

Sydenham Newsletter



February 2016

Editorial

Welcome to our February Village Newsletter which covers the numerous activities that have taken place since early December. The two most important refer to both very sad and very happy news – the sad news being the untimely passing of Christine Quainton, and the happy occasion being the lovely wedding of Claire Ashfield and Andrew Payne, who we picture on our cover.

Paul Stancliffe has written about Christine and the beautiful service led by Serena on Tuesday 26th January, and has included the moving tribute delivered at the service by the then very small person she looked after nearly 40 years ago: how well Sydenham villagers responded to someone who was much loved in the village. Christine's sister Gillian and Pete have written a lovely 'thank you', in particular to the 'team' who supported them in the final weeks and with the funeral arrangements.

Claire, the eldest of the three Ashfield girls, completed the trio of family weddings held at St Mary's over the past five and a half years – in reverse order, by marrying Andrew Payne on Saturday 19th December – the start of a busy week for many but in particular Revd Joan DeVal. The weather was good for Claire to continue the tradition of walking the short distance from home at Cape Cottage, escorted by her father John and accompanied by the senior bridesmaids – sisters Kate and Tilly all looking beautiful and met by their respective children. All five played a special part as flower girls (Annabelle and Charlotte) and page boys (Thomas, Ollie and Harry). All had much fun especially exploring the altar as Claire and Andrew signed the register! Brother-in-laws Andy and Dan were ushers and ensured it all ran to military standards.

Whilst I refer to Revd Joan being busy, I know that the whole ministry team under Rector Maggie were all working hard with numerous services in the four parishes. A report of St Mary's Christmas services is on pages 4 and 5, with Joan leading most of them. However the team will have little respite as Lent commences on Ash Wednesday 10th February, which leads me into the reminder of Pancake Day racing in Brookstones the afternoon before, on Shrove Tuesday – see page 5 for full details. You will also see from the services listed opposite that Mothering Sunday is only four weeks away on 6th March and is a great opportunity for the children to show how much they love their Mums – come along to the 10am Family service when all the children will be able to pick up a pretty sweet scented posy to present to their Mums as a sign of their love and affection.

We have advance notice that Sydenham Cricket club are hosting a St George's Day fund raising supper in the OSR on Saturday 23rd April and Jason also reminds us that Sydenham Fayre, this year on Saturday 4th June, start their planning with a meeting in the Crown on Thursday 24th February.

Rachel has summarised the items discussed at recent Parish Council meetings, but I guess it's too early for them to comment on the conclusions of the Open

Evening held only last Thursday, to discuss producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Here in the newsletter we will be happy to share any thoughts presented and in fact villagers think there is indeed a need to have a Plan!

The Ladies of Sydenham WI have sent in their report and Anna has also been active in summarising the Book Club member's thoughts. I'm also delighted that Lizzie Archer has written again to update us on her Girl Guide trip to India, and a quiz night in the OSR is a great way to get people involved - well done Lizzie!

Finally, thank you to the supporter's of the OSR 100 Club and the special Christmas Draw. Well done to £100 winner Angela Tipping, another unsung fund raiser with her brilliantly decorated cakes, and to £50 winner Cyndy for her continuing support. We also include the February winners.

The next Newsletter will cover March and April so please contribute copy with Diary dates, February meeting reports and any other thoughts you may wish to have published. Can you pass your copy to members of the Newsletter team or by e-mail to royharry@aol.com by Friday 4th March.

Dates for your Diary in February and March

St. Mary's Church Services

*Services from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer are marked **

February

| | | |
|-------------|---------|--|
| Sunday 7th | 10.00am | *Holy Communion - Revd. Joan DeVal |
| Tuesday 9th | 3.30pm | Shrove Tuesday Pancake races outside the OSR, Brookstones. |
| Tuesday 9th | 7.30pm | Local St Mary's Church Meeting in the OSR |
| Sunday 14th | | No Service |
| Sunday 21st | 6.00pm | *Evensong - Revd. Maggie Thorne and Mark Humphrey |
| Sunday 28th | 10.00am | Songs of Praise - Church Wardens |

March

| | | |
|-------------|---------|---|
| Sunday 6th | 10.00am | Family Service for Mothering Sunday - Revd Joan DeVal followed by tea & light refreshments in the OSR |
| Sunday 13th | | No Service |
| Sunday 20th | 6.00pm | *Evensong - Revd Joan DeVal and Mark Humphrey |
| Sunday 27th | 10.00am | *Easter Day Holy Communion - Revd Joan DeVal and Mark Humphrey |

Christmas Services

Looking back over the various services celebrated here in Sydenham, we started with the Carol Service in mid December with Revd Joan DeVal doing the honours. We had a good attendance for this important service of Carols and seven lessons read by villagers Siobhan McKee, Toby Roe, Alison Isherwood, Mark Thomas, Gemma Ward (with Annabell helping!), Mark Oliver and finishing with Fiona Kermack. It was a lovely service followed by tea and cakes in the OSR.

The following Friday evening St Mary's hosted the Countryside Carol Service for the third year with guest organist Sarah Fairall and it was again a splendid service with Revd Joan.

Two days later on the Sunday, many of the congregation were scheduled to be at the big village wedding party, so we had decided not to hold a service on 20th December, but carols were sung by the choir the previous day at the lovely wedding of Claire Ashfield and Andrew Payne and at the following day's reception. Following the reception, early evening saw us singing round the Christmas Trees on the Green and we had a great turnout with half a dozen carols led by Chris Hood. Most people then trooped off to the Crown for mulled wine and mince pies and a very jolly family evening.



Christmas week followed and on Monday evening the St Mary's choir joined the St Andrew's choir to sing Carols at St Nicholas Church Emmington at Michael Holland's request in an annual event which raises funds for nominated charities. The evening of music and verse was a huge success led by Rector Maggie in front of an invited congregation including Bishop Colin, of Dorchester and acting Bishop of Oxford.

Then on Christmas Eve we held the afternoon Crib service with virtually a full house congregation of 75 adults and 24 children. Revd Joan was in fine form and involved the children in finding all the Christmas characters represented in the Crib around baby Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, angels etc and additionally having split the congregation into quarters, introduced the game of 'every time I mention the word Angel - I want you to say Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!' This of course was great fun and went down extremely well with both adults and children.

Later that evening we had the Midnight Communion and a couple of dozen hardy souls turned out to welcome in Christmas Day. Poor Joan must have been quite tired after such a busy day and late night.

In the United Parish whenever there are five Sundays in a month, the fifth Sunday rotates between the four churches. In December it was St Mary's turn to host the service which was the friendly Songs of Praise led by Roy and Adèle and it was pleasing to have a good turnout, finishing with a glass of sherry to celebrate Christmas.

The final seasonal activity was a traditional 'Christingle' Service on the afternoon of Sunday 10th January led by Barbara Bigland. The dozen children involved with their parents all held lovely pre-prepared large oranges pierced with candles, cocktail sticks with marshmallows and pretty red ribbon and gathered around the font. When the time came to light them, the church lights were turned off and it was a magical sight lighting all the candles and singing the Christingle Song. The £69 collection from this service goes towards the work of the Children's Society which works in this country to protect vulnerable children.

Thank you all for getting involved in an eventful month at St Mary's and in particular to Revd Joan, we are so lucky to have her leading our services.

Roy

Mothering Sunday - March 6th at 10am - A Service for all ages

Come and celebrate your Mother - with an opportunity to give her a nosegay of flowers or to light a candle in her memory. Any contributions of a poem, a picture or a prayer of thanks are welcome - please give them to Joan or one of the Church Wardens and they will be included in the service.

Thanks, Joan

Letter from the Rector, Maggie Thorne

Dear friends,

February is often a dreary, wet, cold and even snowy month with little to look forward to. However, Valentine's Day sits nicely in the middle to offer the possibility of respite to warm our hearts. Valentine was a priest, or possibly even a bishop from Terni who was martyred in Rome under Emperor Claudius. His association with love originates from a vague link to the pagan fertility festival, Lupercalia, which fell in the middle of February, and from the Medieval belief that birds mated on that day. For Christians, though, the day marks an acknowledgement of an all-loving God who blesses those who love one another, as Jesus exhorted his disciples to do. So apart from the sentimental aspects of the day and sending our sweetheart a card, chocolates and flowers, it's an opportunity to think about the very Author of love and his love for us. Jesus conflated two particular scriptures to give us his summary of the Law of love: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mindYou shall love your neighbour as yourself (Matt. 22. 37, 39). Most will understand that Christians are to love God and others and we do this through our worship and charitable acts and giving, but this must be done with our **heart, soul and mind**. This implies that we love with all our understanding, intellect, will and purpose as well as our affections, but we must also love **ourselves** with the same approach. If we reflect on our past or current capacity to love in this way we might be surprised into new levels of authentic discipleship, especially when we realise that God loves **us** more than we can possibly understand or imagine.

Enjoy Valentine's Day, even if you don't receive any romantic gestures, and remember that 'We love because he first loved us' (1 John 4.19).

Every blessing, Maggie

Pancake Day Races

Tuesday 9th February 2016. From 3.30pm - Free Entry

Easter is even earlier this year with Lent starting on Ash Wednesday, the day after Pancake Day. Traditionally here in Sydenham, along with many others, Pancake Races will take place after school, outside the Old School Room. I'm sure the usual team of supporters will be making delicious pancakes to serve afterwards in the OSR but for the races we would love children, mums and Grandparents to come along with their frying pans and a ready-made pancake to compete in the events. We will have sweeties for everyone who competes followed by hot pancakes, refreshments with tea and coffee and soft drinks served in the OSR afterwards with all contributions going towards the church funds. The event is fun with informal racing for all ages. In previous years we have had a variety of competitors including the local PCSO Jackie Madden, the clergy, wrinklies like me and even Mum's to be - do come along and have a great afternoon.

Roy

Another active but Fun Year for the St Mary's Choir.

It's been another busy year for the choir. Our first event was the Friends of the United Parish concert at Aston Rowant in June along with other singers. We've sung at two weddings; one was the Saturday before Christmas and we were also asked to sing at a post-wedding party in a marquee the following day for Sydenham friends of the parents of the bride. We did a selection of carols, accompanied by a jazz trio!

We had our annual choir outing in November, singing firstly at St Lawrence's in Toot Baldon with the audience being our husbands and wives, and then we had a very jolly dinner in the Mole in the village.

December was very busy with visits to Hempton Field and the Village Centre to sing carols, the lovely Sydenham carol service, the Emmington carol service, the Countryside carol service, carols round the trees on the village green, the wedding, the Christmas Eve midnight service and the United Parish Songs of Praise! So, busy, but thoroughly enjoyed by all.

We've been lucky to attract some new members this year, but unfortunately lost our one and only bass as he moved away. So, any men out there who'd like to join us please do!

We're very grateful to Chris Hood for his patience and hard work with us - we all enjoy singing under his tuition and look forward to lots of singing in the coming year.

Siobhan

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Christine Quainton,

20.8.1957 - 9.1.2016.

The Thanksgiving service for Christine Quainton on 26th January in St Mary's Church was conducted by the Revd. Serena Hutton. Christine had planned the service herself and chosen the hymns, and St Mary's choir sang "In an English Country Garden" as their tribute to her.

The Revd. Serena Hutton's address mentioned that Christine and Peter had met on a blind date on Friday 13th March 1992 and were

married four years later on Friday 13th April 1996 at Wootton, near Abingdon. They felt that Friday 13th was lucky for them. She also recalled Christine's great love of nature and the countryside, which she enjoyed to the full in Sydenham, particularly the animals, wildlife, and of course the hens.

Christine was born to Janet and Ronald Lee as the middle sister of three. Her early life involved many changes of school, both abroad and in England, because her father was an RAF aircraft engine specialist. He worked on a huge range of different aircraft at many different bases, including the Blackburn Beverleys at RAF Abingdon - and was ultimately awarded the BEM. But Christine always did well at school, excelling in all subjects, even Latin!

After school she attended Avenal House, part of Stevenson College in Edinburgh and qualified under the National Nursery Examination Board (NNEB) scheme, which was recognised as the gold standard for those working in childcare.

After leaving Edinburgh, Christine went to work as a live in nanny for the Swan family at St Barnabas Vicarage in Ealing, initially looking after Ellie, who attended Christine's thanksgiving service with her mother Celia, and whose tribute at the service is printed opposite.

After six years with the family, she made a complete change and became manageress of a large bookshop in Ealing Broadway. Subsequently, on returning to her family home, by then settled in Abingdon, she managed a large card shop in the town - before her marriage to Peter, for which she made her own wedding dress, the bridesmaids dresses and needless to say, the wedding cake!

A Tribute from Ellie Kirby (nee Swan)

Chrissie came to live with our family in 1977 when I was two years old. She looked after me and my baby brother Toby when he arrived two years later, and lived as part of our family for six years. Apparently the first words I said to her when we first met were "It's a good job you've come, we've got "Coike" for tea! Little did I know that I was talking to the Queen of Cakes! Over the years Chrissie made me and Toby the most amazing birthday cakes which ranged from a snakes and ladders board, to a basket of flowers and a Knights castle with a draw bridge that really worked! They were true creations and not only looked spectacular but tasted incredible!

Chrissie was a really wonderful nanny and I have many memories of my time with her...

I remember watching The Monkees in her room with her as a special treat, daily trips to the butchers on Pitshanger Lane, her sewing up the pockets on my coat to stop me putting my hands in them and falling over face first, cooking pancakes together, teasing Gillian with feet shaped ice lollies...and her tickling my ears to help me get to sleep.

Then there were the trips to her parents, 'Uncle' Ron and 'Aunty' Janet to us. Now these were VERY special! They had a dog called Bimbo who could say "sausages" and a tortoise who we would have to search for as he made his bid for freedom out of the garden and onto the RAF base! We discovered the delight of chocolate covered banana sweets from the NAAFI and Cherryade made by the magic Soda Stream machine!

One of my favourite memories is of a Christmas evening when Toby and I were overwhelmed with excitement. We had just finished our evening bath and were ready for bed. We walked into our bedroom and were greeted by the magical sight of snowflakes and fairy dust all over our bedroom windows: the Christmas fairies had been to visit!

Toby and I still talk about that evening and although we are now both grown adults (and should clearly have more sense) we still really believe that the fairies came that day. In our minds and memories Chrissie never left the room. It was only the other day that she admitted she had been rushing in and out of the bathroom, whilst we had the longest bath we had EVER had, and that she was in fact the fairy! But fairies make magic ... and that is what Chrissie did ... she created magic for me and Toby.

When Gillian got in touch and gave me the opportunity to relive some of these memories of Chrissie it was a real gift and something for which I will be forever grateful.

I now have two sons of my own. When I asked Chrissie how she thought I could ensure they have such magical memories of their childhoods she simply replied, "Memories are something you make together".

Well, Chrissie, we may not have been together for a long time, but you are always with us. Whether that is when I make sure I crush egg shells before putting them in the bin because you told me the witches would use them for boats if I didn't, or at Christmas when we wonder if the fairies will ever visit again?

Unfortunately Toby couldn't be here today but I wanted to finish with his words. When we talked about today he simply said, "I don't remember as much as you Ellie, I just know that I really loved her and that she was amazing".

A message from Christine's sister, Gillian, and Peter

We would personally like to thank the people of Sydenham for all the care and kindness they have shown to Pete and myself during Christine's illness. I have been staying with Christine and Pete over the last few weeks and have been overwhelmed by the support we have been given. It has, and is, an extremely hard time at the moment, but we wouldn't have coped without the help of the villagers.

Big thanks to Jill Turnbull and Madeleine Stewart for preparing the OSR for the funeral tea, and to everybody who helped to make it such a memorable time for the family, knowing that Christine was thought of so highly. Also a big thank you to Rebecca Wood who organised the obituaries for the newspapers, and also "delivered" Mum and Dad safely to Pete's door on the day of the funeral, along with much more.

Our hearts are broken with the loss of Christine, but we are so pleased that she had overwhelming happiness with Pete and her beloved hens here in Sydenham.

The choir's tribute of "In an English Country Garden" was wonderful and a true reminder of Christine's thoughts and life.

Thank you so very much, Gillian and Pete.

Parish Council

Planning

P15/S4281/LB

Coopers Yard, Sydenham

Two additional windows to the south barn. Minor alterations to a modern shelter to provide a garage space and smaller store rooms; garage doors and stable doors added.

No strong views

Neighbourhood Plan Meeting



The largest part of the last few weeks has been spent exploring whether as a village we need to do a Neighbourhood Plan. You might have seen some of the emails inviting everyone to a village meeting and even if you weren't able to join us, we think it is important to share some of the information from the evening.

There was a great turn out for the late January meeting, with representation from throughout the village including both the Kingston Stert and Emmington areas. We were joined by Charlotte Colver, Planning Policy Officer (Neighbourhood) from South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils to present what the plans involve and answer questions.

The key aspects of the discussion were:

Whereas a Community Led Plan (CLP) outlines the aspirations of the community for their environment, a Neighbourhood Plan becomes a legal document to be referred to for any planning requests

The Parish Council is the 'qualifying body', but the plan requires the assistance of several people in the community and external organisations for surveys etc.

The main steps (but not necessarily exclusively) are:

STEP 1 - establish the boundary of the area the plan will cover (this does not necessarily have to relate directly to the Parish boundary and can take in other areas with the permission of the neighbouring Parish Council)

STEP 2 - set up a working group for the plan and complete a form to be sent for consultation with the Neighbourhood Planning office at SODC

The nature of the team involved varies depending on the location, but could include:

Plotting footpaths

Reviewing housing character style around the village

Organising a housing survey (engaging an external party to conduct this such as Community First Oxford)

Young people who wish to influence the village future

Those who have graphic skills

Apply for grants available (£5k is currently available from SODC to establish the plan)

STEP 3 - to gather evidence using the resource at SODC to guide the team

STEP 4 - build the plan including the 'story' of the village, what we want and where we want it

STEP 5 - plan shared with the village for review and amendment

STEP 6 - assessed by SODC to determine if it fits within the South Oxfordshire Local Plan

STEP 7 - independently reviewed by third party

STEP 8 - village referendum where a majority vote in favour has to be achieved in order for the Plan to be passed and become a legal document



Sydenham Cricket Club is hosting a

St. George's Day Dinner

Saturday 23rd April at 7.30pm in the OSR



***Tickets are £25 per person and include a welcoming drink,
3 course dinner and cheese.***

***There will be 'English Entertainment' and an auction of rather
select lots to help raise funds for the club's new nets.***

***For further information and tickets please contact Toby Roe
tobyroe@hotmail.co.uk or 07789 698630***

It is estimated that the whole process would take 18 - 24 months from start to finish, although there are moves to try to reduce this to 12 - 18 months. The next steps are to review some example plans (you can find a couple on our website) and for the Parish Council to share these with the village and attend a similar initial discussion in Kingston Blount on 10th February.

If anyone has any questions then please direct them to the Parish Council email address (sydenhampc@gmail.com), so that we can collate and discuss them with Charlotte Colver.

Clearly, it was a very passionate subject with much debate and although the position is still undecided, we are now armed with much more information on both what is involved and what a Neighbourhood Plan really means.

Other Parish Council matters

Improving mobile signal coverage

Discussions have been continuing, but the current programme from Vodafone is closed until later this year.

Speeding

The meeting with Mark Francis in December was interesting with a number of options explored including refreshing some of the current speeding signage etc. The costs involved are significant, so we are planning to discuss this at our next meeting to determine the practicalities.

In addition, we have purchased some more speeding stickers for wheelie bins which will be distributed, and you may well have noticed the designed speeding posters have now been put up.

Playing Field

The RoSPA inspection has identified a few aspects that need to be replaced, with elements like the round picnic table needing to be removed completely as it is rotten and broken. So, we have been gathering some quotes and are looking at applying for a grant for some items.

Sydenham Grove

Yet again the SOHA meeting was postponed, as there was no update to be given, so we are setting one up in February. We will obviously continue to keep you informed on this front, once we know more.

Electricity supply

Other options have been explored and although the undergrounding scheme continues to face its challenges and take up a lot of people's time, we are hopefully moving towards a resolution.

Broadband

The situation for the Plough Corner/Emmington end of the village has still not changed, although there has been some activity in Emmington. We are continuing to liaise with Better Broadband Oxfordshire for feedback.

Emergency plan and resilience

We have been looking at the requirements for installing a back-up generator in the OSR and are also looking at purchasing items for the Sydenham Survival Kit, which will include high visibility vests, LED lights etc.

School catchment

We have contacted both the Chair of Governors and the Head Teacher at Aston Rowant Primary School to discuss changing their catchment areas. Both are going to be contacting the relevant bodies to raise awareness of the situation and determine what is involved.

Join us at our next meeting

If you have a view or opinion on any matter, feel free to join us – our meetings are always on the first Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in the OSR. If there is anything we are involved with that you would like to share an opinion on, or help with, please do come.

Rachel

SODC

Planning

P15/S3653/HH and P15/S3654/LB

2 and 3 Box Cottages, Sydenham Road

Internal alterations to 2 & 3 Box Cottages to enable them to be occupied as one dwelling. Demolish modern single storey extension to rear of no. 3 and replace with two storey extension. To replace modern windows on front and rear elevation with traditional timber windows.

Permission GRANTED

P15/S3184/FUL

1 Holliers Close

Proposed demolition of existing bungalow and construction of two semi-detached residential dwellings (use class 3) on the site, with new access into site.

Permission GRANTED

P15/S3313/FUL

The Folly, Chalford

Demolition of existing cottage and construction of replacement dwelling

Permission GRANTED

Oxfordshire County Council

Be a real life super hero – Give your community a lift

Be a real life super hero
Drive Jim to the doctors.

Volunteer today –
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/volunteerdriver

DRIVING LICENCE
1. Frances
2. Wilder
3. Oxfordshire
4. DVLA
5. Mother of two / part time superhero

communityfirst oxfordshire
OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Oxfordshire County Council has teamed up with Community First Oxfordshire, to launch the new 'Be a real life super hero – give your community a lift' campaign. The campaign is appealing for volunteer drivers to support their local community transport scheme and for communities across Oxfordshire to set up new community led transport schemes where there is a need.

Who benefits? Elderly and disabled people in communities across Oxfordshire need real life heroes to give them a lift. They need help with transport to get to appointments, shops and to clubs and to access the day to day occasions that most of us take for granted.

Is community transport really so important? Yes - community transport schemes give people access to transport, where they may otherwise have none. Community transport provides support in both rural and urban areas.

Expenses are reimbursed and you can do as many or as few journeys as you wish - drivers living in villages are particularly needed.

Visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/volunteerdriver or call 01865 883488 to find out about community transport groups near you and who to contact to offer your support.

Sydenham Fayre 2016 – Saturday 4th June

Put the date in your diary now and follow Jason's Fayre bloggs and e-mails – the Sydenham Fayre committee are hoping to meet at the Crown on Wed 24th February at 7.30pm and if anyone would like to join do come along. www.sydenham-fayre.co.uk for contact and times.

Jason Benfield-Harbour

WI News



Greetings from Sydenham Women's Institute, an active and friendly group of women from Sydenham and the surrounding area. We meet at 7:45pm on the third Thursday of each month, sometimes in the Old School Room (OSR), sometimes in members' homes. Prospective new members are invited to attend meetings without any obligation to join, so please do come along if you are at all interested!

At our January meeting we learned about the medieval practice of brass bas-relief effigies, including some hands-on practice making rubbings from the brass. See Fiona's write-up below for more details about the evening.

Our next meeting will be on February 18, when we'll gather at Two Chestnuts in Emmington to hear guest speaker Jo Rose, Kinesiologist and Reiki Practitioner, discuss Holistic Health and Wellness. On March 17 our annual meeting will take place at Washington Cottage in Chalford. We will review the past year, look ahead to events in 2016-17, and elect a new committee.

At our April meeting we will learn and practice circle dancing in the OSR; in May our speaker will talk about photography (venue TBD); and when the days lengthen in June we will visit West Wycombe and the Hellfire Caves. In July our meeting will take the form of a garden party at Upper Chalford Farm, a lovely historic house and garden, home to one of our members.

In addition to our monthly meetings, we host a Social Coffee Morning in the OSR every second Thursday from 10am to noon, operate the cake stall every year at Sydenham Fayre, and from time to time we participate in outings organised by Oxford Federation of WI, as well as organise our own. For anyone new to the village or to the area, the WI is a wonderful way to meet your neighbours and make new friends. For more information, contact Anna Froker at 07803 624085, or email anna@kairosyoga.org.

All rubbed up – the right way!

At our WI January meeting, David Maycock came to give us a talk on Brass Rubbing. What we actually got was a very interesting history of brass rubbing with some local historical residents to boot! David brought with him a collection of 20 or more plates. These were replicas - miniatures of original brasses - in resin cast and gave us a very interesting background into the history of most of them.





Brass rubbings originated approx. 1311 when we were a Catholic country, and the belief was that after death the soul was sent to purgatory before going to heaven, thus requiring prayers by loved ones to complete the journey. The memorial plaques were erected by the wealthy as reminders so that they would be prayed for. The cost was approximately £120 – then! The cost equivalent would be that of a large house. This is because brass sheet wasn't made in England, it had to be imported, and usually mounted on purbeck stone which was very labour intensive, along with the engraving and polishing.

The style of dress worn represents the development of armour from chainmail and tabards to sheet armour. Coats of arms were also displayed: the lion (meaning fearless and brave), the griffin (the symbol of the Boleyn family) and sheep, the symbol of wealth of England i.e. merchants. He also explained the fashion of women's clothes, mentioning how the sleeves in Tudor times were a separate garment and tied on. It was common to be left a pair of sleeves in a will.

Local notaries mentioned were John Clarke who is in St Mary's in Thame, from the time of Henry the eighth. Richard Quartermain was a third son, so no chance of inheritance of a title, so he trained as a barrister. Unfortunately, the elder brothers did die and so he inherited. He is known to have prosecuted Richard (Dick) Whittington of London. He had 4 memorial brasses made. Sir Ralph Verney, an Oxford don from Merton College has his displayed at Oddington church

David then went on to explain (and briefly demonstrate) how to do a rubbing: then we all selected one of the brasses and created our own masterpieces! A brilliant evening!

Bits and Pieces

Lizzie Archer's Trip to India – Update

This is just a quick update on what has been happening so far in my fundraising for India.

Thank you for all the donations of items for my Christmas Hampers. I made one for the Pub, one for school (Lord Williams's) and one for my hockey club (Thame Hockey Club), all this raised £406 so thank you very much!

Thank you to all the families who have given me babysitting jobs – much appreciated. And dog sitting for Barney of course! Turning lights on/off and curtain opening/closing whilst people are on holiday has also been great for money raising as well.

I also did a talk to Kineton's WI group about my trip which was very well received and I really enjoyed giving the talk and answering the questions. Please could you continue to bear me in mind if you have any jobs etc. that I could do. Thank you!

Next major fundraising is a quiz night at OSR on Saturday 19th March. Gordon has very kindly offered to be quiz master – thank you very much! Tickets will be £7.50 which will include chicken or vegetable curry at the break. There will also be a raffle during the evening as well.

Please phone 355 920 to book tickets, and if you can't make it please could you buy raffle tickets.

I have heard that my flights have been booked and I am excited to hear that I leave on 12th August – it feels real now! During February half term I should be finding out about all the injections I will need (scary).

Thanks again and I look forward to seeing you on the 19th March.

Lizzie Archer

Sydenham Book Club – Report on the January meeting.

A lively meeting at the Crown brought forth a range of views and opinions about three books: 'A Spool of Blue Thread', by Anne Tyler; 'Things Fall Apart', by Chinua Achebe; and 'The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry', by Rachel Joyce.

Nominated for the 2015 Man Booker Prize, 'A Spool of Blue Thread' garnered mixed reviews, from "LOVED it" to "BORING". Some readers found it uplifting, some found it depressing, some found it both. Everyone thought it very real-to-life. All agreed the prose subtle and skillful, and lauded the author's cleverly inserted revelations of family secrets and acutely observed portraits of individuals. Everyone recognised the author's sense of humour, and appreciated the way she managed to capture and convey interactions and dynamics between family members. Some readers wished for a more compelling storyline and felt the lack of classic "arc" to the plot, while other readers were completely

satisfied with both pace and plot. The ending felt rather abrupt to some readers, though others thought it in keeping with the novel as a whole.

A story about post-colonial Nigeria, 'Things Fall Apart', was published in 1958 to global critical acclaim. Written in a simple, declarative style, the prose echoes the cadence of the native Ibo language, and paints an illuminating portrait of the rhythms of West African tribal life before and immediately following the arrival of missionaries. The book club members who read this book felt they gained a better understanding of tribal customs and laws, and perhaps why some native inhabitants scorned the missionaries' European customs and religious beliefs whereas others were susceptible to adopting new traditions and moral codes.

Liked by all, and loved by several, 'The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry' proved a Book Club pleaser. Everyone praised the author's writing for its clear, lighthearted tone and occasionally lyrical prose, and everyone enjoyed accompanying Harold on his allegorical journey through the English countryside. Though some readers felt the occasional twinge of impatience along the way, all agreed that the marvelously satisfying ending made the trip worthwhile.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, April 19th, 8pm at the Crown, when we will discuss 'The Girl on the Train', by Paula Hawkins and 'Midnight's Children', by Salman Rushdie.

Anna Froker



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OSR 100 Club

The Special Christmas Draw took place at the Crown on the busy lunchtime of Christmas Day and Lynne Kingston and family did the honours by drawing the £100 prize which went to Angela Tipping. We were particularly pleased for Angela as she plays an important part in church fundraising with her generous annual contribution making the 'Guess the weight of the Cake' for the Christmas Market.

New villager Jane Parry who was hosting her mother and father with a seasonal pre-lunch drink picked Cyndy's name out of the hat for the £50 prize - Well done ladies.

Adèle kindly assisted with the February draw and the winners are:

| | | |
|-------------------------|-----|-----|
| Sandra Ludgate | 100 | £25 |
| Jerry Pattison | 68 | £15 |
| John Wilson (Waddesdon) | 29 | £10 |
| Holly Wills | 152 | £10 |
| Cecily Church | 168 | £ 5 |
| Oban McLeod | 21 | £ 5 |

Thank you everyone for your continued financial support for the OSR, through the monthly draw. *Roy*



The Chiltern Brewery's 2000th Gyle – January 2016

If that's got you reaching for your dictionary – don't worry, it's a specialist brewing term referring to the amount of one beer produced at one brewing. And this heady mix, or mashing-in as it should be called (pictured), is local brewer The Chiltern Brewery's 2000th gyle. An amazing achievement in just 36 years and a suitable cause for celebration once the beer is released.

This is a bottle-conditioned classic IPA in the making, using a single base – Maris Otter - malt and highly hopped with generous amounts of Bramling Cross and English Cascade hops. You will have to be patient though; the final result won't be ready to drink for several months.

Proud brewer Dave McGovern says. "This IPA should be a true classic, light golden in colour with a fruity aroma and set off by a dry malt middle and a long hop finish and will be about 6% vol strength."



Once it is bottled, named and labelled, all you will need to do is look out for it online www.chilternbrewery.co.uk and on the shelves at the brewery shop in Terrick, near Wendover.

IPA stands for India Pale Ale, new lighter heavily hopped beers that were transported from Britain to India in the 1750s. Before the invention of refrigeration you couldn't brew beers in hot climates so the beer was brewed here and shipped to India.

If this is all a bit technical at least you were spared the photo of the mash bed "sparging"!

The Chiltern Brewery has been at the forefront of the revival of classic English ale styles for 36 years, all brewed with the finest English malt and hops - naturally.

www.chilternbrewery.co.uk 01296 613647 Twitter @Chiltern_Brewer

Pub News



The Crown

The Crown are proud to be taking part in the Worlds Biggest Pub Quiz on Sunday, 7th February at 7.30pm. Our MP John Howell is hoping to join us at the beginning of the evening and perhaps we can even convince him to be quiz master for a couple of rounds.

Our chosen charity is the Alzheimer's Society as this is a subject very close to our hearts.

For more information please see: <http://worldsbiggestquiz.pubaid.com/>
Please give us a call or drop us a line to support this great event. We will not be serving supper. Crisps and nuts are available at the bar but please feel free to bring along other snacks if you wish.

Best wishes Yvonne, Roger & Lucy

The Inn at Emmington

We had two events in January to get things going for the new year and our fifth year anniversary party was helped along by great music from London based Contraband. More music of a slightly different nature was part of our 'Burns Afternoon' where we had the haggis piped in by Paul Cameron (brother of Jon Cameron) who continued to play on and off through the afternoon and indeed all evening! Sporting occasions feature widely in the next couple of months with Six Nations Rugby and Cheltenham Gold Cup day sure to give an extra reason to come and have a pint or two while watching the action!

Jerry and Paula

Dates for the Diary

February

| | | |
|----------------|--------|--|
| Tuesday 9th | 3.30pm | Shrove Tuesday Pancake Races down Brookstones outside the OSR. |
| Tuesday 9th | 7.30pm | Local St Mary's Church Meeting in the OSR |
| Thursday 18th | 7.45pm | WI - Jo Rose. Holistic Health and Wellness. Two Chestnuts in Emmington |
| Wednesday 24th | 7.30pm | Sydenham Fayre Meeting - The Crown |

March

| | | |
|---------------|---------|---|
| Sunday 7th | 10.00am | Family Service for Mothering Sunday followed by tea in the OSR |
| Thursday 17th | 7.45pm | WI AGM - review of 2015/16 plus elect new committee. Washington Cottage |
| Saturday 19th | 7.30pm | Lizzie Archer Fundraising Quiz in the OSR with Gordon. |
| Sunday 28th | 10.00am | Easter Day Holy Communion |

April

| | | |
|---------------|--------|--|
| Saturday 23rd | 7.30pm | Sydenham Cricket Club St George's Day Supper |
| Saturday 30th | 7.30pm | Friends of the United Parish (FUP) Safari Supper |

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We run four Singing for the Brain® groups across Oxfordshire, each one of which offers people affected by dementia the chance for social interaction in a safe and supportive environment.

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In this role you will put together and then run a short programme of songs which suit the musical tastes of attendees.

We will provide you with all necessary training, reimburse your agreed out-of-pocket expenses and give you any support you require.

To find out more or apply, call Jane Penton on 01296 718956 or email jane.penton@alzheimers.org.uk

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