



Finstock News 84

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The days are beginning to draw out and become warmer. This will encourage most of you to get busy in the garden. Please welcome our new garden columnist Robert as he introduces you to the joys of snowdrops. Shaun will update you on Village Hall fundraising activities and Mike will explain how the Parish Precept works. Rob has written an article celebrating the success of our school hockey team and *Osiris* details the wine region of Puglia in Italy. We begin with the joy of singing. Enjoy the read.

SINGING IS GOOD FOR YOU!

The science doesn't lie: singing really is good for your health.

Professor Graham Welch, Chair of Music Education at the Institute of Education, University of London, has studied developmental and medical aspects of singing for 30 years and he says the health benefits of singing are both physical and psychological. "Singing has physical benefits because it is an aerobic activity that increases oxygenation in the blood stream and exercises major muscle groups in the upper body, even when sitting. Singing has psychological benefits because of its normally positive effect in reducing stress levels through the action of the endocrine system which is linked to our sense of emotional well-being. Psychological benefits are also evident when people sing together as well as alone because of the increased sense of community, belonging and shared endeavour."

There are said to be more choirs across the country now

Finstock Village Music May 30th - 31st

The Finstock Friendly Society is pleased to announce that the 2nd Finstock Village Music event will take place on the evening of Friday the 30th and throughout Saturday May 31st.

We plan to have local musicians performing on Friday evening in the Village Hall as well as readings and dramatic presentations based on the theme of **Finstock Traditions and History**. On Saturday we have a village procession, traditional music in the bower, community singing, Morris dancing, and in the evening a ceilidh with the Finstock Festival Band.

Further details to follow but why not book this weekend in your diary now. If you would like to take part please contact Tony on 868743.

A **Domino Singles Competition** was organised by Dave Floyd in December to raise funds for the Village Hall and The Shop. There was also a bar and raffle. Due to the late hour there were joint winners: Barry Floyd and Joy Murphy. A total of £42 went to the Village Shop and £293.43 was raised for our new Village Hall.

2014 is the centenary of the birth of Dylan Thomas, poet and playwright. Probably his most famous work is the play Under Milk Wood.

than fish and chip shops. Gareth Malone is credited with re-igniting our interest in choral singing through his BBC2 series *The Choir*, which has shown a new generation of singers the benefits of singing.

Another reason for the increase in choirs is Rock Choir, started by musician Caroline Redman Lusher in 2005, which has pioneered the NO AUDITION and NO NEED TO READ MUSIC approach, and now people all over the UK are enjoying its mix of fun, friendship and community spirit.

Rock Choir members have recorded a top twenty album, appeared on television and sung at the Albert Hall. Since I joined two years ago, I have sung at the O2, performed for Prince William at Kensington Palace at the Centrepont fundraising event, broken a Guinness World Record and taken part in flash mobs.

Rock Choir is all about having fun and there are always lots of exciting events in the pipeline. To find out more go to www.rockchoir.com.

Keep your heart and head healthy -- get singing! NH

Funds for Finstock

Funds for Finstock would like to thank everyone who bought a Finstock Calendar for 2014. We send a big thank you to the TVSA staff who sold the majority of calendars and thanks also to Hilltop Garden Centre for supporting us once again by covering the cost of printing.

Calendar sales plus money from the Garage Sale meant that we raised £922.38!

We have issued cheques to the following groups to buy something on their wish list:

Rainbows/Brownies - £100; Toddlers - £100; Good Companions - £100; Woodpecker Pre-school -£200; Finstock School - £200; and TVSA - £222.38.

Thank you once again for all your support,

Carol, Nicky and Pat

Carol would like to say a special thank you for all the support you have given her over the years. She has now left the village (in body, not in heart); but if anyone would like to take on the Garage Sale and the Calendar projects, she would be happy to offer any advice, carol846@btinternet.com 01865-301683.



VILLAGE EVENTS



Art and Crafts Exhibition and Sale

Fundraising for the Village Hall and the Village Shop

Saturday May 10th; Finstock Village Hall; 10am-4pm

£10 per table

£2 entry fee; children under 12 FREE

Raffle tickets at £1 each

Wine and bar

All artists and crafters who wish to participate should contact Ruth Nissim on 868147 or dorescottage@hotmail.com.

Finstock Local History Society

January 17th *Salter's Steamers* with Simon Wenham

Salter's Steamers is one of the longest established firms on the Thames and has a fascinating history.

February 21st *One great kettle and a pair of brass dogs in the kitchen: Wills, Inventories and Accounts, 1545-1731* FLHS members

An insight into the lives of Finstock and Fawler residents through probate documents. Domestic life and luxuries, working tools, house construction and room use, crops in the field and barn, etc. presented by the FLHS Probate Group.

April 18th meeting cancelled.

The History Society meets on the third Friday of the month at 8pm in the Village hall, Finstock. Members free; non-members £2.50.

North Leigh History Society

February 4th *The Treasures of the Mary Rose*. A talk by Stephen Griffiths.

March 4th *Jack the Ripper*. A talk by Brian Wood.

7.30pm North Leigh Memorial Hall. Members free, visitors £2.50. Further details from Diana Power 882301.

The Royal British Legion Ramsden

The Ramsden RBL Poppy Appeal raised a total of £1,343.66. This total includes a total of £921.31 from the sale of Poppies which is an increase of £70.98 over last year's sales.

I think this is very satisfactory and I would like to thank all those who supported poppy sales. Janet and I are particularly grateful for the dedication of our collectors. We also appreciate the behind the scenes work that Mick Charlesworth does in his role as organiser for Charlbury and District, which includes Finstock and Fawler.

Frank Schofield

Happy New Year from Finstock Toddler Group!

It has been a lively start to the year, after a fun-packed Christmas. Thanks have to go, once again, to all the parents and carers of the children who come along. Your continued support and help towards each and every session is invaluable and makes for a great atmosphere for everyone.

This year, we hope to see more new faces and some fabulous new cake creations! Please let us know if you have any ideas for Toddler Group, about what we can bring to it or add to make it an even better experience. We meet on Wednesdays (in term time) from 10am in Finstock Village Hall. Come and join us!

Caroline Beatty

cazbeatty@hotmail.com

ChoC - Charlbury's Own Cinema

www.chocfilms.info

Sunday February 9th *The Hunt* Cert.15

This multi award-winning Danish film tells the story of Lucas, a forty-year-old divorcé living in a small provincial town that is finally getting his life under control. (Shown with subtitles)

Films held in the Memorial Hall, Charlbury at 7.30pm. Doors/licensed bar from 6.45pm.

The Oxfordshire Museum Woodstock

Park St, Woodstock, OX20 1SN

Tel.: 814103

Visit The Oxfordshire Museum - It's FREE!

Unearthed - Riches of the Romans & Anglo Saxons February 8th-April 27th

This archaeology exhibition is going to feature some brilliant Anglo-Saxon and Roman objects along with some exciting new technology to display and interpret some of the star items.

The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum will open in spring 2014. See the story of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and the Oxfordshire Yeomanry.

More: Winston Churchill's time as an officer in the Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars. Prisoners of war. And a First World War exhibition to mark the centenary of the start of the war in 1914.

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TEN THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE VILLAGE HALL REGENERATION

I don't want to give any money

- Sort out your unused clothes and shoes and take them to the Rag Bag clothing bank at the Village Hall
- Volunteer to help with events on the day. The beer festival needs many helpers to plan and make it run smoothly
- Organize and run an event to raise money
- Attend an organized event such as quiz night, folk music, beer festival, etc.
- Hire the hall to increase usage for birthday parties, etc.
- Start a new, regular club at the hall
- Become a member of the management committee or a Trustee of the charity

I do want to give some money

- If you buy anything online, go via www.easyfundraising.org.uk, select Finstock Village Hall as your charity of choice and for many things you purchase a small percentage will be given to the Hall by the online company
- Give a donation. Online, this can be done at mydonate.bt.com/charities/finstockvillagehall and if you are a UK tax payer, the charity can claim an extra 28% of the value of your donation. If you pay 40% tax, you can claim relief to the value of 28% of your donation. Otherwise, write a cheque payable to Finstock Village Hall and if you pay tax, sign a Gift Aid form to get

the extra 28%. If you wish to remain anonymous, that can be arranged.

- Sponsor a brick for the Finstock Walk – an engraved block-paving brick with writing of your choice to be utilised at the new Hall on a paved outdoor area. Watch for details of this soon.

Want to help with organising this year's Beer Festival in September to make it bigger and even better? Contact Shaun for more details on any of these initiatives on 868134 or at morley.shaun@gmail.com.

Events for February and March

Monday February 17th Quiz night at the Plough from 8pm

Monday March 3rd Quiz night at the Plough from 8pm

Saturday March 8th Alexander technique to help back pain (afternoon)

Saturday March 15th Folk Night bar from 7pm in the Village Hall

Monday March 24th – Games Night at the Plough from 7pm

Shaun Morley PC

The Prospectus for the Redevelopment of the Finstock Village Hall will be delivered to all houses and businesses in the village.

The Parish Council

Part of the Parish Council's duty is to maintain the Village's vital services and assets. The PC also supports new development if and when it preserves and enhances the benefits we, as a Community, enjoy or aspire to. You might notice when you receive your Council Tax statement later this spring that a small proportion, the Village Precept, can be used at the discretion of the Parish Council for that purpose. The precept for the coming year will be spent on cutting the grass on the Village Green and the Playing field; trimming the burial ground; assisting with the funding of the regeneration of the Village Hall; paying the rates on the Pavilion; contributing to the maintenance costs of the Playground; and paying the salary of the Clerk of the Council. Small payments will also be made for such things as the upkeep of the village notice boards and the wreath we lay at the war memorial annually.

The PC provides a grant to the Parochial Church Council and subscribes to several professional organisations that provide help and advice to Councils on legal and financial issues. If you want to know more about the work of the Parish Council, why not attend one of its meetings; they are held on the 4th Monday of each month and are open to the public.

Mike Woodfield PC

Submit sightings to the Bees, Wasps and Ants Recording Society: bwars.com

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Art and Crafts Exhibition and Sale

**Fundraising for the Village
Hall and the Village Shop
Saturday May 10th; Finstock
Village Hall; 10am-4pm**

£10 per table

£2 entry fee; children under 12 FREE

Raffle tickets at £1 each

Wine and bar

**All artists and crafters who wish
to participate should contact Ruth
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PARISH COUNCIL SURVEY

In 2012 the Finstock Parish Council distributed a Survey to seek comments about the state of our village from recreation to village amenities to housing. Those results have now been made available to the *Finstock News*. Of the 325 questionnaires distributed only 65 households responded, only a quarter of villagers; there were 17 other respondents that fell outside the 'household' designation.

Villagers were given the opportunity to express their opinions about Finstock; what they wanted to see change and what they valued. Features of the village that were especially valued included this newsletter, the school, the shop and the pub.

One question from a respondent can be answered here. In brief the comment was, 'We could benefit from setting up a Community Fund to fight inappropriate planning applications.'

There is in fact a dedicated fighting fund under the banner of the Forest Action Group with £657 in hand. Roger

Pensom and I are the two officers who monitor this fund.

'The *Finstock News* is a good forum for people with ideas...' was another comment. Here is an idea – if you want to maintain the value of your home and live in a healthy community then volunteer to work in our community. If you want to see changes made then attend Parish Council meetings and present your ideas. If you want others to decide what living in Finstock means then sit at home and complain that you would do it differently.

Joy Murphy Editor

Some reasons for cautious optimism

I am writing this on the second day of the New Year and feel more optimistic about the future than I have done for a few years.

The economy is showing positive signs, unemployment is declining and despite the appalling weather, shop sales are booming (even if much is online). Here in West Oxfordshire, the outlook appears particularly rosy. Unemployment is negligible, businesses are growing, high-speed broadband for all is committed and WODC have balanced finances again meaning that our Council Tax will be frozen again in 2014-15.

There will not be forced cuts in services from the District Council either.

However, there is some cause for concern about the future. Recently published census data predicts a steep rise in the percentage of our local population in the over-85 age group. I think we are all aware of the ageing population here in Finstock. Obviously, this has serious implications for the appropriate provision of care at home and in care homes.

Also, it means for us younger people a growing responsibility to provide support and companionship for elderly relations and neighbours. People in Finstock are very aware of these moral responsibilities and we must do everything to encourage and develop this kind of caring attitude.

Finally, 2014 will be a year of fundraising for the shop extension and rebuilding the Village Hall. So far the support from everyone has been fantastic and I am sure this will continue.

We should be grateful to the people who are organising all these activities and support them as much as we can.

A happy and prosperous New Year to everyone!

Hywel Davies District Councillor
868004

WODC is very keen to hear what people think about its new website and details about how to comment are on the home page – www.westoxon.gov.uk.

www.ifixit.com The free repair guide for everything, written by everyone.

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Read the *Finstock News* online at sites.google.com/site/finstocknews/online; join the *Finstock* Yahoo group – groups.yahoo.com/group/finstock; or write to us at 63 High Street, Finstock Oxon OX7 3DA.
– en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finstock

Plan ahead – Know the deadlines

| Issue | Deadline |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Feb/Mar | First of January |
| April/May | First of March |
| June/July | First of May |
| August/September | First of July |
| October/November | First of September |
| December/January | First of November |

Please keep articles short. As space is limited, the Editors reserve the right to shorten long pieces in the interest of balance. *Finstock News* does not necessarily share the views expressed in readers' letters.



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Line ads are charged at 20p per word, payment in advance.

Please contact: John Wells on 868776. We will no longer be accepting inserts for the newsletter.

Food Bank

Finstock residents have been incredibly generous since we started a collection point in the shop. The donations are taken away every week to the centre at Chipping Norton and are then distributed by volunteers across the rural area which includes Finstock residents. The winter

months are hungry months; so if you are shopping for yourself, consider buying an extra tin or packet for someone less fortunate. We are happy to have staple foods but no alcohol or perishable foodstuffs. Enquiries 868774.

Barbara Pensom

Break the Bag Habit

The bag charge will be introduced in England in October 2015. That's almost two years away, but at our current rate we would use more than 12 billion bags during that time. That's a huge mountain of waste and litter that could endanger wildlife and spoil our beautiful countryside.

FINSTOCK SHOP

Hello from the Village Shop and a Happy New Year to everyone.

The Shop had a very good Christmas. Ideally we catered for all your needs and we hope that 2014 has started well for you.

Do come and have a look at the new stock of Bennett's wine and the 'everyday' wines that we also keep

alongside them.

We are continuing to stock goodies from Upton Smokery: smoked salmon, chicken, bacon and pate and even some smoked condiments and garlic – worth a try. We also have local mustards, chutneys and jams, cakes and pastries, yoghurts and ham.

Shop opening hours:-

Weekdays 8-6

Saturdays 8-1

Sundays 9-11.30

SHOP TELEPHONE NUMBER –
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Karen is having new ideas about cards and gifts for St.Valentine's Day in February and Mothering Sunday in March, so watch out for her displays.

You have been very generous in making contributions to our Food Bank collection and we thank you for that.

Thank you again to Karen and all our lovely volunteers who are putting in extra hours to help out with staffing and keeping the Shop looking attractive whilst Sue is not working, but we always need more volunteers. If you think you might be interested in helping in your Village Shop do have a word with Mo or Karen.

We wish Sue a speedy recovery as we miss her smiling face.

We apologise again for any deviation from normal opening and closing times. While we are short of staff we will be closing at 5:30 on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, not 6pm as shown.

Let's gear up for a happy and prosperous 2014. Mo

Your Post Office

Thank you for all your support in 2013. I look forward to seeing you for all your Post Office needs in 2014. Karen Williams

Open Monday to Friday from 9am -1pm

COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION

Nature is slow but sure; she works no faster than need be.

Henry David Thoreau

Hedgehogs

The hedgehog is Britain's only spiny mammal. Their highly specialised coat contains around 6,000 creamy-brown spines and hangs around their body in a loose-ish 'skirt', concealing greyish fur on their underside, surprisingly long legs and a short tail.

Hedgehogs are a gardener's friend, as they eat snails, slugs and insects, but they are in decline in Britain. Hedgehog Street (hedgehogstreet.org/pages/hedgehog-street.html) is asking people to become Hedgehog Champions to rally support from their neighbours and work together to create ideal hedgehog habitat.

Hedgehogs travel around one mile every night through our gardens in their quest to find enough food and a mate. If you have an enclosed garden you might be getting in the way of their plans. We can make their life a little easier by removing the barriers within our control: for example, by making holes in or under our garden fences and walls for them to pass through. The gap need only be 13x13cm or 5 inches square and so should not affect your pets' safety. You could: remove a brick from the bottom of the wall or cut a small hole in your fence if there are no gaps or dig a channel underneath your wall, fence or gate.

Leave areas of your garden 'wild', with piles of leaf litter and logs. These are an attractive nest as well as a home for the invertebrates (slugs, beetles) that hedgehogs like to eat. Remember to never feed hedgehogs milk; instead provide plain, fresh water in a shallow bowl.

Meadow Farm

The Heritage Lottery Fund has given a £758,000 grant to BBOWT, the Wildlife Trust to buy Meadow Farm, which is a precious remnant of ancient wildflower meadows, near Blackthorn on the border of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire, which will be open to visitors in 2014. Across the whole of the UK there are only 1,500 hectares of floodplain wildflower meadows like Meadow Farm. Stuart McLeod, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund South East England, said: "We are delighted

to support this project to conserve what is nothing less than an oasis of biodiversity for Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. This area of flower meadow that has lain undisturbed for centuries can now be fully protected while providing a valuable learning resource." ONCF

New Grasshopper Atlas needs your records

The Grasshoppers and related insects recording scheme of Britain

and Ireland is working towards a new atlas. Please send your records to orthoptera@ceh.ac.uk, or log them at www.brc.ac.uk/irecord; or send them to your Local Records Centre. Draft atlas maps and free species ID sheets for download at www.orthoptera.org.uk. ONCF

Explore the Cotswolds Guide and online timetables

The updated Explore the Cotswolds by Public Transport Guide has been published covering the period December to May 2014. The corresponding bus timetables are also available to view online, providing a single source of public transport information across the Cotswolds AONB. www.escapetothecotswolds.org.uk/visitor-info/gettinghere/

ONCF bulletin

Walks for all in Oxfordshire

A series of attractive country walks uses routes that are easy for everyone to enjoy, especially those with reduced mobility: users of wheelchairs or mobility scooters and people with pushchairs and young families. OCC www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/countryside.

ORCC Trading Limited - Bulk Oil Buying Scheme

All that is needed to join the bulk oil buying scheme is to pay an annual membership fee, which will cover as many oil orders as you need during the course of the year. Orders are placed once a month and savings in the cost per litre are generally around 5p per litre less than the average price. For further details go to www.oxonrcc.org.uk or telephone Emma on 01865-733214. (ORCC)

Witney Woodland Volunteers

We meet every Monday at 10am under the clock by Waitrose in Witney to do a range of interesting and rewarding conservation projects in the Witney area, finishing at midday. Further details are on our website at www.witneywood.org.uk.

ONCF bulletin

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District Councillor

Liz Leffman

I recently had a very encouraging discussion with officers at WODC to find a replacement for the Dean Pit recycling centre. I hope to be able to bring you further news later in the year. In the meantime I wish everyone in Finstock all the best for 2014.

FINSTOCK SCHOOL

How splendid for Finstock School to have gained a Good rating from its OFSTED Inspection in September! The inspector called the day before his visit; these events are etched on one's



memory alongside other significant world happenings. It was a day when Lynn, our secretary works in the morning only. I was in a meeting over lunchtime and the emergency phone line began to ring. This of course, was a disruption to a very important meeting and I did not want to answer the call. Imagine what a surprise we would have had the next morning at 8am, had I not picked up.

The end of the calendar year was celebrated with a Nativity Play from Oak and Beech Class children, directed by Miss Holloway and Miss Cheshire. Our pupils love treading the boards and put on a lively and enjoyable show. The choir, this year was 14 strong which is almost one quarter of the school. Their dedication in attending rehearsals and singing at local events was admirable.

In November, our weekend open day led by our governors, marked the beginning of a yearly event through

FoFS

The Friends of Finstock School hope you all had a good Christmas and a Happy New Year! Your support for your local school is always very much appreciated and we look forward to future events in 2014.

which we will publicise the great opportunities Finstock School provides: the academic pursuits alongside the nurturing and encouragement for all children to believe in

themselves, to take risks and to find their place in the world. It was great to see so many current parents and other members of the community in attendance.

FoFS (Friends of Finstock School) have given us funding to refurbish an extra work space for one to one support, and the library, both of which are now ready for use. There will be a dedication of the library to Celia Garrick who supported pupils in reading for over twenty years. She was an amazing person and is sorely missed.

The children are learning about World War II this term. If anyone has memories or experiences they would be willing to share, they are invited to contact the school on 868314. Also we are keen to see any items from the time: e.g. ration books, gas masks, wartime letters/photos, games, clothing, etc.

Schools have a new curriculum to implement this year. Another way of keeping us on our toes; it would be nice to walk with feet on the ground for at least a few years.

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

W.B.Yeats.

Would you agree?

Thank you to our many volunteers and visitors. Happy New Year!

J. Roden, HT

School holiday

Term 3 2014 INSET day Monday
January 6th

Term 3 2014 Tuesday January 7th to
Friday February 14th

February Holiday Monday February 17th
to Friday 21st

Term 4 2014 Monday February 24th
to Friday April 4th

Finstock School

participated in two Hockey Tournaments

Cedar Class (Years 5 and 6) were invited to represent the School at two "Mini Hockey" Tournaments held at Wood Green and Henry Box Schools. The first tournament on November 14th was for boys' teams and the second on November 26th for teams of girls.

Each team was to number 10 children with seven playing at any one time. The other three could be used as 'rolling' substitutes. As there are only five boys in Cedar, permission was sought and agreed for five girls to make up the numbers. Although hockey has now been a regular weekly activity for Cedar class during the past 14 months, the rules and playing conditions of "Mini Hockey" are significantly different from the ones the children had been experiencing.

During the two tournaments the biggest challenge was for the children to face the daunting prospect of playing on a pitch that was seven times larger than the basketball court that the school uses on the village playing field. Additional changes were the introduction of several new rules, using an adult sized and weighted ball, playing continuously for 7-10 minutes, learning drills for corners and developing the confidence to enjoy the experience and not be over-awed.

The tournaments were organised in two leagues with the top two teams going onto a semi-final knock out with the winners then competing in the final. The boys came 3rd in their league drawing one game and narrowly losing two. The girls were unbeaten in their league, winning one game and drawing three and were narrowly beaten into third position.

In both tournaments the teams acquitted themselves well. They demonstrated energy, enthusiasm and a good team spirit. In addition their conduct was excellent; they were generous in congratulating their opponents, never once questioned the officials and met the challenge with a joyful but sportingly aggressive determination. They were a credit to their school, their village and their homes.

Rob Symonds

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*I didn't like my nose at first.
Then it grew on me.*

NEW BEGINNINGS IN SCOUTING

As I wrote before, things were changing for me. I had left Witney and had had very little response to the idea of starting a new group in Finstock, and thus decided to continue with plan "A" which was to support North Leigh. I accepted the role of Assistant Group Scout Leader which leaves me to concentrate on improving and growing the group and getting leaders through their training whilst looking at recruiting new leaders. I will still run a troop on a Tuesday and this may well be in Finstock as part of North Leigh. The group certainly needs it. During the discussions with the current Group Scout Leader it was agreed to include Finstock under its catchment allowing those interested to join. North Leigh

is accepting Scouts but there is a large waiting list for Beavers; they are desperate for new leaders in both the Beavers and the Cub sections with new sections in each really needing to open.

North Leigh is a truly wonderful group, rural location, very active and has some really good, dynamic leaders who run a great programme for all ages. They have access to woodland and have regular camps locally as well as great outdoor activities. I have been helping them since late October and have already been rifle shooting, ice skating and helping the scouts with their first aid and team building. The Beavers have had visits from an exotic animal group and everyone who wanted to handle the weird and wonderful animals and insects had the chance. The entire group were

involved in the inaugural Scout Christmas Post in North Leigh and New Yatt which involved local people purchasing a small stamp from the group and dropping their Christmas cards into the custom-made boxes. The Scouts then sorted and delivered them locally. A great idea and a great success. Next year I hope to see a couple of boxes in Finstock.

I will now report on activities that all sections are doing as well as the activities I am involved in directly, and remember scouting is inclusive: whatever gender, race or religion you are, the one requirement is that you have fun.

Have a great 2014 and I look forward to seeing some of you as either parents or new members soon.

Andy Compton 868271
or 07528-570180

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Puglia - the Magic Heel

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Oz Clarke

There is a proverb in Puglia: 'A caval donato non si guarda in bocca'; which means 'Never look a gift horse in the mouth'. Puglia produces more wine than any other region in Italy, and the grapes ripen all year long, giving them high sugar content. When winemakers from Northern Italy and France wanted to buy their wines in bulk for blending there were traditionalists who thought it was a bad idea. But the deal was too good to refuse.

Things are changing fast in Puglia, which is now the focus of modern wine makers who can bring both excellence and consistency to the finished product, crafting high quality individual wines. The fact that there are so many indigenous grape varieties makes it attractive to growers who value *terroir*.

There is a black grape variety which is emerging as a bit of a star, even if the locals cannot agree the precise definition of the name. *Susumaniello*, according to my friend Paolo, means 'little donkey' (a reference to the small black donkeys used to carry the grapes) and also means 'kicks like a mule', indicating strong wine. Until recently it was thought locally to produce dull, boring wine and was used only for blending. However, clever wine makers realised that after careful cultivation and selection this could make dense, full-bodied wines. *Susumaniello* wines made recently have been outstanding.

Some things, however, do not change in Puglia. The locals have yet to agree on the correct spelling of the name.

The interest is there, and indications are that this could sell for over £20 a bottle, I have one thing to say to the locals: - *A caval donato non si guarda in bocca*.

Osiris

The Affordable Warmth Helpline 0800 107 0044

gives impartial expert advice on issues including reducing energy bills, increasing energy efficiency of properties, switching energy supplier and how to stay warm over winter. For more information on the Oxfordshire Affordable Warmth Network please contact Dale Hoyland, Affordable Warmth Projects Manager, 01908-256926,

dale.hoyland@nef.org.uk. There is a signposting service about available advice and funding for affordable warmth for members of the public, older people, people on low incomes and benefit recipients, and private rented tenants. See www.oxford.gov.uk/affordablewarmth or www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/envhealth.cfm.

FINSTOCK RAINBOWS & BROWNIES

Rainbows have a full unit so please do put your daughter's name on our waiting list if you would like her to join our group. After Easter there will be a few places available to those on the waiting list.

The Rainbows will have an action-packed term as usual and they are also hoping to do a Rainbow Sleepover shortly.

During the Rainbow Open Evening in November, they raised a fantastic £300. Well done to all, especially for the wonderful raffle prizes. **This £300 will be donated to the Finstock Village Hall regeneration fund.**

2014 is going to be a great time to belong to Brownies, as we will be celebrating the **Brownie Centenary!**

We have so much organised that it's going to be hard to fit it all in. To name a few:-

In April we will have a sleepover at The National Space Centre in Leicester and Brownies take over the tracks c/o First Great Western trains to London to include VIP's at Paddington. May is a PGL pack holiday to Liddington, and July is our giant County fun day/sleepover at Cornbury Park. Then in the autumn we will probably do another pack holiday and then a family fun day at Heythrop Zoological Gardens.

Brownie numbers: we have a full unit on Wednesdays, so can only offer places for Monday Brownies at present.

Also hopefully everybody by now has seen the **Rag Bag Recycling Bin** that we have organised and placed outside the Village Hall. This is for any clothing, textiles, shoes, handbags and accessories. Please place any unwanted items in the rag-bag bags available from the Post Office or Village Hall or by contacting Caroline on 07890-629001 or otherwise any other plastic bag – PLEASE no loose items. The bin has only been in place for a short time and we have already had it emptied three times. All the proceeds of this will be going to the Village Hall Regeneration Fund, so again many thanks for supporting this good cause.

I have a great adult leadership team and would like to thank them all because without their help and continued support we wouldn't be able to have three wonderful and successful groups for our local girls.

Pictured below in our new Finstock Brownies HOODIES – from left to right: Twit Twoo – Karen Williams (Monday),



Barney – Bridget Myatt (Monday), Brown Owl – Caroline Booth (Monday & Wednesday), Snowy – Hannah Mansell (Wednesday Brownies & Rainbows), Barney – Rachel Hemming (Wednesday), Eagle Owl – Kim Lovelock (Wednesday Brownies & Rainbows), Little Owl – Amy Booth (Wednesday Brownies & Rainbows) and Nicky Owl – Nicky Blackall (Monday)

Finstock Rainbows meet in the Village Hall on Wednesdays from 4.45 until 5.45pm. Rainbows are for girls aged between 5 and 7; to put your daughter's name on our waiting list to join, please contact Amy Booth on 824190 or ajb5@btinternet.com.

Finstock Brownies meet in the Village Hall on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6pm until 7.30pm. Brownies are for girls aged between 7 and 11. Contact Caroline Booth on 07890-629001 or caroline0booth@btinternet.com to add your daughter to our units. (At the moment there are only places available on Mondays.)

The Plough Inn Finstock *A very warm welcome* **awaits you at The Plough!**

Our themed food nights will continue monthly. In February it will be a Valentine's night on the 14th. The March themed food night will be confirmed closer to the time. Please look out for notices in the pub. Remember to book early as these nights have proved very successful.

Quiz nights on Monday February 17th and March 3rd. Monday March 24th - Games night at the Plough from 7pm. All quiz entry fees will go to the Village Hall regeneration fund.

The Plough is open Tuesday through Friday from 12-3pm and again from 6-11pm. We will now be open all day on Saturday from noon. On Sundays we will be open for food until 4pm and close at 6pm; with occasional live music after lunch by Acousticana. And on Monday nights we will be open for drinks only.

We will be closed from Monday February 3rd until the evening of Monday February 10th.

Thank you all for your support and we look forward to seeing you all soon.



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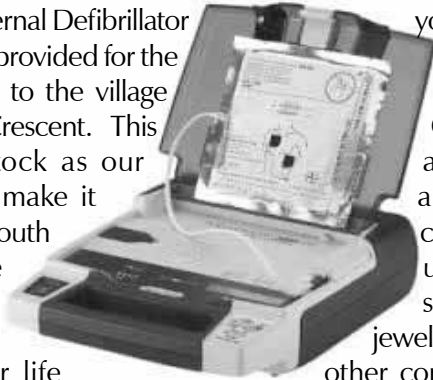
Firstly I would like to wish everyone a Happy and Healthy New Year. The Community First Responders cover the local villages responding to 999 emergency calls but only when sent by the ambulance service. Winter can be a difficult time with a high demand placed on the service at times such as Christmas and disruption due to bad weather. The support of the local volunteer team should hopefully mean that help reaches those unfortunately in need of our services as soon as possible. You may also have seen that Finstock has been given a defibrillator. This is located on the side of the first set of garages on Hill Crescent. It is well lit and has a code to access it, which will be given out by

Ambulance Control if the situation arises. Remember, you need to dial 999 for an ambulance first and they will tell you what to do and how to access the machine if needed. The defibrillator is automated and will talk you through what to do. It will only provide a shock to the right type of heart rhythm (fibrillation), so if placed on someone without this heart rhythm it will advise you to continue CPR.

As usual we continue to ask for any unwanted new or used printer cartridges and mobile phones which we can recycle to add to our fundraising. If you have any questions about the Community Responders please do not hesitate to contact me via saraanscombe@btopenworld.com.

FREE Life Saving Training

The Automated External Defibrillator (AED) which has been provided for the village is located next to the village notice board on Hill Crescent. This is fabulous for Finstock as our remote location can make it very challenging for South Central Ambulance Service to achieve their pre-determined attendance times for life threatening emergencies. Please note that there is NO number on the box that holds the machine. We have been told that a number isn't needed and that calling 999 and telling SCAS Control that



you need the code for the Finstock AED is sufficient.

Our defibrillator is automatic but there are still important considerations with using the machine such as pace makers, jewellery, moist chests and other considerations. Training

is always recommended! SCAS are offering a FREE AED familiarisation session to be held in the Village Hall. Becoming familiar with this life saving piece of equipment gives a casualty's assistant confidence and as such this will save time. In a cardiac arrest situation, every second counts!

If this FREE training interests you and I hope it will, please email me ASAP as I am coordinating the training session: firstforsafety@live.co.uk. Should insufficient numbers show interest the training will unfortunately NOT go ahead.

The training session will also include training on basic CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation). Anyone in cardiac arrest needs immediate and effective CPR whilst the defibrillator is being prepared. Would you know what to do? For the benefit of your family, friends and neighbours, please support this event. Age 8 years to 108+ years.

ALL EXTREMELY WELCOME!

Drew Agger

Woodpecker Pre-school

*Happy New Year
to you all!*



We ended last term on a high. Our Christmas play went much better than expected; the children amazed us as they did not suffer from the stage fright that we had anticipated. Ken Franklin generously captured the moment for us on DVD's (free of charge) which parents purchased for a small fee. Alongside our play came the Christmas raffle and thanks to everyone's generosity by donating prizes and buying tickets **we raised £677**; some of this money will go towards replacing the plastic roof on our canopy in the hope of making it more weather proof. Our end of term party was brilliant, and for the first time ever there were no tears during the party games! We were also visited by a very jolly Father Christmas, who made the term end on a very cheerful note.

All that was last year and we have now got back into the swing of our routines. We are still hoping that there will be a few kind folk who will find a little time to share an interest or a skill with us. Last term we were visited by Justin Kamphuis who shared his homeland, New Zealand with us all. He also helped us to have a go at the All Blacks' Haka. All the children (and staff!) thoroughly enjoyed his visit. If you think that you would like to visit us please just contact Lesley on the number below to arrange a date.

Our opening hours are 8.45am to 12 noon, Monday to Friday, and we are situated at Finstock School, School Rd, Finstock. For further information, or to organise a visit, please contact Lesley Dore 07964-817165 or email woodpecker.pre@outlook.com. (Please look on the 'OFSTED' website for details of our excellent recent report or telephone Lesley and ask for a copy.)

*They told me I had type-A
blood, but it was a Type-O.*

N.RANDELL

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Take time to help your NHS this winter

Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Winter is a busy time for the NHS. The cold weather, short dark days, ice and snow along with seasonal ailments like flu and norovirus bring extra pressure to the health service.

However there is a lot you can do to make life easier for your NHS and for yourself. By choosing the right services and treatments you can save yourself a lot of time and inconvenience whilst making sure that healthcare staff are treating the people most suitable for their service.

- Take two minutes to decide on the most appropriate service for your needs. Many people use hospital

A&E as a first port of call when they should really be looking for help or advice elsewhere. The A&E is ONLY for people who are very sick or badly injured.

- Unless your condition is very serious or life-threatening, you should consider other options, such as your local minor injuries unit (for cuts, broken bones, sprains, minor burns and scalds); your GP (for feverish children, infections and persistent symptoms); NHS 111 – the 24 hour a day telephone service for general advice and guidance; your pharmacist (for upset stomachs, insect bites and stings, coughs and colds); and your

own first aid kit (for everything from tummy aches and sore throats through to minor cuts and grazes).

- Take the time to have a flu jab – flu is not just a bad cold it can be a serious illness and it puts huge pressure on the NHS, business and families. Ask your GP about a flu jab today. It is free for many people and the simple vaccination can save a huge amount of misery. Visit www.nhs.uk/livewell/winterhealth/pages/fluandthefluvaccine.aspx for more information
- Take ten seconds to cancel an appointment if you can't make it. GPs and hospital departments are very busy during winter, so if you cannot make an appointment please let them know as soon as possible. Your appointment can be given to someone else who needs one.
- Take a minute to order your repeat prescription. A simple phone call to your GP can mean you get your repeat prescription in good time and ensure you do not run out of medication over a holiday period.
- Take 15 minutes to visit your pharmacy or supermarket and stock up your first aid kit so you have everything you need to treat minor ailments and injuries yourself without the need to visit your family doctor or other NHS service. Visit www.nhs.uk/chq/pages/990.aspx or ask your pharmacist for advice

FROM YOUR COUNTY COUNCILLOR

In Finstock, I hope it proves to be a great year for the Village Hall in the coming year, and I was very pleased to be able to put £2,000 towards some part of this venture. As the Community Fund from which this comes must be spent by the end of March, I believe it will go towards a new portable stage for the Hall. Should we be able to keep some form of Local Member Fund in future budgets, I do hope to give some more to this appeal.

That naturally leads to the setting of the County Precept, as mentioned in my last report. We still have to make large savings, with Home-to-School Transport still having to do its share. A

roadshow similar to "Talking Oxfordshire" visited any local schools affected by the proposed changes to explain in depth exactly what is being proposed and answer a large basket of questions. Village Hall Grants may also be a casualty, but you will not be surprised to know that there is always a loser in any savings we try to make.

Lastly, the local subsidised bus route review is coming to an end, and I will be taking a close look at recommendations going forward on such routes as the Charlbury Taxibus. This is not part of the Budget procedure, but every six years we try to ensure value for money from all the routes we subsidise. Rodney Rose



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THE JOY OF THE WINTER GARDEN

The garden was finally put to bed in early December, although with the mild conditions, some of the plants were very reluctant to become dormant. The climbing rose *Schoolgirl* with its frothy pink blooms, and the showy red flowers of *Salvia hot lips* have continued to flower since starting in May.

Bright yellow flowers of winter jasmine and the yellow and white flecked bright green foliage of the Jasmine *argentevariegatum* climb the stonework. The woodland garden beds are carpeted with silver, pewter and patterned leaves of the autumn cyclamen with a background of Japanese Acer leaves. Different strains of cyclamen, originally started from fresh seed, increase each year, spread by ants carrying the sugar coated seed to their nests, so surprise plants turn up in new places.

Winter sunshine highlights the red orange and gold of the Witch Hazel flowers which are complemented by the glowing of the stems of willows, dogwoods and coral-barked Acers. The graceful birch bark and the colour of the lichens on the trees and stone work provide yellows, greens, greys and blacks. Interest continues with the green flowers of the oriental hellebore "green cups", followed by the yellows, whites, rich dark reds, pinks and magnificent slates and sumptuous velvety blacks with the

golden anthers. These are grown in raised beds providing the drainage and making it easier to see flowers, helped by the cutting off all the old leaves in late November, removing any hellebore aphids (pale green winged insects) which prevents the spread of viruses such as the hellebore black death, seen as blackened foliage. Any plants showing the signs need to be dug up and burnt as they can devastate a collection.

Snowdrops in drifts under the trees brave the colder months to herald the coming spring. These



flowers, loved and collected by the Victorians, have become very popular again with enthusiasts called *galanthophiles* who now tour the country seeking the new and rarer cultivars. One of the best varieties *S.Arnett* produces good sized fragrant white flowers while *Mighty Atom* is a shorter large-flowered white. A good yellow is *Spindleberry* and another is *Wendy's Gold*. All snowdrops love a top dressing of mushroom compost and it is a good idea to divide large clumps every five years after flowering to maintain size

and vigour.

February is the time to go for woodland snowdrop walks; special interesting collections with lovely settings can be seen at Evenley Wood garden, Colesbourne Park, and Rodmarton Manor. Check their websites for directions and dates.

Robert Bigwood

Green Gyms

Green Gym is a unique scheme, established over 10 years ago, which helps people become physically and mentally healthier by taking part in practical nature conservation activities to improve their local environment. Everyone is welcome to join in, with a range of tasks to suit most people's fitness.

N.B. For all tasks wear sturdy boots and old clothes, bring waterproofs if wet.

For more information, see the website tcv.org.uk/greengym/how-green-gym-works.

The Oxfordshire Green Gyms are all run by volunteers and are based at Chipping Norton, and Woodstock among others. Most gyms specify the following:-

- Children: under 16's accompanied by a guardian are welcome.
- We provide all tools, training and refreshments.
- Please wear old clothes and sturdy shoes or boots (trainers not advisable).
- Tetanus: Please ensure that your tetanus inoculation is up to date.

These groups carry out practical conservation on sites around West Oxfordshire and everyone is welcome to come along:-

Chipping Norton Green Gym meets on a Wednesday or Thursday morning. Contact Jenny Harrington 01608-643269 (email jennyharrington@btinternet.com). Visit: chippygreengym.org.

Woodstock Green Gym meets on a Wednesday morning. Contact Philip Redpath on 810820 (email: redpath998@aol.com). Visit woodchipgreengym.org.uk. Mobile on the day: 07769-500667.

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