

# The Gossip

H O R N T O N

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## Hornton Floods



**On Monday 23 September the rain that has dominated the weather throughout the summer reached a crescendo, with a deluge that continued non-stop from the small hours until the late evening.**

Unfortunately some properties were affected; one of the cottages on the green, the Holloway garages and the cottage gardens. Andrew Higgins and Steve Woodcock were able to kindly move some tools and machinery out of the water's reach in the garage of a holidaying resident.

The most damage, however, occurred in the school, where by 4.30 p.m. Oak class, which houses the reception and year 1 classes and the Peachtree area, were quickly under five inches of water. Luckily Louise Goddard and Jo Gamage along with other staff were still working and were able to move the electronics and some of the equipment out of the way. The Fire Brigade were called, one engine attended and checked the area and the electricians, but there was nothing else that they could do to help.

At 7.30p.m. Headteacher, Wendy Whitehouse, sent an urgent e-mail to the parents telling them about arrangements for

the following day. The response, said Wendy, "Was amazing. They have pitched in and helped with the clearing up and been marvellous. Special thanks as well to Ted Fox, Andrew Higgins and Calum Harris who all rallied round and helped to move and dispose of damaged items." Isabelle Harris arranged for the Pavilion to be used as a temporary classroom for the affected classes and helpers moved furniture and equipment. Luckily the drains and toilets have not been affected and so the main part of the school can continue as normal, although the grass area will be out of bounds for quite some time!

Wendy said that they would appreciate the gift or loan of child-friendly rugs and floor cushions to use in the Pavilion, as these were all destroyed.

The cause of the flooding appears to be a blockage in the culvert that carries the brook under the road until it... *continued overleaf*

emerges at the bottom of the gardens on the other side of the Green. As can be seen in the photographs there is a large grill across the culvert but this still allows smaller debris to be carried in, and there is no way of clearing it out if it becomes jammed. It is difficult to ascertain which organisation is responsible for maintaining the culvert and the Parish Council will be asked to investigate. It is twenty years since anything similar occurred, but it would seem that climate change may mean that events like this will become more frequent so we should take the time to be prepared.

The shed that houses the sports equipment has been damaged but that isn't a priority at the moment. Wendy may be asking for volunteers via Roger's e-mail list to help with salvaging the shed and its contents at a later date, so please look out for that, all help will be appreciated.



Culvert 23/9 p.m



Culvert 24/9 am

# Wroxtton Motocross

## The story so far...

Historically a local farmer, Mr Hedges, allowed Banbury lads and young families with off-road bikes to use a field about a mile south of Hornton, two fields away. This arrangement continued for years without any problem; the bikes belonging to a local club could be heard in the village at random times but they made no more noise occasionally than a distant swarm of bees. Eventually Mr Hedges passed on and his daughter, Mrs Kerwood of Balscote, inherited the farm. Mrs Kerwood, in conjunction with motocross track manager Brian Pounder, who runs the Banbury Motocross Club, became determined to expand and run the track as a business rather than the hobby it had always been. Within a short time she had succeeded in building a national scale professional circuit with 40 gates which attracted Clubs and riders with their entourages from all over country, and indeed several major championship heats took place. It became one of the most highly rated commercial circuits in the UK. Riders would arrive on Friday evening and camp until Sunday evening, crammed onto every inch of space which wasn't actually track. The destruction of this area, its peace and quiet and its watercourse and wildlife, plus the various anti-social liberties which were taken by the users, became intolerable. The noise inflicted on six nearby villages, including Hornton was dreadful, worsening according to the wind direction. Approaches were made to the organisers but they were rebuffed.

In short, massive development of the track contravened many rules. We have now been combatting this threat for over five years, with strong villager support and ward member backing. There have been many twists and turns.

The owner was advised by Cherwell District Council to apply for a Lawful Development Certificate. This was withdrawn on the advice of CDC (largely due to the evidence our campaign submitted) and, instead, a retrospective planning application was submitted. In the face of considerable opposition, not only from many local residents but also several professional bodies as well as CDC and OCC officers, this was refused by 13 votes to nil - a decision that was not appealed and now never can be.

Mrs Kerwood continues to try and convince everyone that her ambitions to diversify are valid because the track has always been there and she chooses to ignore the glaring fact that the existing facility that she has created has been

'significantly intensified' and bears no resemblance to the original little track through a working field.

Despite the fact that permission had been refused the organisers attempted to hold a "practice" meeting in December 2023, which was prevented by local authority and police intervention. CDC issued an Enforcement Notice, effective from January 2024. The owner was given 6 months to comply with the conditions, but recent photographic evidence shows that these conditions have definitely not been met.

The many concerns raised during the planning application, particularly environmental ones still apply and it would not be legal for meetings to occur.

## The story continues...

Despite these interventions the organisers scheduled a meeting for September 8. This would have been in contravention of the Enforcement Notice from Cherwell District Council (CDC) preventing them from holding MX activities. It would also have contravened legislation on protected European species and other rules.

Hornton Parish Council (HPC) and the campaign team have been in close contact with CDC and eventually the MX meeting was postponed possibly to 13 October. The Parish Council said "Clearly, we strongly feel that this should not be allowed to progress either. HPC is again heavily engaged in arguing the case with CDC. Given the complexity of the situation it is difficult to summarise what we are doing, other than to say that considerable time and energy is being put into ensuring the wishes of residents, and indeed the Planning Committee Councillors' wishes, are heard loud and clear."

So, to be clear, planning permission for Wroxtton Motocross has been refused and the deadline for appeal has passed. Continued action in contravention of the Council's instructions has resulted in an Enforcement Notice being issued.

In February this year another Planning Application was lodged for land which is also owned by Mrs Kerwood adjacent to the site of the MX track. Known as the "Fishing Lakes" you must see the full details plus maps by visiting the portal thus: (>> = 'go to')

Cherwell District Council >> Planning and Building >> Planning Application No: 24/00375/F >> Planning Register >> Portal (main details) >> Supporting Documents.

You will see that the closing date for comments was 21st March, and the target

decision date was 30th September. It appears that the decision has been postponed several times and it should now be decided at the November Planning Meeting. It is to be hoped that the continuing delays and changes in personnel on the Council Planning Committee have not diluted the strength of the case against granting this permission, so be prepared for yet another round of letter writing.

Among the supporting documents on the portal is the following from Shenington Parish Council, which sums up the arguments against the Fishing Lakes Application:

Dear Ms Daniels,

We are writing with reference to the Fishing Lakes planning application, your reference 24/00375/F. This is now closed for further comments, but new information has been found which may well influence your decision.

At our Parish Council meeting on Wednesday 21 March, we were advised by George Reynolds that we could only object to the application on the meritorious basis of the application alone and not on the probity and reputation of the applicants themselves. More of this later but we believe the following drastically alters the planning application we were asked to consider. The additional information that has been discovered relates to the slide show presentation that accompanied the application. Attached are screenshots taken from the annexed master plan to the Site Access Appraisal document. When the presentation is in slide show mode, there is an extra shot which shows extended holdings and what looks like a large house/hotel/restaurant. When the presentation is static it reverts back to the original proposal as follows:

- 15 lodges
- 8 huts
- 60 space car park and
- 1 management complex.

When the presentation is moving through the slide show, it shows:

- Circa 48 lodges
- 23 huts
- Circa 120 space car park
- 1 management complex and
- 1 large building with no obviously assigned purpose but of a size that could be a hotel/house/restaurant.

Had we known this was the intended extent of the plan, Shenington with Alkerton Parish Council should have strongly urged you to reject this plan within the time allocated for responses to the application. We believe if you give consent to develop, the company will seek to increase the building on the site to the detriment of the ecology to the area.

We also believe that you should also consider the purposes of such an

application. We are not aware that this is an ecology group or environmental improvement organisation; this is a married couple pursuing a business opportunity, presumably in the same way they have pursued other business opportunities which the police are now investigating.

While we accept it is not for us to judge the merits of a business plan, but rather the effects of that plan on the local area, it is difficult to see how the original proposal would make the business profitable. This is important should the plan get consent because the business needs to survive. The original numbers are small. The secondary numbers make more sense in terms of profitability. We would not wish for the uproar of the development for it then to be abandoned at a later date due to further development disputes.

This business needs fishermen (and women of course) through the doors to make the business a success. However, there is no information in the application about the likelihood of this venue being of any value to the fishing community.

The Council should consider the numbers of people that such a development would involve, the implications on local resources (recently explored in depth during the Elan Homes planning application in Shenington and Alkerton,) and of course, the implications for the environment. In addition, this rural area will be subjected to noise pollution during an extensive build and the local residents of Hornton will have to contend with light pollution after the build - intrusive light pollution if the secondary build numbers are instituted. We also have concerns regarding access to and from the A422.

The application is accompanied by an Environmental report which provides a list of species that may or may not be affected. The desk studies highlighted little in the way of the presence of species but then, given how often this land has been environmentally assessed, it was unlikely to. The field surveys highlighted the land, as is, provides suitable habitats for all common reptiles, and some less common including Great Crested Newts. There are otters in nearby Broughton, and it is hoped these will extend down the Sor subject to the cessation of the allowed, continued pollution of the Sor Brook. The site has suitable foraging habitat and shelter for hedgehog, foxes, common toads and brown hares. Given this is not an environmental project but a fishing business, we are concerned that the biodiversity of the area should be left undisturbed. There are no water courses on the site although plenty close by and we still have an ecosystem that thrives there. Drowning out huge parcels of land for fishing will limit the natural habitats of important native animals. Coupled with huts, lodges and visitors, this application has

the potential to reduce the biodiversity and damage the current ecosystem forever.

In addition, the application does not meet sustainability criteria as set out in Cherwell's own Sustainable Development proposals. For example, this application specifically contradicts Policy ECD 13 as it chooses to radically alter the landscape with the addition of the lakes instead of preserving the existing flora and fauna. We would also point out that this site is very close to an area of outstanding natural beauty and is adjacent to features listed in the Council's Landscape Evidence Base which identifies specifically Hanwell, Wroxton, Broughton and the Sir Brook Valley as places with features of value. Some of these places would be impacted by traffic, noise and light pollution from this development.

We therefore ask you to reject this proposal on the grounds of the unknown damage this proposal would have on local biodiversity and also that it fails to meet many of your own requirements in your Sustainability Criteria.

You will no doubt be aware that the applicants also owned the legendary Crooked House which was burned down and are currently awaiting a decision on criminal prosecution. The applicants are also attached to the landfill site in Oxfordshire that went up in flames in Finmere. In addition, they recently gutted a pub against the wishes of the local residents. These are applicants who hit the headlines regularly, accused of ignoring authority, rules and regulations. We realise that no prosecutions have been made yet and that reputation should not be the only reason to reject an application. However, it speaks much of a council who chooses to let people with such awful reputations into their local communities when those communities and constituents have such grave concerns.

Should the council be minded to consider this application, we believe the least you should do is delay your decision until the CPS has decided on whether to prosecute the applicants. In any case, the application should not be considered at all until the comments of CDC's Ecology Officer, in terms of biodiversity, Oxfordshire County Council's Transport Department and the Thames Valley Police are fully addressed. This is a Full application and it is inappropriate that Preliminary Ecology Appraisals and incomplete planning proposals should be even submitted for the Committee's consideration.

Yours sincerely,

*Peter Barrett*

Chairman, Shenington with Alkerton Parish Council

# Hornton Film Show!

Forget the Odeon Leicester Square - on Saturday 9th November our Pavilion will undergo a glamorous transformation into the Pavilion Bell Street for the 'Return of The Hornies.'



It's twenty years since Pete Whitehead organised the first Hornton Film Festival, which he ran once a year from 2005 until 2011, when he and his family moved to Stratford. Anyone, any age, could submit a short film - black and white or colour, silent or soundtracked, whatever they liked, so long as they were original and home made.

As ever, Hornton folk came up trumps and produced a variety of clever and imaginative films including a spoof Butch Cassidy, Hornton 2005BC featuring a caveman raffle using stone raffle tickets, and even Sir Trevor MacDonald reading the Hornton News. Altogether there were over 70 short films made for the five Festivals that took place. There were rocking animations, thrilling who-dunnits, trips down memory lane and the highlight of the Festivals had to be the presentation of the Hornies - our version of the Oscars. Excerpts from many of the films will be

shown on The Big Screen in the Pavilion on 9th November.

To mark the 20th Anniversary Pete would like to stage a Hornies Revival Night next March, and he hopes that the Return of the Hornies on 9th November will inspire a new generation of village talent to submit their entries for spring 2025. Pete told the Gossip "Making a short film is much easier these days, because almost everyone has got a smartphone. Free, easy to use software is readily available and other formats are, of course, perfectly acceptable. I hope that people will come along on November 9th, watch some of the films over a glass of wine and go away with loads of enthusiasm to make their own movie for Hornton Film Festival 2025." On the evening there will be plenty of help and advice available for anyone who has never tried movie making before using their smartphone. Tickets for the November event, costing £3 for adults and £1 for children, will be available from Isabelle Harris on 01295 670304 from October 6.

Hornies Revival Night is planned for 15th March 2025 and is expected to be a night of full-on glitz and glamour. There will be bubbly, a red carpet, the Hornton Paparazzi plus an award winning guest or two. Dress to impress!

Please put both of these not to be missed dates in your diaries:  
9th November - 'The Return of the Hornies'  
15th March 2025 - 'HFF Revival Night'



# 3H's

It's the time of year when most villages celebrate Harvest Festival and I'm always surprised by the quantity of produce gardeners bring forward for the events, the churches are beautifully decorated, and the amount and variety of the items at the Horley Harvest Auction was, once more, amazing.

Vegetable gardening is not practiced anything like as much as when I was small, when the church was full of loaves of homemade bread, a large loaf baked by the village baker in the shape of a sheaf of wheat, garlands of flowers, piles and sacks of vegetables and numerous sheaves of actual Oats and Wheat, which was auctioned afterwards. But times have changed, and gardening now is almost exclusively a leisure activity rather than something of a necessity to grow food, but still top quality crops are produced to amaze everybody.

Gardening this year has been something of a challenge due to the wet weather, but as the saying goes, "It's an ill wind that blows no-one any good" and the root vegetables and those that like the warm damp soil such as parsnips, onions, marrows, pumpkins, and cucumbers have done well.

The pleasures of gardening for me extend not only to the autumn and winter time, preparing for the coming seasons, but enjoying the co-incidental things that nature blesses our gardens with all year round, like the birds, animals and insects. One Swallow doesn't make a summer as Aristotle opined, but for me two families of Swallows have made my autumn by producing three broods each in nests in a garage nearby, the last one fledging during one of the incessant rainstorms we had at the beginning of October, thirty new Swallows is some performance and the adult birds were flying in pouring rain looking for food for their broods, amazing birds but they're all gone now and hopefully now enjoying the warmth of North Africa.



# Gardening Club News

Three Hs' have enjoyed another quarter with plenty going on. In August we had an interesting and informative talk on aromatherapy and the benefits it can bring to everyday health. Then in August was our annual produce show, and despite the weather the entries were at least as numerous as last year with Jan Hall scooping the shield for the overall winner, that is the highest total points scored in the vegetable, flowers, and cookery sections. Very well done Jan, an amazing effort, and well done too to all those who entered, and indeed to those that didn't but who were supporting the whole event. I have in mind here Malcolm Cross, who surrendered what would undoubtedly been a position at the front of the grid! to get us out of a spot when it turned out that our booked judge had decided to move to Scotland, so Malcolm with his keen and experienced eye stood in very ably.

In September we had a new event, 'Harvest Supper' mainly consisting of produce grown in our gardens and allotments, prepared and hugely enjoyed by members. Thank-you all so very much, particularly the ladies who cooked it, Bill Jeffs for growing most and preparing some of it making a super evening; delicious simple food which I hope we can develop and repeat in future years.



As we come towards the end of another year, Three Hs is already planning next year's calendar which I hope will be at least as interesting as this. Why not join and come along to our meeting and socialize, 'chew the fat' with like-minded people and help make it a go-to place for a Tuesday night.

*Mike Patching*

## Review of the 3H's Flower & Produce Show

**The 3H's held their Flower and Produce Show in the Pavilion on Saturday 17th August, organised by Isabelle, Liz, Pat, Caroline and Ann under the Chairmanship of Mike Patching.**

In his address Mike spoke for everyone when he praised the number and quality of the entries despite the strange, gardener-unfriendly weather this year. He explained that the gentleman who had agreed to judge the vegetable entries had been unable to attend and at the last minute Malcolm Cross had kindly stepped in. This meant of course that Malcolm had to surrender his place as a contestant, quite a sacrifice after a season's hard work!

Sally Buchan's son found a silver cup in one of his mother's cupboards and has donated it to the 3H's Club, and it will be used to celebrate the best single entry in the Flower class. This year's judges were: Malcolm Cross, Vegetables: Barbara Shepherd from Oxhill, Cookery and Ros Eley of Horley judged the Flowers, Pot Plants and Flower Arrangements.

The winners were: Vegetables - Mike Patching; Flowers - Jan Hall; Cookery - Isabelle Harris and Jan Hall jointly. Bill Jeffs won Reserve Vegetables, Liz Jeffs won Reserve Cookery and Pat Ayres won the

Reserve Flower Arrangement. Jan Hall won the new Sally Buchan Cup for her outstanding Single Flower and the President's Shield for the Overall Winner went to Jan Hall.

Mike said "Some of the silverware is beginning to show signs of age, and we hope that perhaps someone would like to sponsor some new cups, perhaps in memory of someone or for their company." If that is of interest to you please contact Mike on 07850 758105.

There isn't a prize for "Best Front Garden" but if there were the winner would surely be the President himself, Mike Patching.

*The Editor*



# Farewell to Lindy & John...

On Wednesday 31st July Hornton said a fond farewell to Lindy and John Bridgeman of Eastgate House, when they moved to their retirement home in a village in North Yorkshire.



Lindy and John have been active members of our St John the Baptist Church for all of the 40 plus years that they have lived here, with John as a Church Warden and Lindy a Lay Reader. The Church was packed on Sunday 28th when Lindy conducted her last service on the theme of love and community. They received the blessing of the Rev Alicia Baker, who thanked them both for their service, and they paused for a moments reflection together at the Alter. The service was followed by farewell drinks and nibbles provided by the Church Ladies Working Party, outside in the bright sunshine.

Over the years Lindy has combined managing their home, bringing up three lovely daughters, teaching special needs children and fulfilling all of the duties of a Lay Preacher with commitment and grace. Lindy spoke about how the influence of her family's mixed religious upbringing made her especially pleased that in Hornton we now enjoy ecumenism between Church and Chapel. Alongside his many other duties as Church Warden John has taken a special interest in the fabric of our Church, investigating its history and its many tales, and sharing his findings with the community during events within the Church. Who can forget his discovery that Hornton may once have had an Anchorite!

Both Lindy and John spoke warmly about their years in Hornton and their sadness at leaving. They feel, however, that the time is right for both themselves and their house to move on to a new life and new opportunities. Their wish for their old home is that the new owners simply "Love it".

The Ladies Church Working Party organised a collection and thanks to the generosity of parishioners were able to present John and Lindy with the following gifts:

*Dear Hornton,*

*It is now three weeks since you gave us both that most amazing send-off and two weeks since we moved into Sundial House. Leaving was so hard, and we have had to turn to Alexa to play 'You raise me up' many times.*

*We really cannot adequately put into words our thanks for your joining us in our Final Service, sharing in our party on the church lawn and then for the most amazing shower of good wishes and presents which literally left us speechless. Our loss for words has been exacerbated by our having no internet for two weeks and insufficient mobile signal to pick up or send messages. The occasional one got through when we went down to our village café (really tasty) or the pub, giving us excellent excuses for a skinny iced latte or a glass of Sauvignon blanc!*

*The gifts you have given us have undoubtedly helped us settle, giving us much pleasure in planning on positions of plants, pictures, books and ornaments and on how we may spend our exciting and extremely generous tokens. Above all each gift makes us feel that we have brought a little of each of you up with us. Many, many thanks to you all.*

*The Wellburn community has been very welcoming. Church (Victorian with Patron Saint St John the Evangelist) is at 10.00am on the first and third Sunday with a Benefice Service in one of the five churches on the second and fourth Sunday. We have yet to discover what happens on a fifth Sunday. The order of service changes on different Sundays but the order of refreshments afterwards in Welburn is set. – Home-made cheese scones, home-baked Yorkshire Brack and home-made chocolate chip cookies! Those who know my lack of baking skills will understand why I am hanging back from offering help for coffee time! The Rector has however invited me to join his team after I have served the required six months residency, so that is something to which I can look forward, when in danger of feeling overwhelmed by change.*

*Annabel is nine minutes away from us in Huttons Ambo but William comes to school in this village. Geordie and I skirt round the school on one of our walks each day. Like Hornton, Welburn is blessed with many footpaths with Castle Howard being just a mile and threequarters away across fields and through woods.*

*We look forward to welcoming you and sharing the beautiful Howardian Hills if ever you are able to come this way.*

*Meanwhile, thank you, thank you, thank you!*

*Yours*

*Lindy and John*

- A personalised David Austen Rose, pale apricot with a light fragrance called "Memories of Hornton" presented in a ceramic pot.
- A metal garden ornament featuring three swooping swallows to remind them of the swallows which returned to Eastgate each year.
- A year's subscription to Wild and Bloom, who deliver fresh cut flowers once a month.
- A voucher in a card for their new local Pub, the Crown and Cushion, to enjoy meals or drinks and some Waterstones book vouchers.

We're sure that everyone in Hornton wishes John and Lindy all the very best for the future, and a long and happy retirement in beautiful North Yorkshire.



# Pavilion Wildlife Project

**We need enthusiastic volunteers to help – and we know you are out there!**



The Parish Council and Pavilion Committee have a plan for land surrounding our Pavilion and sports field to tidy up and beautify the area while at the same time preserving and improving biodiversity to benefit wildlife and the environment. To make the plan work we need keen volunteers. We envisage creating a village conservation group to take on the project. This is a great opportunity for all to get involved, hands on, in this local wildlife project for the future. People of all ages, abilities and levels of experience are welcome, especially children and young people – it will be their world!

The Wildlife Project covers a large area; the scrub at the end of Hart View, the land from the pavilion car park along the football pitch path including the patch at the end of the plantation, the steep bank below the Bell Street gardens and the area at the south end of the pavilion. The plan is to introduce a greater variety of species, to plant a few interspersed trees around the area with a coppice under the electricity cables, hedgerows, areas of shrubs and self-seeding wild flower meadow plants.

This will of course be a long-term project. To start with the over-grown areas need clearing, grass needs cutting and raking and land prepared for seeding and planting this Autumn. Clearing and planting will be carried out sensitively over relatively small areas at a time. This is important in order to minimize disturbance of the existing habitat and dependent wildlife. Following on will be the season-by-season management of the whole area.

Several organisations are very supportive of the project. Wild Oxfordshire

are involved offering expert advice and guidance and The Woodland Trust will provide tree plants. Other conservation groups have expressed a willingness to support us when we are up and running. Other help with funding costs of the project should be available and discussions are ongoing with Cherwell District Council, in conjunction with Hornton School, for a grant through Rural England Prosperity Fund. Hornton primary school are very keen to be involved with the project including the incorporation of a garden plot for the students. This will provide a great outdoor nature education and activity space for the school children to become involved with.

Local Wildlife Conservation is desperately needed across Britain, this year alone most of us have noticed the massive decline in butterfly and insect populations and the dwindling numbers of birds. Over the last 75 years, 300,000 miles

of hedgerows and the life they support have been lost; wild bird populations have fallen by 73 million, about one third, since 1970 with several species at risk of extinction; insect populations including key pollinators like bees, vital to support the whole of the food chain and entire eco systems upon which we all depend, have been decimated leaving about one third of species at risk of extinction.

But there is still hope. The decline must and still can be halted and gradually reversed – but we all need to act fast and effectively. Small local projects can together make a significant impact. This project is one opportunity for us to do our bit to make a difference by helping local wildlife and improving the wildlife corridor.

Work has already started. So far we have cleared the grass at the end of the pavilion, which is now nearly ready for seeding with a wild flower meadow seed mixture and we are making progress with preparing the south bank and Hart View for planting copse and hedgerow trees. What we need are more volunteers to help the project make progress. We are on site most weekends at the moment. If you have an hour or two you can spare, please come along and join in the fun. Notice of activity weekends and times will be circulated on the village email. It will be up to the ideas, enthusiasm and graft of the local community to make the project a success – will you come on board?

Please join this project if you possibly can and encourage others to do so. If you are interested or have any questions please contact me at any time:

*Philip Holt*

07932 366 397 [dlr.holt@hornton-pc.org.uk](mailto:dlr.holt@hornton-pc.org.uk)



# News from St John the Baptist, Hornton

## More Repairs to the Church Roof

Church Warden Isabelle Harris reports that work on further repairs to the church roof will commence in Mid-October. Repairs were carried out nearly a year ago but further leaks have been found following a detailed inspection of the lead roof. It is hoped to get the church watertight before winter sets in.

Following the departure of John and Lindy Bridgeman to be near their family in Yorkshire we have lost two members of our Parochial Church Council together with John Turner who has moved to be near his family in Cambridgeshire. We are in the process of recruiting one or two new members to the council which meets between three and four times a year.

There are regular 11am services at alternately at the Parish Church and Chapel, followed by tea and biscuits. Everyone is most welcome. The latest winners of the 100 Club have been drawn out of the hat at the last PCC meeting. The winner was *Bob Langton* with second prize going to *Tristan Koberl* and third prize to *Linda Cross*. If you would like to know more about joining the 100 Club, of which a third of the money goes back to members as cash prizes, then please contact *Andrew Overton*, Church Treasurer: 01295 678920.

## Ladies' Working Party

Our lovely ancient Church of St John the Baptist relies entirely on us for its upkeep and, although financial help is always needed, practical help is just as important. If you could spare a few hours several times a year the Ladies' Working Party would welcome you with open arms to help with flower arranging, cleaning and brass polishing.

If you can help please contact the new Church Warden, Isabelle Harris on 01295 670304 or email her on [isabelle\\_harris@btinternet.com](mailto:isabelle_harris@btinternet.com).

## - Gossip Joke -

An English person, a Scot, a Spaniard and a German are attending an important meeting. The speaker asks:

*"Can everyone see me?"*

They all answer:

*"Yes - Aye - Si - Yah!"*



## A Vintage Ride from the Auction of Promises

Villagers will remember the highly successful Auction of Promises earlier in the year. Simon Woolf offered a ride and a pint in his vintage 1951 Orchard Green MG TDs to the top bidder. It was won by Bob Langton, (pictured here) on his winning ride with Woolfy in the driving seat. Explains Woolfy "It wasn't until 2017, following some incredibly generous and informed guidance from vintage car owner, Ken Hartlett, that I became the seventh owner in 70 years of the of the now named Myrtle. The car's fantastic appearance is mainly due to the hard work of the previous owner and his father who completed a full "chassis up" renovation in 2012."

Woolfy has had a love of the marque since the 1970's when his father bought an MG at auction. He would often accompany his father at vintage car rallies as a designated map reader. High points were the annual RAC Rallies and two furiously fast laps around the Silverstone circuit.

## Dates for your Diary

**Sunday 24 November**, in the Church - Gospel Bell Service

**Saturday 7 December**, 5.30pm, in the Church - Christmas Fair

**Sunday 15th December**, 4pm, in the Church - Christingle Service

**Sunday 22nd December**, 6pm, in the Chapel - Candlelight Readings and Carols

Come and join us at

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**The last day of the summer holidays was celebrated on the green on Sunday 1st September with a Village Picnic.**

Despite many gloomy weather forecasts with threats of thunderstorms and raging winds, the day was glorious, hot and sunny, perfect picnic weather. Families and friends of all ages arrived on the green with their impressive picnics, several with traditional wicker baskets; colourful blankets, chairs and coolboxes. The children mixed and played together with the balloons and the bubbles, and everyone visited Mr Frosty's Ice Cream Van at some point in the afternoon with many people enjoying a giant double cone and flake.

Katy Walther ran a tombola and raised £105 towards the laying of the new floor in the school, and Isabelle Harris ran a traditional Hornton Raffle which raised £175 towards printing The Gossip.

Grateful thanks to Glen Walther for transporting the chairs and tables to and

from the Pavilion, Mark Bowes for setting up the cheerful background music, Ted Fox who provided the hay bales, and Ed Fox for bringing his Ice Cream Van.



*A message from*



**'what3words'**

*What is it ?*

Many emergency services around the world now accept 3 word addresses from callers who would otherwise struggle to say exactly where they need help.

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## Scams

**Did you know that the Government has a department which deals with online scams?**

If you get an e-mail which you think is an attempt to lure you into replying with personal, card or bank details then simply forward it to: [report@phishing.gov.uk](mailto:report@phishing.gov.uk) without opening it or following any suggested link, and then delete it.



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# ANNUAL Croquet Challenge



August Bank Holiday weekend saw very blustery and changeable weather, but that didn't deter plenty of competitors and spectators from taking on the Open Knock-Out Croquet Challenge on the football field.

Andrew Overton and his team had pegged out five perfect pitches and the afternoon saw eighteen teams battle it out for the coveted silverware. Andrew was on hand to act as rule advisor and referee, and a bar and refreshments were available in the shelter of the Pavilion. The final closely fought game was between Tom Wain and his partner Ela Hancer, and Gavin and Rafferty White, with Tom and Ela triumphing and beating their opponents to the post to take the trophy.

Special thanks to Andrew and his team of helpers for all their hard work, and Isabelle for the traditional raffle. Profits from the afternoon went to support the Pavilion.

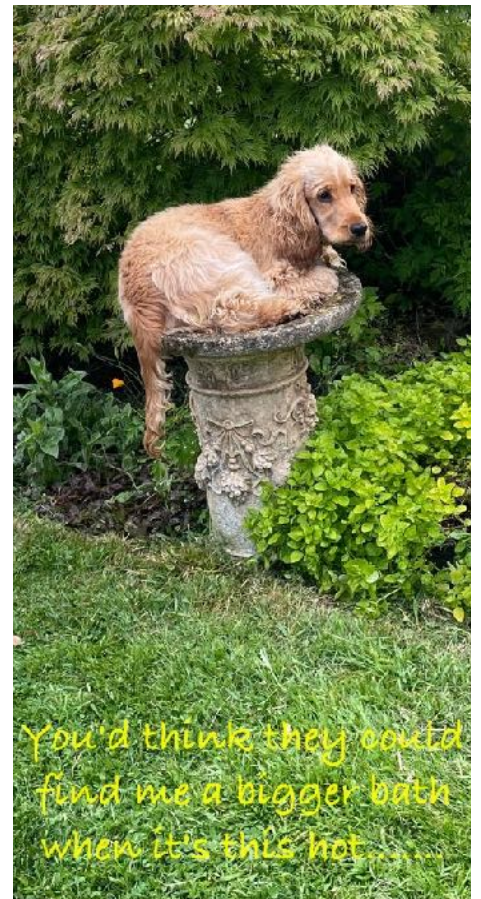


*Euro final in the tepee!  
Fun even though we lost 2-1*

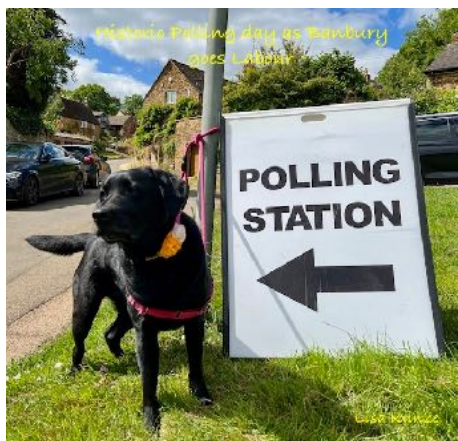
# Summer Fun



*Prom nights for the beautiful young ones*



*You'd think they could find me a bigger bath when it's this hot...*



*Victoria Polling day as Banbury goes Local*



Kate and Ashwin's non-traditional wedding parade



Bell Street sunset  
Al Mills



Distant stags  
Al Mills



Blowing bubbles at the picnic

# *in Hornton!*



Running the Hornton Six in July

# My First Car

Roger Corke

To be honest, I'm not that interested in cars. Most cars, anyway. They're just modern boxes on wheels. When friends ask me *how much do you spend every year on good wine, Roger?*

I usually reply *a lot less than your shiny new car depreciates!* But there has to be an exception and Leuky was certainly that. Leuky was the first car I ever bought and, before he even came into my possession, he was called Leuky on account of his registration number – LEU299K.

I know that because I broke two golden rules when I bought him (Leuky was always a *him*, by the way). Rule Number One is *never buy a used car off a friend*. Everyone says that, don't they? You just end up ending the friendship if the car breaks down the following week. Rule Number two – and this is my personal rule – is *never buy a used car off a lawyer*. Have you heard that old joke about how they've started using lawyers instead of rats in laboratory experiments because there are some things even rats won't do? It has more than a grain of truth. I know, I started in the law before becoming a journalist.

But I bought Leuky in the autumn of 1979 from...a mate who was a lawyer, who already called him Leuky.

The fact that we've got this far down in this article without me mentioning what kind of car Leuky was perhaps tells you something. He was, in fact, a 1972 Mark 1 Blue Ford Escort. 1100cc with a manual gearbox in case you're interested.

I wasn't. I just needed a car because I was working as a graduate trainee reporter on the *South Wales Echo* newspaper in Cardiff. As part of our training, we had to spend three months in the Bridgend district office, 20 miles away. At night-time we often had to travel up the South Wales valleys for council meetings, so a car was pretty much compulsory. If you couldn't drive when you joined the *Echo*, you soon learned.

I knew nothing about what happened under the bonnet of cars but I started going to motor maintenance classes at night school. Even if I didn't do any maintenance myself - and I didn't really want to - I figured that it must be worthwhile for the time when I had to talk *turkey* with a garage about what was wrong with it.

To my surprise, I quite enjoyed tinkering with Leuky. He was starting to get a bit rusty, so – under strict supervision at night school – I welded new plates onto his floor, fitted new carpets and a heated rear window, changed the oil and spark plugs, put in a new hand brake cable.



Thank goodness for my Haynes workshop manual!

I was beginning to feel like a real mechanic, so I plucked up the courage to change the clutch. Fortunately, there was Mr Moody - a very kind mechanic in a lock-up workshop just round the corner from where Lynn and I lived in Cardiff - who made sure I didn't do anything stupid. There was something really satisfying after the last bolt was screwed in and, slightly to my amazement, the car with its new clutch worked perfectly.

At least it did for a couple of weeks. I was driving to Bridgend one morning and there was a loud bang. The inner and outer parts of the clutch had broken apart completely. Mr Moody towed me back and replaced the clutch with another one. I don't know whether I'd done anything

wrong when I installed it but he'd never seen anything like it before. Neither had Unipart, who eventually gave me a full refund... after I contacted their press office. There has to be some perks of the job.

I heard a very similar bang when I was taking Leuky down to Southampton in April 1982 to sell him. The head gasket blew on the A34 just 10 miles short of my destination. I limped Leuky to the garage where I was due to trade him in - and was landed with a repair bill before I even got my new car.

That was a snazzy white Vauxhall Chevette - top of the range. It even had an LCD radio (*liquid crystal display* for any millennials who have read this far). But the Chevette never had a name. I can't even remember the number plate. It just wasn't Leuky.



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# HORNTON HISTORY GROUP *off on another adventure!*



**The History Group continues to spread its wings. Following visits to Cirencester, the Battle of Bosworth site, Leicester and Lincoln we followed up with a private visit to the ancient moated castle of Maxstoke near Coleshill in the West Midlands.**

The visit was made possible by a family connection between party leader Lorna Abbott and Edwina Fetherston-Dilke, daughter-in-law of the current owner Michael. The castle dates back to 1345 and the current owners, the Fetherston-

Dilke's, acquired it in 1599 from Sir Thomas Egerton, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England. It was purchased by Thomas (later Sir Thomas) Dilke, for the sum of £5,500 which included not only the castle but the manor and park of Maxstoke and most of the houses in the village.

The party from Hornton was met by Edwina Fetherston-Dilke for our private tour. She described, with some passion and undoubted pride, the history and ownership prior to the acquisition of the property by her family. Owners included the Earl of Huntingdon, the Clinton family including Lord Clinton, Earl of Stafford, the Dukes of Buckingham, the Compton family and latterly Sir Thomas Egerton who only owned it for two years, before acquisition by the Dilkes. Maxstoke has been owned and occupied by the Fetherston-Dilkes ever since, for over 400 years.

The castle and moat are a perfect square with the clock on the main tower dating from 1757 and still keeping perfect time. The castle had additions from different periods including the Gothic, Georgian and Elizabethan periods. All of the sections are occupied except for the towers, which are too cold and uncomfortable. We climbed an ancient stone staircase onto the roof of one tower in order to view the surrounding countryside. It was lined as a dovecot and open to the elements. Another tower seems

to be haunted by the unhappy ghost of a wife who was reportedly pushed down the stone stairs by her husband. The walk around the moat, gardens, and vast kitchen garden were an added bonus to our visit.

Lorna and husband John arranged for the History Group to have lunch after the tour at The Red Lion pub at Corley Moor on the outskirts of Coventry. A perfect end to a well organised and much appreciated day out.

*Bob Langton*



# Bridge That Gap

## 🎄 Bridge the Gap Christmas Tea Party 🎄

Dear Hornton Retirees,

We are delighted to invite you to this year's Bridge the Gap Christmas Tea Party!

Date: **Tuesday 3 December**

Time: **2 - 5pm**

Venue: **Hornton Methodist Chapel**

Firstly, thank you for your unwavering support in making this event possible. This year, the talented hospitality students from Bloxham School will be providing a fantastic tea party with a festive Christmas theme.

This community project was conceived following the challenges of COVID-19, with the primary aim of bringing together the village's older and younger generations. It's a wonderful opportunity for both groups to learn from each other and build lasting connections.

Bridge the Gap includes anyone who lives in Hornton and is at retiring age or older, plus a class of pupils from Hornton Primary School. All residents who are retired are invited.

Please confirm your attendance by Wednesday 6 November by either emailing: [skheathcote67@gmail.com](mailto:skheathcote67@gmail.com), or messaging me on 07787561183.

Approximate attendance: 55 Adults and 30 Pupils

Warm regards,

*Sophie Heathcote*

Park Close House Mistress, Bloxham School

## SCHOOL NEWS

### Scholarly Achievements....

Hornton Primary school achieved fantastic year 6 Sats results, last term, with their results placing the school up there within the top 1% of schools nationally. Congratulations!

Congratulations were also in order for this year's GCSE and A level students, who all did extremely well with their hard work paying off. There were successful applications to Universities all over the country including Leeds, Nottingham and Edinburgh as well as apprenticeships, training schemes and sixth form entries. Laura Hemmings and her twin sons are off to Addis Ababa to take up a teaching post in an International School there, and Molly Donaldson is off to work in Paris.

*The Gossip* sends congratulations to all of these young people, and our best wishes for a happy and fulfilling future! Well done all of you.

## Poetry Corner

### Love Came First

By Donna Ashworth

*You don't move on after loss, but you must move with.*

*You must shake hands with grief, welcome her in,*

*for she lives with you now.*

*Pull her a chair at the table and offer her comfort.*

*She is not the monster you first thought her to be.*

*She is love, and she will walk with you now, peacefully.*

*If you let her.*

*And on the days when your anger is high, remember*

*why she came,*

*Remember who she represents. Remember.*

*Grief came to you, my friend, because love came first.*

*Love came first.*

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# Hornton Roots Run Deep

A new gravestone has arrived in Hornton Church's graveyard, 74 years after the funeral!



Purely by chance I met the son of Eliza Goddard, nee Walden, in the Churchyard where he was supervising the installation of a memorial to his mother, Eliza, who died of sepsis in 1950 aged only 50. His name is Chris Goddard, and he explained that his eldest daughter is interested in genealogy and having discovered that there was no stone for Chris's mother had arranged for one to be placed. Chris's grandmother was also buried here in an unmarked grave and so they had arranged for her name to be included on the same memorial.

Chris had discovered that the plaque at the bottom of Tinkertank had the names of his great grandparents on it, and he believed that this once stood on the chest grave at the bottom of Tinkertank.

Chris's father first came to Hornton in 1916 as an electrician whose job it was to install the newly invented electricity supply in airfields, probably Sherington which was



then an RAF base. He had then been recruited by Viscount Bearsted to instal electricity to Upton House and Sunrising House, where he worked between 1916 and 1938 - pre-dating the supply to the village by 15 years! During those years he lodged at the Red Lion which was then run by Mrs Edon, and he travelled backwards and forwards to London and his first wife, and Chris's half sister.

In 1938 he took over as Landlord of the Red Lion, which together with the Dun Cow, was one of the two remaining village pubs and ran it with his younger second wife, Chris's mother. Chris was only five when his mother died, and he remembers that everyone in the village was very kind, and took care to look out for the 'motherless boy in the pub'. He recalls that the village was split into 'Church' and 'Chapel' in those days, and so he knew the churchgoers best because they were the ones who drank in the pub, the Methodists being strict temperance. Mrs Edon had retired to a cottage across the road, and Chris remembers that if he had a fall or a splinter he would run to her to be looked after. Later, during the war, he recalls that she had about 13 evacuees living with her at some point!

Chris went to school in the Village, where he was taught by Mr Levick, who owned a Triumph Mayflower car, registration number FUD1, and Miss Dimlow who kept her car in the Red Lion's garage, and whose stone in the churchyard he still pays his respects to. Chris was very good at maths, probably because of his years spent keeping the score for the darts players in the Pub. He had brought with him on this visit his Hornton Sports Day medal, which he won for the 50 yard sprint in 1949. He had contacted the School and asked if they would be interested in having it and head Mrs Whitehouse had invited him to visit and bring it in.

By 1956 Chris's father was unwell, but he managed to keep running the pub until 1958, when his daughter in London insisted that he retire and come back to London with her. So at the age of 12 Chris left Hornton and moved to London. He married, had four children and now lives in East Sussex. Despite leaving here when he was so young Chris said that Hornton is definitely his spiritual home, where his roots are. He comes back fairly regularly, and has lunch with his old friends Barbara Neville and Linda Cross, visiting the graves of his family and putting faces to the names of many of the gravestones in the churchyard, indeed he plans to join all these old friends and lie next to his mother one day.

*The Editor*

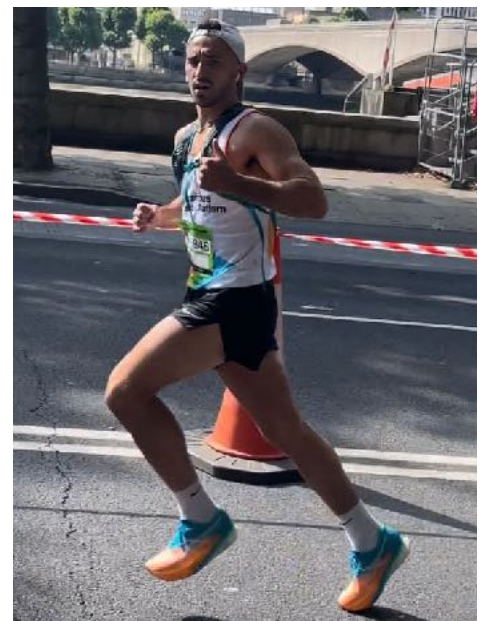
From our small village to your small village...



**Eddie Caviezel Cox and his running partner Alfie are supporting The Village Project Foundation by running 100 miles from the South Coast to Fulham over four days in November. They have never run more than 15 miles, so this will present a serious challenge!**

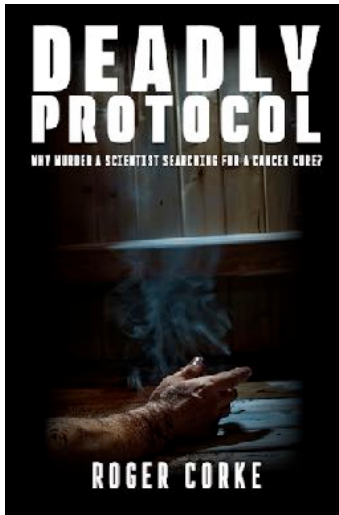
The charity they are supporting was set up by their friend Chris and provides resources and amenities for impoverished communities in Africa and Asia. The project they are supporting aims to provide clean water to a village school in rural Ghana where the charity have already built a school and a library.

To find out more about the challenge, the charity and how to donate please follow this link: [https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/AlfieandEddie?utm\\_term=a6XbzGkNX](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/AlfieandEddie?utm_term=a6XbzGkNX)



# Bookshelf

Earlier this year Hornton lost its claim to fame as the home of a successful author when Felix Francis and his family moved on, but this month two other well known residents have had their debut works published to critical acclaim. They are completely different genres aimed at completely different demographics, but both deal with red hot topics - literally, as you will see...



## Deadly Protocol

Roger Corke

Published by Diamond Crime

Roger talks to CrimeTime.co.uk:

**Roger Corke's debut crime thriller, *Deadly Protocol*, is the ultimate medical conspiracy. How did he come to write it?**

At the start of *Deadly Protocol*, we find a scientist working on the Holy Grail of medicine – a universal cure for cancer – brutally murdered. Professor Hasely Stone has been bludgeoned to death and left prostrate across the heater of his sauna. The temperature inside is 110 degrees C.

Who killed him and why? Feisty female protagonist Dr Ronnie Ackerman must solve the mystery after she wakes up in Stone's bed, following a disastrous one-night stand, and discovers his body downstairs. The stakes turn out to be higher – far higher – than she could ever have imagined.

Roger Corke came up with the plot of *Deadly Protocol* whilst on a filming trip in America. He's spent more years than he cares to remember making investigative TV documentaries for series like the BBC's *Panorama* and Channel 4's *Dispatches*.

"I had a chance conversation in New England with a British scientist carrying out cutting

edge research into the genetics of cancer," he said. "He explained just how fast knowledge in this area had progressed in recent years.

"Cancer research used to be like putting on a blindfold and throwing darts at a thousand dartboards – that was the way this scientist put it. Today they knew what dartboard to aim for.

"I asked the inevitable – naïve – question everyone wants answered: does that mean we're close to finding a cure for cancer?"

"His answer floored me... 'It's possible someone's already found a cure for cancer but a lot of people would have a lot to lose if it ever saw the light of day.' and with that one sentence, the plot for *Deadly Protocol* leapt into my head."

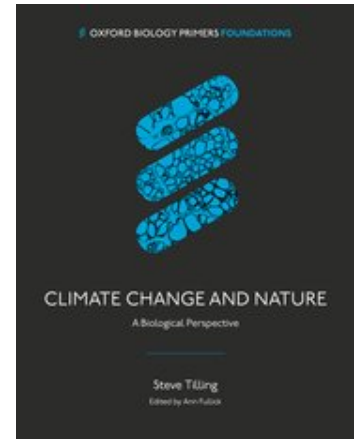
It took a lot longer for Roger to find a home for it. An agent pitched an early draft – to more publishers at one time than any book she had every tried to sell. There were no takers.

"I put the draft away in the drawer and forgot about it for a few years. Then I made what many people think was a crazy decision: I offered to donate a kidney to a complete stranger.

"The idea wasn't so mad. One person who needs a transplant dies every day in this country for want of a kidney. Healthy people only need one kidney to survive and I had two. What's more, I'm an identical twin and my brother agreed to donate one of his if I ever needed it, so I went ahead.

"The operation went without a hitch but I had to have three months off work afterwards, so I made two promises to myself. One was to buy a boxed set of 'The Wire' and watch all 60 episodes – what a great series. The other was to take that thriller out of the drawer and rewrite it. "Within 30 seconds of writing again, it was as though I had never been away."

*Below: Roger and Lynn at the launch of 'Deadly Protocol'*



## Climate Change and Nature

Steve Tilling

Oxford University Press

The goal of this primer is to raise awareness, knowledge and understanding amongst 16-19-year-old students of climate-linked changes in nature and biodiversity affecting the plants and animals in our seas, coastlines, lakes and terrestrial habitats. It demonstrates how a substantial array of biological observations, research experiments and models provide confidence in the accuracy and validity of current and future predictions. All levels of biological organisation from individual organisms to ecosystems are being influenced and changes are projected to increase in coming decades. However, much remains to be discovered and this primer highlights potential future roles for 16-19 students -- from volunteers to career researchers - through which they can help in transforming and mitigating future impacts.

£22.99 in paperback on Amazon and available as an e-book offering a mobile-compatible experience and convenient access along with functionality tools, navigation features, and links that offer extra learning support: [www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/ebooks](http://www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/ebooks)





Peafowl are actually two (green and blue) related species of the pheasant family. They originate in the Indian subcontinent and southeast Asia and are the national bird of India. They are social birds; a group of peacocks is called fittingly an "ostentation" or a "muster". Peafowl are categorised as exotic livestock which means that their owner is responsible for their care and any damage that they cause. They are noisy and not suitable for residential areas, have no traffic sense and cannot tolerate cold, wet conditions so need shelter.

Peafowl are forest birds that feed and nest on the ground and roost in trees. They are omnivores and eat plants, flowers, seeds, insects, frogs and reptiles. They are able to eat things that are poisonous to other birds and animals and they actively hunt ants and insects. In captivity they are fed grains, cheese, cooked rice, all kinds of meat and vegetables - in short anything that they can fit in their mouths and digest. Peacocks can fly, but not far - it's rare for them to fly more than a mile. They will only fly to escape danger, roost or cross an obstacle.

Peacocks (male) have iridescent blue and green plumage with a long 'train' of covert feathers concealing a fan-tailed quill display, a crest on his head, and spurs on his heels. He doesn't sing, but has a strident call which carries for long distances and is used as a call to attract females, during courting and even during

mating. He displays his beautiful fan of glorious coloured quill tail feathers during his courtship displays. The Peahen is smaller and lighter in weight and also has a crest and spurs but no 'train' and is a much duller colour, a mixture of brown, grey and green. She also puffs up her plumage to ward off female competition or signal danger to her chicks. Older peahens with failing oestrogen have been recorded suddenly growing male plumage and the strident call, suggesting that this is the default and is suppressed by female hormones in breeding hens.

Peafowl can also be white, but they are not Albino, which is extremely rare. Their feathers are white due to a genetic mutation called leucism, which inhibits melanin deposits. This is a recessive gene which must be received from both parents, consequently white peafowl can be selectively bred in captivity. They are extremely rare in the wild, probably due to the fact that the white, ground nesting



peahen is so obviously vulnerable to predators.

In Christianity the white peacock symbolises peace and the Holy Ghost whilst in Hinduism they are believed to bring good luck and prosperity. Historically, white birds symbolise peace, cleanliness and purity of spirit.

In the blue and green Peacock the beauty of his plumage is not due to the pigments in the feathers which are plain shades of brown, blue, red and green, but to the effect of light and reflections on the various angles of the barbels on the edges of the feathers, which create iridescence. During courtship the hen will stand directly in front of the cock so that she may observe his display at 90degrees to the surface of the feathers. He will then turn so that his tail is at 45 degrees to the sun which will accentuate the iridescence of his train. Once he's unfurled his feathers, the peacock flutters them at about 24 times per second. The resulting airwaves set the crest on top of the peahens' heads vibrating. She knows the male is around even before she sees him and, from the force of the vibrations, can tell exactly how long his tail feathers are. And that is important, because it seems that, for the peahen, size really does matter. The size and weight of his tail is an indicator of strength, and he signals his self-confidence by reducing his ability to flee with a lot of pointless flummery. Demonstrating that you are fearless can be attractive to females: it is

why boys buy motorbikes. Peacocks shed their tail feathers annually, when molting is triggered hormonally after the mating season. They will then re-grow longer, stronger feathers in time for the new season.

Peahens nest on the ground and the chicks are well camouflaged with tawny brown, tan and dirty ivory feathers. They don't develop colourful plumage until 3 years and then are not fully vibrant until they are about 6. They develop quickly and are able to fly into a tree to roost after two weeks and after eight weeks the hen will be letting them fend for themselves. Despite the hen being a watchful and protective mother predation is high and only about 30% of a brood will reach adulthood. They are also very prone to disease or parasites and even in captivity it is normal to lose 50%. By about six months they will be stronger and more resilient.

The following article by Harry Pearson in Country Life describes the arrival of Peafowl in Britain.

"The peacock's journey from its native India to the grounds of the British country house was long and convoluted. It started, perhaps, with Alexander the Great. When the Macedonian king first saw peacocks on the banks of the River Ravi in the Punjab, he was so astonished by their iridescent beauty he thought they must be divine and — as he was descended from a God himself — some sort of distant relation. Alexander ordered the birds protected and sent some back to Greece.

Although Phoenician traders probably brought peacocks to Europe some 600 years before Alexander, it was the charismatic conqueror who popularised them. His tutor Aristotle also played his part in the peacock's voyage to our shores. The great philosopher conceived the idea that the peafowl's flesh did not corrupt after death. This misplaced belief led to the bird being associated with immortality and

the resurrection. As a consequence, it became an early symbol of Christianity. The catacombs of Rome were decorated with images of peacock feathers. Word of the bird spread as missionaries travelled westward.

Muslims took a different view. To them, the bird was vain and evil. Its shrill keening a curse from the Almighty — punishment for having helped the Devil slip into the Garden of Eden. That is the public perception of the peacock in a nutshell. For one person, the bird is a heavenly creation whose pride, as William Blake noted, 'is the glory of God'. To others, it is a satanic menace that keeps entire communities awake at nights, rips the roofs off garden sheds with its sharp claws and destroys flowerbeds in its greedy quest for food."

There is a long and very interesting article about the history of the Peacock's introduction to Britain on [researchgate.net/peafowl:historyandculture](http://researchgate.net/peafowl:historyandculture) by Anthony Cheke, which mentions the existing flock of 'feral' peacocks in Harcourt Arboretum in South Oxfordshire.

The first record of Peafowl being kept in England was in the 14th century when the aristocrat Sir John de Foxley brought a breeding pair back from The Holy Land. They were then considered exotic and valuable creatures and became very popular as status symbols among the wealthy and the landed gentry. Eventually they became a way of impressing guests at Banquets when they would be served alongside other 'Great Birds' - swans, herons and cranes. By all accounts the meat was tough and unpleasant, and physicians believed it to be indigestible and that it "unbalanced the humours". Despite this it continued to the centrepiece of any great feast and as recently as 1864 we have this description of how to prepare the bird from the English and Australian Cookery Book:

"Instead of plucking this bird, take off the skin with the greatest care, so that the feathers do not get detached or broken. Stuff it with what you like, as truffles, mushrooms, livers of fowls, bacon, salt, spice, thyme, crumbs of bread, and a bay-leaf. Wrap the claws and head in several folds of cloth, and envelope the body in buttered paper. The head and claws, which project at the two ends, must be basted with water during the cooking, to preserve them, and especially the tuft. Before taking it off the spit, brown the bird by removing the paper. Garnish with lemon and flowers. If to come on the table cold, place the bird in a wooden trencher, in the middle of which is fixed a wooden skewer, which should penetrate the body of the bird, to keep it upright. Arrange the claws and feathers in a natural manner, and the tail like a fan, supported with wire. No ordinary cook can place a peacock on the table properly. This ceremony was reserved, in the times of chivalry, for the lady most distinguished for her beauty. She carried it, amidst inspiring music, and placed it, at the commencement of the banquet, before the master of the house. At a nuptial feast, the peacock was served by the maid of honour, and placed before the bride for her to consume." There are so many myths and beliefs surrounding the significance of Peacocks that they would warrant an issue of The Gossip to themselves! It appears that the birds have been objects of respect and awe throughout the centuries in most of world, the subject of countless scientific studies, and an inspiration for artists and architects throughout the world.

It is believed that finding peacock feathers symbolises good luck, elegance, beauty, rebirth, royalty, wealth and divine femininity. In Greek mythology they represent protection and in Buddhism wisdom and enlightenment. In our Britain the feathers are thought to represent vanity and ostentation and to bring bad luck (the neighbours gossiping?) if you have them displayed in your house - but elsewhere - that in your house they have the power to protect you from evil forces and according to Feng Shui, to bring good fortune. If you find a peacock feather it could mean that your personal angel is watching over you or that an important and life transforming event is coming your way. The 'eye' on the feather represents the 'third eye', self realisation and spiritual awakening. It could be a reminder that you should appreciate the beauty of the world around you and all that you have. Or it could be that you were just lucky enough to find an exceptionally beautiful feather!

*Birdbrain*

**SOURCES:**

Wikipedia; Country Life Magazine; Treehugger; Howstuffworks; birdfact: Birdzilla



# Comings & Goings



Our former rector, Jeff Chard, who many will remember very fondly, sadly passed away peacefully at his home on the Isle of Wight. Jeff and his wife Fran moved to the Isle of Wight from the Rectory in Wroxton when he retired from being rector of the Ironstone Benefice and spent many happy years there. Fran said "He had a good life and shared with me very happy memories of 59 years of marriage. His funeral was on the Isle of Wight, but he had asked that his ashes be interred in the Churchyard in Wroxton." There was a memorial service on 20th August and Jeff's ashes were then interred as he had wished.

Edna Seed, the mother of Shenington GP Dr Jan Marshall, has died. Edna, who lived in Horley, will be known to many people in Hornton, especially those who attend the monthly lunches and the Coffee mornings at the Methodist Church. Her funeral was held in Horley on 15th August, with mourners wearing cheerful colours to reflect her personality and donations to Katherine House Hospice rather than floral tributes.

A warm welcome to newcomers Ella and Kyle who have moved into Holloway House Flat on the Green, and to Jenny and Nick Calloway and their son Cash who have moved into The Willows.

## The Gossip

The copy deadline for the next issue of The Gossip is Friday 3 January 2025. Please send your ideas or submissions to Anne Joyner at [thehorntongossip@aol.com](mailto:thehorntongossip@aol.com). To advertise in the next issue, please contact Ni Marot.

*Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information printed in this newsletter, the editorial team cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any errors that might occur, particularly in respect of advertisers not meeting customer expectations. The opinions published in this paper are not necessarily those of the team.*

### A word from the Editorial Team:

Don't forget - *The Gossip* welcomes your letters if there's anything you would like to say to "The Village" via these pages. The only rule is - no anonymous letters will be printed.

## Save the Dates...

### Hornton & District WI Bingo Evening Friday 1 November, 7pm in Hornton Pavilion

Everyone is welcome to join in the fun and there are lots of prizes to be won!

### Quiz Nights at the Dun Cow

The Pub Quiz nights have started again on the first Wednesday of each month in the Dun Cow, starting at 7.30pm.

All you need to join in is a team of 6 and some loose change for the Charity donation. There is a small prize, usually chocolatey, for the winners, and a draw at the end of the evening to choose which team will set the questions for the following month. There may be food available - check with Steve and Rebecca beforehand.

### 'The Return of the Hornies'

#### Saturday 9 November, in the Pavilion

Tickets available from Isabelle Harris. See page 4 for more details.

And the Hornton Film Festival will be on Saturday 15 March 2025 - more details to follow nearer the time, but do make a note of the date!

### The Oxford Breakfast

#### Saturday 16 November, 10am in the Pavilion

The Hornton History Group are going to celebrate the delicious things that Oxford has brought to the breakfast table with a brunch accompanied by a talk.

Local historian Liz Woolley is a specialist on the history of Oxford and will be sharing some of her knowledge with us as we enjoy some local delicacies. There will be sizzling Oxford sausages courtesy of Proctor's sausages made to a traditional recipe, accompanied by local eggs in a bap, followed by toast and authentic Oxford Marmalade made by Catherine Vint. Tea and coffee will be available, or you can wash it down with Beer brewed in Oxford.

The Brunch welcomes everyone, you don't have to be a member, and the cost is £10 a head, children £5, payable on the door. To book a place please fill in the enclosed form and drop it off in the Village Post Box on the Manor House wall, next to the Notice Board, any time before Friday 8 November.

*Laurie Furneaux*

### Bridge That Gap

#### Tuesday 3 December, 2-5pm in Hornton Chapel

See page 14 for all the details.

### Hornton Christmas Fair

#### Saturday 7 December, 5.30pm in the Church

Do come and enjoy cakes and treats, and browse the colourful stalls full of Christmas delights.



# Mary Berry's Sausage & Potato Supper

This is a one pot dish which serves 4 to 6.  
Mary says it will become a favourite with you and  
of course one pot traybake type dishes are easy!



## INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 large onions, sliced lengthways into wedges
- 2 red peppers, deseeded and sliced
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1tbsp chopped fresh thyme leaves
- 500g baby new potatoes, halved
- 12 sausages, pricked with a fork (choose ones you like, obviously)
- 200ml white wine
- salt and freshly ground pepper

## METHOD:

- Preheat the oven to 220C/200C fan although have the oven a bit lower if you think your oven runs hot! Put everything except the wine in the dish/pan you are going to use to cook the ingredients and turn them over so they are fully coated in the oil.
- Spread the ingredients out in a single layer making sure the sausages aren't covered by any of the vegetables. Season well with salt and pepper. Roast for about 30 minutes until golden brown.
- Remove from the oven, turn the sausages over and toss the vegetables in the cooking juices. Pour in the wine. Cook for a further 20 minutes or until browned and the sausages are cooked and the potatoes tender.

Enjoy!  
Lynn Corke

## Are you hiding Hornton History in your garden?



There could be archaeological treasure beneath your garden, according to Ian Harris, a member of the Hornton History Group. He writes "We are considering carrying out some test digs to find evidence of old structures or other things of interest, which would have lain hidden for centuries.

"We would be interested to hear from anyone who thinks they may have archaeology in their garden or nearby land. We would initially use a metal detector and then a test trench about a meter square. Once investigated the site would be restored. Contact me if you think you have a potential site of interest."

Ian can be contacted on 01295 670304, or [ii.harris@btinternet.com](mailto:ii.harris@btinternet.com)

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OPEN:  
Mon-Thur: 9.30am - 4pm  
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1st Sat of the month: 10am - 2pm