

The Gossip

H O R N T O N

ISSUE 131

NOVEMBER 2023

Halowe'en Stories

The Church Porch

Years ago, when I was a teenager, my mate and I were 'hanging out' in the village one evening after dark - too young to go to the pub and too old to sit indoors with Mum and Dad. It started to rain, so we snuck into the Church Porch - the door didn't used to be locked in those days. The Church was in complete darkness and there was no-one around. We were sitting on the stone ledge, (we didn't know it isn't a seat but a coffin rest!) the door into the Church was closed and we closed the outer door in case anyone noticed it was open.

Suddenly I thought I heard a noise. "Did you hear that?" I asked my mate. "No", he replied, but that made us both keep quiet and listen. Then suddenly the latch on the inner door to the empty, dark Church went up with a rattle. I don't know if the door actually opened, and we didn't actually see anything.....because we were up and out of there like greased lightning!

Told to the Gossip by an Anonymous Hornton Grown-Up

Tinker Tank

When I was in my early twenties I was going down Tinker Tank one evening to the Pub. It was dark but that had never bothered me before. I went through the kissing gate at the top and after a few steps felt an overwhelming urge to look behind me. On the Red Lion side of the path just by the kissing gate I could just make out a pale grey blob. I'm not ashamed to say I felt a surge of pure fear. I didn't want to go back that way so I took off down Tinker Tank as fast as my legs could carry me. I burst into the Pub and tried to look calm, but Eli - who some of you might remember used to walk to the Pub every night - took one look at me and said "You just saw the grey lady in Tinker Tank, didn't you? I've seen 'er a few times meself."

Dan Joyner

The Ghost at the Mill

At the early part of the 1950's for a short time Hazel, Harold and baby son Paul Burden lived at the Mill House, which was next to the windmill at the top of Holloway.

On Saturday afternoons Harold played football for Hornton Village team. After the match he would go with the team for a drink at the Dun Cow before walking home up Holloway. Harold's sister Vera, lived in the village.

This particular Saturday, Vera had walked up Holloway to the Mill House to spend the afternoon with Hazel and baby Paul. The women were sitting in the kitchen having a cup of tea and a chat while Paul was having an afternoon nap upstairs. Both women clearly heard what they thought was Harold scraping his boots outside on the boot scraper. They said to one another, "Harold's home early."

All of a sudden the kitchen door blew open with a gust of wind. Bright sunlight came streaming in. Something looking like a cloud floated by them and disappeared through the closed stair door. They next heard footsteps going up the stairs. Their little dog was upstairs in the room where Paul was sleeping. The dog began barking furiously.

They both jumped up and rushed upstairs into Paul's bedroom to find the little dog by the baby's cot, barking his head off. The hairs on the dogs back was all standing on end. There was no-one there. The dog was very frightened, but baby Paul was sleeping soundly.

Hazel and Vera said to one another "I think we have just seen a ghost."

Paul Burden

Letter from the EDITOR

With autumn here it's the time of year when we're all trying to get through the million and one jobs in the garden that need doing before winter sets in. Several people have mentioned that it might be a good idea to recap 'The Rules' - or should that be 'The Good Neighbour Policy'!

BONFIRES:

- Not at all if your immediate neighbours are thatched.
- For everyone else - after 6pm with the wind in a favourable direction.
- Fast and Furious - none of this smoky smouldering for a week or so.

MACHINERY:

- Never on a Sunday.

And that's it! Top tip - bag up damp fallen leaves in heavy duty bin liners, tie them up securely, heap them up in an out of the way spot and forget them. By next Autumn you'll have sacks of lovely free crumbly leaf mulch top dressing.

Anne Joyner

The Gossip

The copy deadline for the next issue of *The Gossip* is Friday 5 January 2024. Please send your ideas or submissions to Anne Joyner at thehorntongossip@aol.com. To advertise in the next issue, please contact Ni Marot.

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

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Annual Hornton CROQUET TOURNAMENT



This is the 7th year that we have held a croquet competition on the football field at the Pavilion and it is always well supported. Thanks to some very tight mowing by Glen Walther the grass was in good order.

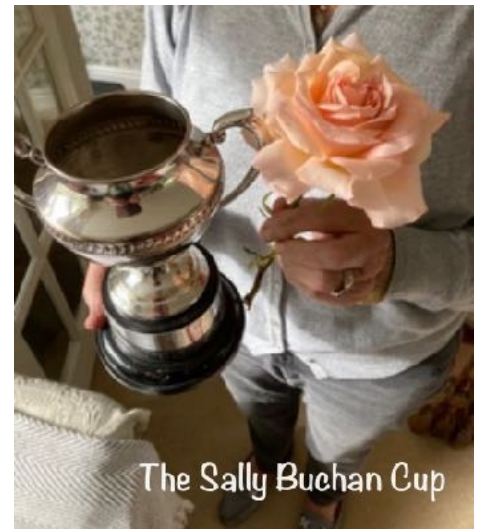
This year we had 20 teams of two enter and with other visitors we were over 50 people enjoying a great afternoon. The bar was open, tea by request with great cakes on offer. Tuition was available, but some of our regular family groups needed no introduction to the game and its tactical and competitive spirit.

Graham and Jan Hall ran the competition desk with David and Jane Martin doing the bar and Carol Overton and Jo Langton running the raffle.

The weather was kind to us, so a prompt start on all 5 lawns was possible at 2pm with the final knock out round being played at 5.30pm....it was all very tense. The Wain family had done extremely well through the afternoon and in the end it was Kevin and Jain Wain who pipped Nicholas Spencer and Charlotte Smith to the post and were the winners. Jane said that she was delighted to win, but that being a "non competitive person, it was the taking part that really counted."

Andrew Overton presented the cups and thanked everyone for coming and helping to create a great atmosphere. A total £497 was raised to help maintain the Pavilion.

Andrew Overton



3H's Gardening Club Flower & Produce Show

Saturday 12th August was a sunny day and despite this year's many gardening challenges the 3H's were able to field an impressive display of vegetables, flowers and houseplants.



Mike Patching, the Chair, told *The Gossip* " Considering the weather the vegetables and flowers did remarkably well. This must be the year of the giant vegetable, with 40cm long cucumbers and similar length beans, flawless potatoes and extraordinary onions."

Malcolm Brown from Adderbury judged the vegetables and declared Malcolm Cross the overall winner of the Vegetable Cup, with Emma Hamer a worthy runner up.

The Flower Class was judged by Ros Eley from Horley with Linda Cross winning the Eileen Lewis Cup for her flower examples and, once again, Emma Hamer was a worthy Reserve. Glenys Griffiths won the Silver Salver for her Flower Arrangements.

The Cooking Cup was won by Cath Bellamy with Jan Hall winner of the Reserve Cup.

Both Rohan and Reuben Singh (pictured opposite) won prizes for their Gardens in a Seed Tray, and Patrick and Eric Harris kept the Harris flag flying with their prize-winning gingerbread men.

Sue Patching won the Sally Buchan Cup for a single rose. This Cup has a strong Hornton connection as it is awarded in memory of 3 H's founder member and much loved Hornton resident the late Sally Buchan. Mike Patching, the Chair says "I am told by the

members that Sally never specified what sort of bloom should win but that it should be a single specimen, but she always graduated to the Roses, so we will maintain the tradition. The rose in the picture is called 'A whiter shade of pale' from David Austin".

The winner of the President's Cup for the best plant exhibit was the Chair, Mike Patching, and finally Emma Hamer scooped the Shield for the Exhibitor with the most points.

Mike went on to say "The gardening club has about 40 members from Horley, Hornton and Hanwell. We are always looking for new members, ideas, speakers and places to visit so if you live in any of the villages in the Ironstone area, then please come along, you will be very welcome.

It happens on the second Tuesday in each month in Hornton Pavilion. It's a light hearted friendly group where garden problems and ideas are discussed with a visiting expert in some aspect of horticulture. We have quizzes, a bring and buy gardening stall, and a useful exchange of topical and seasonal ideas. We have an Annual Giant Pumpkin Competition every Autumn with this year's due to be judged at our October meeting on 10th October."

Anne Joyner



Lest We Forget...

A Local Hero



With every year that goes by we lose more witnesses to the Second World War. Last August one of Hornton's own local heroes died aged 100 in a care home in Weston-Super-Mare where he chose to live with a friend, an ex Spitfire pilot. He was believed to be one of only two survivors of his regiment who saw active service.

Reginald Charles was born in Hornton on 1st February 1923, to Violet and Clarence, farmers, and christened in St John the Baptist Church in April 1923.

Conscripted in 1942 at age 19 into the Army, he was first posted to Northern Ireland. At 21 this farmer's son from peaceful Hornton found himself in Arromanches, Normandy with the 1st Ox and Bucks Infantry in action near Caen. Reg drove a Bren Gun Carrier coming under constant fire - who knows, perhaps his experience driving tractors over muddy ploughed fields gave him an advantage over the other lads. In August the Army broke out of Normandy and fought their way through Belgium to

Holland, where his battalion took part in ground operations to reach Arnhem.

On Christmas Day 1944, a long, long way from Violet's Christmas dinner and carols round the fire, his battalion reached the Ardennes to join the Battle of The Bulge and stem the enemy's advance.

Conditions were described as 'atrocious'. 'For many days allied air support was impossible. Reg drove an armoured personnel carrier, delivering rations and ammunition to the front line and returning with casualties to be evacuated. Where mines had been cleared the tracks were lined with white tape. This was hard to see in the snow so Reg became adept at steering with one hand and

running the tape through his fingers with the other.'

Reginald's obituary in the Telegraph continued 'In the Battle of Reichswald Forest his Battalion was involved in heavy fighting against German paratroopers and armour before taking part in the forced crossing of the Rhine in March 1945. They entered Hamberg on May 4th, a few hours before a cease-fire was announced, bringing to an end the war in north-west Europe.'

Reg was demobbed in April 1946, and returned to work in Banbury supplying domestic coal and eventually owning the company, Palmer and Sons on Cherwell wharf. In later life he became a father, grandfather and great grandfather, and combined running a business with acting as a circuit steward for the Methodist Church and his work with the Banbury Rotary Club.

In February 2016 he was appointed a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur and on June 6th that year, at Pegasus Bridge in the grounds of the Pegasus Museum, Ranville, Normandy, he was awarded the medal.

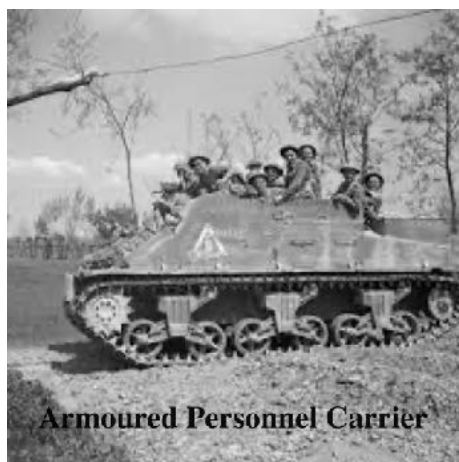


Ian Charles said "Dad taught my sister and I the merits of honesty and integrity, respect, tolerance, accuracy and a listening ear. It was his selfless giving to his family, friends and community over his enormous lifetime that I will remember and aspire to emulate."

His daughter Shiela Harding said "Just before he died he did a recording with ITV Meridian of the veterans' memories for next year's 80th anniversary of D-Day and the Battle of Normandy. Right up until the end he was still making sure people knew what the war was about."



Bren Gun Carrier



Armoured Personnel Carrier

Anne Joyner, with thanks to Roseanne Edwards, the Telegraph and the Imperial War Museum

Today's Local Heroes.....

Local Heroes aren't all in the past - we have our fair share in the village today, people who are prepared to challenge themselves for a good cause. Here are some of them.

Ann Hemmings & Julie Stanley

Ann Hemmings and Julie Stanley embarked on the Sponsored Walk for the Historic Churches Trust.

On Saturday 9th September, one of the hottest days this year, when the temperature reached 30°C, Ann and I donned suntan lotion, sunglasses, funny hats and walking boots and at 10am began our sponsored walk for Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust.

We started our journey at Shennington Church (which was locked, so took a selfie) and then on to Alkerton Church which was open, but another selfie was needed as there was no one to greet us. Undefeated we carried on along the hot dusty road to Balscote Church where a note was found, inviting riders and striders to the coffee morning in the Village Hall. This was a great relief in more ways than one, as toilets were available along with hot and cold drinks, cake and friendly people to chat to. Dragging ourselves away, we continued on through Balscote and along the busy Stratford Road towards Wroxton. Cars whizzed past us at an alarming speed, often blowing us sideways, so we diverted along a lane taking us past the business park and bringing us into Wroxton.

Wroxton Church was the next stop where we were greeted by a lovely young lady who offered us cool drinks and biscuits. After signing in we sat and chatted with her for a short while, enjoying the cool surroundings of the church. We then walked to the Catholic Church and went inside, but there were no greeters, (another selfie needed). We sat under the statue in the garden and ate our sandwiches. Refreshed, we continued along the very long and hot road to Horley. As we approached the Church, people passed us coming from the concert which had been held there. We went in and sat in the church to cool down.

We then continued on our journey, walking wearily through the village, down Clump Lane and across the fields towards home. As we came to the gate leading into the Piece, we stopped under a small tree and drank the last of our water and wondered if we had the energy to make it to the Church to sign in. Deciding this was a step too far, we slowly walked home, agreeing to sign in at the morning service next day.

Our efforts raised £300 for the Historic Churches Trust, and we would like to thank everyone who sponsored us.

Julie Stanley



Neil Madden

On 16th September Neil Madden completed a 24 hour relay run to raise money for Pans Pandas UK.

The run was organised by Gareth Costello, a parent who recently attempted to swim the length of Lake Geneva as his Pans Pandas Challenge Yourself effort. Unfortunately he had to be rescued due to hyperthermia setting in.

Gareth put together a team of seven people for the run, but unfortunately due to last minute illness and injury this was reduced to just four - Neil, Chris, Rob and Sharon. They gamely shared out the extra laps between them, starting at 12 midday on Saturday and continuing in relays through the night until mid-day on Sunday, managing to have someone on the track every hour. Neil ran a total of 24 miles with a step count of 77 thousand!

Their efforts have so far raised £1,102 via Just Giving/Gareth Costello/Pans Pandas 24h Run. Gareth said " We embark on this run as individuals coming together as a team, which in some ways feels similar to the Pans Pandas community, supporting each other, sharing our stories and ultimately understanding. It can be a lonely experience for both the children and the wider family suffering with these terrible illnesses and the support arm of the charity is sometimes a lifeline to parents."

Neil credits Alex Birch with helping him to train for this event.

"Don't know what PANS/PANDAS is? Download the PANS/PANDAS Stories podcast from Apple, Spotify or wherever you get your podcasts, or visit the website at panspandasuk.org"

Alex Birch

Alex was himself in training for a cycle ride from London to Paris. Alex is a qualified ride leader and this ride involved leading a team of four experienced riders.



I jumped at the opportunity to take on this 249 mile ride - with 10,350 feet of climbing - since one of the chosen charities is Solace Women's Aid, a charity which helps women and children in London build safe and strong lives, free from abuse and violence.

While I am a fitness instructor and triathlon coach by trade, this was my first three-day cycle event and I was a touch apprehensive. As it turned out the pace was gentlemanly, which made a pleasant change to the usual head-down, push-on approach I adopt when racing. As such, there was plenty of time to take in the gorgeous countryside both in the UK and in France, to savour the tastes and smells of idyllic village cafes and restaurants and, of course, to spend a great deal of time putting the world to rights with my fellow riders!



Not only was it a fabulous adventure, thanks to the generosity of friends and family I managed to raise just over £1,600. Cracking result. As the French say: "D'une pierre, deux coups!"

Alex Birch

Afternoon Tea

for Macmillan Cancer Support & Katharine House Hospice

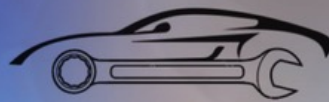


On Sunday 24th September the team of talented ladies, Cath, Julie, Isabel, Lynne, Ann, Jo and Sarah put on an amazing spread of edible delights in the Pavilion, washed down with free-

flowing Prosecco. Sixty people attended the event, and the afternoon raised a magnificent £813 for Macmillan Cancer Support and £300 for Katherine House Hospice.

The ladies wish to thank everyone who came and shared this very enjoyable afternoon.

Sarah Walther



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Hornton Football Club



Hornton FC continues to go from strength to strength as we begin another season in the top tier of the Banbury & Lord District League with our first game on Saturday 2nd September.

We have a number of exciting young players coming through, including Olly Rickards of Bell Street.

There are still lots of Hornton connections running through the side including the manager, Ollie Wright, who is grandson of locals Linda and Malcolm Cross; Dan Campbell, whose parents still live in the village; and Dave Taylor of Hadsham Farm. Glenn Walther and Mark Wright are still heavily involved at the Club with the former being Groundsman and the latter taking the duties of Secretary and Treasurer.

We will look to keep you updated with fixtures, results and forthcoming fundraising events. Please feel free to come and show your support on a Saturday whenever we are playing at home, the players would really appreciate that.

We also have a Facebook page where you can view up-to-date fixtures, results and pictures from the games taken by local photographer, Jon Huntbach.

Clubs & Things...

Keep Fit with Alex Birch

6.30pm Tuesdays in the Pavilion. £60 for 12 weeks (£5 pw) or £8 pay as you go. For further information contact Alex on 678504 or acw.birch@btinternet.com

3 H's Gardening Club

7.15pm every second Tuesday of the month in the Pavilion. £3 for visitors. Contact Mike Patching on mike.patching@btinternet.com for further information.

Kundalini Yoga and Meditation

6.15pm Wednesdays in the Old School, Horley. No need for previous experience. Contact Anne Owen on 07835086411 for further information.

Cribbage

7.30pm Wednesdays in the Pub. Friendly group, tuition available.

W.I.

7.30pm First Thursday of the month in the Chapel. A non-stuffy, friendly group from surrounding villages with a speaker and outings - bowling in October. No need to join before you visit, all ages very welcome.

Contact sallyspencer@gmail.com for further information.

History Group

7.00pm 2nd Thursday of every month in the Pavilion. Speakers, outings, annual sub of only £15.

Contact lauriefurneau@gmail.com or 670896 for further information.

Coffee and Chat

10.30am - 12.00 every Friday in the Chapel. There is a baby/toddler corner, so Carers and Babes are very welcome. Cakes, Bring and Buy and friendly company available.

Hornton Football Club

Keep up to date with fixtures via their Facebook Page: Hornton FC

Library and Puzzles

Free, exchange, borrow and donate. Any time in the Chapel, side door is open and turn left.

Chapel Hire

Contact Julie Stanley on julieharrystan@aol.com

Pavilion Hire

Contact Isabel Harris on 670304

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Finally, a few more dates for your diaries - Bingo evenings at the Pavilion, fundraising for each organisation:

The Chapel - 17th November

The Pavilion - 24th November

The Church - 1st December

We look forward to seeing you!

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Hallowe'en Joke:

Q: What did the caretaker shout as he jumped out of the broom cupboard?

A: **!!!! Supplies !!!!**

Around the world - in one night...

If a magic carpet picked you up and whisked you off to eat in Korea, Italy, Jamaica, Mexico, Thailand, America and France, you would travel more than 35,000 miles - or one and a half times round the world.

Alternatively, you could have popped down to the Dun Cow on the last Thursday in September and tasted the cuisines of all of those countries in just one evening by eating the pub's special *Around the World* seven-course tasting menu.

The dinner - created by DC's immensely talented chef, Rob Marshall - and the lucky customers were not disappointed: every course on the £40 menu was absolutely delicious.

We started off with Korean fried chicken in a bun, followed by carbonara tortellini from Italy. One of my favourites was the next course - sea bass and plantain in jerk sauce from Jamaica. That sauce was out of this world.



Spicy Tacos el Pastor from Mexico were followed by my favourite dish of all - Green Thai Curry. It was Thai curry alright, but not as you know it - for this was a dessert! It had all the flavours you would expect in Thai curry but was sweet and sensational.

We finished off with coffee and doughnuts from America - another dessert - and coffee and macaroons from France.

The sold-out dinner was so popular that Steve and Rebecca had to lay on a second sitting on the Wednesday, and there's another tasting menu later this month - Steve and Rebecca are still finalising a date.

Please pop into the Dun Cow and see them to reserve your place!

Christmas is coming...

The Ladies Working Party is hard at work planning the church Christmas Fair, which will take place on Saturday, 2nd December from 6pm. It is a fun evening with handmade novelty gifts, a produce stall, and tasty treats for sale. Mulled wine will again be available to add to your enjoyment. Children will have the bran tub to dip into as well as other games.

We would also like to invite the village to take part in our new Christmas Window Competition. Choose a window in your home that is easily viewed and decorate it with a Christmas theme, it does not have to be religious and it can be any size window. We will give you a number to display in it and so that people will know which window to look at, as some of you already decorate more than one window!

If you wish to enter please let Jo Langton know by the 11th November, as she has to prepare the map, it will also have a tear-off voting slip. A small charge will be made for the map. We will give you details of where to get the maps nearer the time. Windows will be viewed over the weekend of **16/17th December, between 3-7pm**. There will be a prize for the winner and runner-up. (joann.langton2013@gmail.com for entries).



The Hornton Village Christmas Card



For the last few years we have had a village Christmas 'card' up on the noticeboard. Instead of writing and delivering individual cards this is a way of wishing your Hornton friends and neighbours festive greetings and also doing something worthwhile for a good cause by making a donation to charity.

All you need to do is write your name and the charity of your choice on the list - as well as making the donation of course!

'Farmer Scrooge' at the Pavilion

Following the roaring success of their performance of 'Eddie and the Gold Tops', last April, the Baddapple Theatre Company will be bringing their slant on the Dickens' Christmas story to Hornton on December 22nd, when they present 'Farmer Scrooge', an original adaptation from the Charles Dickens story by Kate Bramley.

Have a good chuckle while the blustering, skin-flint farmer Ebenezer Scrooge gets his comeuppance and is forced to see the error of his penny pinching ways. Full of local stories and carols, puppets and mayhem, and original songs by Jez Lowe, plus a whacking great dose of seasonal bonhomie, this is a winter warmer to put a smile on everyone's face this Christmas.

Space is limited so book early!! Contact Pete Lemon on WhatsApp or pete.lemon@gmail.com to let him know how many tickets you'd like.

Adults - £12.50 under 16s - £8

Doors open and licensed bar from 7pm; 'curtain up' at 7.30pm.

Proceeds to The Hornton Pavilion and The Hornton Allsorts Drama Group.



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Hornton History Group

The group meets up monthly in the Pavilion or the Dun Cow on the second Thursday of the month. Our year is varied, with talks, town walks and visits to historic properties. As well as enjoying these outings our aim is to research stories and characters which illustrate Hornton's past. We then try to communicate this information to people in an engaging and interesting way.

Anyone fascinated by our village's history is very welcome to join the group. The annual membership fee is £15. Please contact Laurie Stewart Furneaux on 01295 670896 or email lauriefurneaux@gmail.com.

Hanwell Castle Living History Weekend

The results of excavations and historic research at the site of the renowned and magnificent 17th Century gardens at Hanwell Castle were brought together again this September in a weekend of archaeology and living history.

Many unique finds, including the country's finest collection of terracotta garden urns, were on display in a pop-up museum, and archaeologists were there to demonstrate their techniques. Visitors also had the opportunity to chat to Hornton's Ian Harris, a volunteer at the site, who was excavating an important area of the 'House of Diversion' area and finding pots and plasterwork from the historic building.

The Sealed Knot staged a living history camp, showcasing crafts of the period and offering insights into aspects of everyday life, from book binding to coffee drinking. Live music of the period was played and a dramatisation of the hunt for the Royalist agent Richard Allestree, who was resident at the castle in the 1650's, took place.

Laurie Stewart-Furneaux



Ian Harris



SIX WARRIOR WOMEN OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WARS, 1642-51

**A FASCINATING ILLUSTRATED TALK BY STEPHEN BARKER
INDEPENDENT HERITAGE ADVISOR AND PRESENTER**

***HORNTON'S ST JOHN'S CHURCH
THURSDAY 9 NOVEMBER AT 7.30PM***

**DURING THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR WOMEN WERE
NOT MEEK BYSTANDERS WHO TOOK NO PART IN THE
CONFLICT BUT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN A VARIETY OF WAYS,
CHALLENGING THE ORTHODOXIES OF THEIR DAY AND PERHAPS
OUR OWN PRECONCEPTIONS.**

**THIS TALK LOOKS AT SIX WOMEN WHO TOOK PART IN THE
FIGHTING, UNDERTOOK SPYING MISSIONS AND NEGOTIATED
DEALS WITH POLITICIANS. IT ALSO TOUCHES BRIEFLY
UPON CROSS-DRESSING SOLDIERS; WIDOWS SEEKING
COMPENSATION FROM PARLIAMENT AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS.**

ADMISSION £5. REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

A HORNTON HISTORY GROUP EVENT, OPEN TO EVERYONE

Comings & Goings

Our deepest sympathy to Kevin, Kate and Alex Matthews on the death of their dear wife and mother, Sara.

Congratulations to Maggie and Andrew Higgins on the birth of their second grandson, Benjie.

Welcome to Alison and Richard Jackson, the new owners of Norland House.

And welcome to Stuart and Samantha Proudfoot in Thorne Cottage.

We hope you will all be very happy in your new homes.

All Change at Norland House

After almost 9 years at Norland House, Roger and I are moving to mid-Devon on 1st October. We first chose Hornton because of its easy access to Birmingham and central London, but that is no longer needed. So, before we feel too old to do it, we are grabbing the chance to change our lifestyle and spend time in the unspoilt rural Devon countryside.

Our new home is a former Devon farmhouse, about a mile from a lovely traditional village. With access to both the north and south coasts, Cornwall, and some great attractions, we look forward to exploring our new home county. And my new business can be run from home, so no more commuting for me!

From the start we knew Hornton was special. As we unpacked our boxes, we could hear carol singers making their way up the hill on a cold December night. Many of those strangers quickly became friends and we have shared some great times together. They, and others we have met along the way, will remain friends after we leave, and we look forward to welcoming them into our new home. Community spirit does not happen on its own. It relies on tolerance of differences, along with the drive, time and hard work of those committed to keep traditions going and making sure no one is alienated. We could not say goodbye, without special thanks to Isabelle and Ian Harris; Sarah Walther, Paul Burden and their family; Julie Stanley; and Anne Joyner for the very many things they have organised and we have enjoyed. And to Chris Woodcock, who has tirelessly and often thanklessly battled to protect Hornton's boundaries and peace.

On 2nd October, Richard and Alison Jackson move into Norland House and start to make it their new home. We wish them well, knowing they will be welcomed into this wonderful place.

Cath Bellamy x

My First Car



Long before cars my brother and I had Vespa and Lambretta scooters and were part of the Mod movement in South West London. We would often put on our Parkas and drive down overnight to join friends in Brighton, stopping in the middle of Ashdown Forest in the freezing cold to recover our blood circulation before pressing on. Sometimes we would stop off at our parents' house near Lewis for breakfast, where my father would worry about why we were so often stopped in London by the police for speeding and also the increasing number of times that we had come off the bikes in minor accidents (about twenty times as I recall in my case).

In 1964 my father suggested we move on to cars for safety and very generously bought them for us (and, yes, we were incredibly spoiled). He gave us a choice and my brother very uncharacteristically chose a sober Mini saloon, but I chose a Mini Moke, both of which were designed by that genius, Sir Alec Issigonis. Although the Moke was designed originally to be a lightweight military vehicle, because of very limited ground clearance it could never challenge a Land Rover, and so became famously known for recreational use, especially on beaches.

With this purpose in mind I invited three of my friends to join me on a non-stop mad dash drive through France to St Tropez where one of them had a French relative. On arrival we stripped off and lay out in full sun for a whole day, following which we all had extreme sunstroke and slept for 24 hours straight. When we eventually emerged we spent a couple of days helping to hand paint the disassembled body parts of a Citroen 2CV, and then helped to put it back together again as if it was Meccano.

Later in life I did have a 2CV and still love their quirky originality to this day.

In fact I became totally infatuated with cars of all types and in my design career worked for many manufacturers including Porsche, Rolls-Royce, Bentley and Volkswagen on exhibition and architectural projects around the world.

Eventually after a year or so, becoming tired of the Moke's slow performance, I traded it in part exchange for a Lotus 7 (designed by Colin Chapman) but that's another story...

John Furneaux



Fewer than ten of these have ever been seen here; they are native to Siberia and central Asia, and one was spotted near the white chalk cliffs of East Yorkshire among the puffins and gannets. This sort of information is made available by Twitchers to the British Trust for Ornithology, and becomes more and more important as they assess the impact of climate change. There is an annual British Birdwatching Fair held in Rutland. There is also a British Rarities Committee, who minutely inspect all submissions before verification. On one occasion they were sent photographs of a rare thrush on a lawn. Their experts realised that the tail of the thrush was in the same position whether it was standing upright, or feeding. On close inspection they saw that it was a papier mache model. The name of the discredited spotter would be circulated to other Twitching organisations.

Non-competitive, ordinary bird watching is a wonderful excuse to be outside, anywhere and at any time or season, as our feathered friends are with us everywhere and at all times. Personally one of my favourite spots in all the world is a deckchair in my garden at 4.30a.m on a spring morning, drowning in the morning chorus.

Birdbrain - with apologies to any Twitcher readers offended by my slightly sarky tone.

The Twitcher

A member of the species *Homo Sapiens*, with a population of about two million here in the UK. They are migratory, often travelling thousands of miles by air, sea and land. They are sometimes solitary, but often flock together when moving to certain locations driven by the urge to look at birds. The Twitcher is easily recognisable, with dull coloured, weatherproof plumage, hats and a great deal of expensive portable kit slung around their necks and bodies. They are extremely competitive and territorial by nature. They communicate using a particular language i.e "The dude thought he'd gripped a crippler for his life list but I knew at once it wasn't my nemesis but a plastic." (The novice told me he'd definitely seen an extremely rare bird that I've never managed to see, but I knew at once that it had escaped from an aviary.)

Like their cousins the 'Train Spotter' and the 'Plane Spotter', they make detailed lists of the birds they have 'spotted', usually in tiny handwritten columns in portable notebooks. The lists may be split into groups, for instance 'county list', 'year list', but there will always be one overriding 'life list'. The aim is to amass a list or lists longer than any other Twitcher. The internet is an invaluable tool for the Twitcher. There are thousands of sites and streaming platforms available to share information and to post pictures, films and stories. The most popular of these sites is called simply Twitch. Many of these 'streamers' attract hundreds of thousands of followers the minute they 'go live' with a post, with people hoping that they can reach the live site before the bird moves on.

Competitive twitchers can submit the details of a spot to the '400 Club', a prestigious outfit run by bird book author Lee Evans. Mr Evans uses his mass of data and general knowledge of the top birders to verify the sighting and if it passes muster it will be recorded on that year's Top Spot.

Mr Evans holds the record himself, but in the last few years he has been under severe challenge by a dedicated young Twitcher called Adrian Webb. Adrian recently said that he had travelled two and a half thousand miles in the last few days and seen only two birds. Mr Lee remarked that the sightings were verified, but that Mr Webb wasn't married, didn't have a job and was being financed by his parents.

The rarest bird ever spotted in the UK was a small insignificant brown bird with a reddish tail called a Red Tailed Shrike.



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INGREDIENTS:

- 6 sound eating apples
- 6 lolly sticks
- 550g (1lb 3oz) granulated sugar
- 300ml (about half a pint) water

Have some unsalted nuts handy which you can toss in any left over caramel.

METHOD:

- Gently heat the sugar and water in a heavy based pan until all of the sugar is completely dissolved. Stir gently with a wooden spoon, if necessary and if there's any sugar on the side of the pan gently sweep this down into the mix with a wetted pastry brush.
- Meanwhile wash and dry the apples and spear with the lolly sticks.
- Prepare a flat baking tray with non stick paper.
- Fill the sink with a few inches of cold water.
- When the sugar has completely dissolved turn up the heat and let the mixture boil until it turns a caramel colour. Do not stir at this stage.
- Take the pan off of the heat and stand it in the cold water.
- Dip the apples in to coat and stand on the non-stick paper to set.

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH SUGAR:

- Be very careful as sugar gets super hot and not only burns but sticks to your skin. Not a suitable job for children - they'll just have to wait and eat the results.
- Only bring to the boil when all of the sugar has dissolved otherwise it will crystallise.
- Do not stir when it's boiling.
- Watch it at all times as it will burn very easily and be too bitter to use.
- Check the colour by taking off the heat, swirling the pan as the bubbles subside. Place back on the heat if you want it to be darker.
- Work quickly and carefully when the desired colour/temperature has been reached.
- Soft crack is 138°C and hard crack is 149°C if you have a sugar thermometer, otherwise be guided by the depth of colour.
- Work quickly when the boiling is stopped as the caramel will cool and harden quickly.



INGREDIENTS:

- Potato peel
- Vinegar
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Sea salt

METHOD:

- Peel some potatoes using a peeler and drop the peel into a bowl of cold water. Add a splash of light coloured vinegar and put the bowl in the fridge overnight. You could use a dissolved Oxo cube instead if you want a different flavour.
- Next day, drain the strips and pat them dry with kitchen roll. Put them back in the dry bowl and toss them with a tablespoon of olive oil and a generous sprinkle of sea salt.
- Bake on a non-stick flat oven tray at 200°C/180°C fan for 15-20 minutes, tossing occasionally.
- This works with carrot, beetroot and parsnip peel as well.
- Store in an airtight container.



There can't be many Horntonians who haven't enjoyed an excellent meal or a takeaway from our neighbouring Indian Queen. Our congratulations to the restaurant which has just won a prestigious award to add to their 2020 Tripadvisor 'Travellers Award'.

The Indian Queen restaurant on the Stratford Road, between Wroxton and Edgehill, was awarded 'Local Restaurant of the Year' at a ceremony at The Holiday Inn, Birmingham City Centre, on Monday August 14, with more than 400 guests in attendance. The event was the 12th English Curry Awards and recognised excellence in a range of categories.

The restaurant said 'Thanks to our locals and everyone who has supported us - hard work pays off. Another award to add to the collection.'

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