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## Voices

on-line

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Dear Editors,

Kathy McLachlan  
Born 1955 – Died 2021

Kathy and I moved to Aston 37 years ago and brought up our two children. Along with many Aston residents we like village life and would not like a town one. Following a fall down stairs last November 2020 she damaged her head and it did not heal well. After three months she had lost the use of her legs and had other problems. On Thursday 28th January medics were called and she was taken to the JR trauma unit. I was not allowed to go due to Covid 19. Her heart gave out on Saturday 30th January. I would like to thank all relatives and friends for their kind wishes and verbal help. It is very lonely at home and I miss her.

*Don McLachlan*

Dear Editors

I know how challenging 2020 was for all of us and that, in some ways, 2021 feels all too familiar. However, though we may be in lockdown now, there is light at the end of the tunnel. With three vaccines now approved for use in the UK, including our own local Oxford/AstraZeneca jab, we are now well on the way to vaccinating our top four priority groups in record time. At the time of writing, over 10 million people have been vaccinated and this grows every day. This is a hugely significant achievement which is testament to the inspirational leadership that has been shown by local NHS organisations', GPs and health coordinators. This, along with longer days, lighter evenings and the beginning of a beautiful West Oxfordshire spring is sure to lift spirits in this challenging time.

I have seen the excellent work of everyone at our local vaccination hubs for myself. The professionalism and efficiency they are showing is proving everyone's dedication to this vital cause. I am also encouraged that so many people across West Oxon are taking up the vaccine when offered. It is this dedication and resolve which speaks to me in these challenging times and shows me that we will overcome this.

We are also once again seeing the huge outpouring of community spirit and good will that warmed us all in 2020. I would encourage everyone to check in on family, friends and neighbours, particularly those who may live alone, the vulnerable and those separated from their loved ones. Sometimes even just a phone call can do the world of good.

My team and I continue to work hard from home on your behalf and we remain accessible throughout lockdown. Please do not hesitate to get in touch at [robert@robertcourts.co.uk](mailto:robert@robertcourts.co.uk) if there is anything at all we can do.

*Robert Courts MP*

## Editorial

The lockdown and the vaccination programme should mean a return to some sort of normality. But it is too soon to say if, when and how village organizations will reopen. Many people in the parish have been involved in the vaccination roll out and we feature one volunteer, Sharron Keen, on the front page. Our thanks go to Sharron and all those who have helped in this most important work.

Borscht Soup, courtesy of Monica Read is featured in this edition. Monica joins our team of regular contributors and we look forward to discovering more delights from her High Street kitchen. Not to be outdone Brenda Smith has written an article for foodies, but her article is entitled Kitchen Disasters!



We are still looking for a crossword compiler. We only need a crossword for every other edition which is three per year- It could be you!

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*Editors Richard Haines and Andrew Long*

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## Sport and Recreation in Aston and Cote:

Thank you for your views

Thank you to those who contacted us via email or commented on our Facebook posts to share your views on the future of sport and recreation in Aston and Cote. We received some great ideas and insights, which were discussed by Aston and Cote Community Trust (ACCT) on 17th February. Based on the results of the current consultation, and the historical vote by the community to raise money for a multi-use games area (MUGA) through the parish council precept, the committee decided in principle to proceed with installation of a MUGA at the village hall site, subject to further exploration of suitability, sustainability and of course, available budget. Most comments mentioned sports that can be played on a MUGA, while a running track and bike park were also popular; these ideas will be considered for incorporation into the strategic plan for future development of the village hall site.

Planning will now begin in earnest and we hope to have the MUGA in place during 2022-23. We'll be reaching out to those who have built and run similar facilities in Cassington, Freeland and Marcham (see photo) to ask for their advice – thank you to those who highlighted these sites. While the current consultation is now closed, we



*The Marcham MUGA*

are always open to views and ideas, and we're looking for volunteers to join the MUGA team to help deliver this project for the community (no experience necessary) – please do get in touch. As we head into spring, ACCT will focus on the safe reopening of the village hall and recreation grounds in accordance with government guidelines, and prioritise projects that were stalled by the pandemic – including essential work on the village hall, removal of the old playground, parking and completion of the area around the young children's playground. We look forward to welcoming everyone back in the coming months.

*Paul Farrow on behalf of Aston and Cote Community Trust*

## 1st Aston Brownies.

The Unit is now well into the Spring Term and the weekly meetings continue to be held from 6 till 7.30 every Monday via Zoom. Although quite challenging on Zoom we have virtually all of the unit joining the meetings every Monday and the feedback that we are getting from those attending



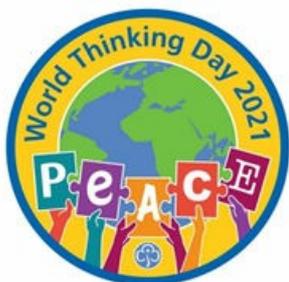
the meetings is that they are really enjoying themselves. We are also adapting the Badge Programme, so that we can continue working through the various Skills Builders, towards the different badges that the girls are working on. We recently celebrated World Thinking Day, which is one of the most important days in the guiding calendar, which is a celebration of ten million girls worldwide that has taken place on every 22nd, February, since 1926. It remains a day for all guides and girl scouts to think of each other and celebrate their sisters all around the world. Once we are all back together face to face we will return

to this and have a big celebration all together.

The Unit is always in a position to welcome enquiries for new girls to join, for more details please get in touch with me, Karen on 07887974468 or [karenthegardener123@gmail.com](mailto:karenthegardener123@gmail.com)

Stay safe,

*Karen Stay, Brownie Leader*



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## Astonbury Festival 20/21/22 August 2021

So, following Boris's latest announcement it looks like we should be able to finally have our first village music festival! It has been a long time coming.... We have lots of exciting news for you all.

Firstly, the festival is now three days instead of two. Secondly, we are making the third day a Tribute Band/Artist day. We have already booked Fleetwood Mac (the world's best Fleetwood Mac Tribute Band according to Mick Fleetwood) as the headliner for Sunday and have also booked Simply Dylan, The Unravelling Willburys along with the Julie July Band and the Britpop Boys. See website links for further info on the bands, more to follow!

Please have a look at the website for further information [www.astonbury-festival.co.uk](http://www.astonbury-festival.co.uk). First tier tickets are available and will shortly be available at various local places including the garage and the village community shop. Also, we are having some initial discussions and consultations with Aston Fete Committee members, on the possibility of incorporating Aston and Cote Village Fete into the Festival on the Saturday. This, like the Festival would rely on volunteers helping to organise so if you are interested please email Nick Angus [nickangus@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nickangus@hotmail.co.uk). Pending further discussion, we should have some news on this by the next edition of Voices.

We really need some more volunteers to work at and just before/just after the festival. No experience necessary but if you have some, all the better. We need volunteers for site build, box office, stage monitoring, bar work and general assistance. If you volunteer, in return for a three hour shift each day you get a free weekend ticket to the Festival! If you do site build/get out, you can just work your shifts before and after the festival and have the weekend free to enjoy the Festival. Please email [volunteers@astonbury-festival.co.uk](mailto:volunteers@astonbury-festival.co.uk)

If anyone in the village or locally has a business and wishes to have a trade stall at the Festival, please email [traders@astonbury-festival.co.uk](mailto:traders@astonbury-festival.co.uk)

We all need a good party after all the lockdown and COVID situation so please support the festival which is in aid of the Community Trust, Cancer Research and MIND Mental Health Charity in any way you can.

*The Directors*

*Astonbury Festival Community Interest Company Ltd*

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## An Exciting New Business

One good thing to come out of lockdown has been the opening of a new local business – Secret Garden Events. Local ladies Natalie and Natalie took the plunge in late July 2020 after coming up with a birthday party idea for one of their daughters. Secret Garden Events is an event planning business offering sleepovers and parties in back gardens and houses. The organisers will decorate bell tents in your garden, teepees in your living room and they even decorated our shop window at Christmas.

Natalie (A) still runs her travel business which has obviously taken a huge hit because of the pandemic and Natalie (S) has continued to work in the neonatal unit at the JR throughout. Together they formed an events business and it has been a huge success.

“This venture is a real passion; we love socialising ourselves and we take a lot of pride in the spaces and parties we create for other people. Making people smile, especially children who have had their lives turned upside down this last year has been a real joy: When we collect the next day, we love to hear what a success the party has been.

Seven months in and we have set up nearly 50 parties in people’s own homes and gardens for families in lockdown (within their own bubbles).

We try to use local talent as much as we can. Gavin Buxton has made a lot of our wooden tables for us, Kates Cakery supplies her amazing cupcakes and celebration cakes and we use the Cotswold Balloon company for any balloon arrangements. We love to support other local businesses where we can and invite anyone that wishes to work with us to get in touch.



*Bell Tent Beauty*



*Unicorn Tipi*

When the bell tent season came to an end in October 2020, we made the decision to offer parties indoors using wooden teepees, this proved extremely popular, especially our Halloween and Christmas themed sleepovers. As restrictions tightened further, we had to adapt quickly to be able to stay open. We decided to offer DIY set ups to families looking to make birthdays a special celebration still. Our most popular themes have been Unicorn, Gaming and Football.

Hopefully now as things ease slowly, we can continue to adapt with the ever-evolving situation and offer party packages for families in and out of lockdown.

We are excited about the bell tent season coming back in March and we hope as more and more of us can get together, we can throw even bigger parties. We have added another tent this year, ordered more tables for indoor and outdoor picnics and plan to add a new woodland theme to our indoor set up (launching soon)”. If you are looking to arrange your next special occasion you can get in touch with the Natalies at [info@secretgardenevents.org](mailto:info@secretgardenevents.org)



*Graze Princess*

Lizzie Woods

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## Gardening Notes

It's lovely to have a break in the weather after the big freeze, but don't be fooled there's plenty of time for more cold weather!

It's good to get into the garden for a brief tidy up – pruning buddleia back quite hard to a framework and two buds. Finish pruning your roses if you haven't already – have a good open framework for hybrid teas and floribundas to allow air into the middle of the bush – leave shoots on the outside so they spread outwards. Climbers should be on a frame against a wall or fence like a hand outstretched with spread fingers. A good feed of rose fertilizer around rose stems (not too close) will give them a boost, to produce growth and most importantly, flowers.

I have been very pleased with my potted amaryllis this winter – large bulbs available around November and Christmas – both my bulbs produced huge spikes of four or five flowers and now are growing a second spike of another four flowers each – very good value.

Clematis may need a tidy to prune away excess growth, which may be wind blown and messy. Prune back to two strong buds about two feet from the ground. Make sure you tie in new growths as they come (they are very brittle so be careful) to give good support on its framework – be it another shrub or a wigwam of trellis. In the case of Clematis Montana, this may need a bigger haircut, as it can end up looking like a hair mattress.

If you have any forced bulbs, such as daffodils or crocus and hyacinth – these can be planted out in the garden (allow foliage to die back first) in a quiet corner, and they should come again next year.

I have been enjoying my crocus, very welcome after the freeze, Thomasianus which seeds easily and will gradually spread over your lawn. Snowdrops, always early, can be lifted after flowering “in the green” and spread about – preferably under shrubs or woody places, and so cool in summer – they don't like hot and dry, so think where it is shady later in the year – they love leaf mouldy places!

### *Goldfinch*



*Crocus will gradually spread over your lawn*

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## Looking Backwards and Forwards

In a year of very little travel it's always with mixed emotions you find yourself viewing a memory on Facebook. Foreign travel seems such a dream now. However that happened when photos from our trip to Australia, which we were lucky enough to squeeze in last March, came back to remind us.

An early flight from Melbourne gave us our first sight of Uluru as we flew over a vast expanse of red emptiness. Our experience was to start the following morning with an opportunity to view the sunrise over this incredible creation. From staring into darkness and then slowly realising colours were forming, shapes appearing, our eyes widened as we were held in awe at the site of this strange rock formation. Soon, in its full glory of reds and oranges the day had dawned and a dash of a rainbow appeared to make it even more spectacular.



*Kirsty and Trevor atop Sydney Bridge*

It was not only the start of the day that was wonderful, but its end too, with a Sounds of Silence Dinner, which was really memorable. Who could have imagined that you could have a delicious four course meal, sitting at white, linen-covered tables in the middle of nowhere? The aim of the evening was to watch the sun set, listen to traditional music and just be in this magical place. One can only guess at the powers and forces felt by indigenous people over the centuries but as the lights were turned off at the end of the meal and we were enveloped in the darkness you could feel the silence surround you. Not frightening but just a sense of being. In contrast a very different memory came from the buzz and excitement of Sydney and the large, structure dominating all harbour views. Yes, we were climbing The Bridge!

Excitement built as we dressed – boiler suit, harness, hat, raincoat and headphones all clipped on for safety reasons. There were very strict rules to obey – no taking phones, cameras or even your own tissue – hankies were provided- as long as they were clipped on. It's was lovely sunny day so we didn't need the raincoats. We began the slow ascent by squeezing between girders and viewed the amazing harbour and the rain clouds sweeping in. Within minutes we were in horizontal rain so heavy it soaked us through to our pants despite the raincoats. Sometimes rain is so heavy all you can do is laugh –so laugh we did. Slowly, like our climb the rain clouds passed and bit by bit, as we got to 'the summit', the sun shone again and the sky cleared to show us the amazing sight of the Harbour and the Opera House of course. What a privilege to be able to do something like that and tick a bucket list item.

So yes, when Facebook throws more holiday memories at us I will enjoy looking back and with growing hope look forwards again to more travels.

*Kirsty Jackson*

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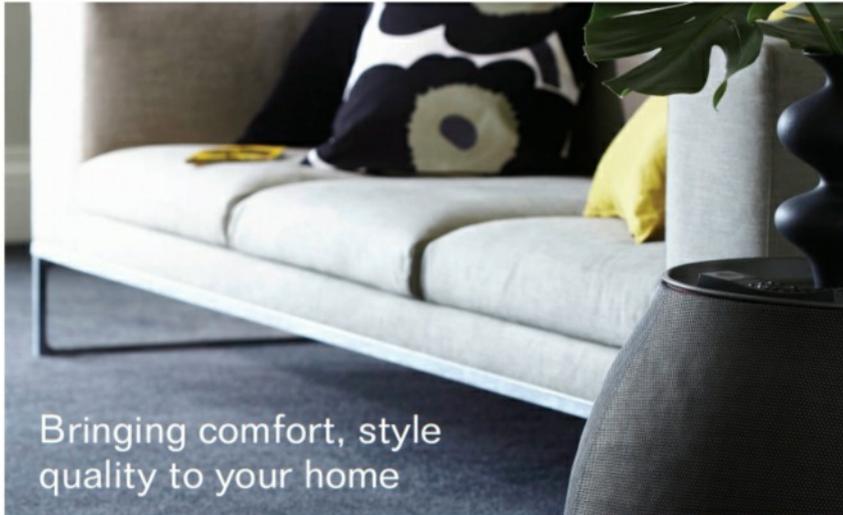
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## Have You had Your Vaccination Yet?



Most of us old folk have, at the time of writing, had their first vaccination, hopefully without suffering any associated side effects. I know of nobody who has declined the opportunity to be vaccinated, and I hope that that is a true assessment of the situation. It behoves us all to receive the vaccine, where possible, if this virus is to be controlled.

The whole process was, in my experience, carried out with commendable efficiency and simplicity at Carterton Health Centre, thanks to the way in which the medical staff- and the volunteers- went about their tasks. Everybody and everything were kept on the move, in an orderly but not overbearing fashion, and this made the whole experience very acceptable.

It was nice to see Dr Uden there (I understand that Dr Ward has been there at other times) generally overseeing the whole process, making sure that we were all well looked after and, when the opportunity arose, engaging us in pleasant conversation. For most of us, it was probably the first time we had been out of the Parish for some time, and it was nice to see familiar countryside again, and note the few changes which had taken place. So it made for a pleasant afternoon out, comparatively speaking.

By the time this issue of Voices is delivered to our homes, many more people will have received their first vaccination. It is to be hoped that the number of new daily cases, as well as the admissions to hospitals and deaths, will have continued to fall. All in all, the future (at the time of writing) appears to be much brighter, and this will hopefully lead to the proposed relaxation of the restrictions being introduced at the planned times.

*Robert Jones*

## Recipe

### Borscht Soup

A soup for which there are dozens of different recipes. There are beetroot soups made right across Northern and Eastern Europe and right into Russia, so feel free to play around with this recipe. Borscht is often served as a chunky soup or maybe smooth with a spoon of soured cream.

Your wooden spoons may never come back from cooking this vivid dish! Wear gloves to prevent your hands from becoming pink if you have any job interviews coming up!

**Ingredients.** Serves 4.

A knob of butter or margarine

Tsp vegetable oil

350 gms beetroot peeled and chopped.

2 small onions/or 2 small leeks – white part only, chopped

1 parsnip, peeled and chopped

1-2 sticks celery, chopped

1-2 carrots, chopped

1 medium potato, diced

2 tbsp tomato purée

1 tsp sugar

1 ltr hot stock

1-3 cloves garlic, crushed

1 bay leaf

1 pinch allspice

1 tbsp cider vinegar

½ tbsp lemon juice

Fresh ground pepper

To serve: soured cream (or cream soured with lemon juice) or crumbled feta/mild goat's cheese.



### Method

Melt fat in large pan over low heat. Add onion/leek, beetroot, celery, parsnip, carrots, sugar and sweat for about 10 minutes, stirring often to prevent vegetables from catching on the bottom. Add the potatoes to the pan and add the hot stock, tomato purée, allspice, bay leaf and some pepper. Bring up to a simmer, leave to cook for 15-20 minutes or until vegetables are tender. For the last five minutes of cooking, add the garlic. Remove from heat, fish out the bay leaf and stir in the vinegar and lemon juice. Taste and adjust seasoning if necessary.

### Serving tip

Either blend the soup until smooth. Serve with a tbsp of soured cream swirled into each bowl, or, instead of a smooth soup, don't blend and either add shredded cabbage or beetroot tops along with any cooked beans for the last few minutes of cooking.

Monica Read

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## Where in the Village?

Where in the Village would you find this signpost?



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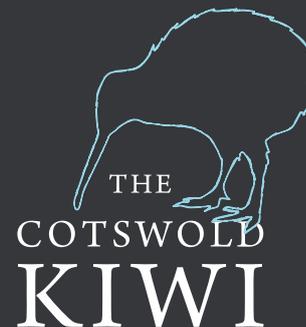
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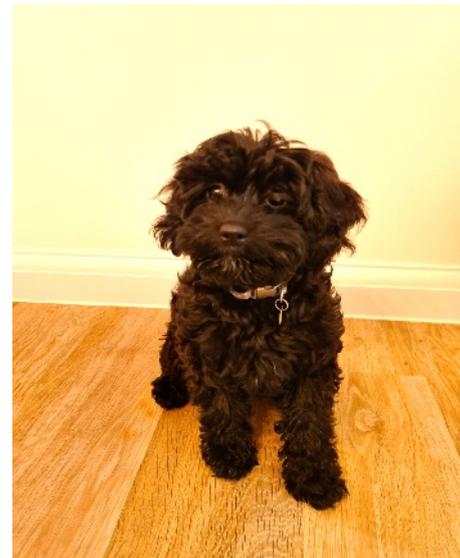
Welcome Lottie- our newest staff member at school!

We are delighted to inform you that we will be introducing a therapy and reading dog into school to provide therapeutic interventions and to support pupils with reading activities. There is a wide range of research and evidence to support the use of a therapy dog in school. This research includes:

- A positive impact on the mental health of pupils
- The development of confidence in reading of those who find reading out loud difficult
- The development of communication and social skills
- Developing an increased understanding of responsibility and care for animals
- As a reward incentive for positive engagement and behaviour in school
- The opportunity for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities to gain a qualification in animal care

The dog we have chosen belongs to our Deputy Head and Early Years teacher Mrs Chadwick. She is a Cavapoo puppy called 'Lottie'. This breed has been chosen due to the friendly nature of the breed and the fact that Cavapoos do not moult hair which reduces the risk of allergy. Lottie is undergoing training and will be gradually introduced to school and our pupils. She will be fully insured to work in school and with our pupils. Pupils will shortly have an assembly to introduce Lottie and ask any questions that they may have. We are sure you will agree that this is a fantastic opportunity for our school and pupils and we are looking forward to developing Lottie's role in school.

*Melody Chadwick*



**Lottie - our newest staff member**

## Quiz

The cinema may have been off limits during lockdown, but we have still managed to watch films at home. If you have been overdosing on box sets or just reviewing old favourites why not test your memory with our film quiz.

1. " I owe everything to George Bailey," are the opening words to which film?
2. On whose life was "Behind the Candelabra" based?
3. Daniel Day-Lewis starred as which US president?
4. In the film Billy Elliott, what did Billy become?
  - a) a footballer b) an assassin c) a ballet dancer d) a photographer
5. In the 1952 film "The Titfield Thunderbolt", what is the Titfield Thunderbolt?
6. Who with Tim Rice wrote the songs for the 1994 film "The Lion King"?
7. Which film is the odd one out?
  - a) Vertigo b) Psycho c) Memento d) Frenzy
8. Which actor died when making the film Gladiator?
9. A Bengal tiger features in which 2012 film?
10. Who starred in the 1992 film "Sister Act"?
11. What was the name of the computer in the film "2001 a Space Odyssey"?
12. What is unusual in Alec Guinness's performance in "Kind Hearts and Coronets"?
13. In which city is the film "Don't Look Now" starring Julie Christie set?
- 14 Three films have each won 11 Oscars. Can you name them?
15. "After all, tomorrow is another day" are the closing words of which film?

*By Andrew Long*



## News from Aston and Cote CE Primary School

The beginning of 2021 has not been as we all hoped as we joined the rest of the country in a third national lockdown meaning that the school has only been open for a small group of children in line with government guidance.

However, amazing learning experiences have taken place in homes throughout Aston and the surrounding area. We are incredibly grateful to all our parents who have pulled out all the stops to support their child's remote learning so diligently.

Staff at school have also been working hard with the children in school as well as providing remote learning for the children at home. The use of "live teaching" using Microsoft Teams has been much more widely used this time and has enabled the children to feel more connected with their teachers and classmates.

We have been extremely lucky to have received grants from local charities and businesses which have enabled us to provide laptops for children at home if needed. We are very grateful to Jenny Chaundy of Bampton Community Shop for coordinating donations from PD Hook, Bampton Welfare Trust and Bampton Exhibition Fund.

We were also very fortunate to receive a donation from the County Council – this was organised for us by Councillor Charles Mathew. Furthermore, we were very grateful to receive donations of equipment from people in the local community.

Children's Mental Health Week was an opportunity to shine a spotlight on and raise awareness for children and young people's mental health. This year's theme was 'Express Yourself'. Throughout the week, there was a chance to engage in activities to support children's well-being and build their resilience, both in school and through home learning challenges. The week culminated in a 'Dress to Express' day -the children were encouraged to wear an outfit of their choice to express themselves. Children could wear their favourite colour or a range of colours that expressed how they were feeling.

The half term finished with a "Life Skills and Learning Day" during which the children were set a wide variety of challenges ranging from learning how to tying shoelaces, making a cup of tea, baking, tidying bedrooms, vacuuming, writing a thank you letter or learning how to make a 999 call. Hopefully many of these skills are still being practised, giving parents a much-needed break in return for all their hard work with home schooling!

*Fiona Taylor – Head teacher*



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## Concerning an Indelicate Topic Perhaps but after recent heavy rainfall .....

Across the Parish, we are all aware of the impact of recent flooding upon the woefully inadequate drainage system that simply lacks the capacity to deal with the demands upon it. This capacity issue will undoubtedly worsen with a 20% increase in housing stock over just a couple of years. This is a really hot topic across the County, with Thames Water being taken to task by OCC and others. However, we can all prevent making a bad situation worse by not disposing of inappropriate items down our sinks and toilets. These items cause blockages and can even reappear from the sewer system.

For example, on 29 January, the heavy rain caused the sewer in the road at the lower end of Bull Street to overflow, as did the sewer by the Village Hall entrance. This is (sadly) not unusual after heavy rain, but rather than subsiding as it usually does within 24 hours or so, it continued to overflow until 5 February. Had this just been rainwater, it wouldn't have been so bad, but other items soon began to appear such as wet wipes and sanitary products.

So, please, please – only dispose of items down your sinks and toilets that they were designed for. We all have a ‘roll’ to play here!



*Russell La Forte*

## Aston and Cote P.C.



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Aston, Cote Shifford and Chimney  
Parish Council

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[www.astonoxon.com/parish-council.html](http://www.astonoxon.com/parish-council.html)



*The lower end of Bull Street*

## Parish Council News

The unhelpful blend of proximity to the floodplain, an ongoing 20% increase in housing stock and the woeful state of the sewer and drainage system in the Parish was graphically illustrated at the end of January, following a period of persistent, heavy rain. Whilst winter flooding in local fields is the norm, this year it seemed especially widespread. We also had sewers overflowing for up to a week, for example by the Village Hall and in Bull Street. Small consolation perhaps, but we were not alone in this, with similar reports widespread across the District and County. The simple lack of capacity in the Thames Water infrastructure is a long-standing matter that continues to attract the personal attention of our OCC Councillor and local MP, directly with the Chief Executive. No quick fixes seem likely, but the Parish Council continues to inform and support this debate with local evidence.

On a lighter note, I am delighted to see that the Cote defibrillator has now been installed. Refurbishment and improvement of the telephone box in which it is located will follow very shortly. Whilst we all hope such equipment is never required, it does provide a potentially lifesaving capability in a relatively remote, rural location. For the same reason, we have also approached residents in Chimney to seek their views on potentially siting another defibrillator there. Similarly welcome to see, has been the installation of 'Richard's Bench' in Bull Street opposite Waites Close, erected in memory of the late Richard Godwin, our sorely-missed postman.



*The defibrillator in the old telephone box, Cote*

Following the completion of Phase 1 of our traffic calming project in the Parish, planning has continued for subsequent stages. Potential sites for new/replacement signage in Cote, Shifford and Chimney, as well as the minor roads in Aston has been completed. OCC Highways have also been approached regarding the perennial problem of traffic management in The Square, and we await their report, albeit I suspect there will be no easy solutions here.

**North Farm Update** Discussions have continued with OCC regarding the future of their vacant North Farm site as a community-led development opportunity. It must be stressed that nothing has been agreed to, and there is a long way to go, but it is fair to say that the project has captured the imagination of OCC and their thinking is beginning to crystallise. However, the support of the community is a vital prerequisite for them to 'unlock' the planning permission they would currently require from WODC. This places us in the unusual situation with such developments, usually 'imposed' upon the community, of exercising some real control and influence. The matter essentially comes down to a trade-off between how much development are we prepared to agree to, in return for what community assets and benefits? Importantly this should be balanced against the potentially greater risk of doing nothing, whereby OCC just sit on the site, wait for planning policy to change (5, 10 years?) and then just fill the entire site with housing, with no influence from, or benefit to, the community. I know that residents will be keen to see more details on OCC proposals. Whilst these are imminent, publishing deadlines prevent going to print in this edition of Voices, but we anticipate being able to initiate another, more detailed round of public consultation in mid-March, that will put much more flesh on the bones for people to offer their comments. Notwithstanding this, residents are welcome to provide comment at any time, either direct to councillors, via email to [elaine.anstee@astonoxon-pc.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.anstee@astonoxon-pc.gov.uk) or by post to the Clerk.

*Russell La Forte,*

*Chairman: Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney Parish Council*

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## 500 Club Winners

### January 2021 Draw

No. 151	40	S. Haynes
No. 344	30	E. Hook
No. 135	20	J. Harris
No. 159	10	C. Holt
No. 171	10	P. West
No. 113	5	Mrs. Griffiths
No. 220	5	B. Taylor
No. 79	5	J. Whiteley

### February 2021 Draw

No. 358	40	T. Lett
No. 10	30	A. Gillibrand
No. 186	20	G & S Cracknell
No. 282	10	M. McKay
No. 251	10	P. Woodbridge
No. 361	5	K. Glaister
No. 144	5	S. Gargan
No. 245	5	R & K Dudley

## Aston Community Shop

As I write, we are approaching our half year anniversary and what a learning curve it has been for all of us. I think I can fairly say that we are pretty happy with the progress we have made, but there have been some challenges. A number of our volunteers had to self-isolate, which resulted in us having to modify our opening hours. The Winter weather played its part as well, with the excessive rainfall amply demonstrating the need for a new roof when we can afford it. The fierce cold made for some quite chilly shifts for volunteers and shoppers, but keeping safe with good ventilation in the shop was our priority.

On the positive side we have introduced a few new and exciting lines. If you haven't tried Pobi's artisan bread yet, I would urge you to do so. Jack Miller from UE set up a pop-up coffee shop over a couple of weeks in February while he wasn't needed by his main employers. This was very well received and if there are any budding baristas out there, or anyone who fancies training as a barista, we would love to hear from you. In the meantime, we will hopefully be looking for another means of providing takeaway coffee. You also could not have failed to notice the wonderful flowers provided by Anna Childs. All of these new suppliers are from in and around Aston!

We would like to thank many people including Natalie and Monica for their lovely seasonal window displays, Bampton Welfare Trust for a very generous grant to help us along, and everyone who has so kindly donated goods to the Besom charity.

As ever, we would emphasise that this is a community effort. The shop belongs to all of us. If you would like to get involved, there are plenty of opportunities - working in the shop (training will be given), administration or cleaning - whatever your skill is, we can use it and above all, do use your shop!

*Paul Read*

*Director, Aston Community Store CIC*





## Nature Natters Spring!

One of my favourite signs of spring comes courtesy of the great tits. Our resident male is in his smartest plumage, so that he can parade himself for the females while singing his see-saw call. I always think it sounds a bit like a rusty bicycle pump, but interestingly the song of the great tit varies around the country: so, our bird sings with the West Oxfordshire accent.

The great spotted woodpecker is also hammering out his territorial and courtship drumming to remind me that Spring is on its way. For many years now one of these lovely birds has worked out that he can make a louder drumming sound by hammering on one of the tit nest boxes that we have round the garden. He must sound like super woodpecker, and it must be rather a disappointment to the females he attracts when they realise that he is much the same size as any other male.



*A Great Tit*

The sobering side to these signals of spring is the fact that these days they start earlier than they used to. In February it's hard not to applaud global climate change, but the worrying signs are there. Stone chats are over-wintering near the car park at the Chimney nature reserve, and there are blackcaps over-wintering in many places around here.

There is an interesting story connected to these blackcaps. Old bird books tell you that mistle thrushes spread mistletoe (hence the name) by eating the berries and passing the seeds with their poo. But evidently blackcaps are also partial to mistletoe berries, but the berries are sticky, so the birds wipe the goo off their beaks, and in doing so spread the seeds. So perhaps climate change is helping us enjoy the festivities around Christmas by giving us more excuses to kiss.

*James Gray*



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## Behind Every Picture....

...there is an interesting story

In the January edition of Voices we featured a collection of 'Where in the Parish' photographs published over the last ten years. One of our readers sent us the following interesting fact.

*"I was interested to see the little round stone circle on the "Where in the Parish" page. I know someone asked if it was an old well! My husband built it and we put an almond tree in it ( I don't know what happened to it) when we moved into Vicarage Close in 1968 when the houses were built. Glad to see it's still there.*

*Tiz Evers. Cote"*



*The stone circle originally featured in a 2014 edition*

## FACS News

The start of the year has been a bit quieter for FACS (Friends of Aston and Cote School) due to lockdown however our focus is still on raising funds for the school in particular for new playground markings.

### Last Will and Testament Online Packs

FACS have been given a unique opportunity to offer parents and friends of Aston and Cote School an option to gain an online Will pack - with all donations being given to the school. There are two options:

1. Mirror Will - 2x separate Last Will and Testament documents, sometimes referred to a 'Mirror Wills' suitable for married or un-married couples. Once drafted these documents must be signed and witnessed in order for them to be legally binding. Regular price £130 per pack
2. Single Will - Last Will and Testament suitable for a single person or for somebody who's partner is not making a will. Once drafted this document must be signed and witnessed in order for it to be legally binding. Regular price £80.00 per pack .

We ask that if you want to purchase a pack that you donate whatever funds you think are reasonable to FACS at <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/14459>.

### The company

The company is <https://www.mylastwill.co.uk/> and the law firm behind the checking of the wills and approving them is Dunham McCarthy (DM-Legal.co.uk).

### If you want to go ahead

Please email Elaiza McHale on [protectyournest@outlook.com](mailto:protectyournest@outlook.com)

Please state your name, mobile number and the email address you want the code sent to.

Include in the email you are writing in regards to "Will Writing voucher in support of Aston and Cote school fundraiser".

Elaiza McHale, the Director of Protect Your Nest, will then organise for a code to be sent to you and you do the rest. Then please visit <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/14459> to make your donation to FACS.

Remember that in normal purchasing a single will is worth £80 and a mirror will is worth £130.

We appreciate any donations you are willing to give. Please note that FACS have been donated these packs and we are passing on this offering to the parents of the school, but are not liable if you go ahead with this offer. For more information please do contact us on [facstaston@gmail.com](mailto:facstaston@gmail.com)

### Clothing Collection

In addition, we will be holding another clothing collection for **Rags2Riches4Schools** - Please help us by donating your good quality unwanted, re-useable (clean, dry and wearable) clothes and accessories. FACS receive 40p for each kilo. Date of collection is Thursday 22nd April (not the 2nd March as previously advertised).

Thanks again for all your support with our fundraising.

*FACS Team*

*Friends of Aston and Cote School*

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## A Right Old Lime Pickle

Like many people during the latest lockdown, a takeaway is a weekend treat, when cooking seems too much like hard work.

A nice Indian meal was selected by the family and the order placed via a delivery app, for delivery in Aston at 6pm, on a Sunday evening. Then just before 6pm, there was a call from the delivery driver, asking if I lived in Ham Lane. I informed him that I lived in Farm Close and that he was not even close. He went on to say that he was driving on a “very broken road” and couldn’t see any houses. I informed the driver that he was in completely the wrong place and that he should turn around and head back to the village centre, where I would guide him from there.

Five minutes later and the phone rang again. The delivery driver said he was stuck, and asked me for help.

So, I set off in the car with a rumbling stomach, in an attempt to find him and hopefully retrieve the takeaway for myself and my two children. Not wanting to get my car in a similar position as the delivery driver, I parked up at the end of Ham Lane and set off on foot to rescue my lamb pasanda, pilau rice and peshwari naan. After walking three quarters of the length of a very wet and muddy Ham Lane in complete darkness, I eventually found a very sheepish takeaway driver with his stranded car on the grass verge. No amount of pushing was going to free the car from the extremely wet grass verge, what a pickle!

I told the delivery driver I would do what I could to help him, but I was not able to use my car, as that would then no doubt get stuck as well. So, he handed me my bag of relatively warm Indian takeaway and I set off for home. During the walk back down Ham Lane, I posted on the “What’s going on in Aston and Cote” Facebook page, to see if there were any knights in shining armour with a large truck who could help the poor delivery driver out.

In true Aston community spirit, within five minutes someone had volunteered to rescue the delivery driver. I rang the stranded driver to inform him someone was on their way to help pull him out.

By the time I had finished off the last onion bhaji, the delivery driver called once again, this time to tell me he was out and on his way back home to Witney. With a massive thank you to Richard Comley for coming to the rescue and pulling the car out of the grass verge.

I guess blindly following Sat Nav directions and not taking note of whether there is actually a road in front of you, is not always the answer.

*Chis Poulson*



*Richard’s rescue vehicle*

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## Eating Out (but In)

### Parisienne Soirée – Côte at Home

Since we're shielding, we've not been able to dine out since March, so it was with some curiosity that we received an invitation to a 'Parisienne Soirée' from our daughters, with instructions to 'dress to impress'. As I haven't even worn a shirt since changing to work from home in March, it was rather strange to put on our glad rags to not go out. It transpired we would receive a delivery from 'Côte at Home' courtesy of Côte Brasserie, one of our favourite restaurants in Oxford. One daughter brought us some champagne and later that Friday morning we received a large box with everything we'd need for the meal on Saturday. As we opened the box with some anticipation, folding back the recyclable padded paper, air-filled bags and re-usable ice-packs, we were presented with a veritable feast.

Pâté aux Cèpes - Roasted field mushroom, cep, white wine and vegan crème fraîche pâté

Smooth chicken liver parfait

Baguette & Beurre Demi-Sel Charentes-Poitou

Roast whole sea bream with new season Norfolk potatoes, pickled cucumber and a caper and dill mayonnaise

Guinea fowl fillet ballotine stuffed with mushroom and pork, wrapped in streaky bacon.

Served with glazed parsnips, Chantenay carrots and Norfolk new potatoes, and a thyme and veal jus, plus a side of steamed green beans with a Normandy garlic butter

Dark chocolate and almond fondant (suggesting having it with vanilla ice cream which we had)

Lemon and Armagnac posset with fresh raspberries & gavotte wafers

The instructions said to put the mains on a tray and cook in the oven while we had our aperitif and starters, with our daughters and son-in-law sitting opposite on a laptop screen.

I wasn't overly keen on my wife's Pâté aux Cèpes, as although nice, it was too loose for my liking. The equally generous portion of chicken liver parfait spread on the crispy baguette on the other hand, was superb and both came in reusable ceramic pots.

My wife usually has fish and although prefers fillets to whole fish, she loved the sea bream. I lean towards red meats and if ordering myself, may not have chosen the ballotine, but I'm glad my daughter did, as it was superb, very tender and moist. The green beans were

enough for at least three or four people and had to be heated in a microwave, but we found them a little too crunchy so if ordering again I'd boil or steam them for longer, and the jus needed longer than the instructions stated also.

My wife loves lemon so really liked the posset, and I had the fondant. I probably didn't leave that in the oven for the full 20 minutes and wasn't sure whether to eat from the ceramic pot or tip out as I did, but didn't do a good job of that, so it didn't come out in one go, but still tasted good.

The hospitality sector has been hit hard by COVID, so it's great to see some restaurants being creative at this time and I'd urge you to support those who do or risk having nowhere to go when life gets back to some form of normality.

*Russ Avis*



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## Rubbish!

Some people say that I can talk rubbish so I thought I would ask our own Aston Rubbish Operatives – bin men to you and me – how 2020 had been for them.

On a Thursday morning I caught up with the men who collect our food waste and asked James about their "Covid-19 work year". He is the chap in the middle of the photo. Steve is the chap without a mask and Rav is on the right in the photo. James was unable to spare the time to chat there and then, but sent me his reply as a note. It said:



(l-r) Steve, James and Rav

“James here from the food waste guys. I will bullet point a few things to cover the pandemic...

1. It has been very tiring and extremely hard. None of us has had any proper holidays during this time.
2. We work for Ubico and as they have been fantastic providing us with full PPE.
3. Due to the pandemic our work rate has gone up much more due to everyone being at home. Workforce and management have all pulled together and worked well.”

Steve was able to work and talk as I trailed behind him in Woodbridge Close. He is employed by an agency and gets up for work at 04:10, every weekday, arriving at the Depot for 05:30. He said teams vary and the lorry works around Witney, Standlake, Hardwick, Yelford, Aston and then Shifford and onwards. The food waste is eventually taken to a digestion plant near Cassington where it is recycled at a special facility and turned into a liquid fertilizer called digestate. The by-product, methane, is also used. Oxfordshire Council reckon that more than 40,000 tons of waste is kept out of landfill and plead with the public to recycle food via this way and not in the ordinary rubbish bin.

*Lizzie Wood*

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## WODC has closed all its 'Bring Sites'

How will that affect you?

Dix Pitt is not affected. It remains open.

Some recycling 'Bring Sites' are on private land (such as Sainsburys) and these may or may not close. Unfortunately information on individual sites is not available. It will be a case of waiting to see.

WODC now collects an extensive range of recycling from the kerbside and all this information is listed on their website – albeit well buried!

So what would you have taken to a Bring Site that can now be left out with your blue bin? I have tried to tease out the relevant information for you.

- Extra cardboard and packaging following on-line shopping. Also Christmas cards but not ones with glitter. Card can be left beside the bin if there is too much to go in.
  - Small electrical items (Kettles, hairdryers, laptops, radios) separately wrapped and put in black box on top of glass
  - Textiles (clothes in any condition, shoes in pairs, bedding and curtains) in see through plastic bags next to the bin. Clothes and shoes in good condition should go to charity shops.
  - Cooking oil and engine oil in labelled sealed plastic bottles (Empty fabric softener bottles are good)
  - Household batteries – put in a used envelope on top of the bin. Car batteries are collected free but need to be booked in for collection: Tel: 01993861000
  - Books, video tapes, CDs and DVDs will all go either to paper recycling or landfill so if they are in good condition they would fare better in a charity shop.
- If you have any further enquiries try ringing WODC help line on 01993661000. They are extremely helpful but, needless to say, are often busy!  
Happy re-cycling!

*Brenda Smith*

### Answers to the film quiz

1. It's a Wonderful Life
2. Liberace
3. Lincoln
4. c. Ballet dancer.
5. A railway locomotive.
6. Elton John.
7. Memento, the other films were directed by Alfred Hitchcock.
8. Oliver Reed.
9. The Life of Pi.
10. Whoopi Goldberg
11. Hal.
12. Alec Guinness plays 9 different characters.
13. Venice.
14. Ben-Hur, Titanic and The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King.
15. Gone with the Wind.

## Kitchen Disasters

They say the kitchen is the engine room of any family home. Ours is more like a war zone. Until lockdown my catering prowess did not extend much beyond reliable staples – roasts, casseroles, salad, bacon butties, with the default position of the chippie or Chinese take away. Then came lockdown and with it an avalanche of recipes in the media, and Helpful Hints leaving no basic staple food unmolested. Everything appeared to need garlic, fresh herbs and quinoa! As most recipes seem to involve all these exotic delicacies – even the puddings – burdened with guilt over my lack of enthusiasm for creative cooking I decided I would simply try a few variations of my own. I hasten to add most of these variations were unintentional and mostly brought about through sheer lack of attention to detail. Apple pies with no sugar, casseroles with pepper overdose and a fruit cake which would have been a candidate for "Churches need Foundations". (The oven ganged up on me here)



Pancake Day was rescued from total carnage by the eleventh hour arrival of a non-stick frying pan. (Thank you Internet!) Family tradition in the Smith household dictates that everyone tosses their own pancake. Thanks to lockdown the number of family members was reduced and this, plus the new pan, saved the floor from several 'misses'.

It is a good job I never became a member of the W.I. The members would have drummed me out!

Roll on the day when I will be free to do my own shopping. I will be able to plunder the 'Ready meals' section with impunity and microwave the lot. In the meantime I often think George Wiltshire had the best idea at the Aston fete. His bacon rolls were legendary!

*Brenda Smith*

## Where in the Village?

### Answer

Outside the show home on Marsh Furlong

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## **Aston Astronomy**

### **Beehives and meteors**

In the spring evening sky, winter's Orion is heading towards the western horizon. Instead, Gemini (with twin stars Castor and Pollux), Cancer (the Crab) and Leo are central.

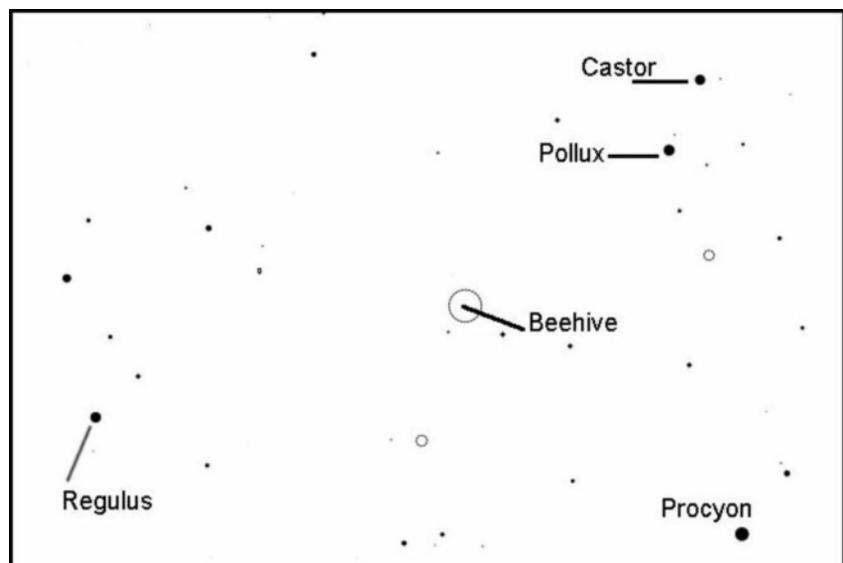
Cancer is not bright and sits between the other two, but it is home to a star cluster called Praesepe (Latin for 'manger') or the Beehive. Hipparchus, the ancient Greek astronomer, called it the 'Little Cloud', and that is how it looks. Telescopes reveal a swarm of stars. Galileo counted 36 but over 1000 stars have now been found.

To locate the Beehive, first find the backwards question mark of Leo. The bright star forming the dot of the question mark is Regulus. Look west from Regulus and find the bright pair Castor and Pollux. Pollux is the nearer to Regulus. Look just under half way from Pollux to Regulus and slightly downwards and you should see a little cloudy patch: the Beehive.

Choose a night that is cloud free and not misty. In ancient times, Praesepe's visibility was used as a measure of haze. Avoid times when the Moon is full and nearby. Any clear evening between 2nd and 15th March or 29th March and 14th April will be best. Binoculars will show a clump of stars.

Between 19th and 25th April, look out for late evening meteors appearing to come from near Vega, the bright star in the north east. The best chances will be around midnight on 21st-22nd and 22nd-23rd. Fifteen per hour can be expected. Unusually high rates - hundreds per hour - were observed in 1803, 1922 and 1982. Will 2021 be similar? We will have to look to find out! Best to look up at the eastern sky for meteors heading south west.

*Chris Holt*



*Regulus, the Beehive and Pollux high in the spring southern sky*



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## A Winter's Tale

Snow, it lay deep and crisp and even.

Plop plop plop down the road came a jolly family. Simon was out with his daughter Emily. "Let's make a snowman to sit on that wall". And so they did, "and a handsome fella if I say so myself", said the snowman. "But," said Emily, "he looks so lonely. Let's make my favourite animal in all the world, a Snowpig." And so I came into Snowman form and Snowpig came into pig form. Simon and Emily stood back pleased with their work. It was time to go home. There was a little sob. Emily said, "I can't leave Snowpig here, I want to take him home". And so they did.

The Snowman was sad. Now he was alone again on the wall. He knew in his heart that his days were numbered. The snow would go and so would he.

Plop, plop, plop. The walker stopped. "What's your name?" asked the Snowman.

"I'm Sam, some know me as Sam Flood but I recently got married so now I'm Miller."

"But you look lonely, Snowman" said Sam. And the Snowman told her the tale of how he had had a companion but Snowpig had gone to live a new life in Aston. "I know what" said Sam, I'll build you a friend." And so she did. A little man with a smiley mouth and a flower for a hat. "That's what we all

want, a friend" said Snowman.

And Sam went home knowing she'd created a little pool of happiness in Cote



With thanks to Simon Paterson and Emily and Sam Miller (Flood) for bringing these snowmen (sorry snowpeople!) to life.

*As narrated to Poppo Hoskins*

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## A Melt of Snowmen

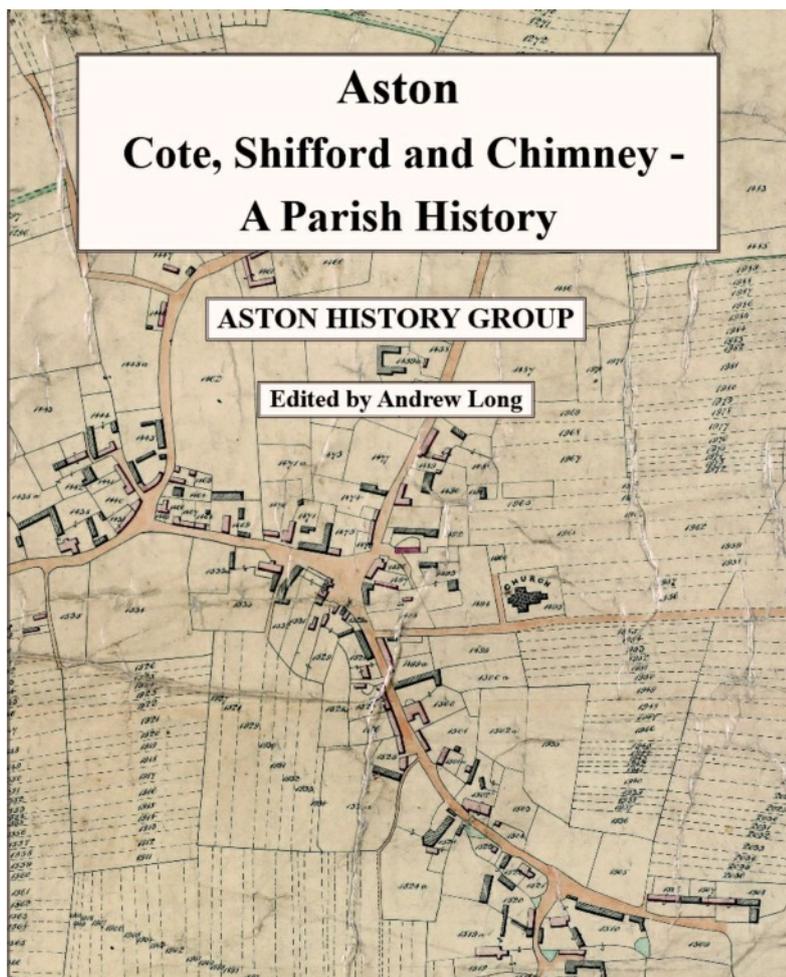
At the end of January slightly more than a flurry of snow enabled children and parents alike to build snowmen and have the odd snowball fight. Here are some of the creative figures which Susan and I saw on a walk around the village. But as the collective noun for a group of snowmen suggests, it was only a few days before they had all melted.

*Richard Haines*



# Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney

## A Parish History



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The book is finished and has gone off to the printers! We, The Aston History Group, decided to publish the book ourselves, we thought it might be fun!

The research and writing, carried out by Martin Bowley, Russell la Forte and me, has been engrossing and enjoyable. But what surprised us was the sheer amount of work involved in editing, proof reading, indexing and checking copyright. We discovered a previously unseen photograph and were about to include it in the "Occupations" chapter, but found that the copyright was owned by Getty Images. We used the image but it cost us cost us £80!

There are over 300 illustrations in the book, mostly photographs but there are some specially commissioned drawings which we have used to illustrate things where no photograph exists.

The book will cost £15 and will be on sale at The Community Shop from the 24th March. Copies can also be obtained from Penny Black House in The Square. For those farther afield we can offer a postal service. The cost for postal copies will be £15+ £5 post and packaging. For further details contact Trevor Jackson 01993850622 or email [trevjackson@gmx.co.uk](mailto:trevjackson@gmx.co.uk)

*Andrew Long*

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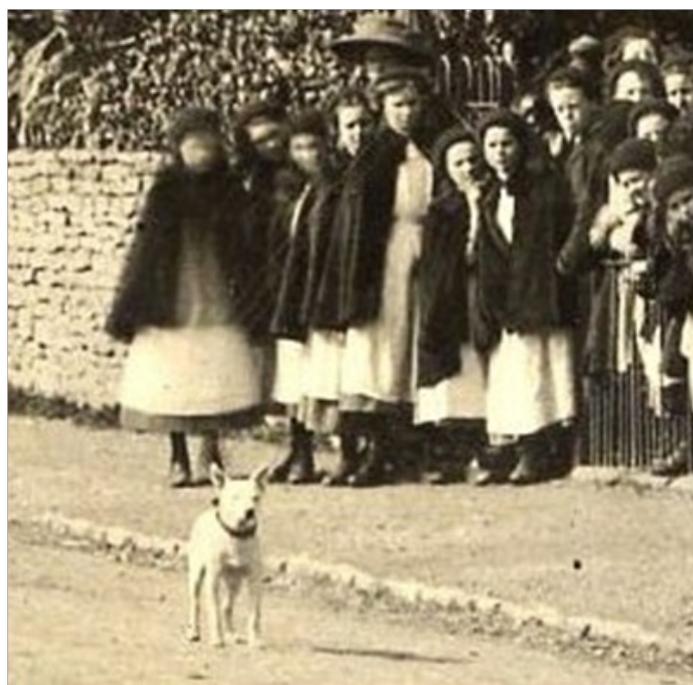
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## Dog Fouling

Any old photograph of Aston seems incomplete without a dog. Dogs were ubiquitous, and probably so too was dog mess. Dogs no longer roam the village unaccompanied, but dog fouling is still a problem. I don't want to put my foot in it (pun intended) but surely we can expect our open spaces to be free of dog mess. The Cricket Field/Recreation Ground is a case in point. The very successful Aston Youth Football Club uses the field for training purposes and for matches and dog mess on playing surfaces is simply unacceptable. Unfortunately there are not many options for dog walkers. Our parish is not blessed with unlimited green space. There is no easy solution. As the village develops maybe we need to think of some better provision for dog walkers.

*Andrew Long*



## What's On or Not!

**We are just coming out of lockdown and village events should soon begin to restart. At the time of going to press this is the current position.**

## Community Trust & Fellowship

### Village Hall:

The Community Trust is following the current guidelines and the hall will re-open when permitted.

Vicky Fuller 851649 vicky.fuller@tiscalli.co.uk

### Fellowship Centre:

No lettings until lock down restrictions are lifted.

Andrew Long 850271 ag.long@virgin.net

## Church Services

### Aston and Cote Community Church

Currently meeting in line with government regulations, which require all in attendance to wear masks, to maintain social distance and not to interact between households.

#### St James

1st and 3rd Sundays Holy Communion 9.30

2nd and 4th Sundays Family service. 9.30

This may well change due to current situation

**The Parish Virtual Online Services (Zoom)** If you are not yet joining in and would like to do so, please contact one of the wardens or the Vicar.

#### Shifford

At the moment there are no services at Shifford until the 2nd Sunday in March which will be Holy Communion

## Parish Council

The Parish Council will be held on the first Thursday of each month at 7.30. Currently meetings will be held using Zoom until further notice and details can be found on the Parish Council website [www.astonoxon.com](http://www.astonoxon.com)

## WI

No meetings at The Village Hall

## Wednesday Club

No meetings until further notice.

## Brownies

There are no meetings at the moment However Brownies are still very active albeit on Zoom. Information :07887974468 or [karenthegardener123@gmail.com](mailto:karenthegardener123@gmail.com)

## History Group

No monthly meetings, but we can help with information about the parish or family history enquiries..

## Aston Community Shop

Current opening hours are:

**Monday to Thursday 8.30am – 2pm**

**Friday 8.30am – 7pm**

**Saturday 8.30am – 2pm**

**Sunday 9am – 12pm**

## Post Office

The Post Office at Aston Community Shop.

Monday 9.30-12.30

Wednesday 9.30- 12.30

Friday 12.00-3.00



*Aston and Cote  
Produce and  
Craft Show*

*Something to do while  
we are in lockdown!  
It's Show Time!!!  
Sunday 12th  
September 2021*

*Vegetables, Fruit, Preserves,  
Cakes, Photographs, Children's  
classes & a few fun ones*

*Something for everyone!*

For a schedule please visit Aston and  
Cote Produce and Craft Show

*Save the date!*

The poster features illustrations of a carrot, tomatoes, and several jars of preserves.

## The Census 2021

Sunday 21st March -

Office for National Statistics

## Local Elections

Thursday 6th May

- Police and Crime Commissioner for the Thames Valley  
- Oxfordshire County Council - Eynsham Electoral Division  
- West Oxfordshire District Council - Standlake, Aston and Stanton Harcourt Ward

There is one seat for election for each of the above for our Division/ Ward





## Last of Winter and Signs of Spring

The flooded fields around the Village caused by the heavy rain at the end of January transformed the landscape and gave the perfect opportunity for a new Swan Lake. During the 'Beast from the East 2' the tree and fencing on the roadside of St Joseph's Court became iced over with the continuous splashing and freezing from passing cars.

In early February a flock of 800 sheep was spotted being driven up the Cote Mile on the way to Lew to be scanned for pregnancy. On the last day of February snowdrops were in full sun nestling in the ditch by the culvert on the Cote Rd.

*Richard Haines*

