

Finstock News 104

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VOTE IN THE GENERAL ELECTION!

Please come and support the School Summer Fete as part of the Finstock Festival weekend. Details on this page and on page 11. Viv Wightman has an article about walks in our immediate area now that the weather has improved. Our wine columnist notes the excessive amount of tax on wine in the UK. Our political representatives report on the recent county election and their activities. Details of Village Hall events are found on pages 7 and 8. The Wychwood Project has won Heritage Lottery Funds and Finstock School is the first school in the county to be accredited by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom.

The latest Ready Reference (RR) has been included with this issue of the newsletter. The RR contains contact information for organisations, health, transport, government and much more. Keep it handy for use throughout the year.



Madge and Ida Welton

Sisters Madge (82) and Ida Welton (84) visited Finstock School in June of 1987 to share old photographs and memories of the school, which they attended and where their mother taught until 1927. (We are grateful to the Witney Gazette reporter John Chipperfield for sharing this picture and story.) You may recognise several current and former Finstock residents among these children.

FINSTOCK FESTIVAL 2017 Friday June 30th - Saturday July 1st

This year's Finstock Festival promises to offer a weekend of great music and family entertainment. As in previous years, local residents can enjoy two nights of entertainment for the price of one in our marquee on the Playing Field.

On the Friday evening, there is no charge to see any of the bands - a great way to start the weekend and get into the spirit of the Festival. There will be a number of local bands playing including the very popular Quartermelon, as well as our confirmed headline band, Highway 61, not forgetting a well-stocked bar with speciality local ales and much more.



Highway 61

Highway 61 is a Warwickshire-based high energy band playing well known rock and blues songs from both sides of the pond. The band describes its performance as "foot stomping stuff" so come along and boogie down!

On Saturday evening, Wood Green School Big Band will open the evening. The band has built an excellent reputation locally and regularly performs at a number of local public events including by invitation from the local council for the Witney Christmas Lights Switch On. Also on Saturday evening, and back by popular demand, singer and guitarist, Alex Chapman returns.

We are excited to announce our headline band for Saturday evening, The Della Grants. This four piece band are the latest British band to merge blues, rock and R&B to great effect and have quickly made a name for themselves among industry professionals and fellow musicians alike for their song writing ability and on stage performances. Don't miss out on the opportunity to see a truly up-and-coming band.

Tickets for Saturday night: £8 in advance or £10 on the door.

So ditch the apathy, get up off the sofa and get on down to Finstock Festival! All profits from the evening will go towards Finstock Village Charities including the Village Hall, Village Shop, The School and other deserving community causes.

NOTE: This year we want to start erecting marquees on Wednesday morning June 28th at 9am. If anyone can spare an hour or a day (!) to help, we will be very grateful.

Rod Ireland



VILLAGE EVENTS



June

8th General Election

10th Ramsden Fete Saturday

18th Bridewell Open Garden

24th Charlbury Beer Festival

July

1st Summer Fete and Festival

7th Pop-up Folk

8th Dominoes at the Village Hall

16th Forgotten Highways Local History

21st Grim's Ditch Local History

Village Hall event details can be found on pages 7 and 8.

Ladies, give us your support!

Give all your unwanted old bras a new lease of life and help raise money for breast cancer research. Bring them to Joy Murphy at 63 High Street. Against Breast Cancer will receive a donation based on the weight of bras we collect, so every bra counts!

Finstock Local History Society

June 16th Society members *Forgotten Highways* This is a report of the work done to uncover the 'lost' paths and highways in and around the village and a walk to see where they ran.

July 21st Vaughan Abigail Grim's Ditch

Situated on the eastern dip slope of the Cotswolds and centred on the lower Evenlode valley, Grim's Ditch is a discontinuous prehistoric earthwork system which measured, at its maximum, some 28 km in length and partially enclosed an area of approximately 8000 ha, making it one of the most extensive such monuments in England – and it is literally on Finstock's doorstep!

Meetings are at 8pm in the Village Hall, admission £2.50, members free; yearly subscription rate: single £15, couple £20.

It is the 150th anniversary of the birth of architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Ramsden Fête and Companion Dog Show

June 10th Ramsden Fête and Companion Dog Show - the West Oxfordshire fête that everyone loves: a traditional event with a modern twist – fun for everybody. The food stalls open from midday, will offer a variety of foods to suit all tastes and there will be an espresso bar operating out of a vintage Citroen truck. The bar offers Pimms and Prosecco and the tea and cake service starts at 2pm. Don't miss the gin-tasting this year!

For children there is a small fairground, water splash, bouncy castles, coconut shy, try-your-strength plus many more games. Games for old and young include tug-of-war and egg-throwing. If you need a rest, sit down and enjoy Maypole Dancers, Morris Men, local folk groups and a brass band. There are craft and charity stalls galore and a Dog Show – and, yes, this is a dog-friendly event.

The fête runs from 1-4pm and is at Wynter's Close in the middle of Ramsden OX7 3AU. Visit the Facebook page for regular updates. Call 868764 for general enquiries and about stalls. Visit www.ramsdenvillage.co.uk website for general information.

Bridewell Gardens - Open Afternoon

The Walled Garden and Vineyard at Wilcote (OX7 3DT) will be open on Sunday June 18th from 2-5 pm. Admission £3.50, children free. Refreshments, plants, Bridewell produce, products and our own organic wine will be for sale.

Bridewell has been chosen by the West Oxfordshire Business Awards as the Charity of the Year 2017. The WOBA judges stated that "Bridewell is a truly inspirational organisation that has a profound impact on the people that it supports".

For further information please call 864530 or go to www.bridewellgardens.co.uk.

Charlbury Beer Festival
June 24th noon to 10pm at Cricket Club

ChOC Films

Sunday June 11th at 7.30pm - *Exhibition on Screen: I, Claude Monet* Memorial Hall, Charlbury, doors and bar from 6.45pm. Admission: £5 / U15s £3

Sunday July 9th at 7.30pm - *A United Kingdom* Memorial Hall, Charlbury, doors and bar from 6.45pm. Admission: £5 / U15s £3

Cycling fan news

The OVO Energy Tour of Britain will pass through the District on the penultimate stage of the Tour visiting the area on Saturday September 9th. More than 120 cyclists will pass through towns and villages including Wootton, Charlbury and the Wychwoods before continuing through the Cotswolds, eventually finishing in Cheltenham town centre.

COLLECTIVE NOUNS:

A bellowing of bullfinches

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The Parish Council

There has been a very worrying resurgence of effluent overflows recently. The PC has pushed Thames Water to rectify the problems. The Dark Lane problem has been addressed but the footpath next to the Plough remains unfinished to date. Thames Water has a very poor record for customer service but this seems to be improving a little. The PC will continue to pressurise them to carry out repairs promptly and efficiently.

The Annual Parish meeting was held on May 22nd. There was a presentation of the results from the recent Village Survey. If you were unable to attend and wish to read the report, please contact June Pratley, the Clerk who can provide you with a copy. If after reading this report you have any questions, please contact any of the parish councillors. The Survey supports the broad findings from previous surveys and in headline terms indicates significant satisfaction amongst a majority of the many benefits and delights in living in Finstock.

Hywel Davies for the Parish Council

Our MP reports



As you will know, there will be a General Election on June 8th. I wholeheartedly back this decision. This is a crucial time in our history and we need a Prime Minister who has the backing of the country.

I understand that, particularly in West Oxfordshire, we have had a lot of elections recently. Many of you might feel that this is an all too familiar process. However, we do need a General Election now to ensure the elected Prime Minister will reflect the wishes of the electorate.

I am standing as a hard-working local constituency MP, continuing to ensure that West Oxfordshire has influence and a strong voice in Parliament. I am excited to have the opportunity to continue to speak up for West Oxfordshire, and work tirelessly on your behalf. There is so

much more we can do together to make West Oxfordshire better for everyone.

Since October, I have been campaigning on all aspects of my plan, both locally and in Parliament. Education, healthcare, businesses, transport, broadband and housing development have dominated my postbag and my diary. I look forward to being given the chance to continue with this work after the General Election, should you re-elect me as your Member of Parliament.

It has been an honour to serve you all and I hope very much to be able to build on the start I have already made. There is much more to achieve and I am looking forward to setting out my vision for our constituency over the next five years.

Over the course of the campaign period, I want to reassure constituents that I stand ready to offer any help I can with urgent casework issues as the Conservative Parliamentary Candidate; politics should not take precedence over this essential duty.

As I will be based here in Witney, please contact me at robert@robertcourts.co.uk or at 702302.

District Councillors



I would like to thank everyone in Finstock and Fawler for the tremendous support you gave me in the County Council election on May 4th. It is my great privilege to have been elected as both your District and County Councillor, and I look forward to working with you all over the next few years. It has always been somewhat frustrating for me that when residents contact me about an issue that comes under the County Council, such as anything to do with roads, I have had to pass it on to another Councillor for resolution. Now I am able to take up these matters myself, so please feel free to get in touch if there is anything that you think I can help with.

*Liz Leffman 01608-810153
liz.leffman@westoxon.gov.uk*

Now that I sit on the environment committee I look forward to taking on issues such as household waste collection, recycling and the recycling centre issue with my colleague Liz Leffman.

Although I am no longer a member of the planning committee, I will attend meetings when I can. This will leave me freer to discuss planning applications with residents.

I look forward to hearing from you should there be an issue you wish to raise. I remain as always your representative.

Andy Graham

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www.cyclinguk.org/local-groups

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Photographs thanks to staff members and others.

Read the Finstock News online at www.finstock.org.uk; join the Finstock Yahoo group – groups.yahoo.com/group/finstock; or write to us at 63 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:

Farewell Rodney Rose

Thank you to everyone who has supported me for the last 20 years while I served as your County Councillor. During that time I have secured funding for various projects in Finstock as well as working for the benefit of our county in general. It has been my pleasure to serve this community.

I am very sad to be stepping down at this critical time in our country's history.

*Rodney Rose
County Councillor*

Green Field Banks

Once again, as summer approaches, would everyone please keep to the two footpaths that just go along two sides of the field. Also, you MUST pick up your doggie poo, as this is very detrimental to the hay, and is especially dangerous to sheep if they eat the contaminated hay.

*Many thanks for your co-operation,
Viv Wightman.*



Thames Valley Police

www.thamesvalley.police.uk

Thames Valley Police have a new website, which is collaboration between Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary, working with the Police ICT Company and the Digital Policing Programme. The design and operation will be a national solution which is expected to be available to all police forces in the coming years.

Thames Valley Police Alerts: Communities defeat terrorism

If you see or hear something that could be terrorist related, act on your instincts and call the police, in confidence, on 0800 789 321 or visit gov.uk/ACT.

Phishing emails alert

Thames Valley Alerts has advised that fraudsters are sending out a high volume of phishing emails to personal and business email addresses, pretending to come from various email addresses, which have been compromised. Delete these emails without opening the attachment them as they contain a Trojan!

Having up-to-date virus protection is essential; however it will not always prevent your device(s) from becoming infected. Please consider the following actions:

- Don't click on links or open any attachments you receive in unsolicited emails or SMS messages: Remember that fraudsters can 'spoof' an email address to make it look like one used by someone you trust. If you are unsure, check the email header to identify the true source of communication (you can find out how by searching the internet for relevant advice for your email provider).
- Do not enable macros in downloads; enabling macros will allow Trojan malware to be installed onto your device.
- Always install software updates as soon as they become available. Whether you are updating the operating system or an application, the update will often include fixes for critical security vulnerabilities.
- Create regular backups of your important files to an external hard drive, memory stick or online storage provider. It is important that the device you back up to is not connected to your computer as any malware infection could spread to that as well.
- If you think your bank details have been compromised, you should contact your bank immediately.

If you have been affected by this or any other fraud, report it to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 2040, or visit www.actionfraud.police.uk.



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(All numbers start with 01993 unless otherwise stated)

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Line ads are charged at 20p per word, payment in advance. Please contact: Ann Sullivan on 868597.

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An Excess of Excise

Excise Duty is a tax levied on goods up-front, before they can be offered for sale.

Beneath the surface jollity of newspaper articles about the latest prosecco craze, there is a tangible streak of official disapproval about wine consumption in this country, as if the health police are convinced that it is something we should all feel guilty about. It certainly makes it easier for them to raise taxes on it.

UK duty on wine went up by 8p a bottle in the March Budget. Sounds fairly harmless, doesn't it? 'In line with inflation' was the official description. But a line has been crossed. Including VAT, the first £3 of any bottle in the UK is now tax. This is totally unjustifiable. In 15 European countries, including France and Germany, duty is less than 4p a bottle. In Spain, Portugal and Italy the rate is zero.

Duty on sparkling wine in the UK, you will not be surprised to hear, costs even more. Her Majesty's Government is hardly helping the English wine industry. It is actually cheaper to buy English sparkling wine in France than it is in the UK.

What this means is that for the vast majority of UK consumers the amount paid in tax is greater than the value of the liquid in the bottle.

I have a friend who is fond of a glass, who once described the taxes on wine as a necessary levy that we pay to live here. He has now changed his mind, but talk like this just encourages the health police.

Dr. Johnson was absolutely right about Excise Duty: "A hateful tax levied upon commodities and adjudged not by the common judges of property, but wretches hired by those to whom excise is paid."

Osiris

Witney Gazette Public Notices online

You can sign-up for alerts to be sent to your inbox or read notices online. Options cover: probate and legal notices; local authority public notices; planned roadworks; licensing applications; and, planning notices.

www.witneygazette.co.uk/announcements/public_notices

A warm welcome to summer from Finstock Baby and Toddler Group!

We have been having fun with some springtime activities, Easter themed crafts and we enjoyed our Easter Party in April! There were all the usual yummy treats to finish off the term in style. We are also pleased to report that we had a successful Comic Relief Cake Sale in March raising £75 for the cause! Thank you to all those who baked and brought along cakes for the sale and for all the generous donations we received on the day.

We have been getting ready for summer and making the most of our time at the group before we break up for the holidays! We are planning a big end of year party at the hall - look out for more updates on Facebook!

We meet from 10am every Wednesday morning (term-time) and have plenty on offer for all that come along - toys and activities for babies and toddlers and a snack to keep them going, plus cake, hot drinks and chat for the adults!

If you haven't tried us out yet, come along for a free first session! You can keep up-to-date with what we are doing on Facebook, or our weekly emails – contact us on finstocktoddlergroup@gmail.com and we can add you to the list. We look forward to seeing you there.

Helen Fallows

Boost Care Skills

NHS England is offering online training to anyone providing care and support for people living with a learning disability, autism or both. You can learn at your own pace, join an online community, ask questions and take part in discussions. tinyurl.com/gsr35cs

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COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION

It is part of human nature to think wise things and do ridiculous ones. Anatole France

Wychwood Exhibition wins National Lottery funding

We are delighted to announce we have been successful in our Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant application to take the Wychwood Project Living Forest Exhibition to Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock. It explains the origins of the Forest as a hunting ground for Norman royalty and illustrates the way of life of local people over the centuries, whether shepherds, woodsmen or gloveresses. It also covers the dramatic change to West Oxfordshire in the 1850s when much of the forest was enclosed, trees were felled and the land was turned over to farming. The forest ruled our region for over 800 years influencing our landscape, buildings, industries and way of life and much of that history is still tangible today.

The exhibition will run from June 10th until September, with rural craft

demonstration days on Saturday July 8th, Saturday July 29th and Saturday August 19th. Entry to the museum is free and there is much more to see, with eleven galleries displaying art, archaeology, local and natural history; you can also enjoy the changing landscape of the walled garden, the dinosaur garden with Jurassic planting, and visit the Garden Café.

Many thanks to HLF for supporting us!

The Wychwood Project works within the area that was once the Royal Hunting Forest of Wychwood. At Domesday in 1086, the royal forest of Wychwood covered much of what is now West Oxfordshire. Today, the project covers 41 parishes and 120 square miles of the former forest. Visit: www.wychwoodproject.org for more information.



Don't be a Litter Bug

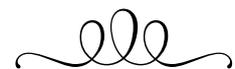
As you go from here to there, do you see the plastic bags, the coffee cups? There is a huge cost associated with clearing rubbish. Keep Britain Tidy estimates that cost to taxpayers is almost £1 billion a year in England.

We have seen the pictures in the media of massive amounts of rubbish dumped illegally in both cities and the countryside. The pictures are a shocking indictment of the ignorance with which people dump their rubbish without regard to the environment or the taxpayer who is charged for their collection and proper disposal. They are as shocking as the headline which read, "Floating plastic in the arctic"!

Many years ago in a *Finstock News* article written by local lad Greg Briner, the Pacific Gyre was mentioned; this is marine debris particles in the central North Pacific Ocean. Now we know that the Atlantic has its own rubbish gyre. Researchers estimated that about 300 billion pieces of tiny plastic are suspended in Arctic waters to the detriment of marine life, including the fish we consume. Scientists have also discovered pollution 10,000 meters below the ocean's surface in the Mariana Trench.

Now more than ever we need to remember that we only have this one planet to live on. Don't be a litter bug and throw your rubbish out of the car window, off the side of your boat or drop it on the street. Don't pay someone to take away your waste without knowing they are licenced to dispose of it legally. You are responsible for your own rubbish.

Remember that **Plastic costs the Earth.**



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Village Hall Events

Pop-up Folk is putting on a fundraising concert in aid of Frank Wise School, performed by The Delly Welly Boot Band! Friday July 7th, Finstock Village Hall, OX7 3BU, doors open 7.15, performance starts 7.45. Tickets on the door (not available in advance) £8 (£5 children age 16 and under). Bar available beforehand and during the interval.

The Delly Welly Boot Band is Susanna Starling (voice and bass), Nick Hooper (guitar and vocals), and Judith Hooper (fiddle and vocals). The evening will also include solos performed by Susanna and her bass, guitar solos by Nick, and duo tunes performed by Henderson: Hooper (Nick and Judith). All proceeds will go to Frank Wise School - a beautiful special school in Banbury which is very close to Nick and Judith's hearts.

Please put this date in your diary if you can - we would love to raise lots of money for Frank Wise School from this event, and would love to see you there.

Dominoes

Saturday July 8th and Saturday August 12th

Come along for a friendly shuffle at Finstock Village Hall. Pairs selected at random on the night. Great fun in a relaxed atmosphere, all welcome. Bar. Open at 7.30pm; pairs drawn soon after.

The Oxfordshire Museum

www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/museums

Through 18 June 18th Unmaking the Modern

Works by painter-printmaker Stanley Anderson RA (1884-1966). A key exponent of the revival of line engraving in Britain.

June 24th – September 17th Heroes Playroom.

Explore our Viking encampment area.

Museum Late Nights

On the first Thursday of June, July, August & September The Oxfordshire Museum and The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum will be open until 8pm.

Saturday June 24th Woodstock Carnival

Village Hall update:

In February we registered as an employer with HMRC and welcomed our first paid employee as caretaker to assist in managing all aspects of the Village Hall. Applications have been made for five grants to finance the storage extension to the hall. We need to raise about £8,000 from these sources. We would also like to thank Finstock Community Projects for their grant that has enabled us to gravel the lane in Well Hill outside the Village Hall.

The limestone scalping surface was sticky when wet and dusty when dry, which created a mess in the hall. It is now much better. In April several volunteers undertook an annual maintenance day to keep the hall in top condition with painting, carpet and chair cleaning, and many other tasks performed. Just one future date for the diary: **The Finstock Ale** will be held on the weekend of September 8th – 10th at Finstock Village Hall. Full details will be in the next FN issue. Anyone wishing to sponsor a cask of beer or cider please contact thefinstockale@gmail.com.

Shaun Morley

Finstock Table Tennis Club

We are very lucky with the modern facilities we have at the Village Hall and along with many other clubs the Finstock table tennis club has just celebrated its 1st birthday which was great fun. Beverley Morley very kindly baked two delicious cakes for Juniors and Seniors to share - thanks Bev!

Also we had a bit of fun before Easter with the Juniors searching for Easter eggs - it's surprising what a bit of extra motivation can achieve.

We are now looking forward to our second year and hope the club continues to serve the local community with a fun and healthy activity.

Junior and senior sessions always welcome new (or old/new) members so if you haven't yet been and fancy giving it a try please come along for either Juniors or Seniors or if you have any questions please either turn up on a Tuesday or contact me: mikesimpkins1@gmail.com.

Venue - Finstock Village Hall

6.30pm - 8pm - Juniors meeting every Tuesday during term-time.

8.00pm - 10pm - Seniors meeting every Tuesday during term-time and school holidays unless notified otherwise.

Brake the Cycle

In more bike-related news, have you heard of Brake the Cycle? This is an adventure for the summer! An opportunity to cycle through Europe staying at eco villages, permaculture farms and sustainability projects. Find out more and join the adventure into sustainable living! www.brakethecycle.xyz/
(The Key – Oxfordshire's Sustainability Newsletter)

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Finstock Craft Club

It's hard to believe that the Craft Club has been running for one year already and it must be said that much of its success is down to the completion and delivery of the fantastic Village Hall in April last year. Thanks again to all those who contributed to what has become a great place to be and to enjoy.

At a recent newly formed Craft Club Committee meeting, we got together to plan events and discuss the way forward. One such event is the annual Finstock Music Festival, (being held, I should add, prior to publication of this newsletter) and the possibility of us participating, following the success of the "dream catchers" we made with the children last year. Kath Lucas is visiting the Craft Club to demonstrate her ideas for this year's event, one of which is 'stone painting'. We will report on this in the next edition of the newsletter.

A date was decided on in early June, to start planning this year's Finstock Arts & Crafts Fayre and how we can make it a bigger and better event than in previous years. I know it's rather early but perhaps you could pencil in your diaries, **Saturday November 11th Finstock Arts and Crafts Fayre.**

In addition to the above, we plan to invite demonstrators to the club to enable us to expand our crafting knowledge. We also hope to visit a crafting event at the NEC later in the year.

Our weekly Monday sessions continue in the Village Hall from 7:30 - 9:30pm (excluding Bank Holidays). Perhaps you could add it to that list of new projects you plan to try in 2017? The first session is free and the weekly fee remains the same at £1.50. We look forward to welcoming you!

For further information you can contact me, Rosa Charlesworth, either by phone, 869283 or email at rosacrafts@btinternet.com.



TVSA - Village Shop and Post Office

Summer time! (I hope). Our Swirl ice-cream machine will be in use again to provide your favourite flavours. Of course we have lollies and other ice-creams in the freezer as well, so come in and treat yourself and your family.

We also have our coffee/tea/chocolate machine if your tastes tend more towards warmth and caffeine.

All our usual tasty goodies will be available, like fresh bread, scones and cakes, jams and honey, ham, bacon, sausages, cheese and free range eggs, a good proportion of which are locally produced.

We also have a good selection of chilled and frozen food, general groceries and confectionery.

Don't forget you can buy newspapers, magazines and stationery here, too.

The 100 Club draw still produces winners every month. If you haven't joined yet or you would like an additional number, ask Karen how to go about it.

If you would like to volunteer in the Shop, particularly on a Saturday morning, when we are very short of help, Karen would love to talk to you about that as well.

Thank you so much for your continued generosity to the Food Bank, which remains a vital support for many people.

Your local Post Office is open on weekday mornings for you to post your letters and parcels, pay your bills, get

cash from your bank account and buy foreign currency. There will be several Special Stamps issued in June and July, including Windmills and Watermills and Landmark Buildings.

We look forward to seeing you!

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Karen Williams

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Finstock Girlguiding

Rainbows - for girls aged between 5 and 7 years. This group meets from 4.45pm until 5.45pm.

During this term we will be doing various challenges and activities to celebrate the Rainbows' 30th Birthday with the theme being "Under the sea".

We have had an influx of new members but will always have spaces for any new members wanting to join.

Brownies - this group is for girls aged between 7 and 10 years and meets from 6pm until 7.30pm.

This term we are covering the three main emergency services - Fire, Police and Ambulance and whilst doing this the girls will be achieving their Fire Safety Badge, Crime Prevention badge and First Aid and hopefully First Aid Advanced badges.

After all this hard work we will then be taking the girls climbing again for the end of term.

Contact for Rainbows is Amy Fox - 07495 064634 (or Caroline, details as below) Contact for Brownies is Caroline Booth - carolinebooth4@gmail.com or 07890 629001

Girl Guides

Girls moving up from Brownies to Guides mean that we now have 14 Girl Guides. We welcome our new Guides and hope that they enjoy their time with us as much as they have enjoyed the Brownies.

The Guides have been busy learning all about traditions in other countries earning them badges in World Culture and Traveller. They have also been swimming followed by a McDonald's supper, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all!

On a personal note, I have had to have time away for a while and would like to thank our Finstock leaders for pitching in to make sure our Guide unit did not miss a session. We are very blessed in Finstock to have such wonderful leaders that all support each other. This support not only ensures the constant running of the units but also the well-being and happiness of all our girls.

Karen Williams

Walking choices

The **Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment** (TOE2) is Oxfordshire's independent environmental funder, supporting projects which improve biodiversity, access to green spaces and the Low Carbon Agenda, for the benefit of local communities. TOE2 works to support better access to green spaces in Oxfordshire's countryside and urban areas, with grants to support a wide range of improvements. Do contact us for more information about how we may be able to support environmental projects in your area. Earth Trust Centre, Little Wittenham, 01865 407003, www.trustforoxfordshire.org.uk.

National Trails - www.nationaltrail.co.uk The best trails in England and Wales

Oxfordshire Way - www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-way Downloadable maps and directions for this 65 mile walk from the Cotswolds to the Chilterns.

Thames Path National Trail - www.nationaltrail.co.uk/thames-path Follow the greatest river in England for 184 miles from its source in the Cotswold hills to the sea. Passing through

peaceful water meadows, unspoilt rural villages, historical towns and cities, and finally through the heart of London to end at the Thames Barrier in Greenwich.

Brakspear Pub Trails - www.pub-trails.co.uk A nice pub connection.

Oxford Bike Week June 10th - 18th

Oxford Bike Week 2017 will take place June 10th-18th and, as part of Bike Week (UK), is an annual opportunity to promote cycling, and show how cycling can easily be part of everyday life by encouraging 'everyday cycling for everyone'. Demonstrating the social, health and environmental benefits of cycling, the week aims to get people to give cycling a go all over the UK, whether this be for fun, as a means of getting around to work or school, the local shops or just to visit friends. There will be lots of fun cycling events all over Oxford between 10 and 18 June (and a few either side of these dates!) Keep an eye on the website (www.oxfordbikeweek.co.uk) for more details, or follow them on Twitter (@oxfordbikeweek). (The Key - Oxfordshire's Sustainability Newsletter)

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Super Walks from Finstock on Dedicated Footpaths

We are very lucky to have so many super walks from Finstock, and there are so many variants to each walk depending on the time you have at your disposal.

Lady Well and Holly Grove - It is easier to write about these two fantastic walks at the same time.

The walk begins, and with good timing ends at The Plough! Walk up onto the field behind the pub and take the left hand path across the ploughed field, through The Longcut (which is the old boundary between Chipping Norton and Witney) down the next field (crossing Akeman Street) to the 'footpath crossroads'. Take the left hand path up to Wilcote, turning onto the path through the little wood by the barns. If you look in by the barns you will see the blackened remains of a massive oak tree. It was struck by a thunderbolt, bang in the centre, in last August's storm. It knocked all the huge branches to the ground, then slowly burned for about three weeks,



right down inside the trunk. It was over 500 years old, and the line of Akeman Street could be seen from that oak, so it is well worth a quick peep!

Back to the path, and go straight across the Wilcote/Hailey road to Wilcote pond, which has just been given a complete overhaul and looks fabulous! Go past the white dovecot and follow the path round to the left, between hedges, go through gates and walk down into fabulous views of sheep with their lambs at this time of year. Then you walk down the avenue of very ancient pollarded ash trees, about 350 years old, to Lady Well, an ancient Holy Well or Sacred Spring (sadly not very well looked after now, but you can still see the steps down to the well). If you follow the trail from the Well, you can see where the spring comes out of the ground and then runs into a small, old, man-made trough for animals. Carry on through the narrow belt of trees, etc. where there is a stream, and where – later – you will see genuine Giant Hogweed. They are massive, at

least 10ft tall with huge flower heads and simply spectacular. They should not be destroyed, but just beware and don't touch them, as the sap can cause severe skin burns – just admire them, as I do. Some are twice my height these days!

From here you have a choice – to Holly Grove or Bridewell Farm! Turn right and follow the farm track right round that side of the field up to the top of the woods and you will see on your right a gate into Holly Grove. At the time of writing, these woods are a mass of bluebells, absolutely stunning, but whatever time of the year, they are fantastic. During the First World War much of the wood was felled for fuel, but you would not be aware of that, and the birdsong is incredible. Follow the path through the woods looking at the amazing display of wild flowers, but of course, remember, you mustn't pick any, then you come to the Wilcote/Hailey road again. Turn left then right over the stile and you look right up the field, past the 'footpath crossroads' to the Longcut and back across the field to The Plough! This walk could take one and half hours or longer if you wander!



Of course, you can reverse this and go straight to Holly Grove, but then you do not have the super walk down into the fantastic views!

Now, back to where you turned right! If you walk straight on from the gate, across that field and the next, then follow the path round to the left, where you will see Bridewell Farmhouse, a handsome building from 1761, go round the farm buildings, ignoring the track on your right, and then, after a short distance, the path crosses two fields diagonally, and comes out on the Wilcote/North Leigh road. You then have to walk on the road back to Finstock, but you will pass Bridewell Organic Garden.

When my boys were small, it was a completely walled, unused, overgrown

garden, which we used to explore around, trying to find a way in! To them and me it was The Secret Garden, from that classic children's book, but had originally been the vegetable garden to Wilcote House. It was set that far from the House so that the gardeners, their horses and carts and all the noises and smells did not disturb the occupants of the house. (I don't know what the occupants of Wilcote Manor thought though!) Again, this walk will probably take about an hour and a half.

Of course, from this same walk you can get to North Leigh or New Yatt, by following other footpaths that branch off.

If you haven't been to Holly Grove, do give it a go, it is well worth it!

Viv Wightman

The 'ACTIVE 10' app

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Friends of Finstock School (FoFS)

Thank you to all the ladies of Finstock for coming out in March to join us for some well-deserved pampering and retail therapy! It was a great evening raising £312.30! Thank you very much to all who helped with baking and on the night, and to Tammy Judd who organised the whole event on behalf of FoFS.

As usual, the year is fast flying by and we have only two more events planned in our diary for the rest of the school year. Our final event will be our School Social Evening where all staff and families are invited to come together for an evening of BBQ, music, games and relaxation to mark the end of the school year.

Before then, however, on the afternoon of **Saturday July 1st**, we are

holding our **School Summer Fête as part of the Finstock Festival weekend**. Please come along and join in the fun whilst raising important funds for our community and specifically our school. There will be stalls, games and demonstrations, refreshments, BBQ, Bouncy Castle and Maypole, all running alongside The Great Finstock Bake Off and The Fun Dog Show. If you are able to offer any help on the day or in the set up to the Fête/Festival weekend please let us know – such events are rather labour intensive so your help in running a stall, the bar or the BBQ for a while would be a massive help. The other huge way to support us is to come along on the day for some fun in the sunshine – we hope to see you there!

Rachel Mackenzie (FoFS Chairperson)
htcfinstock@gmail.com

Finstock School

As the summer approaches, we are beginning to see a little bit more sunshine, and the school grounds are becoming more colourful. The Summer Term is always an exciting and busy time at school, as alongside our normal learning we start planning ahead for Fetes, Festivals, Sports Day and our end of year celebrations.

This year we are also fitting in a 'One World Week' during the final week of May, where we have arranged a range of activities from around the world - including a Science Dome which gives a 360° experience of how Earth fits into the universe and beyond, African drumming, Indian storytelling, a visit from a range of exotic animals and food tasting. This provides an exciting and active way for children to learn about the diversity of the natural and human world around us.

Although we are a small school in a small rural community, we take our responsibility of preparing children for the 'global society' in which they will live very seriously, and this is reflected in our school core Christian values of 'Challenge, Respect, Inspiration and Belief'. We get a lot of feedback from the Secondary Schools which indicate that pupils do, indeed, leave Finstock School ready for the next stage of their education and in fact do very well!

This is the same for the staff of Finstock School. It is a great place for them to learn and develop, and to gather the skills that enable them to

move on to larger schools and the next challenges in their professional journey. So, although it is with great sadness that I have to inform you that both I and Mrs Montgomery (Year 5/6) will be moving on at the end of this term, we should also be proud that we provide such a good environment for ALL members of the school community to grow. Mrs Montgomery and I are very sad to be leaving, but will be making the most of every last minute at Finstock School!



On a happier note, I would like to congratulate Sam Nicholls for his success in the Road Safety Competition run by West Oxfordshire

District Council and The Rotary Club. He was awarded his prize of a new bike during a special assembly in March. Well done, Sam.

School Dates:

Term Monday June 4th - Friday July 21st.

Note: Finstock Church of England Primary School became the first school in the county to be accredited by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. Finstock received a bronze mark in recognition of the benefits of providing frequent, continuous and progressive experiences for all pupils in part by weekly Forest School sessions.

Woodstock's outdoor pool is open

The Woodstock outdoor heated swimming pool with a 25 metre main pool and a depth of 3.5 metres, it is ideal for diving enthusiasts and there is a separate paddling pool for younger children. The pool is available for private hire and swimming lessons and will be open until September. Almost 11,000 people used the facility last year.

Family and season tickets are available from local Better Leisure Centres. For more information call Woodstock Open Air Pool on 811785.

The Lido at Chipping Norton is a community-run facility. For more information see www.chippylido.co.uk or call 01608 643188.

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Glorious summer borders



No summer border in my opinion is complete, without a backdrop of fabulous blue and pure white delphiniums. Delphiniums received their name from the ancient Greeks, who thought the shape of the flower bud with its spur, resembled that of a dolphin. In England in Tudor times some of the species grown were referred to as "larkspur" apparently because the nectary resembles a lark's claw.

The modern delphinium is the result of hybridization of delphinium species from many widely varied parts of the world. Unknown enthusiasts crossed many species including, probably, *D. elatum* from the Swiss Alps, *D. cheilanthum* (dark blue) from Siberia,

D. brunianum from the Himalayas (purple, hooded) and *D. formosum* from Armenia. From these crosses and probably many others the modern delphinium *elatum* type was produced.

The major highlight of the Bristol flower show for me as a teenager was the floral display of Blackmore and Langdon. They bred strong named perennial varieties, with large spikes of flowers. My choice of the magnificent blues is 'Molly Buchanan' with its black bee centre followed by 'Cristella'; a softer blue is 'Loch Leven' and the gentian blue of 'Fenella'. For a rich purple blue, I grow Amadeus. If you like white delphiniums, try 'Jill Curley', or 'Olive Poppleton' with its brown eye. These are very hardy varieties and resist the coldest winters, but beware of the small black slugs which can devour the new shoots as they are emerging in early spring. The yellows and pink colours are not such strong growers.

In America, breeders concentrate on seed lines such as the pacific giants rather than the named varieties, as it is more difficult to grow delphiniums as perennials, due to the climatic conditions in many parts of America.

Delphinium plants love well-drained soil,

and are hungry feeders. This means adding plenty of grit on heavy soils to help with soil drainage, delphiniums sitting in wet soil in their dormant winter season can die. They love plenty of organic matter added to their planting holes when they first go in, then regular feeding throughout their growing season. I use a slow release fertilizer such as Q4 or a scattering of blood fish and bone, a couple of times in summer and repeating it once in autumn before the plants die down.

A border of delphiniums with phlox and peonies in front gives a long lasting colourful display for many years.

Happy gardening, Robert Bigwood

Relieve stress and anxiety

New research led by The University of Exeter, in collaboration with the British Trust for Ornithology has found that watching birds near your home could be good for mental health. People living in neighbourhoods where there were more birds about in the afternoon, as opposed to early mornings, reported lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression. tinyurl.com/l2hnmecc

Top Bird

Blackbirds topped the tables in 2016 as the most frequently seen bird in gardens! They were seen in over 90% of gardens on average throughout the year. Many species, such as Long-tailed Tit and Wren, were seen in higher numbers compared to 2015.

However, not all birds fared so well, and Greenfinch counts were lower than ever, dropping below an average one per garden for the first time from October 2016. This species has been in severe decline, as a result of the disease outbreak charted by Garden BirdWatchers from 2005 onward. We're currently partners of the Garden Wildlife Health project, which aims to monitor and investigate emerging threats to wildlife health.

Join the British Trust for Ornithology. Volunteer surveyors, members and staff work in partnership to provide unbiased information about birds and their habitats. Join or volunteer today and make birds count. www.bto.org



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