

Finstock News 135

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

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“We know that in September, we will wander through the warm winds of summer’s wreckage. We will welcome summer’s ghost” - Henry Rollins It’s been said more than once that Finstock loves to party, and in this issue there is coverage of both past and future events. The centre page spread includes a photographic record of the events of the Jubilee weekend, from the lighting of the beacon on Thursday, 2nd June through to the BIG LUNCH up on the playing field. The great English weather held out, just about, although a warmer breeze on the Sunday would have been welcome! Also, part of the spread includes photos celebrating highlights of the fabulous Finstock Festival and School Fete weekend! Now, we have the main summer period to enjoy while we can and may it bring some peace and relaxation for us all.

THE 8TH FINSTOCK ALE 2nd/3rd September

By the time you read this, the Finstock Ale (“the best little beer festival in Oxfordshire” – testimony from Beer On Tap, the local CAMRA magazine) will be a month away. Make sure you have your diaries marked to come down and join us in the Village Hall. Fun for everyone on Friday evening at our famous Race Night, where you can have a flutter on the horses (or dogs or pigs), with special events and prizes for the children, and the chance to clean-up for the adults.

On Saturday we’ll be running from noon to midnight, and we’ll have thirty beers and six ciders, as well as our gin palace and full bar. Our beers are specially selected to offer you experiences you won’t find in local pubs, or indeed at other local beer festivals. We start our planning as long ago as last Christmas, with trips to Bristol, Birmingham, London and other areas of the country to find beers that will be outstanding examples of particular styles – heavily hopped pale ales, smoky stouts, malty bitters, the occasional sour beer, and many others, because our approach is to offer distinctive beers at affordable prices. Despite collecting these beers from around the country, each will be dispensed at the correct temperature, and all our ales are just £3 a pint.

Cider has taken something of a backseat at the most recent Finstock Ales. Sales had been low, and so our offering had dwindled. This year, we’re going to be bold! We’ve asked our local cider expert to scour the country for six great ciders, and we want to ensure lovers of the apple won’t be disappointed. If you aren’t a big beer fan, but like real cider, then come along and try what we’ve found. We’ll work hard to make the event a great experience. By supporting us, you’ll be helping raise money for the village. All of our profits go to the village hall charity, which pays for the Finstock Seniors’ Christmas lunch, supports other village causes, and keeps the hire rates at the hall the lowest of any comparable hall in West Oxfordshire. We’ll raise a glass to that!

Rod Ireland

“Let a man walk ten miles steadily on a hot summer’s day along a dusty English road, and he will soon discover why beer was invented” - Gilbert K. Chesterton


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Summer's here, so it's an ideal time to stroll down to the shop for a delicious ice cream. Or maybe we should be stocking umbrellas and plastic ponchos? By the time you read this article, we'll know if summer will be full of blazing sunshine or a damp squib. We had hoped to take advantage of the warmer days and long afternoons by extending our Saturday opening hours. We wanted to cater for walkers, impulsive barbecue fans and villagers who fancied a late afternoon treat. Since we struggle to fill Saturday mornings with our small band of volunteers (and we would welcome more) we decided to offer the afternoon role as paid employment. Sadly, at the time of press deadline, despite a broad advertising approach, we had zero interest.

While the shop needs the help of the community, the community also needs the help of the shop. We have really enjoyed welcoming two Duke of Edinburgh students, Darcie Thompson and Lyra Drake, who have been working in the shop, learning how the business works and generally helping out. Our customers have told us how enjoyable it's been to have them there, and they have made a valuable contribution. Good luck with your awards!

Our opening times are:

Mon, Wed, Thu, Fri: 8.30am – 3.30pm (last time for posting 12 noon; P.O. shuts 1pm)

Tue: 8.30am – 1.30pm (and P.O. as above)

Sat: 9am – 1pm (no P.O. services)

Sun: Closed

Alas, Poor Nightjar

Our village today has a tidy look to it. Sort of lived in and workman like. Not everything is perfect and I like that. Pity we cut the verges so often though!

I've been pondering over the vestiges of Finstock Heath and what is left. Not much.

The Second World War military hospital would have destroyed anything that survived the nineteenth century enclosure of the heath and the desire to improve the land. The hospital was soon taken down and replaced by a blank wall of evergreens which we see today and apart from being useful pod-props they offer little in the way of interest except as a cash crop

So, let's dream a little and try to paint a picture of what Finstock Heath may have been like in the past. Our local historian John Kibble has very little to say about the heath, which is disappointing. He does relate that local villagers would collect furze for their fires and collect birds' eggs for puddings. Kibble gained much from the stories told by his family about village life, so had the heath really disappeared from folk memory?

Our book - 'Two Wychwood Villages' tells us that the heath had encroachments on it before enclosure with dwellings and gardens so the heathland habitat would already have started to disappear under cultivation. This looks to have happened after 1767 as Pride's map of that date shows no encroachments beyond the top of Gadding Street. By 1815 there were dwellings.

If you travel along the Leaffield road you will spot tiny patches of gorse and fern still hanging on from the original heath and they provide good colour to the area. Imagine what the heath would have looked like in the eighteenth century with cattle and pigs foraging and deer doing their best to escape the parkland. The bird life must have been very different to today's poor showing.

Were there Nightjars and Dartford Warblers? Might we have seen hunting Hobbies and noisy Stonechats? Reptiles would also have found good homes until ousted to the margins by cultivation and house building.

There are other spots of heath around if you look hard enough on roadside verges and in local copses and woods. A mere fragment though of what Finstock and Ramsden Heath would have looked like. Alas, no more Nightjars here.

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Rod Ireland

Finstock Baby and Toddler Group

Over the last couple of years we know everyone has found things tough in different ways, and especially our little ones who have missed out on so much social interaction. Our village toddler group has tried to keep going (when we've been allowed to meet) but have noticed a big drop in numbers attending regularly. Unfortunately, the low numbers are not enough to sustain the group long-term. We will be reviewing how things go in September and then decide on the group's continuation.

One of the options we are going to trial from September will be to only open every other week and hope that more people will be able to join us on the days we are open, so we are not losing money each week we hire the hall. **Our first session will be Wednesday 14th September (10 - 11.30am)** and we will meet every other week for the rest of the term

then review in December. Follow us on Facebook for regular updates and reminders of when the group is meeting.

For any more details contact us on finstocktoddlergroup@hotmail.com. If you haven't joined us before, your first session is free (only £2 per family thereafter) - we would love to see you! Thank you.

Helen & Tammy

Finstock Craft Club

meets at the Village Hall, every Monday, except Bank Holidays, from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. A warm welcome awaits, for crafters from Finstock and the surrounding area. A free taster session followed by just £2.00 per session. No commitment needed to attend every week.

Finstock Annual Craft Fair

Unfortunately, not this year but we are looking at dates for Spring 23. You will see more information regarding this in the next *Finstock News*.

Contact Rosa for more information: rosacharlesworth@icloud.com

Finstock Quilters regularly meet at the Village Hall every Wednesday afternoon, between 2pm and 4pm so if quilting is your preference, with or without experience, all are welcome. A free taster session followed by just £3.00 per session.

Contact Rosa for more information, as above

DURING THESE MONTHS

1st August, 1740 "Rule Britannia" sung for the first time in public, in Thomas Arne's "Masque Alfred".

11th August, 1897 Birth of best-selling children's writer Enid Blyton, whose books have been among the world's best sellers since the 1930's, with more than 600 million sold.

27th August, 1900 Britain's first long distance bus service began between London and Leeds. The journey time being two days!

2nd September, 1962 - Soviet Russia agreed to send arms to Cuba, leading to the October Missile Crisis after the shipments were discovered by the U.S.

7th September, 1986 - Bishop Desmond Tutu became Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, the first black head of South Africa's Anglicans.

24th September, 1936 - Puppeteer Jim Henson (1936-1990) was born in Greenville, Mississippi. He created the Muppets, including Kermit the Frog, and Bert and Ernie, entertaining and educating generations of children via the daily TV show Sesame Street.



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Pete Welply	868140	Editor
petewelply@btinternet.com		

Photographs thanks to team members and others.

Contact us as above, e-mail the Editor, or write to us at 53 High Street, Finstock, Oxon OX7 3DA.

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.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - a platform for exchange of views

Dear Pete,

I recently went up to the school fête in the hopes of meeting the head, deputy or another member of staff. I wanted to talk to them about community participation in the life of the school. I'm referring here to villagers who don't have an automatic connection with their children or grandchildren attending.

In previous decades there was a lot of such involvement. I went in myself, with Janet Schofield to teach recorders. At one point we had all the seven-plus children playing. I recall a visit from Her Majesty's Inspectors who came into assembly and were mighty impressed with the music. It wasn't just us. Villagers helped with a range of other activities including sports, chess, reading, dancing. When there was an event e.g., a school play there were sometimes two performances – one for parents and the other for the village. We would be included.

Sadly, on my visit to the fete I was unable to find a single member of staff – with the preparation and delivery of the fete done almost entirely by the parents. And a grand job they did too.

Am I alone in wishing for better links between the school and the wider village community?

Ruth Nissim

To the Editor,

Where do you think that solar farms should be located?

Should we prevent solar farm development on usable agricultural land? The Solar Campaign Alliance has a petition out now to stop solar farms on land where crops could be grown. The Alliance notes that the UK's import of wheat, fruit and vegetables is not sustainable, but they do not seek a commitment that the land pulled from solar farm development would be used for growing essential food.

Stop solar farms? Without an equal commitment to see the land used for agricultural purposes, the only benefit of stopping a solar farm seems to be for those who oppose solar farms.

Joy Murphy

Jubilee Celebrations

It was great to see so many people out in person during the Jubilee week. It started off well with the planting of trees in the Jubilee Avenue on Friday 27th May - one indigenous bee friendly tree for each child at the school. In rock hard turf we managed it in two hours! Watch the video here - <https://vimeo.com/726690129>.

A huge thanks to Nicola Vick who built and hosted the village Beacon which was just one of several thousand that were lit all over the country on Thursday 2nd June. <https://vimeo.com/726687148>

The Music Day, was a great success, with fine weather, lively music, great exhibitions and magnificent Morris! <https://vimeo.com/727304964>

The big one was the main BBQ on the Sunday. Despite a heavy downpour in the morning, it was great to see a third of the village out (250) for one of the first times since the big C. Many villagers contributed to the day either financially; by erecting the marquees and prepping the tables; or by bringing salads; or manning the BBQ's and bar. It was a great community effort! The Star attractions were Paul Burridge on the Accordion, Sadie Bosher singing the National Anthem and of course the free bar!

<https://vimeo.com/726695685>



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FINSTOCK FESTIVAL *and* SCHOOL FETE 2022

Three years since the last Finstock Festival, and the committee were wondering if it would be a success... We had no need to worry - it was a very well attended Festival on both Friday and Saturday nights. The weather held out and the marquees filled up. Bands were great and we almost sold all the beer! The Burger tent also sold out in two hours. Bar staffing was superb and there was a great turn out of helpers to dismantle the marquees throughout Sunday.

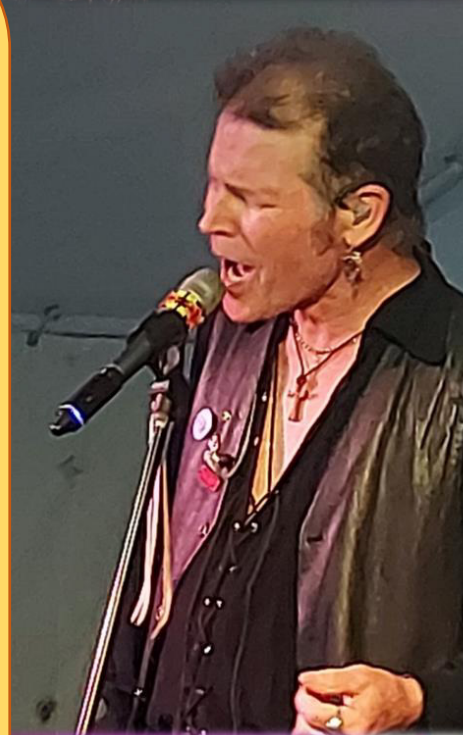
The only disappointment was the number of helpers for the build, and one marquee being damaged by the wind while being taken down.

The financial results are still being collated but hopefully we will show a profit – fingers crossed!

Thank you to our hard working and faithful committee and all the folk that made this event possible.

Rock On Finstock Festival 2023.

Colin Stringfellow Chair





PLATINUM JUBILEE





FINSTOCK CELEBRATES





FINSTOCK FESTIVAL and SCHOOL FETE 2022

Back after a three-year gap, it was great to be able to get together again for the Friends of Finstock School Fete as part of the festival. The Bake Off saw some incredible entries which were enjoyed by all. There were wonderful displays from the school maypole and Morris dancing and amazing martial arts from India Mae Thompson and her White Tigers!

We also raised over £1500 for the school from the fete and the raffle, so thank you to everyone for your support!

Chris Skerrett, Chair, FoFS

**PHOTO CREDITS, for the centre spread –
Angus Child, FoFS, Deborah Jackson,
Ken Franklin, Pete Welply**



Jubilee week - Acknowledgements

The splendid celebrations wouldn't have been possible without generous donations and sponsorship!

Many thanks to the following for donating towards the Jubilee Big lunch and Barbeque:

Frank Boshier, Colin Crosby, The Plough, Andy Shephard, Graham Sutton, Pete Welply and James Woollard – and in addition can we say a big thank you to the following who also contributed financially to the BBQ: Briner, Yates, Pickett, Welford, Hamblin, South, Parkin, Allen, Dalivalle, Woodfield, Collister, Brunt, Lamb, Wallace, Alty, Dixon, Peck, Scott, Cole, Ashfield, Hill, Allan, Finstock Church, Town & Country Trees, Charlbury Garden Centre & anonymous!

Huge thanks to Dale Pratley who not only was instrumental in the tree planting but has kindly volunteered to look after the Jubilee Avenue to keep it in tip top condition. This is a major undertaking. (*Anyone looking for a reliable gardener contact Dale directly on 07856 343449*).

Finally, a big thanks to Ken Franklin, of Church Rise, who produced all of the jubilee videos for free. If you need video work carried out why not chat with Ken at www.video4.co.uk

Julian Stewart



RESERVES ROUND UP

Hedges

The Wychwood Forest Trust supports a number of local interest groups. People who are interested in practical activity to improve the area turn out as volunteers, week in, week out and use their skills to good effect.

The hedgelaying team is one such group. Over the last few years, the team has doubled in size and on a recent visit to Breach Wood, Hailey, Toby came across 8 dedicated volunteers, giving up their Sunday to continue the task of laying the hedge that goes from Whittings Lane up to the wood itself. They use a variety of techniques, hand tools to chainsaws, and have progressed very well. The hedge has now been finished and the team will move on to Witney next season as part of the hedgelaying project Toby created in partnership with WODC.

Toby will be running several courses on a hedge along Jubilee Way, Witney, so watch the website for more details in the autumn.

The 2022 Wychwood Forest Fair - Foxburrow Wood - Sunday 31st July

After a very busy and successful return to Foxburrow Wood in 2021, this year's Forest Fair is back again at our original WFT restoration site near Witney on Sunday 31st July. Nestling amongst the recovering habitats on this former agricultural land, visitors to the fair will be able to see for themselves what the Wychwood Forest Trust can achieve, whilst also enjoying excellent food and drink, rural crafts, and more entertainment than ever on a summer afternoon. So if you want to support our work towards creating a healthier natural environment, whilst also trying your hand at axe throwing, we'll see you there! Advance tickets will go in sale in the next couple of weeks, so keep an eye on our website. If you are a trader, old or new, and are interested in exhibiting at the fair, or would like to join the volunteer team to help us with the event, get in touch with us at info@wychwoodforesttrust.co.uk.



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FINSTOCK FOLK: VIV WIGHTMAN



What was your early life like?

I was born in 1937 near Wokingham in Berkshire and was the middle one between two brothers. I had a happy childhood near the railway tracks where we'd put a penny on to watch it get squashed! I got my O Levels and was able to start my Nurse training at places like the JR and Churchill and later Midwifery in London. I absolutely loved delivering babies at home!

I met Bev in 1964 on a blind date – at the Police Ball at the Bear Hotel

in Woodstock. We were married ten months later. I was living in Jericho with a nursing friend. She moved out and Bev moved in. His business was in Woodstock and he heard about these three bungalows being built in Finstock. We came to look and that was that. We moved into the middle one on 5th November 1966. There was a field behind us where dear Peter Vick would be hand-milking his cows! (I've told David that he was a year or so out – in the last FN, ha ha!).

We loved Finstock. Both of my boys love it and see it as 'home'. The people, the lovely church, the shop, all the walks and the Plough. We extended the house twice and joined up to the bungalow next door.

Bev asked if I could start doing the wages. This snowballed as the business grew, to involve Sales, Purchases and all transactions. I went to classes to study computers and before you know it – became Finance Director!

What's the biggest change you've seen? The Village Hall is brilliant and is used so much by so many groups.

What improvement would you like to see? Upgrade the track outside of the Village Hall.

Your garden is looking great. My Hollyhocks have come out really well this year, but that may be true for everyone? I have doves outside my window and hedgehogs at night.

Considering what you've gone through you are looking in a remarkable shape!

I've been very lucky since my stroke on the 25th March. When I was in the John Radcliffe, I was given a radio with speakers. I turned on Classic FM and after five days of my left arm being lifeless – my fingers started tapping to the beat! The Doctors were amazed and said "you can leave in a couple of days". When I left I had some very kind nurses give me a rousing send off! That was nice. Perhaps they were glad to see me go! Ha ha ha!

I'd just like to say a heartfelt thanks to everyone who has helped me recently – especially Karen in the Shop – what would I have done without her.

*Viv Wightman was talking with
Julian Stewart*

FINSTOCK FOR NATURE

You may have seen in the last copy of *Finstock News* that we proposed to supplement the tree planting undertaken during Jubilee week, and invited families with children who don't attend Finstock C of E Primary School to plant a tree as part of the small orchard development on the edge of the village playing field. So far, only two families have expressed an interest in this project. But, **IT'S NOT TOO LATE** – the planting will take place later on during autumn – if you are interested, please contact either Geoff Griffiths at geoffgriffiths@landscape-matters.org or Pete Welply at petewelply@btinternet.com. We look forward to hearing from you!



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Parish Council News

- Traffic Measures

On June 13th the Parish Council hosted an open meeting at the Village Hall to discuss traffic calming in the village. We explored the problems we endure and what might be done to make our roads safer - suggestions included: introducing a 20-mph speed limit throughout the village; improving road safety and awareness raising in general; traffic speed monitoring; reducing traffic speed on critical sections of the B4022; additional traffic signage and speed limit enforcement.

There was general agreement that there is a real problem and action is needed, particularly targeting speeding, poor visibility and inconsiderate parking. There was full support for the PC's application for a 20-mph limit in the village and in addition there was pressure for a 30-mph limit on critical sections of the B4022 Witney to Charlbury road. There was also good support for the deployment of vehicle activated speed signs (VAS) and clearer signage warning drivers of places where there are likely to be pedestrians crossing the road - by the Village Hall and on the B4022 - and larger signs to deter HGV's using the village as a short cut.

Poor visibility was a notable problem - particularly where it is caused by inconsiderate parking. There was discussion of white or double yellow lining and a recognition that while such measures weren't universally welcomed, they would, if complied with, help make the village safer. While parking is a problem in several parts of the village, parking by the school and the corner of School Road and Hill Crescent is particular tricky, especially at school start and end times; the Parish Council agreed to ask the school to let parents drop off/pick up inside the school yard and to request those driving to park more carefully.

Part of the problem with any speed limits, including any new ones we might introduce, is encouraging folk to stick to them and there was discussion of the pros and cons of setting up a Speed Watch group and a number of attendees registered their willingness to volunteer.

Finally, there was strong support for the use of regular articles in the *Finstock News* promoting traffic safety management and providing information on any actions taken in the village.

It wasn't all gloom and doom though - a lot has already been done:

A 270-signature petition has been compiled supporting a 20mph limit in the village, a survey of residents fronting the B4022 has been carried out to test public support for a reduction to 30mph, £1500 has been raised by crowdfunding towards the £2000 cost of a VAS and the PC has made up the rest of the money needed to buy one, the PC has applied for a 20 mph limit within the village, a visit and safety recommendations have been made by Oxfordshire County Council's traffic engineer, and to top things off a commitment to fund Village Hall signage has been received from the Village Hall committee.

As a result of the meeting the Parish Council will consult Oxfordshire County Council on the siting of VAS's and depending on the outcome the Parish Council will make provision in the 2022/3 financial year for the purchase of a second sign. Some questions still hang in the air however. Should the Parish Council proceed with introducing some white and yellow lines at the estimated cost of £1750? Should the Parish Council formally request Oxfordshire County Council for a 30mph limit on the B4022 to coincide with the introduction of the 20mph limit? (There would be a considerable financial advantage to doing so as only the one Traffic Regulation Order would be required and this would be paid for by the County rather than the Parish Council). Finally, should the village create a Speed Watch group or a traffic safety management committee? **WHAT DO YOU THINK? PLEASE LET US KNOW!**

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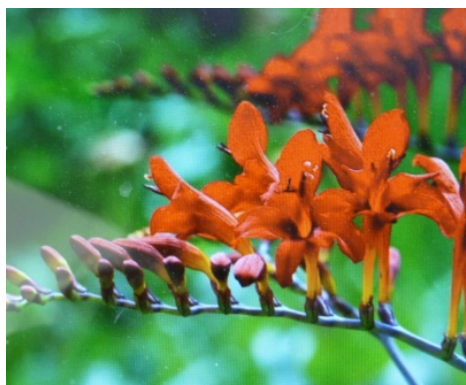
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A vibrant, summer garden jewel

One of the best ways to break your garden out of the summer doldrums is to plant colourful summer-blooming bulbs and tubers, such as tuberous begonias and gladioli. Typically planted in the spring, these warm-weather bloomers usually don't survive cold winters, if the bulbs are left in the ground. However, one notable exception is *Crocosmia*. Despite its tropical African origin, this vigorous perennial is hardy if given a good, deep mulch before the autumn frosts and can stay in the ground year-round in all but the harshest climates, reliably blooming season after season. The lily-like flowers light up summer garden beds and borders. Even when *Crocosmia* are not in bloom, their fountain-shaped clumps of spiky foliage offer contrasting form and vertical interest.



All *Crocosmias* need full sun, growing well in any soil type that is not too wet nor dry, but all resent poor drainage in winter. They are pest free but if root growth becomes congested with age, can be lifted in early spring and divided, discarding the oldest corms and replanting the younger more vigorous ones. Many *crocosmias* make good cut flowers but 'Lucifer' is the best for its tall, strong stems and rigidly branched flower heads. The big bonus is that when the flowers have faded, you are left with the seed heads, round bead-like pods, arranged along the branched flower stems which are a stunning addition to contemporary designs and large garden arrangements. The ribbed, sword shaped leaves are good for cutting too. The plant is also used to make yellow dye, used as a food colouring. The dried leaves emit a

strong smell like that of saffron (a spice derived from *Crocus*). When I was growing up, small plants with orange flowers were called *Montbretia* after the French botanist, Coquebert de Montbret (1780–1801). Introduced into UK gardens in the 1880s, this was later changed to the more descriptive name *Crococsmia*, coming from the Greek words "crocus" which means saffron and "osme" which means scent. Selective breeding has produced a new range of plants, in a range of colours of various shades in yellow, orange, red and even pink. Enjoy your garden!

Robert

GARDEN TIPS

August

Keep wisteria in check by cutting back the whippy green shoots to six leaves.

Don't water the lawn. To keep it greener, let your grass grow longer.

September

- Divide your herbaceous **perennials**. This will keep your plants healthy and vigorous year after year and multiply your stock.

- Net ponds now before autumn leaf fall gets underway to reduce the amount of debris entering the water.

In the 1960s, Alan Bloom at Bressingham nurseries crossed the hardiest two species and selected what was to become the world's most favourite *Crococsmia* – the rich red flowering **Lucifer**, with statuesque dark green ridged leaves. The nurseries then moved on to select smaller varieties for smaller gardens and for front of border, varieties such as Bressingham Blaze, Spitfire, Firebird, Jenny Bloom and Vulcan. A particular favourite of mine that has attractive bronze leaves and pumpkin-gold flowers is *Crococsmia* 'Coleton Fishacre'. *Crococsmia* 'Honey Angels' has lovely apricot-yellow flowers.

COTSWOLD GARDEN DESIGNER

- Looking to improve your outside space but stuck for ideas on how to make the most of it?
- Want somewhere to entertain?
- A space for your children to play?
- Or maybe you just need a quiet place to relax, a calming, scented corner, just for you?



I can provide a full garden design, planting plans or a simple garden report – some ideas of how you could best use your outdoor space and the types of plants that you like and would suit the environment.

CONTACT LORRAINE:

lorraine@cotswoldgardendesigner.co.uk
07516262560
www.cotswoldgardendesigner.co.uk