

The Gossip

H O R N T O N

ISSUE 119

NOVEMBER 2020



Motocross madness

Possibility of retrospective planning permission application
revs up Hornton reaction

Cherwell District Council's invitation to the Wroxton Motocross race track to apply for retrospective planning permission for the enlarged site, whilst failing to enforce existing planning law, has caused considerable consternation in Hornton and other local villages.

CDC's invitation was extended following the withdrawal by the landowner of the site, Sandra Kerwood of Manor Farm, Balscote, for a Licensed Development Certificate. This, if granted, would have approved the site as it now stands: significantly larger and massively more active than it was a few years ago. It would also have granted 24 racing days plus unlimited 'practice days'. However, it is understood that when Hornton Parish Council raised concerns about some of the claims made in the LDC application, CDC advised Mrs Kerwood that it would fail.

The news of the withdrawal was met with approval in Hornton but the village, which has never sought to have the race track shut down, despite allegations to the contrary, has been dismayed by CDC's apparent failure in recent years and up to the present time to enforce planning law. This allows for only 14 days motocross racing each year and prohibits 'intensification' of the track and site and its usage.

"The Parish Council wants the track to be returned to its original use," said Council Chair John Offord. "It used to be a local track for local enthusiasts but has been so transformed in recent years through alarming commercial expansion that it is now the motocross equivalent of Silverstone. It is increasingly hired out to big clubs which hold major events with top riders on much noisier bikes."

If CDC does nothing to enforce planning law and control the growth of the track, Hornton PC will seek a judicial review in the High Court and has formally advised CDC of this.

People from five villages have supported the Parish Council's stance with many writing to CDC's planning department

opposing the LDC application and expressing their dismay at what the race track has become and Cherwell's failure to control it.

Matthew Barrett, a CDC planning solicitor, replied to all: "I can say that an active enforcement investigation is in progress and the aim is to bring about a proper solution as quickly as possible but it remains crucial that the alternatives and all the potential consequences are considered and thought through."

Hornton waits!



Aerial view of the site

STOP PRESS... The Parish Council would like to encourage everyone to refrain from parking on the bend outside the Chapel, due to safety concerns ...STOP PRESS

What a gift!

An amazing £2,600 was generously donated by the people of Hornton to St John the Baptist Church on its Gift Day on September 12. Here the Parochial Church Council expresses its thanks for the help it received.

Gift day at Church was amazing! Despite Covid restrictions we were able to entertain people to either morning coffee and cake run by the LWP or afternoon wine and nibbles run by the MWP (Men's Working Party!). Thanks to everyone who helped and everyone who so generously gave. So many people contributed on the day and over the following two weeks. Those little white envelopes just kept coming so that in the end this generous Hornton effort meant the Church had a grand total of £2600. Thank you to every single person who helped us reach this amount. It will really help us so much particularly in these difficult Covid times. THANK YOU!

Isabelle's industry

One hundred woolly hats and 100 pairs of mittens have been knitted by Isabelle Harris and sent to Samaritan's Purse for their November shoebox appeal.

"Thank you very much to everyone who donated wool," she says, "but I'm getting started again soon so more wool will be very much appreciated."

Comedy catch-up

from Anne Joyner

I'm pleased to report that we have a comedy, a cast and a brand new stage all ready to go for early 2021.

The comedy is called 'Act Naturally' by Giles Scott, and is set in a village hall where a committee are trying to save their Historical Society from financial ruin. Doesn't sound too far from home, does it?

The first few read-throughs have gone very well with a lot of comedic potential and all being well we hope to be able to perform in the Pavilion in January or February next year.

Just in case some of the measures are still in place we plan to stage it over two weekends, cabaret-style with people seated around tables at a distance from each other.

We're all very much looking forward to starting 2021 with a much needed laugh!

You're kidding...

Q: What did the first bonfire say to the second bonfire?

A: Fancy going out tonight?

An Omelette & Quiche joke

Happy village visitors

In October, Clerk to the Parish Council, Cindy Koberl, received the email below from Tony Jepps and his partner Mo. Cindy was happy to answer the questions of such an enthusiastic visitor.

What a wonderful village! My partner and I visited Hornton on a side visit from a Safari Caravan rally near Kington. Yes, it rained ALL the time!!

We were right royally entertained at the Dun Cow. The landlord was wonderful and we spent some time just talking about the effects of lockdown. By chance we came across the current issue of The Gossip. In it was the report of the horrendous fire in one of the thatched cottages. I am a retired NFU Secretary and was more than interested to read of the solution to the fire.

In the village, my eye was taken with the unusual gnomon (sundial) on the stone plinth on the village green. What was it in aid of and why was it built? I write a small travelogue for other members of the Safari Caravan Club and despite lockdown have been out and about seeing many a sundial. Are you able to advise?

We had a very generous meal at the Dun Cow and would have stayed even longer. It made a very wet day brighter.

Artweeks May Festival 2021

To register for ARTWEEKS 2021 visit www.artweeks.org

OXFORDSHIRE ARTWEEKS is open to ALL - amateur and professional artists/craft makers alike, galleries, community and charity groups that live or work in Oxfordshire.

Deadline for registering exhibition entries: 31st January 2021

(this is an extended deadline for 2021 only)

- May exhibitions will be required to be COVID SECURE.
- If circumstances cause last minute wholesale changes as they did this year, venues will then be able to choose to mark themselves as Open/Open by Appointment only (as well as postponed/closed).
- Alongside the physical festival, Oxfordshire Artweeks will host a virtual festival over the same period.
- As it is unlikely the festival guide can be distributed in print in the normal way in 2021, it will be produced in digital versions only.

DATES for the 2021 festival are 1st-23rd May

North Oxfordshire May 1st -9th [3rd Bank Holiday Monday]

Oxford City May 8th - 16th

South Oxfordshire May 15th - 23rd



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Cathy Hattam

Hornton's singer songwriter and photographer Cathy Hatton describes a challenging but fulfilling life with a promising future.

Cathy, 51, grew up in Great Rollright. After leaving school she studied Art and Design at Banbury Tech before taking a three-year degree course in Art and Social Context at Dartington College of Arts. Moved by the plight of children in Romanian orphanages she was an aid worker in that country for two years, funded in part by her photography. Returning to the UK she worked for Central Horse News, the publication produced by her sister, Barbara Gadd. In the 1990s she set up her own business as an equestrian photographer and will continue with that when Covid restrictions permit whilst also pursuing a career as a singer songwriter. Cathy has two children: Jessie (20) and Sebastian (13).

"I get up when my two dogs get up, usually around 7.30. Breakfast is nearly always the same: Wheetabix, banana, a smoothie and lots of cups of tea. Then the dogs and I walk along the Hornton valley to Bill Bailey's field where I tend to our two ponies.

I love the valley. The small lake there, shaped like a heart, was the inspiration for my song *Love Heart Lake*. As I walk I get ideas for songs and record them on my phone memo. I've written songs and piano pieces for years but until recently I didn't have the courage to share them with

people. Lockdown changed that for me. I thought: life is too short; I must do what I feel I have to do. Now I'm recording my piano pieces, which are contemporary classical, and also my songs, best described as folk but not traditional.

So some days, I cycle over to Woodworm Studios in Barford St Michael where my albums are recorded. I have a tiny budget (my income from equestrian photography vanished overnight) so if I'm recording I will have practised for hours at home beforehand so no time is wasted. Two albums are almost ready for release: the piano album is called *The Things That Matter* and the song album will be called *Flower*. They will be available on my website and on Spotify, Amazon, iTunes and Apple.

As an introduction to the albums I've also released five singles on Spotify and other online platforms and I hope to have a Christmas single out in the next few weeks.

When I get home with the dogs Sebastian will be up and I get his breakfast: baked beans and cheese on toast and a mango and orange smoothie. Sebastian is being home schooled, as was Jessie, now in her third year at Falmouth University, so I'll help him with his online course. He's an intelligent boy with huge

natural curiosity. If his interest is provoked, there's no stopping him.

Sebastian is passionate about skiing and would ski every day if he could but he needs a little persuasion when it comes to us walking the dogs. So we do that later in the day and then have an evening meal together. I play the piano when I can, often between cooking the dinner, washing up and admin-type things while Sebastian makes contact online with his friends that he's known for years. Then we light a fire and watch a movie.

Given half a chance, I'm in bed by 9.00pm but the dogs and cats often have a different agenda, especially if our youngest cat brings in a mouse.

In September Cathy undertook a 600-mile round trip cycle ride from Hornton to Falmouth. She did it to visit Jessie, to raise money for her album recordings via a crowd-funding site and also to highlight environmental issues.

It proved to be a tough ride at times. Her satnav took her to some strange places, including through fields, and high winds and rain some days meant delays. The hills in Bath, Devon and Cornwall were "challenging – like Sun Rising Hill round each corner". But it wasn't until she reached Sibford on her return journey that she had her first puncture. She walked the rest of the way back to Hornton.

The inner strength and courage Cathy demonstrated in completing the long ride come, she believes, from caring for her mother Hilda in her final years and, in particular, in her final days. "I always feel my mum and dad with me, whatever the challenge," she says.

Boxing clever

Lindy Bridgeman expresses her thanks for the terrific response to the Church's harvest collection.

On behalf of Hornton PCC and the Banbury Young Homeless Project may I say a huge thank you to everyone. You did not fill just **one box** with long-life food on October 11, as we had hoped, but boxed really clever and filled a massive **five**. It was an amazing response and beyond our wildest dreams! The boxes were immediately delivered.

Recently I have learnt more and more about BYHP and they are by no means only a food bank but a charity that operates in Banbury, Bicester, Brackley, Chipping Norton and surrounding villages. They support young people from 15 -25 and their families through all sorts of difficulties. They provide counselling, family mediation, help with employability, housing advice...the list goes on. More information is available from fliers at the back of the church.

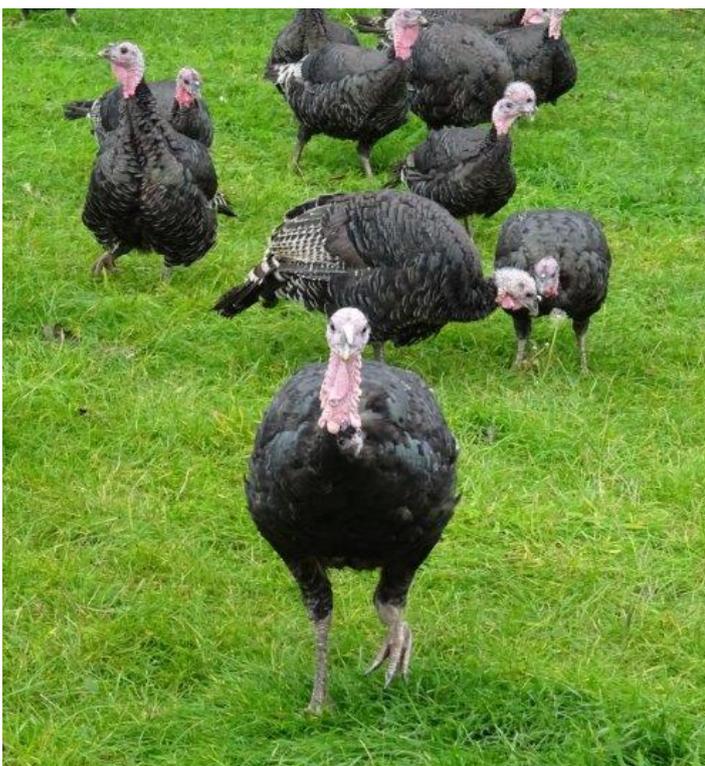
On the farm



It has been a difficult year up at Hornton Grounds Farm. Owners Graham and Catherine Vint could be forgiven for feeling assailed on all sides!

“First it was the lockdown which, in one fell swoop, shut down our successful, award-winning B&B business,” said Graham. “Then the accelerated activity and noise nuisance from the much expanded Wroxton Motocross site, adjacent to our land, became almost unbearably intrusive. Finally, to add insult to injury, we discovered in October that a planning application had been made to Cherwell District Council for a 1.85 acre fuel depot just off the A422 and only six metres from our farm boundary.”

When they bought the farm in 2009 little did Graham and Catherine realise that some 10 years later they would have these problems to confront. They came to Hornton from Jersey where Graham had grown up. He met Catherine at Seale Hayne Agricultural College in Devon and after they married they returned to Jersey and established a Jersey dairy herd. One of their cows became the UK’s champion Jersey milk producer.



“We fell in love with Hornton Grounds the moment we saw it,” said Catherine. “It seemed the perfect place for us to realise our ambition of setting-up a self-sustaining farming cycle which would enrich the soil, encourage biodiversity and, through employing pasture-for-life principles, produce superior quality food.”

It was also the Vint’s mission to offer a young person with an interest in pasture-fed livestock the opportunity to become established as a tenant farmer. Their first attempt failed but in 2006 Will Whallen came to Hornton Grounds and 18 months later he took on the tenancy.

“Will is a very hard worker and in addition to producing cereals and 100% pasture-fed beef and lamb he now also has 1,000 Kelly Bronze turkeys being fattened for Christmas,” said Graham. The turkeys are free-range and go into the barn only to feed and at night.

With Will well established at the 87-hectare farm, Catherine and Graham are able to focus on their B&B and livery businesses. “We re-opened Hornton Grounds to B&B customers in mid-July and in August and September were busier than we have ever been,” said Catherine. “We have had more bookings than in previous years and guests are staying for longer.”

The Vints have also sought to reduce their reliance on fossil fuels. They have installed a carbon neutral biomass central heating boiler in the Grade 11 listed farmhouse and set a 50kw photo voltaic array on a new farm building roof which provides green power for the national grid. They have also installed a Tesla Power Wall 11 which means that for most of the summer they were able to run the house off grid using stored solar power instead. “Every day the sun shines we smile,” said Catherine.

“So despite the challenges we have had to face this year, it certainly isn’t all doom and gloom. We count our blessings in being able to live in this beautiful part of the world where wildlife abounds and we have the wonderful village of Hornton on our doorstep.”



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(Just off the A422 Stratford Road)



Eight-and-a-half keen cleaners turned out on the morning of September 26 to collect litter and smarten up the village. They were Kevin and Jane Wain, Carol and Andrew Overton, Steve Woodcock, John Abbott and John and Laurie Furneaux with their grandson Eddie.

The clean-up usually takes place in the spring but was postponed until September because of the coronavirus. The delay made it a harder task than usual, particularly on the top road where verges with thick growths of grass and weeds concealed the many bottles and other rubbish regularly flung out of passing cars!

Not another!

As if one planning controversy was not enough, Hornton now faces another.

Hard on the heels of the Wroxton Motocross planning dispute, comes an application for planning permission from Certas Energy Ltd and FINSCO Property Company Ltd. They seek to build a fuel depot with ancillary offices plus the installation of plant and hard standing on the site of Hornton Grounds Quarry.

Objections to the proposals have flooded in to Cherwell District Council's planning register website from people living within a wide radius of Hornton Grounds. The reasons for their objections are many and varied and include noise, road safety, environmental issues and the sheer absurdity of establishing a commercial fossil fuel operation in such an unspoilt rural spot.

The target decision date for the application was originally November 3 but is understood to have been extended and will now be after *The Gossip* has gone to press.

Rubbish!

No it isn't; this is straight from the horse's mouth. Jimmy Upstone, waste services development officer for Cherwell District Council's Environmental Services, has advised *The Gossip* that Christmas and New Year bin collections 2020/21 will be as follows.

The last collection before Christmas will be green bins on Monday December 21. Blue and brown bins will be collected on Saturday January 2. Bins must be put out by 7.00am.

Collections will return to normal after the Christmas and New Year period when extra recycling in clear sacks and cardboard boxes will be collected if left next to your blue recycling bin. Small household batteries and small electrical items will also be collected if left on top of any bin lid.

Real Christmas trees (without decorations) will be collected from next to your brown bin in the New Year.

Call for Hornton open gardens 2021!

We took a break this year but our last event in 2019 raised an amazing £2042 for Katharine House Hospice and village causes. This is not the National Gardens Scheme Yellow Book but fundraising for local good causes and your garden can be small, middle-sized or even large. Seven gardens and the allotments opened last time and it would be great if even more opened in 2021.

Some of those who opened their gardens in 2019 have already agreed to open again and we are looking at a Sunday in late June or early July - with teas, of course. Horley has already decided to open but of course any opening will depend on how things look by then in terms of the virus.

Do contact me if you would be willing to open or might be persuaded. There is plenty of time to get your garden in shape; please don't rule it out.

Lynn Corke

e-mail: lynnjcorke@aol.com

Telephone: 670673

Christmas raffle

It is possible that the Ladies Working Party will not be able to stage their usual Christmas Fayre at the Church this year because of the pandemic. But never fear, there will still be a raffle.

During November, Isabelle Harris and Clare Fox will be going house to house in the village selling raffle tickets. If last year is anything to go by, the prizes will be amazing. But donations of prizes are needed; either food items to go in hampers or gifts. All will be very gratefully received by Isabelle or Clare.



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Haunted Hornton

Ghostlike figures roamed the village on Halloween but before long they had returned to their human forms and were safely tucked up in bed. Not so for some apparitions who, as this Gossip feature reveals, continue to make appearances from time to time.

Do you believe in ghosts? Whatever your beliefs, there's no doubting the sincerity of those who are sure they have seen one. Some of their stories, told to their children and grandchildren, are recounted here.

Seventy-two years ago a baby boy lay in his cot in an upstairs bedroom of Mill Cottage on Holloway. A small dog dozed on the floor beside him. Downstairs in the living-room, the child's mother, being kept company by her sister, knitted and chatted as she waited for her husband to return home from the pub.

The two women heard the sound of boot on boot scraper and one said, "He's home early". The front door was heard to open, a cold draught was felt and someone was going upstairs. Unsettled, the women hurried upstairs and found nothing, just the baby still asleep and the dog barking with its hair standing on end.

The two women were Hazel Burden, married to Harold, and Vera, married to Bill Cartledge. The baby was, of course, Paul Burden, firstborn of the six children that Hazel and Harold were to have.

"My mother was an honest, down-to-earth person," said Paul. "She didn't, on this occasion, claim to have seen a ghost but she certainly believed that a ghostly presence had been in the cottage."

Many years later Hazel did see a ghost, this time at the Red Lion on Millers Lane and this sighting was not the only one there has been there. "For some years, Mum was a cleaner at the Red Lion where there was a live-in housekeeper, a Mrs Jackson from Lancashire," said Paul. "One day Mrs Jackson reminded Mum that it was her leaving time but Mum explained that she was waiting to clean the bathroom and couldn't because someone had just gone in there." Apparently, Mrs Jackson asked Hazel to describe the lady and was told that she was wearing a long white dress. "Ah, it's only the old lady," said Mrs Jackson, knowingly.

Some months later, Hazel took her youngest child, four-year-old Lynne, to work with her. When Hazel went to open the bathroom door, Lynne said "You can't go in there; a lady has gone in," and this time it was Hazel who replied knowingly, "It's only the old lady!"

Fast forward a few years and builders are working at Thorn Cottage. There's a frantic knocking on the front door and, on opening it, the builders are confronted by a screaming woman who then runs off. She returns later to apologise. "I live at the Red Lion and I saw a ghost," she said.

Shortly afterwards, the same builders were tidying up before the Easter break and burning rubbish in the back garden. A burning cement bag was caught by the wind and blown on to the thatched roof of the Red Lion which was destroyed. "Since then, no-one has seen ghosts there," says Paul.

Pete Bebb, the current owner of the house, confirms this. "None of us have ever seen anything ghostly in the house. Old houses always seem to have this vibe but actually we've always found the place rather warm and welcoming. Having said that, we did have a knock on the door some time back from an old chap who used to live here when he was a boy. He asked if we had seen the ghost, implying that he had. Personally, I think the ghost flew out of the house when the roof burnt down in the 1990s."

It was in the early 1960s that the Red Lion ceased to be a pub and many changes were made to it. One couple who lived there were the Yates whose daughter, spending a Saturday evening in the sitting-room with her boyfriend, saw an apparition coming through the door carrying a light. It disappeared through a wall, following what would have been the old route through the pub. The boyfriend ran out of the house and was never seen again!

A far more gruesome apparition, a headless corpse, was rumoured to have been seen from time to time on Holloway and to have possibly been the ghost of an old miller who was

murdered. A similar tale was told to Paul Burden by Mr Scannell, a builder who lived at Home Farm on Bell Street. "He was a very strong man, nicknamed Great Man, who had been a bare-knuckle fighter in his younger days," says Paul. "He was also a great story teller!"

Eric Turner was not of that persuasion. "Dad was a straight man, to the letter," said his daughter, Isabelle Harris. "He believed that he had seen a ghost and nothing would budge him from that conviction."

The sighting happened around 30 years ago when Eric was re-wiring Proffitts House on Millers Lane. The grade 1-listed house had been occupied for many years by the Wheeler family but Jeremy Black had now bought it and was making major improvements.

"Dad was there with other tradesmen for a few weeks," said Isabelle. "After a while, they realised that, after a day's work, their tools and pencils were being moved around. They all left at the same time so it couldn't have been one playing tricks on the others. Then Dad saw the ghost. He was dressed in Edwardian-era clothes, with leather gaiters like a farmer, and he had a big moustache. He wasn't scary, Dad said. He just calmly watched what they were doing as though checking that the work was done properly."

Isabelle and her mother, Audrey, were keen to see Proffitts House so went one Saturday when the workmen weren't there. They went into one bedroom – all fine – then another which Isabelle didn't like at all. It felt horrible. Telling her father this later that day, he told her that that was the very room where he had seen the ghost. "I felt chilled right through," said Isabelle.

When Roy and Fiona Bridgland moved into Proffitts House, Isabelle went back to the same bedroom, but felt nothing. "It seems weird but we have had no sightings or feelings of coldness in the house since we moved in," said Fiona. "Isabelle's answer to this is that the ghost must like us, which is nice."

There has been a paucity of ghost sightings in recent years – or maybe people are seeing them but keeping quiet about it. If the latter, please let *The Gossip* know your story so we can feature it in a future issue of our village newsletter.

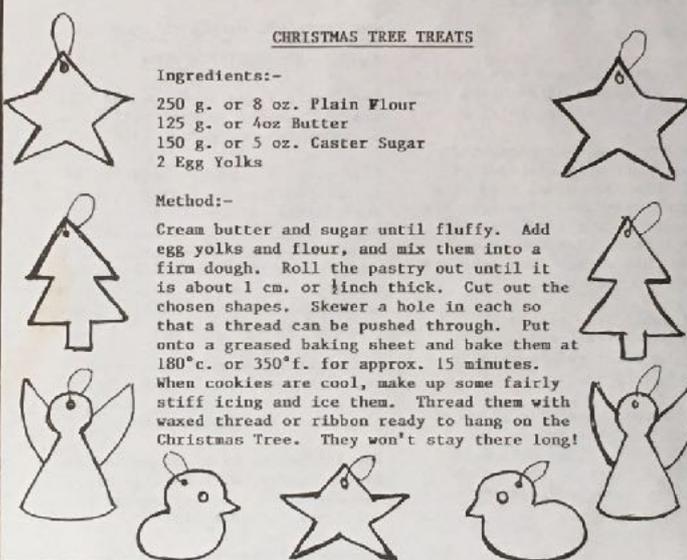
Looking back

This illustrated recipe for Christmas tree cookies appeared in the Autumn 1991 issue of *The Gossip*. It thoughtfully provided weights in grams and ounces. But who submitted it and who had a go and made the cookies? Answers will appear in the February issue.

CHRISTMAS TREE TREATS

Ingredients:-
 250 g. or 8 oz. Plain Flour
 125 g. or 4oz Butter
 150 g. or 5 oz. Caster Sugar
 2 Egg Yolks

Method:-
 Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg yolks and flour, and mix them into a firm dough. Roll the pastry out until it is about 1 cm. or 1/2 inch thick. Cut out the chosen shapes. Skewer a hole in each so that a thread can be pushed through. Put onto a greased baking sheet and bake them at 180°C. or 350°F. for approx. 15 minutes. When cookies are cool, make up some fairly stiff icing and ice them. Thread them with waxed thread or ribbon ready to hang on the Christmas Tree. They won't stay there long!



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Chris's cards

BARKS supporter Chris Woodcock has been making and painting a range of Studio B individual Christmas cards and greetings cards for sale to help raise funds for the animal charity. They feature dogs, cats (see picture), hedgehogs and rabbits and are £2.50 each. Call her on 670795 if you would like more information and she can send you pictures of what's available.



Hornton steps on the GAS for BARKS

Generous Hornton animal lovers were amongst the first to support the new GAS (Gadgets And Stamps) campaign, the latest fundraiser for Banbury Animal Rescue and Kindness Service (BARKS) when it had its opening weekend in October.

The donation of unwanted phones, small gadgets, coins, jewellery and postage stamps will raise vital funds for animal care and re-homing. BARKS Chair Ann Collins said: "We've deliberately launched GAS before Christmas and, if it's a success, we'll keep it going right through 2021. It's one of our new ways to maintain vital income, despite all the pandemic restrictions."

Items collected or donated by Horntonians can be dropped off as follows:

- Stamps – Maggie Higgins, Holloway House, the Green
- Other gadgets, jewellery, foreign coins, notes or small change – Chris & Steve Woodcock, Cromwells, Eastgate – tel 670795 if you would like them to pick up.

For full details of what can be recycled see below.

<p>Jewellery</p> <p>Unwanted gold & silver including damaged items Costume jewellery Watches</p>	<p>Coins & Currency</p> <p>Banknotes & Coins Any currency UK or foreign of any age/unchangeable currency</p>
<p>Mobile Phones, Cameras & Gadgets</p> <p>Mobile Phones . Video Cameras Old Film Cameras . Digital Cameras . Sat Navs Game Consoles . Games & Accessories . iPods MP3 Players . Tablet Computers</p>	<p>Stamps</p> <p>Loose / Single Stamps First Day Covers Presentation Packs</p>



Marathon man

Alex Birch describes the run up to this year's London Marathon and how he fared in the virtual event

In 2019 I ran 3:05:14 in the Manchester marathon and was allocated a Good-for-Age place in this year's London Marathon. The April event was rescheduled to October 4 in the hope that Covid restrictions would have been lifted but in August it was decided the event would need to be run virtually. With so much training in the legs I decided to give it a crack although it was a constant struggle to get excited about the prospect of running alone for 26.2 miles.

The morning arrived and one look out the window confirmed the weather would not be on side. I pushed back my planned 7.30am start to 10.30am, which proved to be a good call since the rain eased up and the wind dropped a little.

The London Marathon team had developed an App that simply needed to be started and it would tell me when the distance had been covered. It also had pre-recorded cheers to celebrate passing London landmarks which made me chuckle and passed the time.

We were also sent numbers to attach to the front and back of our running vest. This turned out to be a stroke of genius because walkers and drivers alike stopped to cheer me along the route. In fact, with Kate popping up at strategic points along the route with copious supplies of jelly babies and my good friend (and fellow coach) Richard H tracking my progress and keeping me on focus I can honestly say I started to enjoy the experience.

I ran two 13.1 mile loops forming a large triangle, the northernmost point being the top of Edgehill, with the Tysoe/Shenington crossroad and the Alkerton turn on the Stratford Road marking the southern tips of the route.

A bout of abdominal cramp at mile 22/23 set me back a few minutes (truly painful) but I otherwise travelled the distance in less discomfort than any of my previous marathon attempts and to my relief it was all done and dusted in a time of 3:05:08, a full six seconds faster than last year. That was cause for celebration and Kate whisked me off to the DC for a couple of pints and a veggie roast. Happy days.

Although I'd been hoping to flirt with 3 hours, given the unusual circumstances I walked home in relative ease and in decent spirits. There's always next year!





Tennis takes off

Amy Harris describes how a new tennis initiative has taken off in Hornton

Godwin Abah at 'Inspire to Win' and I have been working in collaboration with JUMPA to launch a new tennis school in Hornton.

The venture began with an Open Day at the beginning of September on the JUMPA tennis court. The afternoon consisted of doubles and singles games as well as some fun activities for the younger children. All this was led by LTA accredited coach Godwin, who is now continuing to develop a programme of tennis lessons to be held in the village.

Lessons have already begun, ranging from individual adult training sessions to a Mini Red Ball group of 5-8yr olds. Godwin has also brought another coach on board called Pam, who is also very experienced and has been working with Godwin for many years.

It is fantastic to see people from the village playing on the court; hopefully this is only the beginning of much more to come. Godwin plans to continue with the current lessons through the winter season (weather permitting) and when spring comes will then launch even more options for people to get involved. This will include spring and summer camps for children, and group or individual sessions for adults.

The programme of lessons is open to anyone of any ability so of course please contact Godwin or me if you are interested in joining and watch this space to hear about new opportunities in the New Year.

Godwin - godwin_abah@yahoo.co.uk

Amy - amyharris.aih@gmail.com

Classes available after open event	Price per Hour
Mini Red - Ages 5 - 7 - Group Lesson	£9.00 each
Mini Orange - Ages 8 - 9 - Group Lesson	£10.00 each
Mini Green - Ages 8 - 9 - Group Lesson	£10.00 each
Yellow Ball - Age 10+ - Group Lesson	£10.00 each
Adult Classes - Group of 4 - Beginners and Improvers	£10.00 each (£40 per hour)
Adult Classes - Group of 4 - Advanced	£10.00 each (£40 per hour)
Individual Coaching - Any Age/Any Level	£35.00

All Prices Include £5.00 per hour contribution to JUMPA



Thanks from Cantlays

My husband Jonathan and I would like to thank the residents of Hornton for the warm welcome they have given our son Montgomery born during lockdown on the 6th July at the JR, Oxford. A little brother for Wilfred. We would especially like to thank our lockdown 'buddies' and neighbours Carole & Graham Campbell of Pudlicote and Lynne, Oliver, Carla and Sophie Fickling of Canada Cottage. It was incredibly reassuring to know help was nearby during this time.

Amy Cantlay, Angel Cottage

Geoff Greenhalgh



It is with sadness that we write of the death of Geoff Greenhalgh on August 10th. His immediate family held a very small ceremony, as he had wished, at the Sun Rising nature reserve and burial ground in Tysoe. His ashes were interred next to his wife Barbara.

Geoff and Barbara lived in Hornton for 30 years; having met at school, they were married for 64 years and had three children and three grandchildren.

Geoff was born in 1930 and was an engineer by profession. He was also a lifelong Manchester United supporter, played the trombone and enjoyed DIY and garden construction.

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Meet Dot and Bill

Evie Mortimer introduces us to her new business venture



Dot and Bill is my new online retail shop for women's clothing which is named after my wonderful grandparents!

I had the idea for the business a couple of years ago, and I thought: you always regret the chances you don't take - so here I am!

I have sourced the most fantastic brands, with great quality items that I select and buy in advance for each season. I have recently put an order in for summer 2021.

It is a great range of clothing. I like to think there is something for everyone's taste and style. There are some going-out options and there are some lounge-wear choices, and everything in between.

I am mainly online but am looking into hosting a pop-up event soon. Going into 2021, I hope to be able to join in with some shopping fairs and markets too. To browse the website go to www.dotandbillonline.co.uk.

Hunt alert?

Are you a dog walker or leisure walker who enjoys the footpaths and countryside routes around Hornton and neighbouring villages? If so, you may, like me and Bean, not relish getting unexpectedly caught up in the Hunt when they're out in this neck of the woods.

Since the incident in the village earlier this year, there is now a solution: Warwickshire Hunt have set up an alert list for any Horntonian who would like to be notified of the Hunt's plans to be in our area. It works - I was alerted to their Hornton/Ratley meet at the end of October.

Let me know if you would like the name of the Hunt contact so you can be added to the list. (The Hunt have requested we don't put out an FB post each time.)

CW

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A walk on the wild side...

Our summer visitors have gone, this year's fledglings are fully grown and independent and we are cleaning and re-filling our garden bird feeders ready for winter. However, we're not just setting up convenient feeding posts for all of our little favourites; we are also making life easier for our less popular feathered friends – the hawks and falcons which are collectively called a kettle of hawks or a cast.

In our area we may see three raptors: the peregrine falcon, kestrel and sparrow-hawk. They share physical characteristics: strong curved ripping beaks; long clawing toes with sharp talons; and strong muscular legs. Generally, falcons kill with their talons whilst hawks kill with a blow to the head. They have sharp eyesight and see about eight times better than humans. Their prey, voles, mice and rats, mark their territory with urine and faeces and the raptors are able to map their movements on the ground by seeing these markers.

All raptors are protected by law and conservation has been so successful that they are now classified as green on the UK conservation list. This continued protection is controversial since many of their prey birds are now on the endangered red list.

The sparrow-hawk is the smallest of the three, the male being somewhere between a blackbird and a collared dove in size and the female about 25% larger with grey bars on her chest. They both have rosy cheeks and live for an average of four years. Sparrowhawks are excellent bird hunters, catching small species like finches, sparrows and tits. Sometimes they ambush their prey from a perch, while other times they may fly low, suddenly changing direction and snatching small birds straight from our lawns and bird feeders.

Sparrow-hawks build messy stick nests in woodland and delay hatching until there are plenty of small birds around. The eggs then hatch in succession, so that if food is in short supply the youngest chicks will be sacrificed. The chicks are vulnerable to temperature and so the female will brood them constantly whilst being fed by the smaller, more agile, male. By about six weeks after hatching the chicks will be fully fledged and ready to disperse to their own territories.

The largest of the three hawks is the handsome peregrine falcon. It is dark slate-grey above and white below with black bars across its chest and belly. It has a white throat and cheeks and a strong, black moustache and mask. The average lifespan is six years.

Until recently, the peregrine falcon was only found in the north and west of the UK but over the last couple of decades it has been spreading south. It has found some unusual nest sites, including Derby Cathedral and the BT Tower in Birmingham and has been introduced into many UK cities including London to help control the feral pigeon population. The tall skyscraper city structures replicate the precipitous cliff edges that it would naturally nest in.

In contrast to its ferocious appearance the peregrine is a faithful mate and a caring parent, mating for life and guarding its nest and territory ferociously. It employs an eagle-like hunting method, circling high above the ground and reaching up to 200 mph when stooping from a great height, one of the fastest



Peregrine falcon



Kestrel



Sparrow-hawk

animals on earth. Their prey, usually pigeons and collared doves, are seized mid-air and carried to a plucking post.

The hawk that we see most often along the road verges and motorways is the kestrel. About the size of a pigeon, their preferred food is voles, field mice and small birds. They live for four years and nest in holes in trees, old buildings and abandoned crows' nests. Both parents feed the young and the males and females have similar plumage. They have a remarkable ability to hover, even in strong winds.

The impressive hunting skills of falcons have always fascinated mankind and they have been thought of as royal birds in many civilisations throughout the ages. They were royal birds in Ancient Egypt and in Greek mythology the hawk was Apollo's messenger. In Polynesia the hawk is a prophet bird and associated with healing powers. Our Royal Family however have preferred to keep racing pigeons and do their hunting on horseback!

Falconry is a sport widely practised, especially in the Middle East. Falcons can change hands for enormous sums of money; recently in Riyadh a peregrine falcon (Shaheen) sold for 106,000 US dollars.

Falcons get their own passports and it's common practice for them to travel by plane between the various Emirates and as far as Pakistan, Morocco and Syria. They must have their own seat. The business class cabin of a Flydubai flight in April 2015 was reserved purely for falcons and on Qatar Airways you can take up to six birds in economy.

We don't have to go far to find out more about falconry as we have one on our doorstep in Warmington on Fir Tree Farm, beside the campsite situated on D'Arcy Dalton Way. Visit <https://www.firtreefalconry.co.uk> for details of several interesting experiences on offer – unfortunately not available at the moment of course, but something to put on the ever expanding list of things to do in 2021

Birdbrain



Parsnip & apple soup

Serves 6

Parsnips are rather a love 'em, hate 'em thing but this National Trust recipe does not have the full undiluted parsnip flavour and has the advantage of using some of those plentiful apples which have been around this autumn. You do not need to be too precise about the ingredients and can adjust to taste. Also the sage oil is optional but pretty! Good for an autumn/winter lunch.

Ingredients:

30 ml vegetable oil	300g apples, peeled, cored and sliced
200g chopped onion	10g vegetable bouillon or 1 vegetable stock cube
2 cloves garlic, minced	Salt and pepper
1 tsp ground nutmeg	80ml rapeseed oil
80g parsnips, peeled and chopped	10g fresh sage, finely chopped

Method:

1. Heat the oil in a large pan. Add the onion, garlic and nutmeg and saute for 5-10 minutes until softened.
2. Add the parsnips and apples and saute for another 5-10 minutes.
3. Dissolve the bouillon in a litre of boiling water and add to the pan. Cover and bring to the boil. If necessary, add enough water to cover the vegetables and then simmer gently for 20 minutes or until the parsnips and apples are softened (probably less).
4. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly, then blitz with a stick blender (such a useful thing!) until the mixture is smooth. Add more water if the soup is too thick and season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. If you want, place the oil and sage in a saucepan over a medium heat and warm through until the sage begins to sizzle. Remove the pan from the heat and leave the oil to cool. Drizzle the green oil over the soup when you serve it.

Enjoy!

Lynn Corke

Play Street Tag

A fun, free smartphone app that offers rewards for exercise has been launched by Oxfordshire County Council.

Street Tag turns exercise into a game; a family-friendly one that rewards primary schools, families, individuals and communities for physical activities such as walking, running, and cycling. It is turning streets and parks in Oxfordshire into a giant virtual playground.

For more information on how to play, head to www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/streettag

The Gossip

The copy deadline for the February issue of *The Gossip* is Thursday 28 January 2021 - submissions please to abbott@hornton.myzen.co.uk. To advertise in the next issue, please contact Cindy Koberl at ckoberl@btinternet.com.

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