

Finstock News 141

Serving Finstock, Fawler, Wilcote, Mt. Skippett and Finstock Heath

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“August rain: the best of the summer gone, and the new fall not yet born. The odd uneven time.”—

Sylvia Plath,

The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath

While this issue focuses largely on what has been and, quite literally, now gone in some cases, there is also much news about forthcoming events as well. The summer holiday period will hopefully provide a break of some sort for most of you and a chance to reflect, as well as plan for the shortening days ahead.



WOODPECKER COMMUNITY SHOP AND POST OFFICE



At the end of May, we pulled down the blinds on the shop for the very last time. The death of a village institution came with a sense of both sadness and inevitability. Yet every funeral needs a good wake, and so on Tuesday 6th June, we opened the doors again to a throng of folks who have contributed to its role in serving our community over so many years. Directors past and present, including Jenifer Wates, the original chair; suppliers, volunteers and valued customers all came together to celebrate the triumph of nearly twenty years of being there for Finstock and the surrounding villages. We remembered old faces, the constant feeling of crisis in trying to build trade and marshal enough volunteers to open as long as we could, but most importantly, the sense of friendship associated with this focal point on School Road. And, of course, we paid tribute to Karen Williams, who has personified everything that's good about serving our community.

The barn is empty now, gutted of fixtures and fittings, cleaned, ready to be handed back to Ed and Chloe, whose generosity allowed us to operate rent free for so long. The benches and picnic table have been handed over to the Parish Council to be moved to another site within the village, the chillers and other equipment will be used by the Village Hall and Finstock Community Projects at events like our summer festival.

In years to come, generations will not know what it was like to have the shop at our heart. But we shall remember.

Rod Ireland



Bridewell Gardens

A big reminder about the last Open Day for this summer - The walled garden and vineyard will be open to the public on Sunday, 10th September between 11.00 am and 4.00pm.

There'll be a "pop-up" café in the garden for tea and cake as well as high quality plants for sale, plus home-produced jams and chutneys. Bring a picnic blanket and relax in the vineyard with friends and family. Speak to Bridewell staff about the recovery service and the support provided at the gardens. Dogs on leads are very welcome. Families and children are encouraged to explore the site.

We look forward to sharing our beautiful gardens with you once more this year.

Suggested donation £5 per person.
*Bridewell Gardens, The Walled Garden,
Wilcote, Oxfordshire OX7 3DT*



DURING THESE MONTHS

3rd August 1492 - Christopher Columbus set sail from Palos, Spain, with three ships. Seeking a westerly route to the Far East, he instead landed on October 12th in the Bahamas, thinking it was an outlying Japanese island.

4th August 1961 - Barack Obama, the 44th U.S. President was born in Honolulu, Hawaii.

13th August 1961 - The Berlin Wall came into existence after the East German government closed the border between east and west sectors of Berlin with barbed wire to discourage emigration to the West.

2nd September 1666 - The Great Fire of London began in a bakery in Pudding Lane near the Tower. Over the next three days more than 13,000 houses were destroyed, although only six lives were believed lost.

7th September 1822 - Brazil declared its independence from Portugal after 322 years as a colony.

15th September 1890 - British mystery author Agatha Christie (1890-1976) was born in Torquay, England. She wrote nearly a hundred books including mysteries, dramas, poetry and nonfiction.

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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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FINSTOCK FESTIVAL 2023

Music, Sunshine, Food, Bar, Great People.

Our festival ticked all the boxes this year as always.

As an experiment, we started the build a week early on Sunday morning - in the hope that we would get more help. A sterling team arrived at the field and we managed to get the three main six by twelve-metre marquees up by 1.00pm. Just in time to enjoy the rest of Father's Day.

The huge job of putting in place the rest of the infrastructure - electrics, bar, flooring, staging, lighting, and stock, etc. began early Wednesday morning. A formidable team of workers beavered away in high temperatures every day until we opened at 7.00 pm on Friday evening.



Friday is fast becoming Bikers' Night; we estimate forty came this year. They were entertained by our own local ukulele band followed by our regular and much loved GROWLER. The place was rocking!

Saturday afternoon was the school Fete followed by our late afternoon and evening entertainment, which consisted of Laura Jones & friends, On the Spectrum and The Replays.

The festival this year was very well supported, the takings were considerably up on the previous year and the final figures are yet to be computed.

Sunday is pull down and pack away day, a truly massive and draining task. We started at 9.00 am. with a solid crew and the job was finished just in time for the last six workers to make last orders at The Plough before 6.00 pm. - for a well-deserved and rehydrating pint!

The last two army store tents came down Tuesday morning.

Sadly, an unfortunate incident took the edge off the event, in the form of an unknown person deciding to ram the heavy gated entrance to the field. This resulted in the wrought iron gates being destroyed and also a large brick pillar wrecked. We hope the perpetrators will be identified.

That apart it was a very successful Finstock Festival.

A massive thank you to the many people that helped with the festival in so many ways - a job well done. Rock on Finstock Festival 2024.

Colin Stringfellow, Chair

FoFS Summer Fete June '23

We had a wonderful day at our annual fete on the field, it was great to see so many people join us there. Huge thanks to our team of volunteers for putting on a brilliant afternoon, and to the Finstock Festival Committee for all the hard work on their event so we can join forces, it's such a massive help to us!

There were fantastic performances from Finstock School's mini-morris group and Witney Training Band who delighted audiences with their dancing and music, visits from local vintage tractors and Charlbury Fire Station - who brought along a fire engine for some demonstrations which were much enjoyed! There were stalls a plenty inside the marquee from local external crafters, plus a variety of games and sweet treats for everyone. The big prize draw from our successful summer raffle finished off the afternoon and there were lots of lucky winners all round! Thank you to our supporters who joined us on the day, local businesses who donated prizes for our amazing raffle and all those in the community who donated items for the tombolas, we are so grateful.

We can't wait to be back next year, even bigger and better!

Helen Fallows



VILLAGE HALL

www.finstock.org.uk/village-hall • villagehallfinstock@gmail.com

Finstock Woodpeckers Short Mat Bowls

Established on the opening of the new village hall in April 2016, the Woodpeckers recently celebrated their seventh birthday. We are a friendly group that play social but competitive bowls indoors at the village hall every Monday and Thursday at 2.00pm year-round. New players are always made welcome and all you need to play is a pair of clean, flat-soled shoes and we provide the rest. We have two OPEN DAYS for first time bowlers to try the sport on Thursday 28th September and Monday 2nd October at 2.00pm - just turn up, or phone for more information. If you cannot make those days or want to try before then you are most welcome. Just come but give us a call first so we can have spare equipment ready.

As well as playing at Finstock, half our players now play for Charlbury in the Oxfordshire leagues and two play for Oxfordshire County team. We enter a Woodpeckers side in the Wednesday morning triples throughout the winter, while half just play social bowls.

In May, Shaun and Beverley Morley competed in the European Pairs competition near Antwerp, Belgium over two days. They topped their group of seven pairs beating some strong competition, but then were knocked out to a team they should have beaten in the last 32.

*For more information, call Shaun
on 01993 868134.*



Finstock Craft Club - Craft Fair News

Everyone at the Craft Club would like to pass on our thanks to all those associated with the Finstock Arts and Crafts Fair on 17th June. These include visitors to the fair, our very talented and enthusiastic stallholders, and the hard-working craft club members past and present. We must also say a huge thank you to everyone, which includes all of the above, plus the Royal Oak Ramsden, Charlbury Garden Centre and Blenheim Palace, who donated a magnificent total of more than fifty items to our Tombola. Please know that your very generous donations enabled us to raise and send £100 to our chosen charity, Maggie's Centre (Everyone's home of cancer care). Our local Maggie's Centre is based at the Churchill Hospital in Oxford and is dear to the hearts of many who have been touched by this dreadful disease. For more information about Maggie's or if you'd like to personally support them with a donation, here's a link to their website: [Maggie's Oxford | Maggie's \(maggies.org\)](http://Maggie's.org)

For those who were unable to visit this time, you missed a fabulous selection of beautifully crafted items. You will have another opportunity to see many of them again at our next pre-Christmas fair. Look out for a date in the next newsletter, you won't want to miss it!

The craft club continues to meet every Monday evening, except bank holidays, at the village hall, from 7.30 to 9.30pm. Still just £2.50 (although this is a slight increase from last year) per session, with a free taster session for any newcomers. A warm welcome awaits all who are interested in joining.

*Rosa
rosacharlesworth@icloud.com*



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FINSTOCK VILLAGE HALL

Even in the long, glowing days of summer, the Village Hall is as busy as ever. Whether it's party time, or you need an exercise or relaxation class, or maybe some wonderful Thai food from Noah and Chris at Nuak, it's there on your doorstep. Did you know that if you live in Finstock or Fawler, you can hire the hall with all its amenities for as little as £5 an hour? Our trustees work to ensure that by carefully managing the finances, we can continue these affordable rates for our community. Would you like to help us, and give a little of your time to planning the future of the hall? We have space on our team for one or maybe two new trustees. Interested? Call Rod Ireland (the current chair of trustees) on 868634, or email at rod.ireland@sky.com.

Since the last edition of Finstock News, we also appointed a new Caretaker – Marc Thompson will not only ensure that the Hall is safe, secure and well maintained, he will also take over the booking manager role from Karen Williams. Welcome to the team, Marc! The Hall has been well supported by the Parish Council over the years, and they have told us that going forward, new councillor Aaron Copestake will become the regular Council member to attend trustee meetings and report back. Welcome Aaron!

When one door shuts, they say another door opens. In our case, with the closing of the shop, we have been the fortunate recipients of both a large drinks chiller and an ice cream freezer, so many thanks to the shop directors for this donation. The eagle-eyed

among you may have noticed other doors opening too. When we need to build the stage for the Hall, it typically had to be dragged piece by piece from the back of the store room around the front of the building. But now, thanks to the hard work of Steve Peters, we have double doors opening from the stage store directly into the hall, saving a great deal of time and effort.

Who likes a nice beer or cider, especially on a hot day? Don't forget that the Finstock Ale returns on Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd September. Just as with the hall hire, we aim to make this an affordable experience, with entry and drink prices much lower than other festivals in the county. Even if beer or cider is not your preference, we have a full bar (including our famous Gin Palace) with lots of soft drinks, gentle music, Morris, and other entertainment for the family. And it's by running the Finstock Ale that we can support the Hall finances, so when you take your first sip of the extraordinary beers we'll have found for you, you can tell yourself you are actually performing a community service!

Finally, can we just remind our Hall users about the need to park cars down on Well Hill and not directly in front of the Hall. We have still had occasions when our neighbours have found it difficult to drive to their houses – and it is of course vitally important that emergency vehicles can have access at all hours. Thank you for your cooperation.

Rod Ireland





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COUNTRYSIDE – CONSERVATION – ENVIRONMENT

“He that plants trees loves others besides himself.” – Thomas Fuller



Finstock for Nature

In the last issue of the Finstock News, Geoff Griffiths gave an account of how Finstock for Nature (FfN), the local voluntary conservation group, is planning to support the preservation and protection of Finstock's richness of natural habitats. This month, FfN has been actively raising funds to support the establishment of a traditional orchard, hopefully on the edge of the Parish playing field, as reported earlier. Orchards represent a designated space to foster local social connections while improving this declining natural habitat and the wildlife it supports. Plus, of course, and in time, lots of fruit!

At the Finstock School Fete on Saturday 24th June, FfN had a stall where visitors were able to learn more about the orchard proposal and register their support - by placing an 'apple' on the group's tree, as well as filling out a short survey. Results from the survey suggested wide-ranging support for the orchard – a huge thank you to all who shared their thoughts and backing for this exciting development.



A Ceilidh dance to celebrate midsummer was held at the Village Hall on Saturday 1st July and this helped to raise funds, with bar profit going to FfN. It was a great turn out - lively fun and joy was had by all who attended. The fabulous, uplifting music and song were provided by the Fabulous Finstock Festival Band. Dancing was of course the highlight of the event and any reluctance on the part of attendees was swiftly lost with the party atmosphere (and appropriate refreshment from the bar!). Thanks to Kath Lucas who did an admirable job of calling the dances to the unsuspecting audience. The execution (kind of) went well and the event raised approximately £150.00. Thank you to all those who put their best foot forward.

At the Finstock Beer Festival on Saturday 2nd September there'll be another opportunity to catch up with FfN, as well as enjoy the Fabulous Finstock Festival Band - who will be providing a rolling programme of music, along with the Morris singing shanties.

Those wanting to become involved in FfN can email geoffgriffiths@landscape-matters.org or petewelply@btinternet.com for further details. All are welcome and appreciated.

Sarah Mounsey



The Hill End Outdoor Centre, Farmoor

A number of activities coming up for both children and adults during the summer months, including –

Thursday, 10th August BUGS AND BUTTERFLIES FAMILY DAY

a self-led day designed for families and friends to take part in activities at their own leisure.

This summer we are running a minibeast-themed day - why not come dressed as a butterfly or bug?!

- *bug hunt and pond dipping
 - *natural crafts - make some wings!
 - *willow weaving
- £5 adults / £3 child. Sorry no dogs.

BRING YOUR OWN PICNIC

Friday 8th September, 7.00 – 8.30 pm BAT WALK

This event is run by the Friends of Hill End

see full details, discounts and tickets on our website – <http://hill-end.org/activities/upcoming-events/>

- * Family batty activities!
 - * Life stories and crafts
 - * Explore their habitats around Hill End
 - * Use our bat detectors
- £10 adult / £3 child

Saturday, 16th September SPOONCARVING!

Led by David Knight who has been exploring woodland crafts for over 20 years and has a keen interest in relating an understanding of woodland ecology with the practical skills of woodland management and craft skills - of making products from a wonderful sustainable raw material.



Strix Aluco

We are most fortunate to have a good number of Strix Aluco within the village. They are rarely seen unless you are lucky and a bird is disturbed from its roosting place and flies away on silent wings. Of course, they are heard on a regular basis with the male and female calling to each other.

There is a very good spot to see the young of these elusive birds but you only see them when they fledged the nest in late June and they begin to explore their surroundings. I've been out most evenings just before dusk to try and catch a glimpse of the Strix Aluco family and I'm pleased to report that there are two young from the nest this year.

One of the adults has also been seen coming in to feed them, as it will do for some months; a vole perhaps. The youngsters have adapted the top of a nearby fruit cage to await their evening supper and it was delightful to see their whole body bobbing as they learn to focus on prey. They are still covered in white downy feathers and they are still learning to land after initial flights.

Their cousin, Tyto Alba, the Barn Owl lives nearby. Strix Aluco is better known as the Tawny Owl!

Vicus

Guy Wallis - the Pods at The Plough

It's all action stations as we attempt to have the two Pods completed by the end of July – by the time you read this, they should be finished and have their first occupants. As long as some of the final furnishings have been delivered, we'll be well on schedule. I've got somebody local to do all the laundry and cleaning, so we're all sorted there.

Each pod will accommodate up to two people and one of them will also be pet friendly – so room for the dog as well! They are equipped with a double bed, with bedside tables, etc., and there is a small kitchenette too, for heating up a pizza or other snack meal. There's a separate wet room area with double shower, wash basin and loo. The Pods have heating too and so will be good to go all year round. A good Continental breakfast will be available for the mornings.

A new website will be set up to cover the accommodation – more details on that a bit later on!

I'm hoping to attract business people during the week as well. Where would you rather stay? - in a country pub with all the facilities of a hotel bedroom, or in Witney with no good food - going down to a fast-food outlet?

Hopefully it will add another bit of income to the pub and help it survive a bit more – all the rising costs do make an impact!

Guy Wallis



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SCHOOL NEWS

Oak Class loved the weather at the end of last term! It gave us lots of opportunities for super outdoor learning: mini-beast hunting, ice lolly designing, and salad making! The children have explored the texts 'The Bear and the Piano' and 'The Rainbow Fish' and



made some incredible art to showcase their learning. We are very proud of all they have achieved this year!

What an amazing year! This year we have been mathematicians, authors, artists, publishers, scientists, musicians, and linguists. I have had a wonderful time getting to know the incredible Finstock community over the course of the last academic year and firmly believe that the children have had an amazing year too! I know that next year they will once again do everyone proud as they progress into a



further year of their education. We have finished our Britain at War topic over the Summer Term by visiting the local war memorial in the village and creating our double-page spreads to showcase our learning over the course of this year.

As we progress into the Autumn term, the children in Cedar class have started their new project, Dynamic Dynasties, a knowledge-rich project all about the history of ancient China, primarily focusing on the Shang Dynasty and exploring the lasting legacy of the first five Chinese dynasties, some of which are still present today.

Miss Dixon and the Finstock Team



Left to right, Paul Howard, Alison Felstead, Ruth Nissim, Triona Adams, Sara Andersen, Elizabeth Knowles - Photo: Paul Nash

The Barbara Pym Society in Finstock: Presentation of Emily Stockard's Paper 'The Finstock Years' – Touring Oxfordshire with Barbara Pym'

On Friday, 17th March this year the focus for the Local History Society was a presentation of 'The Finstock Years – Touring Oxfordshire with Barbara Pym' – a paper written by Emily Stockard, a member of the Barbara Pym Society and the author of *The Making of Barbara Pym: Oxford, the War Years, and Post-war Austerity*.

The 'stars' of the evening were to be Alison Felstead and Triona Adams, presenting a slightly 'localised version' of the paper. Six Pymsters swelled the audience to enjoy the excellent 'double act' by Alison and Triona, speaking, reading and managing the PowerPoint slides.

Many of the audience were familiar with so many of the places shown and were pleased to hear about them in a focused Pym context. The presentation went down very well, and when it came to questions, we found out that two of the audience had actually known Barbara Pym and her sister Hilary Walton quite well. They had both appeared in the film 'Miss Pym's Day Out', where locals had been invited to participate!

Michael Collard appeared in the church scenes, and his friend was the driver for Henry Harvey, Barbara Pym's lifelong friend.

It is an 'old' [1991] film but worth watching for views of Finstock – and for fans of Patricia Routledge, who plays Barbara Pym: <https://tinyurl.com/3ppjdt8>

The History Society will be planning more 'BP themed' meetings to maintain the awareness of Barbara Pym in Finstock. Thanks to Alison and Triona.

Such richness!

Paul Howard

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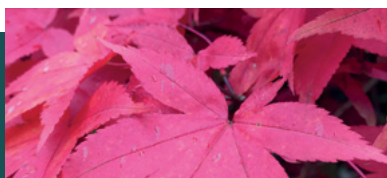
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Thoughts about Finstock Unplugged, with its regular 'meets' and occasional concerts

It is SO good to be back at The Plough for our regular gatherings on the last Monday of the month! As some people know, we take over the front bar, move a table out to make more room, and settle down to three hours of assorted music, depending on who rolls up and what they decide to sing or play. On Monday 26th June there were 22 of us in the meeting in the front bar, although occasionally the number increased when others emerged from the back bar and lingered for a while. We are always happy for people to listen in and are grateful for their cooperation in not disturbing the performers.

This Monday, Pete Joshua turned up with his banjo and sang his version of Pete Seeger's song 'Jesse James'; Ian Page arrived with his concertina and sang a music hall number - and later led us with the fine shanty 'Old Maui'; Ricky gave us a lively rendition of 'Flash Bang Wallop (ooh what a picture)' - so we had that and the sea shanty! Oh, we do like something with a sing-along chorus! Many guitarists had fun contributing songs that varied from traditional folk, to the great American songbook, to classics like 'Hotel California' and 'The Whiter Shade of Pale', to songs by Dylan, Steve Knightley ('Widecombe Fair') and as usual the evening included a good number of fine original compositions from the likes of Dave Oakley, Kim Bradley and Jim Driscoll.

For info: the dates of our next two 'Finstock' meetings: Monday 31st July and Monday 28th August.

In other news, we are already over half-way through this 2023 series of our Finstock-at-Wilcote concerts, which are usually held in the lovely setting of the exhibition room at Wilcote Art Studios, and which are intended to celebrate the work of some of our excellent local musicians, drawing from all genres of 'folk'. So far this year, on March 31st, we've enjoyed an evening with the gifted young blues guitarist Greg Brice from Shipston-on-Stour, followed by an evening of Americana with US-led, Oxford-based The Holy Fools, supported by Bone Saddle, on 26th May, and most recently, on 23rd June, by Ponderosa, the well-respected band of musicians from Woodstock. Also, at home in Finstock Village Hall on May 20th, we hosted the Oakstone Trio, a group of lively, ridiculously talented young traditional musicians from Oxford. Fortunately, people seem to be developing a taste for the mix our concerts offer, as they alternate between traditional British, Americana and the work of singer-songwriters.

There are three more concerts this year. Friday, the 21st July, will see the return of Moonaroon, which contains Josh and Mitch, two of the key members of The Oakstone Trio. They caused a sensation at the last two FWO festivals and at their first visit to Wilcote in June last year. They will be followed on September 1st by respected folk all-rounders Scarecrow, who should need no introduction to West Oxon natives. The season ends with a concert by the Owl Light Trio, who had a great success when they played at Wilcote in December 2021. It will be good to have a chance to hear them again. On this occasion the 'Owls' will be supported by Larkspur.

Ginnie Redston

Listening to Pete



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Mando-Ponderosa





Food to delight -

Two forthcoming events at the Royal Oak, Ramsden will be focused on some of the best in British catering.

On **Tuesday, 8th August** there will be a British Isles Fish Night - where Fil, Luke and Tom will bring together the best that the British Isles have to offer. £3.00 from each cover will go to the RNLI to help protect our fishermen!

Tuesday, 12th September will feature a Pork Night, "Nose to Tail", that will showcase how food waste can be reduced at every opportunity, and in many creative ways!

For full menu details, keep an eye on the website - <https://www.royaloakramsden.com/events>

*"The first eighty years
are tough. Life gets better
after that"*

Len Deighton, quoted in The Times



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From our MP, Robert Courts

I recently asked the Minister to reassure my constituents in West Oxfordshire that - among the questions that surround Thames Water's finances - day to day services will be protected and much needed upgrades delivered.

After rightly acknowledging Thames Water's performance as 'unacceptable' it was concerning to hear the news of Thames Water's CEO, Sarah Bentley stepping down with immediate effect.

Thames Water needs to focus on bringing about the huge upgrades that are so desperately needed to our country's sewerage system.

The new CEO has a lot of work to do to restore public trust and I will be monitoring developments on this closely.

Parliamentary Petition on Botley West Solar Farm

You will, I am sure, have heard a great deal about proposals for a "Botley West Solar Farm" which would, if approved, impact significantly upon Tackley, Wootton, Glympton, Bladon, Woodstock, Long Hanborough, Church Hanborough, Rousham, Eynsham and Cassington.

I have looked at the plans for Botley West in detail and I am opposed to these proposals.

As the latest part of our joint campaign against these proposals, I want to present a constituents' petition to Parliament to show the strength of feeling on this issue. This is part of our campaign: it will not automatically stop the proposals, but it has a very strong role in showing how strongly we all feel about this, because the petition will be presented in the Chamber of the House of Commons when the House returns after the summer recess, will be recorded on Hansard and - most importantly - will require the Government to respond. This matters, because it is the Government that will be deciding on this proposal, and so a clear demonstration of feeling at this stage is essential.

It is incredibly important if you have a view on the proposals for a Botley West Solar Farm, that you engage with this petition so that I am able to accurately reflect the scale of opinion to the Government, thereby ensuring they take this into consideration when the final decision is made by the Secretary of State.

I would urge you to sign this petition through the link below and to share it far and wide so that we can send a clear message from West Oxfordshire's residents.

<https://www.robertcourts.co.uk/botleysolarfarmpetition>

*According to the Waitrose
Cooking Report*

- A quarter of UK adults have never boiled an egg and don't know how to.
- Four-fifths have never made a salad dressing and
- Two-fifths haven't roasted a chicken!



*"I feel
these days
like a very
large flamingo.
No matter
which way
I turn, there
is always a
very large bill"*



*Joseph O' Connor,
quoted in the San
Francisco Chronicle*

Note from the Parish Council

In May of this year, we saw the election of a newly formed Parish Council in the village. As part of the change, a new approach to how the council becomes more approachable to its residents will start to be implemented, including putting a name to faces of councillors. Your new Parish Council is below. You can keep up to date on Parish News via the website www.finstock.org.uk, or via the new parish council Facebook page. Alternatively, we have now added a section to our monthly meeting - "People's Participation", which will allow you to be involved at the end of the meeting and personally add items to the next council meeting that you feel we should be discussing. The general public are always welcome to attend council meetings, and we look forward to seeing you.

Stop press: As you may have seen, a new Parish notice board is being constructed on Well Hill, almost opposite the Village Hall. This is a good central point in the village that will be visible and accessible to you as you come and go.

COUNTY COUNCIL NEWS

Late night recycling until 8pm

Our household waste and recycling centres open for longer during the summer. You can pop to a local centre to recycle different items until 8.00 pm - from now until Thursday, 28th September. We're also reminding everyone to sort and separate their waste before their visit. To find your nearest waste and recycling centre, please visit Oxfordshire County Council's website - <https://tinyurl.com/3488ja7x>

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The North Leigh Roman Villa Up and coming Open Days -

Here are the days the North Leigh Roman Villa's mosaic will be open in the summer holiday period - opening times 11.00 am – 5.00 pm each day.

Saturday & Sunday August 19th /20th
Saturday & Sunday September 9th /10th

Details on the English Heritage website:

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/north-leigh-roman-villa/>

Or on Twitter: @villa_north

Set within a peaceful landscape on the banks of the River Evenlode, North Leigh Roman Villa is considered to be one of the largest villas in Roman Britain with a history of occupation spanning five centuries. At its most extensive in the early 4th century AD it included three bath suites, 16 mosaic floors and 11 rooms with under-floor heating.

Today visitors can imagine the villa's former richness as they walk through the rectangular footprint of its walls – but the mosaic house hides the real gem of a near complete mosaic floor. The mosaics form the floor of the villa's winter dining room and, as the only example in Oxfordshire still found in their original location, they give a powerful sense of the Villa's original opulence.

NEWS: First Renovations

We are delighted that the first small refurbishment step has happened at the North Leigh Villa site. For years part of the Cottage roof has been leaking. This bit of roof has now been replaced, the building is watertight once more and any asbestos-bearing materials have been removed. As we learn details of more substantial refurbishments, we will of course let you know, but the current view is that it may be this time next year (at the earliest) before anything major starts on site.

You can also view
the Finstock News,
in colour, at
[www.finstock.org.uk/
the-finstock-news](http://www.finstock.org.uk/the-finstock-news)



Front row, left to right -
Mike Woodfield, Vice Chair; Marc Thompson, Chair; June Pratley, Parish Clerk.
Back row, left to right - Nettie Gregory, Aaron Copestake, Graham Sutton and Tammy Judd.

GARDEN CORNER

Sparkling summer colour

Begonias come in all forms and sizes lighting up hanging baskets, pots and borders with masses of long-lasting showy flowers in neon shades and magnificent foliage.

Tuberous begonias are grown from round, fleshy tubers. I look for red buds to appear and then plant them in small pots of humus-rich free draining soil, cover the tubers with a thin layer of soil and then put them on a frost proof shelf. After the frosts have ended in May, I plant them in their outside flowering position. The showy flowers are produced continuously throughout Summer and into Autumn, in bright shades of pink, yellow, orange, red and white. Begonias need to have sticks to support the big flowers, watering regularly and feeding weekly with a high potash fertiliser (tomato feed). After the constant show of flowers ends and the frost has killed the foliage, I dig up the tubers, air dry them, dust each tuber with sulphur to keep them fungus free, and store in a frost-free place until next spring.

The fibrous-rooted begonias are another type with a typical root ball of thin, fibrous roots - e.g. Begonia semperflorens is a dwarf bedding type with shiny dark red or green leaves and lots of small red, pink or white flowers, excellent for baskets, containers, window boxes or as bedding at the front of a border. They can be discarded at the end of the season or planted in dry compost in a frost-free place, and left for springtime.

Then there are the foliage kind, such as Begonia rex, grown for their spectacular metallic green leaves with splashes of silver on the upper surface and a reddish tone beneath. They come in a range of shapes, colours and patterns making them popular as houseplants or grown outside in summer, where they bring an exotic tropical look to a patio or shady border.

The first record of Begonias in Europe, was found in soil from Brazil sent to the Berlin Botanical gardens in 1821; then a new plant with patterned leaves (a Begonia rex) appeared in a consignment of Orchids, sent to England from India in 1856. More varieties of the plant were discovered in the Andes Mountains, having flowers in radiant yellows, reds and oranges. Modern breeding extended the range of sizes, colours of leaves, and flowers with tolerance to different environmental conditions.

Begonia petals are edible and can be used to decorate cocktails and other drinks. The succulent petals give colour, a cucumber-like crunch and a citrus flavour, which makes them lovely in a bowl of greens and fish salads. Another use is in a sauce to pour over fish dishes.

Chinese medicine uses begonia extract to disinfect wounds, stop swelling and ease the symptoms of an upset stomach. In other areas of the world the sap was used to stop a toothache or cure kidney ailments.

I find this group of plants easy to grow and very rewarding.

Robert



Garden Tasks for August and September

- Deadhead dahlias and other perennials to encourage a constant display of blooms.
- Keep pots and hanging baskets flowering by watering and deadheading regularly, and add tomato feed fortnightly.
- Sow hardy annuals in sunny spots to provide early summer colour next year.
- Lift, divide and replant congested clumps of perennials, such as achilleas, once they finish flowering.
- Plant spring bulbs, including crocuses, daffodils, hyacinths, bluebells and snake's-head fritillaries in pots and borders.

A daily nap boosts the brain – Researchers have found that a predisposition to napping is associated with larger brain volume equivalent to between 2.6 and 6.5 fewer years of age-related brain shrinkage. They found no relationship between this and cognitive performance however.

PJR

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