

DRAYTON ST. LEONARD

NEWS AND VIEWS

October 2023

Editor: Diana Cavendish Deputy Editor: Liz Rhodes

Since the last edition of News and Views, the village has undergone some highs and lows. The high point was the Coronation of our new king, in early summer. Some of us watched bits of the service together in the Church, and then repaired to a rather dripping tent for shared picnic lunches. Then we drank a toast to King Charles 111 and Queen Camilla and wished them well.

Not much later that month we suffered a tremendous and damaging electrical storm, some lost routers, Wi-Fi, alarm systems, lights, etc. But the worst affected were David and Donna Watkin. A tree in their garden was hit by lightning, bits of wood flew everywhere, their cars were trashed as well as other damage occurring.

The motto of this village should be “Waste not, Want not”. It is amazing how when anything appears either free or for sale on the village email, it is immediately snapped up. We are a good recycling community.

The 5 new houses are now really taking shape and we hope whoever buys them will be happy there and want to take part in village life. As the road past them and on down to the Aston Martin Barn and other houses currently has no name, perhaps people would like to make suggestions and the village email and we could forward them to the relevant council.

WELCOME TO THE VILLAGE

Jason Sengal and Eve Weatherill have recently moved to Plough Cottage. They are both Research Scientists and gained their doctorates in Oxford, where they met. They also share a love of music, Eve plays the violin and viola and Jason, as he puts it, occasionally clatters round the percussion section of an orchestra. They got married in Dorset in June 2022, then travelled extensively and on their return decided to move back to Oxfordshire. They have many friends and colleagues in Oxford, so are looking forward to new jobs in the biosciences, taking up cycling again and finding good places for a wild swim and a picnic.

Philip and Joycelyn Jaynes with their daughter, Rebecca, have moved into Cherry Trees in the Osiers. They have come from Reading.

FAREWELL TO THE VILLAGE

Geoff and Janet Snell, who lived at Cherry Trees in the Osiers for 27 years, have moved to Henley. We wish them well in their new home, and hope they will be frequent visitors to the village.

VILLAGE PEOPLE NEWS

Charles Dickerson's 80th Birthday party

The weather stayed fair for both the Village Church Fete and onto the following Monday, **when we celebrated** Charles's 80th birthday. Luckily the tents put up for the Fete were still there. All the village were invited and with typical generosity our host provided free beer, drinks and sandwiches, all consumed to the music of an excellent blues band, "The Soul Traders", also recruited by Charles.

We observed the usual toasts, and what really showed was the warmth of affection to a man who has contributed so much to our village, with little regard from us who have benefitted from his constant efforts.

Charles's life has been very rich and varied, his interests ranging from music, sailing, science and history, but to me his abiding quality is an absence of malice, but of kindness towards one and all.

Dick Atkinson

Congratulations to Jo Armon Jones, the keyboard player for the Jazz quintet Ezra Collective, who

have just won the prestigious 2023 Mercury Prize (for best album released in the UK). This is the first time this award has been made to a jazz ensemble.

CONGRATULATIONS

“On the day of the DSL Church Fete, the King’s Birthday Honours list was published, and I was appointed Member of the Royal Victorian Order (MVO). This was in recognition of 36 years service as a Wandsman, and 16 years as Head Wandsman at the Royal Maundy Ceremony held every Easter on Maundy Thursday. As a Wandsman I had responsibility for looking after the Recipients who are presented with a set of Maundy Money by the Monarch. As Head Wandsman I was responsible for organising the other 5 Wandsmen, allocating roles and positions in the various cathedrals where the Royal Maundy was held. This was my last year when the ceremony was held in York. It has been an honour and privilege to serve during this time and hopefully help bring joy to the many deserving Recipients.”

Andrew Wright

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 13th: DSL Film Club: ‘Big Deal at Dodge City’, starring

Henry Fonda and Joanne Woodward.

November 3rd: DSL History Society Meeting: Steve Gunn on “Everyday Life and Accidental death in Tudor Oxfordshire”

November 5th: Fireworks Display and Mulled Wine

November 18th: Wine-tasting evening in the Village Hall: 7.30pm

November 24th: DSL History Society Meeting: Geoffrey Tyack on “The Buildings of the Bodleian”

THANKS

To those who deliver the papers to the Church porch.

To Steve Cox for organising the food bank. Those who want to donate food will find a basket on the pew inside the Church door.

To Ella Chapman for the Drawings.

2023 Drayton St Leonard Bicycle Polo Tournament

The 8th Drayton St Leonard Bicycle Polo tournament took place on

Saturday 2nd September following a spell of very wet weather which meant that the preparations of the fete field was a bit of a challenge, a special thanks to Sam Farrant and Max Wellbelove for their help.

This year there were four teams with players names chosen at random, the captains were Charlie Wellbelove, Edward Hayter, George Farrant and Zoe Cox.

Following Edward Hayter's all important(!) safety briefing the matches began, the going was a little slower this year as the grass was slightly longer than previous years but that didn't slow the excitement of pedal power and the satisfying sound of the polo mallet striking the ball!!

There were some outstanding performances throughout the day with Charlie Wellbelove and George Hayter both delivering phenomenal back hand shots resulting in some skilful goal scoring but Hoop Cox triumphed and secured man of the match for the second time. The green team captained by Edward Hayter and supported by Pete Fry, Tom Harrison and Finn Shaw, a new comer, scoring his first goal, showed some very skilful play!

The determination and competitiveness of George Farrant and his hired assassins Tom and Matthew Wiblin, supported by

Dougie Paterson was very present throughout the day!

The drive and determination of the blue team captained by Zoe Cox and his band of merry men including Max Wellbelove, Hoop Cox and Charlie Hayter resulted in them winning the top of the league and securing them a place in the final against the red team captained by Charlie Wellbelove with George Hayter and Toby Farrant on attack and first timer Thomas Paterson on defence! The final match umpired by Edward Hayter was full of spills and thrills, calls of my line and penalties but the red team that had been runners up prevailed and beat the Blues by 2:0 - the cup was presented to the winning team by Kate Paterson.

The organisers would also like to thank Alison Hardingham for her as always brilliant time keeping and Amanda Wellbelove who hosted a Pimms and refreshments tent throughout the afternoon, it was lovely to see so many villagers coming to watch and enjoy the spectacle of DSL bicycle polo, accompanied with a glass of beer or Pimms.

The "Queen's Green Canopy"- Now Open!

The "Queen's Green Canopy" was an initiative that began in 2021, in honour of the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. The Jubilee was celebrated in the following year. The

aim of the initiative was to increase and protect the native tree cover throughout the UK, through a 'special gift' for the Queen, to mark her 70 years on the throne. So it was that Drayton St Leonard's contribution (with the approval of the Parish Council and aided by Sam Farrant) was to plant some 60 "wildlife-friendly" small trees and shrubs, thus adding to tree plantings that had been carried out years before- for example by Angela Farrant (Sweet Chestnuts, Field Maple and Walnut). Detail on the planting site was covered in earlier editions of the Newsletter, and you will remember that the site is a narrow triangle 55-odd metres long, running alongside the Stadhampton road, just before the entrance to Manor Farm; it contains a narrow footpath:

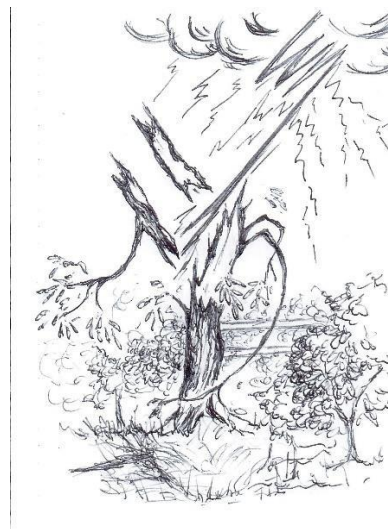


Entrance to the planting is through a new pedestrian gate leading from the Play Area "Nature Zone", so no need now to run the gauntlet of nettles and thistles that lay in wait if entering from the raised roadside verge. Work isn't finished, in that more of the dead or dying Elm suckers will always need removing,

some pruning of the large trees is required, and continued selective weeding etc. will be necessary, but we hope now that the planting will mature quite quickly- given "normal" seasonal conditions.

Please note that I had hoped that DSL's effort would by now be logged on South Oxfordshire District Council's tree-planting website- they did promise- but if it is there, I can't find it; I will let you know.

Charles Dickerson



Drayton St Leonard Local History Society: "Summer" Outing.

On Sunday 17th September 15, our party of 15 set off for Wallingford for our long-awaited guided tour of Wallingford's castle grounds, to be hosted by Judy Dewey, Curator of Wallingford Museum. Unfortunately, wet weather put paid to the walk over what would have been very

slippery slopes, so we stayed in the museum, where we were treated to Judy's scholarly, but very clear and engaging account of the history of the castle, which was built ca.1067-1071, to become "one of the most powerful royal castles of the 12th and 13th centuries". Her account referred to the superb model of the castle in its final stage of development, housed in its own room together with related artifacts and posters. This model was based on all the latest documental and archaeological research, which is still very much ongoing:

Judy Dewey beside the museum's superb model of the castle.



Very little of the castle remains, (see pic below) but the castle grounds are well worth a visit, (it's not far to go!). If you don't know it already, they lie between the Shillingford road and the R. Thames and are well-managed by the Earth Trust in a way that encourages wildlife and biodiversity. The Museum is open until the end of November.

Picture of the castle remains: *Bill Nicholls*,
CC BY-SA 2.0,
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=13621440>.



Charles Dickerson

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ... ALISON GOMM

Almost every day begins with a walk in the fields at about 6:30. I usually say good morning to Neville and their two spaniels, or to Terry and Susan with their Scotties, Vicky and Peter with their greyhounds, Pat with Ted, Alison and Tom with Rosie, Julia running with her three – in fact, I seem to be the only person who doesn't have a dog as an excuse for

getting up that early! Having lived in cities during my twenties, I wanted to settle in the countryside. I love seeing everything come to life in the spring and working out what the Farrants and Emmetts are doing with their land each year.

After the morning walk, I don't really have a normal day. When I finished paying my mortgage a few years ago, I wanted more time to do things that interested me. I cut back my working hours, developed some existing interests and found others. If I'm doing my paid work (as an editor on an academic journal) I usually do it at home. Since lockdown, new systems have made this easy. My other interests take me out and about. For this article I'm focusing on my work in a local prison.

We're a team of volunteers who train prisoners in listening skills so that they can support other prisoners who are struggling with life inside and are distressed – often to the point of self-

harming or contemplating suicide. Having trained our Listeners, we go in regularly to support them – to hear about the contacts they've had and sometimes to guide them – so I'm usually there once a week.

On arrival, we go through airport-style security to make sure that we're not carrying forbidden items. These include the obvious (mobile phones, weapons, drugs) and the less evident (chewing gum and Blu-tak –

prisoners routinely use toothpaste to fix photos to their cell walls). Once through the gate, we draw keys from a locked cabinet and make our way to meet our Listeners.

It seems extraordinary that we, all civilians, are entrusted with a bunch of keys which will open every door in the prison apart from individual cells. But security is extremely tight. We have to unlock and relock nine heavy iron gates to get to our meeting room. There's a lot of clanging, but once we're on the walkways, heading for one of the wings, the prison is quiet. The walkways are concrete, bare, and open to the elements on both sides. There's always a nod and a 'Morning' for anyone you pass. It's a community. We let ourselves into the meeting room and wait for our Listeners to be brought over from their different wings. Although they are trusted men, we're not allowed to escort them between wings ourselves – that must be done by an officer.

I've learnt a great deal from the work and am always impressed by the emotional intelligence and empathy of these men who have – of course – offended, but have often had desperately sad childhoods and have reached a point where they want to make more of their lives and have chosen to do it by supporting others. The skills which they develop through this work will stand them in good stead on the outside.

We enjoy getting to know them and, despite the seriousness of the work,

there are amusing moments. One of the Listeners was bemoaning the fact that ordinary people who take part in *Bake-off* or *Love Island* (they watch a lot of television) suddenly become celebrities and are given more and more opportunities.

‘I’ve been on TV plenty of times, but I don’t get those chances.’

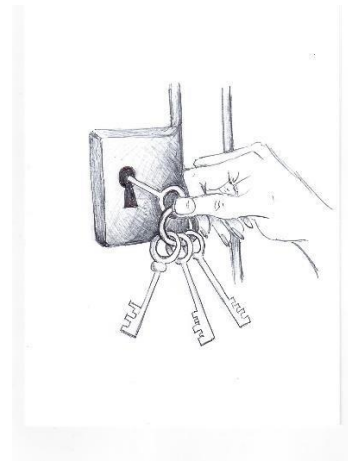
‘Really? You’ve been on television?’

‘Yes, I’ve been on *Crimewatch*, more than once. And that programme where they play dash-cam footage of police car chases.’

Owing to the serious lack of staff in prisons at the moment, the regime is much more restrictive than it was before the pandemic, with men spending most of their time locked in their cells. Those who have jobs within the prison – cleaning, kitchen work, laundry – are the lucky ones because they leave their cells for a few hours each day and associate with other men. Weekends are particularly difficult because there aren’t enough staff to supervise any time out of cells. We’re currently collecting board games to take in for them. If anyone is having a clear-out and wants to donate some games, I’d gladly receive them. Two-player games are particularly welcome, such as chess, draughts or backgammon, but also snakes and ladders, ludo etc. The prison stipulates nothing with fake money, like Monopoly, or small metal pieces. And no jigsaws at the moment – we had an appeal for

jigsaws earlier in the year and were swamped!

Alison Gomm



PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

All five of your Parish Councillors were re-elected for another 4 year term earlier this year. These are Edward Hayter (Chairman), Charles Wellbelove (Vice Chairman), Charles Dickerson, George Farrant and David Hinde. Cassie Pinnells the Parish Clerk continues to do amazing work to support the administration of the Parish Council for which we are very grateful. It has been a relatively quiet Summer for the Parish Council and there have been no additional meetings to consider new local planning applications.

Two councillors recently investigated the repeated flooding of the road by the Thames Water Treatment Works at Haywards Bridge and discovered a blocked drain totally overgrown at the low point of the road on the inside of the bend. This has been reported to Highways with whom we will be following up with to make sure it is cleared.

The Parish Council's application for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit through the village has been approved. This is part of the County Council's 20mph transformation plan and all rural communities were encouraged to apply. We expect the implementation in Drayton St Leonard to take place during 2024, although we have not been given notice of a specific date yet.

The volume of traffic through the village remains a concern for many residents, particularly given the lack of pavements and the narrowness of the lanes.

We have therefore been following closely the planning application for a new river crossing at Culham, part of the wider HIF1 road network improvements to support the planned construction of 15,000 new homes as part of the Didcot Garden Town delivery plan. The plans would include improved road networks to take traffic from Culham on a new bypass of Clifton Hamden through to the Golden Balls roundabout, thereby removing through traffic from local villages. The Parish Council was optimistic

that the County Council would approve these plans.

It was therefore disappointing to learn that at the meeting on 17th July, the Oxfordshire County Council planning committee rejected the HIF1 river crossing scheme, against the recommendation of the planning officers. As a member of the planning committee, Robin Bennett (who represents our area both as a County and District Councillor) voted against this application and we look forward to hearing from him as to the rationale for this and the next steps. The addition of 15,000 new homes in Didcot without new road infrastructure to cope with the already congested state of our local roads needs to be addressed.

The village fireworks event is coming up on Sunday 5th November and we are very grateful to Robert Sellar and Liam Reed for again agreeing to organise this very popular village event.

The Parish Council would also like to thank all those villagers who generously give of their time and in some cases also make generous donations to support the many and varied village clubs, societies and events. Without your commitment, none of these events would happen and our small village community owes you our thanks and support.

Meeting dates and Agendas are always available to see on the Village Website and the Village Noticeboard.

Edward Hayter, Chairman

Further news on the HIF1 new river crossing proposal

The proposals are now due to go to the planning inspectorate and the hearing will commence on the 5th of December.

If you made comments to Oxfordshire County Council as the Local Planning Authority for these proposals at the application stage, they will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

If you wish to make further written comments these need to be submitted by email to LEANNE.PALMER@planninginspectorate.gov.uk by 4th October 2023.

The Parish Council met recently and voted in favour of a response to be submitted on behalf of the Parish.

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NEW EXHIBITION AT THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

COLOUR REVOLUTION: Victorian Art, Fashion and Design

This is the current exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, running until the 18th February next year.

This wonderful exhibition illustrates how the Victorian era was full of colour, in spite of images of “Dark Satanic Mills”, dark furniture, heavy drapes and the wearing of black

clothes, owing to endless periods of mourning.

John Ruskin, the influential art critic, artist and writer, strove to restore colour to paintings and design. He was a huge admirer of JMW Turner, who was a great colourist. The Pre-Raphaelite artists, so much supported by Ruskin, are very much in evidence here, with their meticulously painted canvases, full of colour. There is so much else to see here, colourful dresses, including a bright red corset, statues and jewellery and the Great Painted Bookcase, by William Burges and others. You can also see some examples of the earliest colour photography.

Do book now and go and see this fascinating and varied Exhibition.

Diana Cavendish

CHURCH BELLRINGING

Our Wednesday practices, where we welcome ringers from Marsh Baldon and Little Milton. have continued twice a month over the summer. We have stretched our brains by attempting different methods and variations! We have continued to ring for Sunday services.

We welcomed two sets of visiting ringers; one group rang a quarter peal and the other group rang as part of a training course. In addition, the South Oxon branch of ringers held a practice here on a Saturday evening in July, at which 20 ringers were present.

We would be happy to chat to anyone interested in finding out what we do, please get in touch.

Hilarie and Christopher Rogers
draytonstleonard@southoxon.odg.org.uk

THE CHURCH FETE, 17 JUNE

As usual the village enjoyed warm sunshine for the church fete and the now traditional fun and games including a light-hearted dog show and children's fancy-dress as well as egg-throwing, welly wanging and blat the rat. New this year was a jelly-eating competition which was a feature of last year's platinum jubilee celebrations.

Other innovations were a stress-busting crockery smash suggested and organised by Hazel Diddle and a children's throwing game set up on a special low table beautifully designed and painted by Tina Cox. All the usual eating and drinking favourites were busy all afternoon and villagers, friends and families spent well at the book, produce and bric and brac stalls, the latter boasting a new vintage collectibles table. As always the raffle and auction were fundraising highlights and a testament to the persuasive skills of Anne Wright during straitened times. This year we experimented with a silent auction of good quality donated handbags which did well for a first attempt. Overall, the reliable

generosity of the village in supporting this vital day in the calendar meant that despite a fall in attendance due to clashes with other local events the sums raised held up very well. In total £5,000 was raised. Grateful thanks to all those who worked so hard to make the day a success.

Hilary Gilfoy

USEFUL CONTACTS

CLERK TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

Cassie Pinnells
clerk@draytonstleonard.org.uk

Apart from her other duties, the Village Tents can be booked through her.

VILLAGE HALL

This can be booked through **David Herlihy**
villagehall@draytonstleonard.org.uk

Tables, chairs, crockery can be booked separately. Internet access available by arrangement.

VICAR

Rev. Theresa Stewart-Sykes,
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MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

John Howell

howelljm@parliament.uk

If you contact John, you must put in the email your name, address and contact details to ensure you get a response.