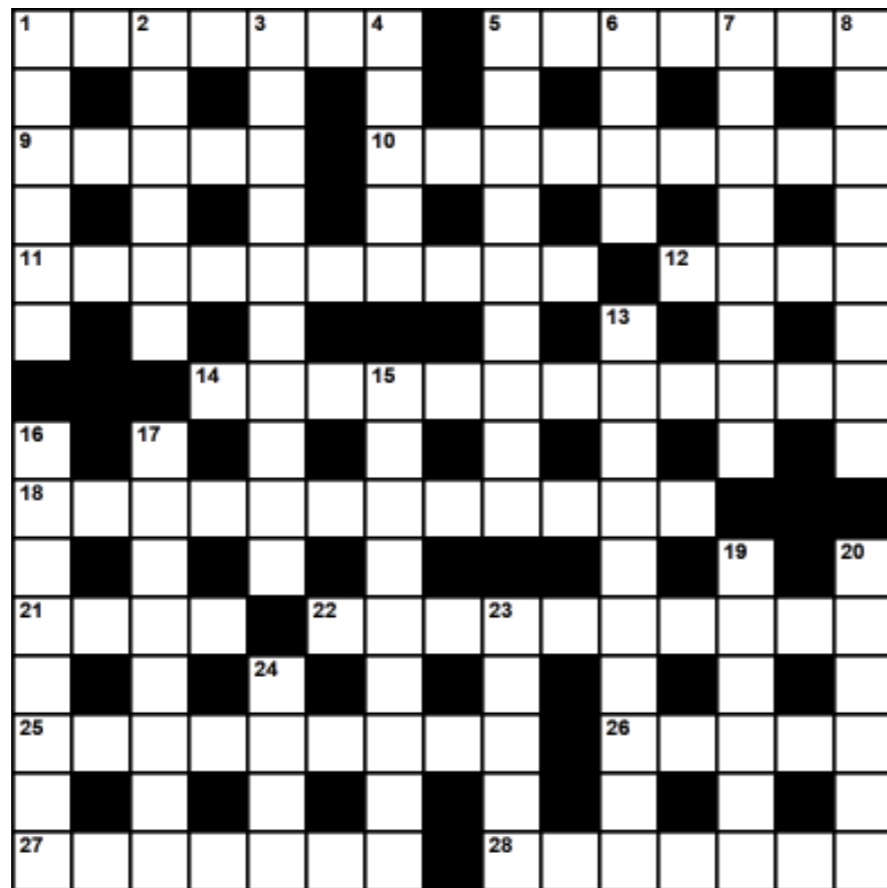
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Cryptic Crossword



Across

- 1/16 23 down Calibrate remold on 2 May (7,8)
 5 Wrath at scattered across (7)
 9 Food wrapped up in fibre admitted flour (5)
 10 Radio active element put in menu (9)
 11 Revered sun is available (10)
 12 European recording of register (4)
 14 Veronica Vest surprisingly is a member of Cameron's 23 down (12)
 18 Men snatch e'en assembly to improve things (12)
 21 Probability disputed over days deciding solutions initially (4)
 22 Eldorado was a rival soap arranged in Spain (10)
 25 Ponderers otherwise turn up (9)
 26 Shanghai olive split by garlic mayo (5)
 27 Catch American Z seen in circus (7)
 28 Reportedly the colour of urine (7)

Down

- 1 Work as a 23 down (6)
 2 Barely confused and indistinct (6)
 3 Crazy reductions are further reduced (10)
 4 Ulnar broken and reset by the moon (5)
 5 Petrel ape rigged cox (5-4)
 6 Drag apostle Ph exchanged (4)
 7 I disco as bizarrely the blood reaches abnormal limits (8)
 8 Appropriate cry of publican to Lear at eleven (8)
 13 Everyone under rags in racing enclosure (10)
 15 Hasty flight when elks added drama (9)
 16 See 1 Across
 17 Or he said awkwardly it was old Zimbabwe (8)
 19 Rio gov organises Australian women's game (6)
 20 A document of endless force on axis (6)
 23 Political do (5)
 24 Finally Slav eco unit choose on May 2nd (4)

Alphabet Quiz

A simple twenty question quiz, but all the answers begin with the letter R.



- Who is this singer?
- What is the name of this flag flown by British merchant or passenger ships?
- What is the name of this flag?
- Found in North Oxfordshire, what is the name of these stones?
- Who is this singer?
- What is the informal name for a military policeman?
- Which twins, according to legend founded Rome?
- Which author has also written under the name Barbara Vine?
- What is the name of Thom York's band?
- What is the most common pub name in England?
- Jim Carey played which Batman villain?
- Transylvania is in which European country?
- Which famous Yorkshire triangle is named after the plant, often used in pies, that is grown there?
- Which bear lived at Nutwood?
- In which local village will you find the Royal Oak?
- Leo McKern played which barrister in the TV series created by John Mortimer?
- Which island in the Inner Hebrides shares its name with an alcoholic drink?
- The name of which weapon is also the name of a Beatles' album?
- What was the nickname of Robert Macgregor a Scottish outlaw?
- In Greek mythology who was the mother of the gods?

Answers on page 27.

Compiled by Andrew Long



Q. How does a tree feel when it's finally Spring?
 A. It feels releaf

Q. How does a bee brush its hair?
 A. With a honeycomb

Q. Why is the letter A like a flower?
 A. Because a Bee comes after it

Q. What do you call a bear caught in a shower?
 A. A drizzly bear



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330	20.00	L & J Harris
52	10.00	G. Dubbin
361	10.00	K. Glaister
267	5.00	A. Long
80	5.00	A. Childs
271	5.00	C. Lawson

April Draw 2024

No.	£	Name
28	40.00	C. O'Brien
233	30.00	S. Sparrowhawk
157	20.00	R. La Forte
379	10.00	D & E Hughes
325	10.00	L & F Tattersall
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WEST OX ARTS

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Exhibition starts on
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Informal Art Group

On the first Tuesday of every month the Art Group meets. It really is an informal group with people getting on with whatever they want. There is a fairly wide range of pursuits. Sketching, water colour and acrylic are popular, but sometimes people pop in for a chat or even bring their knitting!

Being together with others who are engaged in something creative is encouraging. There is always plenty of support available.

Occasionally we have someone to demonstrate a particular skill, but more often people bring in something to work on which they have already started. We have occasionally been out painting and enjoyed a visit to Buscot Park.

It is a small, friendly group, but with no fixed membership. Usually there are about ten "artists" at work! We next meet on Tuesday 4th June 2.30 at the Fellowship Centre. Why not join us? For further details contact Andrew Long 01993850271 or email ag.long @btinternet.com

Coffee Morning for Besom and CAP

On Saturday 9th March the Community Church hosted the second of our fundraising coffee mornings at the Fellowship Centre. We were delighted with a really good turnout of people from the village and beyond, and there was a happy, buzzy atmosphere, as we enjoyed some excellent cakes, scones and drinks!

This time we were raising money for two charities with strong local branches, both committed to alleviating poverty.

The Besom in Witney is the local branch of a national charity which aims 'to act as a bridge between those who want to give and those who are in need'. Liaising closely with social services and other care-providers, Besom collects unwanted, but good quality, items of household furniture and distributes them to those who need them. It also provides food parcels and other essential household goods to families and individuals in need.

CAP (Christians Against Poverty) also has its local branch (or CAP Debt Centre) in Witney. CAP aims to help those in debt to escape from the trap of poverty and provides both professional debt management and a range of life-skills and other programmes of support, with a vision of lifting people out of poverty on a permanent basis.

We were very pleased to be able to raise a total of £700 from the coffee morning, which has been split equally between the two charities. The funds were gratefully received, so a big thank you not only to those who organised the morning but to all who came along, paid your money and ate the cakes!

Az Hobbs from Witney CAP says: 'Do please pass on our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all those who organized the coffee morning, we feel very blessed as your local CAP debt centre.' And Ernie Gascoigne from Witney Besom says: 'On behalf of the Besom in Witney, I'd like to thank you and your team at Aston & Cote Community Church for organising the coffee morning which resulted in your very generous donation.'

Alastair Barnett



Coffee Morning Fundraiser

Sylvia Brown

Some of you will remember Sylvia as the milk lady, travelling over the hills in all weathers to bring milk etc to the village. Some even remember her from Hailey when you collected Christmas turkeys. Many will have come across her at various village organisations. Unfortunately, Sylvia has left the village due to ill health.

Before moving to live in the village Sylv had already joined the WI. Once here she threw herself into village life. Joining most groups. She helped at Wednesday club, eventually taking over running it. She organised coffee mornings to raise funds for the Nuffield hospital and Wednesday club. The list goes on ACTS, History group, the fete, the church and community trust have all benefitted from her attention, I gather her raffle organisation skills have already been missed by ACTS.

The Community Trust has always been close to Sylvias heart. Over many years she ran folk evenings with all proceeds going to the hall or whatever project we were running at the time. Over the years these have raised many thousands of pounds. Another thing she took on was collecting 500 club subscriptions and tombola prizes for the fete, going door to door along Cote Road.

Sylvia you have been a stalwart of village life and you are being missed. Thank you for all you have done for the village.

Carolyn Simmonds

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Aston and Cote Day Centre

It has been an incredibly busy time at the Day Centre since the last publication of Voices. The programme for every Wednesday is fully booked up until the autumn. We have speakers invited in, equipment demonstrations, musicians coming to entertain us, and regular art and craft afternoons and of course our regular bingo sessions and raffle. There is "in house" music and general knowledge team quizzes and team boccia, bowling and curling, so lots to look forward to.



I have enclosed a photo taken recently which show us all during an art and craft afternoon, you will see we were all busy making bird feeders which can then be used at home. Everyone joined in and helped one another which was great.

If you are over 65 and are interested in joining us every week you would be most welcome. The first visit is always free, just get in touch so that we can arrange a visit. Likewise, if you know of someone that would enjoy this very social, safe place every Wednesday do get in touch.

None of this would be possible every week without our fantastic team of volunteers, and we are always looking for more volunteers to join us either for just a couple of hours for the morning shift or a couple of hours for the afternoon shift or for the full day, please contact Karen on 07887974468 or email: target.meukmail.com for more details. We provide a free meal and access to an Award-Winning online learning facility (not obligatory), also a discount card scheme.

More details can be found on our Facebook page and on our website: Aston & Cote Day Centre.
 Stay Safe. Onwards and Upwards

Karen Stay

What's on in Bampton

70 Years of 'Chariot' Racing in Bampton!



Come and support the 'SPAJERS Shirt Race 2024' on Bank Holiday Saturday 25th May. You can either take part or just come and watch the fantastic spectacle of homemade contraptions whizzing around the village of Bampton!

If you would like to take part then there are three categories of entry: Junior (10 and under), Intermediate (11-17) and Adults (18+).

Fancy Dress Judging starts at 5.30pm and the first race begins at 6pm. This great traditional event has been running for 70 years!!

About SPAJERS - Founded in the Coronation year of 1953 this local charity has been organising events for Bampton and Lew ever since. Famed for the Shirt Race, the Donkey Derby, Firework displays and Josie's Draw, these events have brought fun and enjoyment to the villagers whilst also raising money to help our elderly residents.

Please help to support us by buying Raffle Tickets on sale outside the Co-op (Saturdays 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th May) 9am until 1pm.

Use this QR code if you wish to download an application form to participate in the Shirt Race.



Summer Holidays

L H L S A E K A L W I N D B R E A K E M
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 L A S L N E S S K S S I K L I L N H L S
 E H L F P N O A O L S C C O O R A E I I
 Y E N M U A A N F F E R R Y S N H P C N
 B C E S R C E D R D E H O I L F S L E B
 A T E H C C C C O B N L C N O L I L C W
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 R S O K H L O T I C H R R S K K I H A P
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 R I O S T N N E N B F E A A O E U A C G
 A L S H E L L S E A S N K N R A C D H S
 A S O A L N K N F L B U D N A K F E T P
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SUNSHINE	TEMPERATURE	VOLLEYBALL	WINDBREAK

ASTON & COTE ALLOTMENTS

Hello All,

Aston & Cote allotments share around 70 plots between them. We currently have a few plots available in Aston & Cote. This is a very rare occasion, so grab this opportunity to get your allotment started.

Plot-holders are part of a community of like-minded people, many of whom are eager to share their knowledge & sometimes their spare produce.

Most plots are only £11 a year and of a good size.

If anyone would like an allotment in either Aston or Cote please contact Claire at acallotments@gmail.com

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www.astonoxon-pc.gov.uk



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My Easter holiday Flower Fundraiser

(dictated by Simmy)

It started with me asking to do Buttercorn Press cookies and pizza, but we have pets in our kitchen and can't do this! My perfect idea is to have a factory to sell everything I want. I'd like to change the world so I can have all my dreams come true. A bit like Willy Wonka's factory.

Second, I had another idea! To sell pretty flowers as flowers make people happy. Mum said I could do something to raise money for a charity. I love going to the Yellow Submarine so I chose this one.

We ordered lots of jars and ribbon from Hobbycraft and watched some videos on Youtube of how to make hand tied posies. We went to Bampton Garden Centre to buy gardening gloves. Mine are purple. On Tuesday we went to a flower farmer in Carswell. She gave us tulips, hellebores and lots of foliage and we did some foraging in



Granny's garden at the weekend! We also bought some roses.

We pretended our kitchen was a factory. I tied ribbons on the jars and it was like a conveyor belt in my factory. I used a funnel and a jug of water to fill the jars for the flowers. Next time I want to use a water blaster! I was a bit nervous of the prickly stems. I chose the flowers and mum made the posy then I tied the string. Next time I would like a robot to do the string! I pretended my hands were robot hands to put the posies in the jars!

I liked delivering them to people's houses but it started to rain and I don't like going in the rain. I think I need a big shield umbrella for next time.

I feel proud as I raised over £100 for Yellow Submarine and, lucky me, I was allowed Dominos pizza for tea for my hard work with my Lings family. We think we might do some more flowers another day, but (addition by mum) mum needs to get over this one first!

Simmy and Netty Lings



Gavin's tea break?

Thirsty work for a Bishop. Gavin, Bishop of Dorchester (Oxfordshire) visited St. James Church, Aston on 7th April 2024 to perform his role as area bishop. He was assisted with his duty by Miles, our curate, recently promoted to a vicar and soon to be posted with his wife (also a vicar) to Devon. The proceedings were supervised by the Reverend Janice Collier from Bampton (Lots of dog collars!)



His task was to confirm by means of a simple ceremony, Sarah, Maddy, Lesley, Lizzie and Mia into the faith of the Church of England. This is the next step after being baptised. Gavin's title refers to the area in Oxfordshire that he oversees and he is one of four bishops for our county.

At school he set his sights on being a lawyer and at university studied for a law degree and became a solicitor. After a few years he decided to enter the Church as a vocation, but he had to be confirmed in order to gain entry to a theological college. In a bit of a rush to secure this qualification he found that there was only one place available to him, to achieve this – Wormwood Scrubs (male prison). He duly lined up with other prisoners, to be confirmed.

Working as a vicar he was elevated to Arch Deacon. This is a bishop's right-hand person and he spent ten years in this role, in the area of West Meon, Hampshire.

Promoted to bishop, he described it as a good job as you pass all the 'stuff' you don't want to do to your Arch Deacon, and you get out and meet people. Married with two sons, he lives in Kidlington and one of his hobbies is cycling. During Covid, and not allowed to travel abroad, he and his eldest son undertook to cycle from Lands' End to John O'Groats, supported by wife in a camper van.

Gavin tucked into the Victoria Sponge and another cup of tea and chatted with the congregation made up of families and friends. I last heard of him abseiling down the side of Winchester cathedral for charity.

It was God's house!

Lizzie Wood

COMBE MILL
 Come to our steaming events with all machinery running. Market stalls to explore with refreshments galore from our BBQ and bus room. We welcome bookings from local groups and schools. Why not book the bus room for your next family party.

Coming up events.....
 16th June - In Steam themed event: Environmental Day
 16th July - In Steam themed event: Wildlife by the Riverside
 Invited exhibitors will bring along displays and information for the public.
 Combe Mill, a late 19th Century Restored Water Mill on the Clarendon Palace Estate situated by the River Ewer side. With all machinery running and volunteers on hand for questions. See the Blacksmith in the large and main colour.
 Tea room will be open, BBQ, Gift Shop, Barista and Patisserie. Dogs on Leads most welcome.
 Adults £9.00, Seniors £7.00, accompanied Children FREE. Open 10.30am to 5.00pm

Steaming events 10.30am - 5.00pm. Please visit our website for details and pricing. The Mill is also open but NOT IN STEAM over weekends 10.30am - 4.30pm from March 22 until the end of October.

www.combemill.org FREE PARKING

Andrew Long – Chair and Editor (Content)
 Helen Wheaton – Editor (Technical)
 Ian Peat – Treasurer
 Martin Bowley – Secretary and Lay Up
 Tom England – Lay Up
 Liz Harper – Advertising and Distribution
 Lizzie Wood
 Brenda Smith



Thanks to our printers The Flying Press Ltd
 Unit 15, Glenmore Business Centre, Range Rd, Witney OX29 0AA
 Thanks also to the distribution team and
 Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council for their grant

Vicky's After School Club

We offer before and after school care at Aston & Cote Primary School. We provide lots of fun activities in a safe and nurturing environment.

Breakfast club opens at 7.40am
After school club 3.10 - 5.10pm
Monday - Friday

We also run a holiday club in the school holidays open from 8.30am - 5.00pm

For more information visit our website:
 www.vickysafterschoolclub.co.uk

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All proceeds supporting groups and organisations in the local community

Poetry

Poetry writing is a hobby many people enjoy, myself included. The finished, or more likely unfinished, pieces are not always for publication. They may be something personal, giving the writer a way of recording their feelings at the time or about a certain subject.

I think of poetry as being on a par with song writing. Many lyrics also work as poems and strike a chord with the listener in the same way as a poem read out may be very emotive.

The practise of learning poems by heart seems to have gone out of fashion but I expect many of the older readers can quote lines from poems they learnt as children.

I once set myself the task of learning the Kubla Khan by Coleridge. The form is iambic pentameter – I remember that from my English Literature 'A' level. I can only quote the first eight lines - there are over 50 ! Maybe I should get back to learning the rest.

Here are some submissions for this editions 'Hobbies Corner'. Enjoy

Helen Wheaton



Maureen Langford photo competition entry

Magnificent magnolia

*Magnificent magnolia
Arrayed in pink and white
Blooms displayed in splendour
A perfect Springtime sight
Petals that were hidden
In buds so tightly closed
Radiant in the sunshine
Their beauty here exposed
All too soon they'll fade and fall
Scattered far and wide
Leaving just a memory
For us to hold inside*

Peter Gibbs

If I were a clever girl

*If I were a clever girl,
life would be a breeze.
I wouldn't have to think so hard,
before I have a sneeze.*

*If I were a clever girl,
I wouldn't have to struggle,
to do the crossword daily,
with head all in a muddle.*

HOBBIES — CORNER —

Dad – My Hero !

*Who is the Dad-est of all Dads,
The Best-est of all men?
For all he is and does, he scores
Eleven out of ten!*

*A giant in the world of art,
A legend in all sports,
A writer, sailor, craftsman, friend,
Man of profoundest thoughts!*

*Theories of Relativity
Sprang from intellect immense,
But Dad makes Albert Einstein
Appear relatively dense.*

*When Shakespeare wrote his sonnets
And penned his famous plays,
He could not know that Dad's emails
Would merit greater praise.*

*For fine art, think on Turner,
Michaelangelo, Monet,
But with roller and emulsion,
My Dad puts them in the shade.*

*Of Gordon Ramsay, Delia Smith,
And Jamie some might sing;
But give my Dad a barbecue
And he of chefs is king.*

*Dad doesn't practice putting'
Cos, although he plays for fun,
Every time he hits a golf ball
He records a hole in one.*

*O greatest of all heroes,
Whom I now lionize,
There's not a word of truth in this;
It's just a pack of lies!*

*It's utter, utter rubbish, but
Here's something that is true;
Of all the Dads in all the world,
I'm glad that I chose You!*

Derek Bownds

*If I were a clever girl,
sums would be so easy.
I wouldn't have to burn my brain,
and get all hot and wheezy.*

*If I were a clever girl,
I'd do amazing things.
Like take a PhD in maths
and fraternise with Kings !*

Jenny Mills

Diary

May
Thursday 30th
History Group
Visit to the Bodleian Library

June
Tuesday 4th
Informal Art Group
2.30
Fellowship Centre

Tuesday 11th
Parish Council
7.30 Village Hall

Wednesday 12th
W.I.
Morning visit to
Ardley Recycling Centre

Thursday 27th
History Group
Trench Humour in the
First World War
Steven Barker
7.30 Fellowship Centre

July
Tuesday 2nd
Informal Art Group
2.30
Fellowship Centre

Thursday 4th
Parish Council
7.30 Village Hall

Wednesday 12th
W.I.
"Alpacas and their Fluff"
Jane Abbott
7.30 Village Hall

Taking place every week

Mondays
Toddlers
9.00 – 11.00
Fellowship Centre

Mondays
Brownies
6.00 – 7.30
Fellowship Centre

Wednesdays
Day Centre
10.00 – 3.00pm
Fellowship Centre

Thursdays
Badminton
7.30 – 9.15pm
Village Hall

..... Church Services.....

St James', Aston



Aston and Cote
Community Church at
the Fellowship Centre

Service Pattern
First Sunday
9.30am St James', Aston
Holy Communion

Second Sunday
9.15am St Mary's, Shifford
Holy Communion
9.30am St James', Aston
Family Service

Third Sunday
9.30am St James', Aston
Holy Communion
6.00pm St Mary's, Shifford
Evensong*

Fourth Sunday
9.30am St James' Aston
Family Service

*From April to September
inclusively only

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Saturday 08:30 – 14:00
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09:00 – 12:00

Post Office

Opening Hours:

Monday 09:30 – 12:30
Wednesday 09:30 – 12:30
Friday 09:30 – 12:30

Alphabet Quiz answers

1. . Rihanna. 2. Red Duster or Red Ensign. 3. The Jolly Roger. 4. The Rollright Stones. 5. Rag'n'Bone Man. 6. A Red cap. 7. Romulus and Remus. 8. Ruth Rendall. 9. Radiohead. 10. The Red Lion. 11. The Riddler. 12. Romania. 13. The Rhubarb Triangle. 14. Rupert. 15. Ramsden. 16. Rumpole. 17. Rum. 18. Revolver. 19. Rob Roy. 20. Rhea.

Where in the parish

On the wall of Hurdle Cottage /
Number 1 Bull Street

All meetings start at 10.00am and are followed by hot drinks and refreshments. Services involve a time of worship (singing and prayers), followed by a talk. There are special children's activities (Sunday School) during the talk, except for Family Services, where the children stay throughout and the activities are inclusive of all ages.

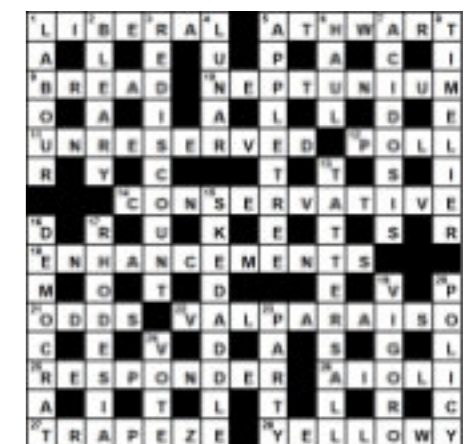
Our talks after Easter are based on the theme of 'Return, Restore and Rebuild', looking at what some of the less familiar books of the Bible, written towards the end of the Old Testament era.

Contact Alastair Barnett on
alastairb@rootsanddrivers.uk for more
details, or visit our website at [https://
astoncotecc.org.uk/](https://astoncotecc.org.uk/)

Date

12 May Worship, talk, children's group
19 May Worship, talk, children's group
26 May Family Service
2 June Worship, talk, children's group
9 June NO MEETING in Aston -
Celebration service in Oxford
at 10.30am
16 June Worship, talk, children's group
23 June Worship, talk, children's group
30 June Worship, talk, children's group
7 July Worship, talk, children's group
14 July Worship, talk, children's group

Crossword answers



ASTON Community SHOP



Aston Community Shop underwent a refurbishment program in June 2020 re-opening on August Bank Holiday Monday as the Aston Community Shop. It is run by a **Community Interest Company** and staffed by volunteers. This makes it an affordable enterprise in the village and allows it to keep the pricing competitive.

We offer a wide range of groceries, drinks and household essentials, together with a fresh coffee machine, ice creams, greetings cards, fresh fruit and vegetables, frozen goods and dairy products.

We also stock locally made Patrick Strainge bacon, sausages and meat products.

Why not come and visit us next time you are in Aston?

Form an orderly queue !

Run by volunteers the shop has become a hub for the local community

We are now seeking more volunteers to help staff the village shop, if you would like further information please call in and pick up a recruitment form.

Alternatively send your details to: acs@astoncommunityshop.co.uk with the subject line 'Recruitment'

The Square, Aston. 01993 850441

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Thurs - Fri 08:30 - 17:00

Saturday 08:30 - 12:30

Sunday 09:00 - 12:30

Post Office Hours:

Monday, Wednesday and

Friday 09:30 - 12:30

Wheelchair Ramp Available

Thank you to all our loyal customers, however, we still want more!

If you haven't used the shop before, please call in.

We think you'll be pleasantly surprised.

Need something we don't stock?

We are always open to suggestions, just ask.