

The Gossip

H O R N T O N

ISSUE 114

AUGUST 2019



The weather was perfect for garden visiting on Sunday July 7 when 10 varied gardens – from postage stamp size to extensive – together with the village allotments and a tea garden were open in the village as part of the Katharine House Hospice Festival of Open Gardens.

Visitors came from other local villages and towns as well as from farther afield; some said they were from places like Hemel Hempstead and Aylesbury so our internet publicity paid off. So many came that more maps had to be printed in haste during the afternoon.

After lots of hard work by the garden owners the gardens looked lovely with flowers, in particular roses, in full bloom. Pimm's was sipped in the English country garden style, courtesy of Jan and Graham Hall at Cherry Orchard, and the tea garden did very brisk business with the home-made cakes nearly, but not quite, running out, thank goodness, as having tea and cake is an important part of garden visiting.

There was the traditional Hornton raffle as well as an extensive plant stall with plants kindly donated by Philip Gilbert at Quarry Nurseries and plantswoman Mavis Heron of Alkerton.

Comments from visitors to the event included: *"Everything was very well organised from the signage to the delicious cakes and the very useful map of the garden locations. And all the hosts were so welcoming and friendly. A real pleasure and privilege to be a part of your wonderful village community for an afternoon. Thank you."*

"I think Hornton was probably the best 'gardens open' event I've been to – so many gardens and lots of variety. Lovely people too!"

"Probably the best selection of home-made cakes I have seen at an event like this."

And: *"What a lovely village and location. We have enjoyed it so much."*



Lesley King, Julie Stanley, Maggie Higgins and Lesley Tilling helped with teas.

Proceeds from the day reached £2053 and have been shared between Katharine House Hospice and Hornton village causes. KHH has received £922.50 with £540.25 going to both the Parish Church, towards a projector to complement the new sound system, and to the Pavilion, towards new scenery panels and a chair trolley. A £50 donation has also been made to The Gossip.

What a great outcome and 239 adults, plus some children, had a lovely afternoon out. This was a better result than we achieved in the previous two recent openings, in part due to the ideal weather. Thanks go to those who opened their gardens and worked so hard to make them look lovely, to those who made cakes and donated raffle prizes as well as to those who helped on the day, setting up, washing up and taking down.

KHH representatives visited during the afternoon and thanked the garden owners for opening. The KHH chairman made it clear that he appreciated the effort involved.

National Gardens Scheme here we come. Well, perhaps not! But another opening in 2021 sounds like a good idea. By then we shall have forgotten the work involved and only remember what fun it was and how much we raised.

Lynn Corke

Organiser of the Hornton Open Gardens Event

Looking back

A bee story made the front page of The Gossip's summer 1991 issue. Elizabeth Jeffs wrote:

"Mrs P Miles and Mrs A Turner, both of Bell Street Hornton, noticed bees busily buzzing in and out of the keyholes of their back doors.

"An investigation was undertaken by David Miles and when he removed the plates and handles on both of the doors he discovered that the bees had completely filled in the back of each door plate with honeycomb and in each cell they were depositing pollen."

Busy (and not so busy) bees are the subject of a feature on pages 8 and 9.

For 'What's On' see centre pages



Spot the difference

Talented Hornton joiner Paul Burden has designed and constructed our new main village noticeboard, now gracing the wall behind the postbox on The Green.

Made of mahogany, the new board went up in May to replace the previous one, made by David Miles, which had done sterling service but had finally been beaten into submission through frequent use and the weather.

"The new board is an exact replica of the old one and I have even managed to salvage a few bits to be re-used," said Paul.

Paul finished his task by re-staining all three boards so they match and look very smart.

New look Pavilion

Refurbishment work on the Pavilion has been completed. Andrew Overton, Pavilion Committee member, reports.

The project had two main aims: to renew the roof and to transform the entrance from a 1960s look to a modern and inviting one. This has been achieved by replacing the wheelchair ramp with a portable one, fitting beautiful oak doors throughout and redecorating and renewing the lighting.

The heating has been brought through from the hall with radiators in all the toilets and in the hallway. The toilet areas have also had new basins and cupboards fitted.

Anyone now wanting to hire the building for a party or wedding will now be proud to do so. When we attend village events we benefit from a much more inviting atmosphere.

Outside the changing rooms have had new showers installed, been repainted and had new doors fitted. A new external loo has also been installed. The area from the front door around to the changing rooms and all along the rear of the building will be painted. Woe betide anyone kicking footballs at our new paint! The walls to the right of the front door will be pressure-washed to help stay within budget.

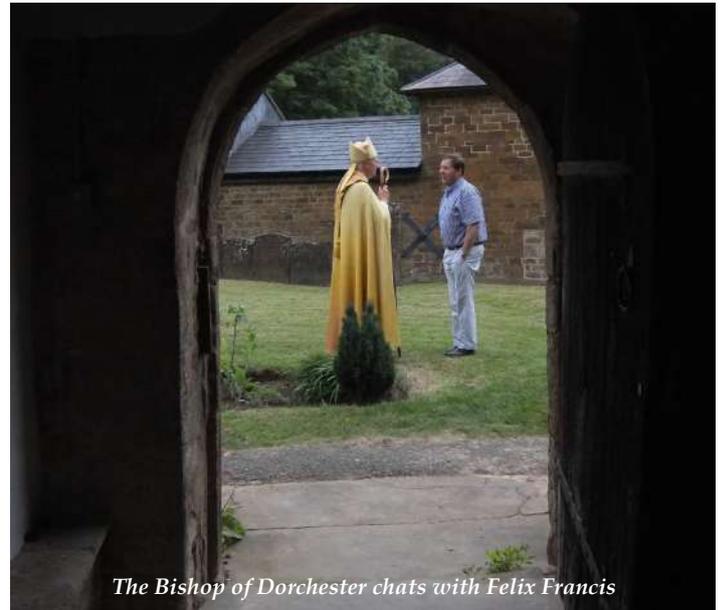
The Pavilion Committee hopes you all approve!

In Dedication & Celebration

A warm welcome, beautiful floral displays, and reflective and original music awaited all those who attended the special concert and service for the Dedication of the Church refurbishment, on Wednesday 10 July.

The Bishop of Dorchester, the Rt Revd Colin Fletcher OBE, spoke of his pleasure at being in Hornton and congratulated the Project Team and craftsmen for their commitment and tenacity in achieving their goal so successfully.

And, in true Hornton style, there was a wonderful selection of refreshments to be enjoyed on the lawn, and musical entertainment, after the Service.



The Bishop of Dorchester chats with Felix Francis



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After months of uncertainty the next chapter in the life of Hornton's pub is underway. Following a smooth takeover from Lisa in early June, the name over the door is Steve Yates who, together with his wife Rebecca, is the new landlord. Anne Joyner went to meet him in the sunny garden to chat about his plans for the future.

Steve and Rebecca and their two daughters, Chloe and Molly, have recently moved back to England from the USA following Steve's retirement from the Army a year and a bit ago. They've never run a pub before nor had they ever imagined doing so.

"When we were here before Christmas we heard the Dun Cow was up for sale," said Steve. "It's in a lovely location and it's got so much potential. After leaving the Army I didn't know what I wanted to do and I just thought, maybe I could make a go of this."

Steve has the advantage of a builder father-in-law and the whole family has been involved in getting things up and running. Work has been completed upstairs so they have been able to move in. Steve's sister Laura, who lives locally, will be an extra pair of hands behind the bar in the evenings.

I asked whether Steve had been shown the village survey that had been undertaken about the pub during the winter as that would be invaluable research for him. He knew of it and hoped to be able to see the survey results at some stage.

"That would give me a clear idea of the village consensus, of what the community wants because that's what we want to give it," he said.

The pub remains closed on Mondays but has re-opened on Tuesdays so that the crib league can resume playing.

"I used to run a quiz at work once a month and I wouldn't mind putting one on here plus, perhaps, live music and karaoke for those who like to sing, those sort of events," Steve said. "You have to be a bit creative, think outside the box and find things to entice people out in the evenings. Over the next few weeks I'll be sorting out the social media and getting in touch with Roger Corke so that we can announce things when they happen."

How about food? "In the pub trade nowadays it's not sustainable to just sell drink, is it?" asks Steve. "We've seen the number of walkers and the mums and dads on the school run who come down to the playground so we're planning to expand into the daytime with teas and coffees, frappes and smoothies, sandwiches, baguettes – all the cafe type of things.

"In the evenings we doing traditional pub food: steak and ale pie, ham eggs and



chips, fish and chips, that sort of thing, keeping it simple, warm and hearty. We're also serving traditional Sunday lunches from midday to 6.00pm. The menus will be updated regularly. We'll be taking advice from people who know more than we do but the general consensus from people who come into the pub is that they want traditional food.

"We'll try and source locally as much as possible from anyone who has eggs or surplus produce, that sort of thing. I've already been told about Simon's sausages and the farm shops. I'll have to explore and see what sort of deal I can do!"

I asked whether they would be putting on any different craft beers, are they interested in CAMRA or any of the real ale groups. Steve replied that CAMRA and beer festivals were definitely something that they would be thinking about in the future and that they would welcome help from anyone who may have been involved before. "We need to learn to walk before we can run!" he added.

Another burning question on everybody's lips – what changes might they make to the pub? Is the precious Dun Cow going to be knocked about and Farrow and Balled until it looks like all the other pubs in the area?

"Not at all," laughs Steve. "I've no plans to do anything at all other than what we obviously have to do. The whole place needed upgrading and decorating. Even the pub signs need a coat of varnish. It has all needed a lick of paint and a bit of love.

"The back bar now has new tables and chairs and the carpet will be replaced in the quieter winter months. The Art Club are welcome to put their pictures back up. We've re-upholstered the benches in the Quarry Bar so people will no longer feel as though they're sitting on a park bench!

"I think the Quarry Bar at the front, that's got all the character, hasn't it? I don't

want to change that. People appreciate the uniqueness of it and, to me, that bit should always remain as it is.

"While we've been getting the upstairs sorted so that we could move in from our other house we wanted to just keep things running as normally as possible. The breweries and suppliers have all been as good as gold, supplying us with glasses and garden umbrellas, that sort of thing. We're looking at putting in a new cellar with integrated cooling systems but because we're a free house, the breweries aren't interested in helping with those sort of expenses."

I remarked that they are making a big investment. "Yes, replied Steve, "everywhere you look you see where money needs to be spent but that's what we'll have to do because at the end of the day it's our home as well as everyone else's public house. So for the first few years we'll invest and invest. But you can see the changes already. It's more welcoming. The first few years are definitely an investment in the future.

"I'm enjoying it. It's obviously a challenge but it keeps you going. It's hard work and long hours but I'm not work-shy. I enjoy hard work and you get the reward when people come in and say how nice it all looks and you can see people laughing and enjoying themselves."

Finally, I asked Steve if there was anything he'd like to say to Hornton. "Yes. From me and my family, we'd just like to thank everyone for all their support, for their many offers of help and for making us feel so welcome. To be fair, I can't fault anyone!"

It looks as though in Steve and Rebecca we have the kind of landlords that Hornton's been hoping for. Perhaps from now on it will be up to us to make our own pleasurable investments in the pub's future!



Paul Burden writes about a special day.

On Saturday July 20 my good friend Julie Stanley had a lovely idea to raise money for Breast Cancer Care in memory of my late wife Jean who was Julie's best friend.

Along with support from villagers, family and friends a garden party was held in Julie's garden under numerous gazebos with refreshments and a raffle. It was the day after what would have been Jean's birthday.

Having lived in the village for most of her life Jean, and Julie, spent a lot of their spare time involved in the Methodist Chapel and, through Churches Together, the Parish Church.

Jean's sister Sylvia, my family and Julie were overwhelmed by the money raised and the donations received on that afternoon and since. The total has now reached £1,000. It surely is testament to the wonderful village we live in.

A very big thank you to all the helpers, cake makers, all who attended and donations from all those who could not come. Thanks also to my family and to Julie's – and especially to Jean for providing a dry afternoon when showers were forecast!

Editor's note: Julie and her team of helpers made July 20 a special day. They created an attractive cafe'-style venue in which they served the most delicious teas. Three-tiered cake stands were used to present dainty and tasty sandwiches, scrumptious scones with cream and strawberry jam and, on the top tier, a selection of beautifully baked cakes. They did Jean proud.



Julie Stanley (left) with helpers Sarah Walther and Jo Langton

Volunteers

Parish councillor Tim Hewlett is looking for volunteers to help man the village's SpeedWatch equipment. Anyone interested should contact him by e-mail: tim@freershouse.plus.com.

***New Art & Craft Events
On Your Doorstep***

Creative workshops are interspersed with art history talks in a new venture set in the heart of Hornton this summer.

Studio B, run by Chris Woodcock in the garden studio of Cromwells in Eastgate, is hosting workshops ranging from printing to portrait photography, textile crafts to life drawing.

The workshops (up to six people) offer friendly tuition by Banburyshire artists and craft tutors. Charges cover tuition, materials and refreshments: for all-day sessions veggie lunch is also included.

In addition, four Art History talks are scheduled for this month (August) on Saturday mornings (11am to 1pm), with proceeds going to each speaker's chosen charity.

Says Chris: "I devised this trial programme because I've built up arty contacts in this part of the world and wanted to give some talented people an opportunity to teach, as well as share my studio space.

"I've tried to choose workshop topics that are new to, or rare in, the art and craft scene in North Oxfordshire: Donald MacLellan led his portrait photography class, Jane Moffatt is running unusual textile and craft projects and Sally Moret offers her lovely screen and sublimation printing.

"The response has been encouraging, with participants coming from about a 30-mile radius and lots of positive feedback. I'd like to thank everyone who has supported Studio B so far."

See the *What's On* section of the *Gossip* for Studio B forthcoming events. Then request relevant info sheets if any catch your eye.

Contact: chriswoodcock@btinternet.com or telephone 01295 670795.

www.facebook.com/pg/soayview



Steve Woodcock, Laurie Furneaux, Kate Fricke and tutor Sally Moret

HISTORY GROUP

Bob Langton brings us up to date with HHG's activities.



Taking to the water

The Hornton History Group was out in force in June to visit the historic Tooley's Boatyard in the heart of Banbury. The boatyard has just celebrated its 250th anniversary and is the oldest continuing-working boatyard on the English canal system.

Over 20 members, including some new recruits to the Group, made the visit which was split into two parts. Half went for a canal trip on the Dancing Duck – enjoying a glass or two of wine in the process – while the other half of the party had a conducted tour of the boatyard, including the forge, where boatyard director Matt Armitage lit the forge and produced a piece of ironwork for the visitors.

Matt gave us an insight into the boatyard and how he managed to save it from extinction. He now has the support of a charitable trust with a strong group of trustees to help ensure its long-term future. A 150-year lease is being granted to the trust by Cherwell District Council and the plan is to raise funds to improve the boatyard and its setting to make it suitable for paying visitors in a few months time.

On to the battlefields

Just a week after huge celebrations to mark the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Cropredy Bridge, when nearly 2,000 members of The Sealed Knot re-lived the original battle, the History Group had their own quite strenuous tour of the extensive battlefield site.

Military historian Stephen Barker gave us a vivid picture of the events which led up to the battle between Royalists and Parliamentarians. He explained that most of the battle was in fact conducted in the parish of Williamscot. During the lengthy walk around the battlefield we were able to view the whole site from a highpoint close to the Williamscot road. The visit was rounded off with a pub lunch at The Bell in Cropredy.



Return of the Hornton brooches

The Anglo Saxon Hornton Hoard, lost for so long in the vaults of the British Museum, is officially coming home in November, the British Museum has confirmed to Simon Townsend, director of Banbury Museum.

There will be a special event to launch the exhibition of the Hoard at Banbury Museum on Saturday, November 16 at 6.00pm. The Hornton brooches will be officially unveiled and Professor John Blair will give a lecture on *The Early Anglo-Saxons in Oxfordshire: New Evidence and New Ideas*. Tickets are £20 and early booking is advised. The link is:

www.banburymuseum.org/events/the-return-of-the-anglo-saxon-brooches/

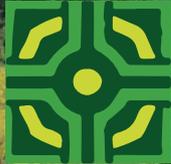
The return of the Hoard is a tribute to HHG member the late Barbara Greenhalgh who spent many hours trawling the internet to find the items and the colourful story of how they were discovered on land adjoining Hornton Church by the vicar at the time. He sold the jewellery to a French dealer who in turn sold them on to the British Museum some years later. Geoff Greenhalgh will be joining us on this special occasion at Banbury Museum together with his son Richard and daughter Cathy.

For signed up members of HHG there will be a private preview the evening before, on Friday November 15, at no cost, with a private tour of the whole museum led by director Simon Townsend. Wine and canapes will be provided.

Garden Party

History Group members are having a garden party in August, just one of a number of social events held during the course of the year.

The Group recently welcomed a number of new members – but there is still room for more. If you are interested in joining (annual subscription £12) please contact Kevin Wain on 670616 or Laurie Furneaux on 670417.



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What's On...

Church Services

First & third Sundays – Chapel, 11am

Second & fourth Sundays – Church, 11am

Every Tuesday

Knit Natter - Chapel, 2pm

Yoga –Chapel, 6.30pm

Keep Fit - Pavilion, 7pm

Every Wednesday

CRIB – Dun Cow, 8pm

Once a Month

Chapel Lunch - Chapel, 1pm on the first Monday of the month

3H's Gardening Club - Pavilion, 7.30pm on the second Tuesday of the month

Women's Institute - Chapel, 7.30pm on the first Thursday of the month

History Club - Dun Cow, 7pm on the second Thursday of the month

Coffee, Cake & Chat

Do call in to the Chapel for coffee, cake and a chat, every Friday from 10.30am - 12 noon. Fairtrade goods on sale for Chapel funds. And don't forget to exchange your books at the village library in the Chapel foyer!

Croquet Crunch

Crunch time is nearly here for croquet lovers. The ever-popular annual tournament will take place beside the Pavilion on Sunday August 25 from 2.00pm.

No croquet experience, skill or knowledge is required (as I, dear readers, can vouch). You just need to be over 14 and to turn up with your entry fee of £4, someone to be your playing partner and – have lots of fun.

The prize? The hugely coveted silver cup and the satisfaction of knowing that you and your partner are Hornton's 2019 croquet champions.

Tea, soft drinks and home-made cakes will be available.



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Come On Down

If you fancy some Country music and outdoor pub games, put Bank Holiday Monday, 26 August, in your diaries. Steve and Rebecca at the Dun Cow are planning a Texas Smoker BBQ night.

Annual cycle ride

This year's annual cycle ride and pub lunch will take place on Sunday 1 September, leaving The Green at 11.15am. All ages, abilities and types of cycle are welcome and, this year, we're hoping to see some of the village's electric cyclists out for the first time.

Leisure and pleasure are the keywords but that will not stop some people wearing lycra! We shall follow a tried and tested local route returning to The Dun Cow for a sociable lunch when those who have walked or done nothing more strenuous than read the Sunday papers can join the cyclists for lunch or a drink. The pub will lay on sandwiches and chips as well as the usual Sunday lunch.

Even if the weather is rubbish, some may ride but we can still all gather at the pub! Go on. There is still time to drag that bike out from the back of the garage or shed.

Lynn Corke

Few places

There are still a few places on the following workshops (maximum of six people). Telephone 670795 or email chrisawoodcock@btinternet.com for details:

Summer Fabric Bunting Making

Tuesday 13 August, 10am - 3.30pm (including lunch)

Introduction to Drypoint Printing I

Friday 23 August, 1.30 - 5.30pm

Introduction to Drypoint Printing II

Friday 20 September, 1.30 - 5.30pm

Make A Wall Hanging Twig Christmas Tree

Tuesday 3 December, 11am - 3.30pm (including lunch)

Saturday Art History talks are £10pp (including brunch), 11am to 1pm, as follows:

10 August – *Getting Under Their Skin*: the inside story on painting conservation by Ruth Bubb

17 August – *Unlocking the Church*: insights into local church architecture by Andrew Parsons

24 August – *Bauhaus*: more than just an art movement by Jane King

31 August – *Divine, Decadent & Distinguished*: Boris Anrep's fantastic mosaics by Dr Jane Williams.

Ride & Stride

This year's Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust Ride and Stride will take place on Saturday, September 14.

Help preserve the history on your doorstep by taking part in a sponsored cycle, walk or horse ride around Oxfordshire churches.

All funds raised go to OHCT and a church of your choice. Sponsor forms are available from Julie Stanley, Langway, Bell Street, Hornton. Tel: 670507.

African Evening in Church

An African evening, in aid of *Send A Cow*, will be held in the Church on Friday September 20.

Catherine and Graham Vint of Hornton Grounds Farm will share their experiences in Namibia. There will also be African music, food and fun, all washed down with Brown Cow cocktails. More information and tickets will be available soon.

Coffee Morning for Macmillan Cancer Support

Cakes - Bring & Buy - Raffle

Friday September 27, 10.30 am to 12 noon, at the Methodist Church.

Harvest Festival

The Hornton Churches Together Harvest Festival will be in the Church on Sunday, October 13.

BINGO!

It will be eyes down at 7pm in the Pavilion on Friday October 25, when the Chapel holds a bingo evening; and on Friday November 1, it will be the turn of Hornton & District WI. Be there!

Tai Chi Takes Off



Jo Langton reports

The Tai Chi class at the Pavilion has just finished its four-week taster course. It has proved popular and will continue, starting again at the Pavilion on Monday, September 9 at 2.00pm. The cost is £7 per session which is followed by tea and cake!

There are 12 people in the class at present and Jules, our instructor, is both enthusiastic and friendly, encouraging us to push a little further each time.

Tai Chi is extremely good for balance and building strength in the muscles. Another benefit, not normally mentioned, is that it also helps the memory as you have to try to remember the flow of the routines as they build up. It is a martial art but non-aggressive and there is no jumping in the air and punching!

We start the hour-long class with a gentle warm-up followed by a series of exercises that lead us into the more recognised Tai Chi movements (see photo). Jules has an easy manner, enjoys a laugh and is very understanding when we use the wrong hands and feet.

New members to the group need have no concern about catching up because Jules is going to start at the beginning again.

If you would like to join us – and it is not just for ladies – please contact me on 670359. Hope to see you in September.

PS I have been asked about an evening session. However, Jules says that for this to go ahead she would need at least 10 people signed up.



Still chance to join Hampton Court Palace trip

There are still a few spaces remaining for the History Group's trip to the majestic Hampton Court Palace in Richmond, south west London, on Saturday, September 7.

The coach will leave Hornton at 8.00am and depart Hampton Court around 7.15pm, providing plenty of time to explore and to have a meal in one of the many pubs and restaurants nearby.

The cost, which covers both entry to the palace (with a group booking discount) and the coach is £37.75 (£33.65 for over 65s).

Hampton Court Palace has a fascinating history. The original Tudor palace was built by Cardinal Wolsey in the early 16th century but it soon attracted the attention of Henry VIII who accepted it as a "gift" for himself. After Mary and William ascended the throne in 1689 they commissioned Sir Christopher Wren to build an elegant new baroque palace.

When royalty left the palace in 1737, impoverished grace-and-favour aristocrats moved in. Queen Victoria opened the palace to the public in 1838 and it has been a magnet for millions of visitors ever since.

The Tudor kitchens, a must-see, are the largest surviving 16th century kitchens in the world, part of a palace that also, on construction, had a toilet area that could seat 30 people, bowling greens that included tennis courts and a maze, designed in 1700, that is now the UK's oldest surviving hedge maze.

The size and grandeur of the Great Hall will take your breath away. It was designed to impress and to proclaim Henry VIII's power and magnificence. He commissioned the wall tapestries which were first hung in 1546.

If anyone is interested in joining what promises to be a fascinating and friendly trip to Hampton Court Palace please contact Jane Wain on 670716 or jmwain@zoho.com.

All Change

For one year only, in 2020, Hornton's May Day fete will be held on the second Bank Holiday in May rather than the first.

The change has been necessitated by the moving of the May Day Bank Holiday from its usual Monday to the Friday three days earlier so that it coincides with the 75th anniversary of VE Day.

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On the move

The next Progressive Dinner will be on Saturday October 19.

If you're new to Hornton you will find that this is a terrific way to get to know some of your neighbours. It's a relaxed and very informal evening which sees more and more participants each time - which must surely be the proof of the pudding!

Don't worry if you're a singleton as you'll be made to feel just as welcome, and don't worry if you have any particular dietary needs or dislikes as the Hosts will kindly accommodate them.

All of the money raised is used for the upkeep of the various village facilities, for instance the Pavilion, children's playing field, football field, Jumba court, Gossip, all of which are dependant on the various village fundraisers that are held throughout the year.

In case you have never joined in before, here is how it works.

The Hosts: Your 'donation' is to provide a three-course dinner for six people, including yourselves. Please don't feel daunted by this, the food can be as simple or as elaborate as you want and the venue can be anything from a carpet picnic to a formal dining room. After all, variety is the spice of life, and everyone joining in will have done so simply to enjoy the evening.

The week before the dinner you'll get an envelope containing all the necessary timings together with the instructions to give to your guests telling them where to go next.

Your first guests of the evening will arrive at 7.00p.m. and will give you a bottle of wine. You may possibly dream up some extra way of adding to the total by charging your guests the entrance fee for a game or by holding a raffle. Finally you'll collect £30 a head from your pudding course guests.

Last year the hosts with the most were: Sue and Colin Macleod, Cath and Roger Bellamy, Roy and Fiona Bridgland, Laurie and John Furneaux, Dan and Lorraine Joyner, Anne and Pete Joyner, Lesley and Steve Tilling, Jo and Neil Madden, Gavin and Gemma White, and Andrew and Carol Overton. Between them they raised the magnificent sum of £1,160.

Guests: Your donation is the price of your dinner with drinks - £30 per head, (the first increase for 15 years!) Following the instructions you'll make your way around the village to different houses all within walking distance of each other. You will enjoy a three-course dinner plus drinks at three different homes for £30 a head.

You'll receive a letter the week before telling you where to go for your starter. You'll get there promptly at 7.00p.m. and give your first hosts of the evening one bottle of wine. Later you'll be directed to another host's home for your main course and from there to a third for pudding; at the end of the evening you'll pay this final host.

Joining in: Please fill in the attached form and post it in the wooden Village Postbox, which is on the wall next to the notice board, by the deadline of 6p.m. on Friday 11th October. If you mislay the form between now and then, or post it in the real pillar-box by mistake (it has been known!) then just put it on a piece of paper with your name, telephone number, guest or host etc. If you are wavering and have any questions just give me a ring on 678082 and I'll set your mind at rest. I do hope we see you on the night!

Anne Joyner

The Gossip

The copy deadline for the November issue of *The Gossip* is Wednesday 30 October - submissions please to abbott@hornton.myzen.co.uk. To advertise in the next issue of *The Gossip*, please contact Cindy Koberl at ckoberl@btinternet.com

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Three Bee Stories

Bees are having a tough time. Threatened by pesticides, the varroa mite and habitat loss, their numbers are falling across the world. Yet they are essential for food production, pollinating many of our favourite foods.

Here in Hornton three bee-keepers are doing their best to maintain colonies of honey bees. It isn't always easy or cost effective, as their stories reveal.

By Hornton standards, Graham Vint (left) is an old hand at bee-keeping. He set up a hive at Hornton Grounds Farm eight years ago, scaled up to two but is now back to one – but with boxes for more!

Endlessly fascinating little Bs

A few years before I started bee-keeping I was chatting with an old hippy bee keeper, Jo Jo, and I asked him about smoking the hive. Now, I knew that puffing smoke at and into the hive is a help; it stimulates the panic response of the insects and they prepare to flee the approaching forest fire. A few puffs and the bees busy themselves elsewhere and leave you alone, most of the time.

Jo Jo had other strategies. He advised to put a little grass in the nozzle of the smoker to cool the smoke. It seemed to work well. I watched him puff away and begin to inspect the hives and it left a wonderful heavy scent of fresh mown hay. The bees became very docile, as did Jo Jo. Only then did he point out that he favoured Californian grass. His view was you might still get stung but you just didn't care!

Some thirty years later I finally got my own bees. Keep it simple became my mantra. It can get very complicated very quickly and in my view unnecessarily. They are only insects after all and they are susceptible to over-enthusiastic novices like me. They will leave home if you're looking at them every other day! That leads inevitably to the dreaded SWARM!!!!

Swarm is a word that signifies triumph or disaster. It is a colony of free bees to one keeper and the loss of a colony of bees to another. Every season the impetus to swarm is present in every colony and the necessity to keep it at bay is the challenge of every bee keeper. It's basically a con job. Letting the bees think they are better and safer in your box on the ground when they really want to be in a nice hole in the top of a tree. Swarm prevention is the goal.

This is where the second hive comes into being as the con is played. You just have to shake all the bees out of one hive box and into another box and set it a few yards away from the original. Two colonies from one and you now have two hives to look after not just the one you started with and this is how it starts. It's not your fault, it's just bee keeping. That's the real con being played here!

Did anyone mention honey? It seems so simple. Get some bees and free honey will be the result. Hmm, perhaps not. My first season coincided with the fields of borage in the top fields so honey was dripping out of the hives. Honey galore! Since then I have had so few jars that I shudder to think of what they cost.

Keep bees, with or without Californian grass. You can't fail to enjoy those endlessly fascinating little B's.

Andrew Higgins became a bee-keeper 5 years ago. He lost his bees when the Beast From The East struck while he was away in India but has started again. His interest in bees began decades ago.

From six to sixty

In 1961 I discovered that honey was made by bees. While the rest of the world was marvelling at Yuri Gagarin and Alan Shepard being launched into orbit, the Berlin wall was going up and Chubby Checker was monopolising the airwaves and dance floors with *Let's Twist Again*, I was being introduced to a colony of bees in the Wiltshire countryside.

My guide was a Mrs Hart from whom we bought our honey and who had a smallholding where an inquisitive boy could have a go at milking goats and whose muddy pond was a sure-fire source of frogspawn and newts. At six years old it had been decided that I was old enough to watch her tend to her hives. The ritual of donning the bee suit and puffing smoke into the hive to quiet the buzzing inhabitants before ministering to their needs left a lasting impression.

Later, in school biology classes, we were taught how bees have excellent colour vision which extends well into the ultra-violet spectrum of light. We learnt that they can find their way back to their own colony from six or seven miles away with an accuracy of a



Roger and Andrew recovering a swarm (above)

Did You Know That?

- One bee would have to fly about 90,000 miles – three times around the globe – to make one pound of honey.
- The average bee will make only one twelfth of a teaspoon of honey in its lifetime.
- A honey bee visits 50 to 100 flowers during a collection trip.

How To Help Bees

- Plant a variety of bee-friendly plants in your garden.
- Plant herbs – bees love them.
- Avoid using pesticides – ask at garden centres for flowers that haven't been pre-treated with pesticides.
- Shop for certified organic food – on average, plant, insect and bird life is 50% more abundant on organic farms.

couple of feet using visual cues but also the angle of the sun, and then communicate to their fellow workers where they have been and how good a food source they've found by a series of dance moves. The fact that these were first written about by Aristotle in the fourth century BC seemed equally amazing.

Later still, while working in the Sudan, the occasional arrival of nomadic honey sellers in rural villages was always a gala event. These men arrived on their camels with saddle bags bulging with old beer bottles filled with honey. They were accompanied by an all pervasive and powerful smell of wood smoke from the fires they used to help rob the nests of the wild African bees many hundreds of miles away. The honey too was smoky tasting but delicious. Less dramatic were the bee-keeping practices in the Yemen. Here it took me a while to work out that the piles of hollow tree trunks outside many villages were in fact simple hives. The trunks were divided in two and once both sides were filled with bees, one end was plundered for the honeycomb that it contained in the hope that the remaining bees would make good the losses. They normally did and the system has been in use for several thousands years.

Now, more than fifty years after my introduction to bees, it is here in Hornton that I finally have my own colony. My fascination with these extraordinary insects and their unique association with humans through history and throughout the world remains. There is also a quiet satisfaction as I watch them in the garden that in exchange for a little care and shelter I have about 50,000 mostly female insects working for me virtually for free.

In 2014 Roger Corke wrote in The Gossip of his excitement at becoming a bee-keeper. Five years later, his enthusiasm is undimmed – despite a particular challenge.

Bee aware

"Of course, if you were allergic to peanuts, one thing I could recommend you do is to stop eating peanuts," said the allergy consultant at Guy's Hospital in London. "As you're allergic to bee stings, one thing you could do is to stop keeping bees."

"I don't want to stop keeping bees," I replied.

"They all say that," said the weary consultant.

It had all started a few months before, when I was given a new swarm of bees by a fellow member of the Shipston Bee-keepers Association. I was in a bit of a hurry and, although I had packed my bee suit, I'd forgotten my wellies. As I was transferring the bees from the cardboard box into a hive, the little blighters went straight for the ankles. I was stung eight or ten times.

I didn't think anything of it immediately – bee stings are an occupational hazard of keeping bees, after all - but, within a few minutes, I started to get red swellings across my chest. A sure sign of an allergic reaction to the bee venom. More seriously, I then started to feel tightness around my throat. People who are killed by bee stings die because their bodies swell up with what's called anaphylaxis: the immune system releases a flood of chemicals that can cause you to go into shock. Your airways narrow, you can't breathe and you suffocate.

I was never that bad but I knew the signs and drove to the Horton straight away where – who says there's not God? – the nurse who treated me was... a bee-keeper! She knew exactly what to do and gave me five-star treatment. A shot of adrenalin and steroids made me right as rain in no time.

When it happened the next time, it was worse. This time, I got pains across my chest as well, as though I was having a heart attack. Off to the Hornton again to be given more adrenalin.

I assumed that, the more you're stung by bees, the more you become immune to the venom but it's the opposite way round. Things weren't going to get any better – only worse. Something had to be done and people with severe allergies to bee and wasp stings are given an EpiPen, which is a syringe of adrenalin they inject themselves with if they are stung.

But keeping bees would be out of the question - until I went to Guy's, that is, where a delightful nurse called Keyna started giving me a course of injections to make me allergy free. You have to be committed – you need to go every week for the first 12 weeks, during which you're given increasing concentrations of bee venom. At that point, 85 per cent of people will no longer get an allergic reaction. After that, you need to go back for a top-up injection every nine weeks for the next three years to make you allergy-free for life.

One or two non-bee-keeping friends of mine have questioned whether the NHS should be spending all this money on someone just because they want to keep bees but you wouldn't expect a hospital to refuse to treat a footballer who's been injured on the field just because he was indulging in his hobby, would you? Anyway, the world probably needs bees more than it needs footballers. When was the last time you saw a footballer pollinating a plant?



You're Kidding...

Q: What do you call a shy bumble bee?

A: A mumble bee!

An Omelette & Quiche joke

Buzz Tower Adds Extra Fun To Play Park



Kevin Wain, Parish Councillor, reports.

One of the best amenities in our village is the children's play park and we say a big thank you to all the people who in the past worked tirelessly to create and maintain the park. The ground purchased from The Ironstone Company for £1 has evolved over many years and provided a regular play area for the children of the village.

Late July saw the introduction of our latest play equipment, the buzz tower. The current team thought something for younger children was needed so, after consultation, the buzz tower was chosen and the order placed.

The buzz tower cost £4167 and we hope it will be a popular part of the park for today's children and their children just as it has been for some of us on the team, our children and now our grandchildren.

Unfortunately, the installation of the equipment didn't go smoothly. The key part of the tower, a slide, was not sent and it would be a further two weeks before it arrived. It then took another week for the fencing to be removed. The good news is that it was ready for the school holidays and we hope that everyone will enjoy it.

The team will arrange an official opening at some point with an event in the play park so please look out for the date and come and help us celebrate this great asset within our village.

Philip held in great affection



On June 13 Philip Brooks, held in great affection by the village, died in Horton Hospital. He was 77 and had been unwell for some time.

Philip and his twin sister Rosemary spent their early years at Horley Fields Farm before moving with their parents, Harry and Olive, into a cottage on Bell Street in Hornton. When the house at 1, Church Lane came up for sale, Harry bought it. Philip lived there for the rest of his life.

His working life was spent with Lamprey's, an agricultural feed merchant, first in the shop then as a van driver before gaining an HGV licence and driving the firm's lorries. He enjoyed his job but when Lamprey's closed down, he retired happily at the age of 55.

Philip's passion was his garden, as his nephew George Gilkes explains. "Up until he went into hospital recently, Philip would spend hours and hours in the garden. He'd have spent 24 hours a day there if he could. He just loved being outside."

Philip could often be seen late into the evening keeping the drains clear, pruning the trunks of the lime trees on The Green or weeding. He also did maintenance jobs for the school.

He had been an extremely strong man, says nephew George. "He wouldn't think twice about lifting a full 45 gallon barrel or a two-and-a-quarter heavyweight sack and tossing them on to a truck.

"I remember, as a young lad at what was maybe a May Day fete, seeing him compete in the village tug-of-war competition. Each road had its own team. Because Church Lane and Pages Lane had so few houses they joined together and with Philip in the team they were unbeatable."

Despite his sociability, Philip was a very private man. He never married. In 2010 his sister Rosemary moved into 1 Church Lane and remained until her sudden death on Christmas Eve 2014. "They got on very well," said George. "When Mum died he missed her a lot."

Julie Miles, who knew Philip all her life, pays this tribute to him.

"Philip lived at the family home opposite the school. He was a quiet, friendly and unassuming person who never saw the need for worldly goods. He knew about engines and often repaired his and his sister's cars by the school wall. In later years he would frequently be seen sitting in his car outside the house, keeping warm and listening to the radio.

"He loved the stars and was often on The Green looking at the night sky. He would always have a chat with you when you saw him. He was a village character who will be sorely missed."

Sally Jones

It is with sadness that we report the death of Sally Jones, nee Nolan, on June 2.

Sally Nolan was born in Hornton in 1941. Although christened Veronica Ann she was always known as Sally. She lived with her family in the Ironstone Company cottage, No 3 New Buildings on Bell Street. The family moved to Adderbury in the 1950s. Sally married Alan Jones just before her 18th birthday.

Sally returned to visit Hornton often, sometimes with her sister Sue. In 2016 she made a significant contribution to the Hornton History Group's very successful *The Way We Were* exhibition with her vivid memories of her early years in the village.



Cumin courgette ratatouille

Here is a recipe for that courgette glut. Serves four as a main or side and suitable for vegetarians as well as being a bit different from the usual wetter ratatouille.

Ingredients:

4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 tsp cumin seeds
Pinch of chilli flakes or cayenne pepper (optional)
400g ripe tomatoes
450g courgettes, trimmed
Large handful fresh flatleaf parsley leaves, chopped

Method:

1. Set a wide pan over a low heat. Once hot, add the olive oil, garlic, onion, cumin seeds and chilli or cayenne and gently fry for 12 minutes or until the onion is soft and golden.
2. Meanwhile, put the tomatoes in a large bowl. Cover with boiling water and prick each tomato with a sharp knife. Leave for a minute then drain and peel off and discard the skin. Roughly chop the tomatoes and mix into the softened onions. Season and fry briskly for about 8 minutes or until the mixture forms a thick paste.
3. Cut the courgettes into chunks or slices (I think chunky slices look best). Mix into the tomatoes and fry briskly for 4 minutes or until very lightly cooked. Season to taste and stir in the parsley. Tip into a bowl and serve hot, warm or cold. Enjoy! Lynn Corke



On Sunday June 16 Hornton residents were treated to the sights, sounds and smells of some of the vintage and veteran motorcycles in this year's Banbury Run as they passed through the village. These included Hornton's very own Graham Campbell (right) who was riding his 1927 Triumph Model P.

Photos: Jan Hall

This Silent Summer



The shrill piping of the swooping, zooming swift fly-pasts has always been a feature of summer in Hornton – until this year, that is. Sadly, our swallow, swift and house martin populations seem to have all but disappeared, joining the cuckoos that used once to call from all corners of the village.

Swallows can live for 16 years and should have begun arriving in April having taken six weeks to get here from central Africa. They travel a predictable route of around 200 miles a day, roosting on the way in traditional reed beds. Both factors unfortunately mean that they can be easily harvested by shooting and netting in Egypt and southern Europe.

They have no need to fatten up for the journey because they fly low and feed on insects on the way. A German study, however, has found that the use of industrial farming insecticides has reduced the insect population by 76%, so large numbers of swallows now die of starvation during migration.

When they arrive they nest in the same barns and outhouses each year. Modern buildings and increased security, however, mean that fewer and fewer open doors are available to them even if they do manage to beat the odds and actually arrive. They can raise up to three broods a year and leave in late September with the oldest brood leaving first.

The swift (shorter tails, smaller wings, shrill call) can live for 21 years and never land, except in their nests, instead feeding, sleeping and mating on the wing. They fly much faster and get here from Africa and Asia in six days, flying continuously and, like swallows, are reliant on feeding on insects on the way. They are here for a shorter time as they can't tolerate cold, so don't arrive until mid-May and are usually gone by mid-August.

They nest through gaps in buildings in cavities, building a nest of spit and straw. The young are in the nest for 37 to 56 days and if the weather is cold they enter a state of torpor, similar to hibernation, until the weather warms up. They begin their return migration as soon as they leave the nest.

House martins are almost indistinguishable from swifts to look at and are here for much longer, depending on conditions. They may start to arrive from sub-Saharan Africa in late March and can be here until first frosts in early October. Once here it takes about three weeks for a pair to use little balls of mud to build their nest under the over-hanging eaves of houses.

Once finished the nest weighs about 500g and is lined with white feathers. They prefer to repair and re-use a nest from year to year rather than build a new one, and they build communally, so a chosen house will usually have several nests.

When they have a nest they will sleep in it, together with the offspring of however many broods they've raised. Eleven birds have been found in one nest – you wouldn't want to be bottom of that heap! Unfortunately, some people still knock nests down, which is in fact illegal.

The sad decline in house martins is perhaps the most noticeable of these three here in Hornton. Twenty years ago there were eleven nests under the eaves of the school building alone and hardly a house round The Green did not have one nest or more. Whenever it rained the puddles around The Green were busy with martins rolling their little building bricks and rushing backwards and forwards before the puddle dried up.

None of us can do anything practical about the over-use of insecticides or the human predation of tiny birds, which can only provide one crunchy mouthful at the most, but the least we can do is try to provide and protect their nesting sites. You can buy swift boxes and get advice on www.shopping.rspb.org.

Perhaps you have a shed, garage, stable or barn that you can leave open and accessible during the summer and don't, whatever you do, dislodge a house martin nest from your eaves.

Birdbrain

Beautiful boys

Congratulations to Alex and Pete Bebb on the birth of their son, Montgomery, who was born on June 23.

Congratulations too to Lynne and Richard Miles on the arrival of grandson Albie and to Eileen Lewis who now has a second great grandson, Finn Isaac.

Happy in Hornton

Kaivel Ann Zdeb writes of her joy in becoming a Horntonian.

"Stan and I are so happy to be the new owners of Honey Bee Cottage. We have found Hornton to be so welcoming; it is such a special village to be part of.

"We are really looking forward to our first lovely (fingers crossed) summer in Hornton! We may vacate for days at a time because we are both still working, which takes us back and forth to the States. Stan is a captain and I am a flight attendant with Delta Airlines.

"We have both lived in England (Stan in Bournemouth, I in Bourne End) at different times in our lives; living in and loving England was one of many things we had in common when we met.



"In the Fall of 2017 we decided we wanted to enjoy England together and there is no time like the present hence we began our search for our perfect quintessential English thatched cottage in a charming village and did we find it!

"After months and months of looking, our search ended when Honey Bee Cottage came on the market. It was even in the area we fell in love with during our search! And, as they say, the rest is history!

"Stan already has his Ducati in the garage ready for us to go exploring and I am thoroughly enjoying the lovely gardens of Honey Bee Cottage."

Newcomers

A warm welcome to Steve and Hayley Tucker who recently moved into Grafton Rise on Bell Street. They have a three-year old daughter Evie and moved to Hornton from central Banbury.

If you're new to the village and would like to be introduced through *The Gossip*, do please get in touch: abbott@hornton.myzen.co.uk

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Good turnout for Aunt Sally

The recently re-furnished garden at The Dun Cow provided the perfect setting for an Aunt Sally and BBQ evening on July 24.

Organised by Jan and Graham Hall, who ran the excellent BBQ, and Lesley and Steve Tilling, who were in charge of the Aunt Sally game, the event attracted 57 players and a further 40 spectators. It raised £338 with £50 going to The Gossip (many thanks!) and the remainder to the Pavilion.

Nick Atkinson won the Aunt Sally game with an outstanding performance. Michael Palmer came second and Bob Goggin third.

Thanks are due not only to the organisers: Jan, Graham, Lesley and Steve but also to Pete Lemon and Herbie Rossiter who helped to pick up the Aunt Sally sticks.

The Aunt Sally game has been played for centuries and is still popular in Oxfordshire and other Cotswold areas. A dolly, a 10cm high ball or skittle, is placed on a three-foot tall metal spike. Players take it in turns to throw six sticks at the dolly, trying to knock it off the spike without hitting the spike. It's harder than it sounds!

Neighbourhood Watch

Sally Spencer takes on the co-ordinator role.

I am Hornton's new Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator and, together with a handful of other members of the village, we keep our eyes and ears open in case there are unsavoury goings on which the police need to be aware of.

In June I represented the village at a local Rural Forum meeting in Deddington where we discussed things such as speeding, parking problems (around local schools) and anti-social behaviour.

These meetings are run by the Thames Valley Police and police community support officers (PCSO) with parish councillors and village neighbourhood watch members in attendance. The PCSOs are committed in their support of the villages but as there are only 3 of them their time is stretched to the limit.

We are fortunate in our village to have a very supportive community and we take care and look out for each other. The Forum is intended to show the public how the police can help us tackle priorities set by village residents. If we have an event that we would like a police presence at, to provide crime prevention advice, then I can request that.

If anyone sees anything that they feel needs immediate action and I am not around then please telephone 101 or contact BanburyRuralNHPT@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

I will be attending the next Rural Forum meeting on Tuesday September 3. If there are any issues that need discussing please let me know on sallyspencer59@gmail.com and I will do my best to bring support/guidance to our village.

Motocross Mayhem

Concerns have been expressed in the village about the volume of noise emanating regularly from motocross events at the Wroxton track and the frequency and size of those events.

The Parish Council shares those concerns and has met with the land owner, the operators of the Wroxton motocross track and, in recent weeks, with Cherwell District Council's planning and enforcement departments.

Councillor John Offord, chairman of the Parish Council, said: "The good news is that Cherwell DC has now assigned an enforcement officer to the case and we hope to have a definitive decision from them shortly."

The noise levels generated by the events do not exceed the legal limits but there is little doubt that planning regulations which prohibit more than 14 meetings a year and more than 28 days on the site have been broken.

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