



# PERM ROCK VILLAGE HALL FOR FUNDRAISER

from Fiona Pollard

The village hall was buzzing on Saturday 16th March as the Stewkley band PERM held a fund raiser for year 6 at St Michael's school. It has now become a tradition for the year 6 leavers to raise funds for a leaving party, a legacy for the school and if they wish, to also donate to charity.

One of the charities to benefit is Little Hearts Matter, who have supported the family of year 6 pupil Lucia who has half a working heart. Another, The Child Brain Injury Trust support children like year 6 pupil Jack, who suffered a brain injury last summer and is still receiving outpatient support at the John Radcliffe hospital in Oxford.

Stewkley football club have been a great support to the fundraising project and joined forces to put on this fabulous event. A huge thank you to Dan Smith from the club who has for the last few months worked with myself and Lynsey Short to put the evening together.

A huge thank you to the main act PERM Paul Carlise, guitar and vocals, Ramsey Craine, guitar and vocals, Matt Day, drums and Eann Bilbe on bass guitar. They played a great mix of rock and pop music covering songs by bands such as Kings of Leon, Ocean Colour scene, The Verve and Oasis. The band has become very popular in the village over the last few years particularly at Rec Fest. Tickets sold out quickly with those not able to get one forming a waiting list. It was so generous of the band to play for the children and their chosen charities.

Thank you to Lynsey Short, Hannah Pierce, Samantha Mardlin, Vikki Skilton, Neathan Willis also James Pollard who helped Dan run the bar. We would also like to thank the parents who helped set up and then clear the hall afterwards.



The Grapevine: Next issue on or about 1 May. Deadline for contributions and ads: 15 April.

Contact: [team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk](mailto:team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk) To advertise: email or call 242137. For editorial: email or call 240350.



**VILLAGE DIARY**

**April 2024**

- Tue 2 PC meeting at 7.30pm, Village Hall
- Thu 4 Bins: General waste, food bins and garden waste
- Thu 4 Coffee Stop, Pavilion, 10.30am
- Mon 8 Book Club, Carpenters Arms, 8pm
- Wed 10 Bins: Recycling blue tops and food bins
- Wed 17 Bins: General waste, food bins and garden waste
- Fri 19 SVCC Quiz Night, Rec Pavilion, 7.30pm
- Sat 20 Afternoon Tea, Methodist Chapel, from 2.30pm
- Wed 24 Bins: Recycling blue tops and food bins
- Wed 24 SLHG, Rec Pavilion, 7.45pm
- Sat 27 Stewkley Players, Murder Mystery, Village Hall, 8pm

**May 2024**

- Wed 1 Bins: General waste, food bins and garden waste

**What's on - Looking Ahead 2024**

**May**

- Sat 11 Aperitif o'clock, St.Michael's Church
- Sat 18 Stewkley Singers, All Saints, Leighton Buzzard

**June**

- Sat 15 Stewkley Open Gardens, in aid of St Michael's Church  
Scarecrow Trail
- Sun 16 Stewkley Open Gardens, in aid of St Michael's Church  
Scarecrow Trail

- Sat 22 Summer Ball - Little Hearts Matter - Upper Dean Farm

**July**

- Sat 13 Flower Show, Village Hall

If you are organising an event in the village, please let us know as soon as your date is confirmed. We will publish details here to inform all village event organisers so that clashes can be avoided.  
team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk

To let the village know about your Stewkley event free of charge on the What's On page, please email: team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk To ensure equal coverage for all events, please keep information restricted to: Organisation, event title, date, time and location, one line of no more than 50 characters description entry cost, contact for further information.

**WHAT'S ON IN APRIL**

**COFFEE STOP**

In the Pavilion from 10.30am to 12 noon  
**Thursday 4 April**  
In aid of Parkinson's U.K

**BOOK CLUB**

**Monday 8 April**

8pm at the Carpenters Arms  
Come along for a drink and a chat with our lively group. You don't need to have read the current book. Bring your ideas.  
Book to discuss: *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* by Alan Sillitoe  
Book for April: *Sometimes People Die* by Simon Stephenson  
Please contact Sally 07902 860255 or Greg on 240487 for information.

Stewkley Vicarage Cricket Club

**QUIZ NIGHT**

**Friday 19 April, 7.30pm start.**

At the Rec Pavilion  
Teams of six, £5 per person, register your team in advance.  
Contact: Alan Hardings 242227/ 07548 979636  
E-mail: alanhardings1970@gmail.com

Stewkley Methodist Chapel

**AFTERNOON TEA**

**Saturday 20 April**

from 2.30pm.  
£12.50 per person - pre-booking required.  
Call sue on 240761 to book, pay and collect.

Stewkley Local History Group

**ALL WELCOME TO THIS OPEN MEETING**

Wednesday 24 April  
**"Waddesdon Manor – Money Moving a Mountain"**  
The creation of the Waddesdon Manor Gardens  
*A talk by Catherine Taylor - Head of Archives and Records at Waddesdon Manor*  
At the Rec Pavilion, 7.45 for 8pm.  
Admission £5, includes refreshment.

Stewkley Village Hall Roof Appeal

**Stewkley Players**

**MURDER MYSTERY EVENING**

**Saturday 27 April at 8pm**  
Village Hall.  
Tickets £20, including supper.  
On sale now 07522 862929.

**STEWKLEY WALKERS** from Bridget Watson

We look forward to seeing you on one or more of our walks. Walk leaders who recce walks may change the route depending on the conditions on the day but, as a rough guide, walks take approximately two hours. Occasionally a walk has to be cancelled due to poor weather conditions, so please check your emails or phone the walk leader before setting off.

**Walks Programme for April 2024****Tuesday 2 Grovebury Quarry and the River Ouzel  
5 miles**

Park at The Grove Lock pub, (LU7 0QU) to set off at 10am around the Grovebury Quarry, taking in the Grand Union Canal, the River Ouzel and Little Billington. The paths are very mixed in quality, mostly flat but a hill near Little Billington rises (130 feet) to give us excellent views across the valley.

One notice threatened the presence of a bull, but it will probably be too early in the year for him. Otherwise, dogs on the walk should be fine, but not in the eating area of The Grove Lock. Brian has booked a table for 15 at the pub, which has a fairly comprehensive menu and a range of beers. If you intend to stay for lunch, please still contact Brian or Hilary to give them a rough idea of the numbers that they will confirm with the pub on the morning of the walk.

Leaders: Brian and Hilary  
07786015257, 07947747782

**Thursday 11 Ashridge Long Mystery Walk  
5/6 miles plus 3 miles**

Meet at 10am at Bridgwater Monument Car Park for a 2 to 2.5 hour walk. After lunch at the Monument Cafe a further optional 3/4 mile (1 to 1.5 hrs) limp for the hardy. Facilities: Toilets and cafe. Please phone Tom closer to the walk date if you require further information.

Leader: Tom  
479007 or 376736

**Thursday 18 Stoke Hammond Circular 4.5 miles**

Meet at 10am at Bragenham Side opposite the Stoke Hammond Community Centre (MK17 9DB). Bragenham Side is the lane directly opposite The Dolphin Pub in Stoke Hammond. The walk will go towards Stockgrove and back via Great Brickhill. Well-behaved dogs on leads welcome. They are also welcome in the bar area of The Dolphin. **Please book your own lunches, telephone: 279518.** If staying for lunch, park at the pub and walk down the lane to the meeting point.

Leaders: George and Thelma  
07860 654325

**Wednesday 24 Tring (Museum) to Hastoe Circular Walk  
3.75 miles, c1hr 45min**

Meet at 10.30am in the Tring Museum/Woodland car park off Hastoe Lane (HP23 6AR). If the car park is full, park on Hastoe Lane. The route is uphill for the first ¾ mile (height gain 738 feet/225 metres) and thereafter on fairly level ground for a couple of miles and then downhill for the last mile. We will be walking through parkland and established walking paths – The Ridgeway and Icknield Way with some splendid views towards Tring and beyond. The route can be a little slippery after rain. There are only a couple of gates/stiles, all of which are dog friendly.

**NB** no toilet facilities at the car park, the nearest public toilets being a short distance away at The Forge car park off the High Street (HP23 4AB), or possibly in the Natural History Museum, which is free entry. There are cafés on the High Street and in The Natural History Museum.

Leader: Arthur  
07492 624 224

**Dates for May walks are as follows: 3, 8, 14 and 31.**

**Please email me with your walk listings for June by 14 May at the latest. [bridget.watson@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bridget.watson@hotmail.co.uk)**

At our recent AGM, other walks possibilities were mentioned, so it would be great for anyone wishing to lead a walk to try some of these this summer:

- Saturday walks
- Breakfast walks, starting about 8.30am
- Afternoon walks, starting about 2pm
- Evening walks in the summer months, starting about 6.30pm
- Whole day walks with lunch (packed lunches/cafe/pub)
- There and back walks, with lunch in the middle

**CALLING ALL VILLAGERS**

We now have the green light to start work on the Community Garden, which you may know is a piece of ground kindly arranged for our use by St Michael's School, just off High Street North.

This project now needs an injection of help to get it progressing. Charles Hill is giving up some of his valuable time to do a lot of the groundwork but we urgently need builders to help with the construction of some of the more formal garden elements.

We would also appreciate the donation of any old paving materials or Stewkley Bricks, so that we can construct a wall and pathway with 'used' materials and the bricks as a memorial to our rich Stewkley heritage.

Once the groundwork is completed we will also be looking for gardening volunteers to help with all the planting and borders.

Please give us some of your time and any donations would be really welcomed and collected.

Please contact Brian Bottomley via email, [cllrBrian1@gmail.com](mailto:cllrBrian1@gmail.com) with any help, donations or volunteering you feel able to give.

**STEWKLEY VICARAGE CRICKET CLUB  
NEEDS YOU!**

Are you a parent of a child in year 2 and have an interest in cricket?

We are actively looking for someone to help run that age group, you will be supported by the wider club. Training is on Saturday mornings at the Rec.

If you're interested please contact

David on 07767690231

**FOODBANK PLEA**

from Steve Nicholl, Food Bank Co-ordinator

No doubt you will recall the heartfelt letter from Rosie George of the Leighton Linlade Homelessness Service and Community Foodbank in February's Grapevine, thanking the Parish for the fantastic donations over the Christmas period. All those involved were bowled over by your generosity.

However, poverty and hunger are long-term issues. They may be most poignant at Christmas or Easter, but the need is still there. And donations to the foodbank in the porch of St Michael's church have reduced dramatically. Of course, housekeeping budgets may still be stretched from Christmas time or by the cost of Easter eggs but, if you can, **please** add an extra can or two of (cheap) meat, potatoes and veg to your week's shopping. Your donation can make all the difference to people around us who are at breaking point.

Thank you

To contact Grapevine  
email: [team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk](mailto:team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk)

## GIUSEPPE VERDI'S REQUIEM *from Stewkley Singers*

The Stewkley Singers aim to raise the roof of All Saints' Church, Leighton Buzzard on Saturday 18 May 2024 with their unmissable Spring concert, Verdi's spectacular *Requiem*. A journey through musical contrasts, from the hushed whisperings of the opening to the fearful deathblows of the Dies Irae, this powerful work was the culmination of many years thought and preparation. Blazing trumpets, thunderous drums and a large chorus summon forth the power, emotion and intense drama of Verdi's choral classic.

Composed as a tribute to the writer and humanist Alessandro Manzoni, *Requiem* was originally performed on 22 May 1874 on the first anniversary of his death. Joined in this concert by the choir of All Saints Church, Stewkley Singers are proud to present Verdi's masterpiece just four days shy of its official 150th anniversary.

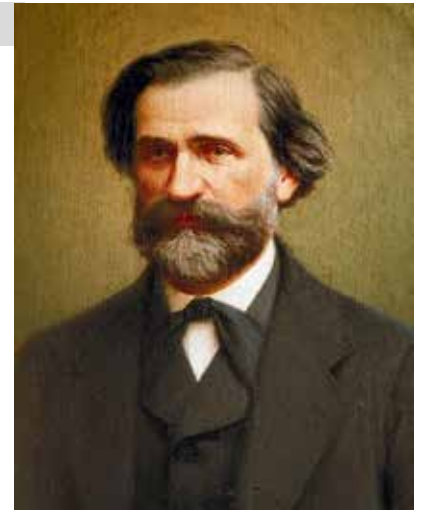
Usually thought of as a composer of operas, the dramatic intensity of Verdi's *Requiem* never fails to disappoint and is a joy for singers and audience alike. This performance, conducted by Jenny Morgan, will also feature four superb soloists, Soprano Sarah Helsby Hughes, Mezzo-Soprano Sian Menna, Tenor

Peter Davoren (making a welcome return after his role of Gerontius with the choir last May) and Bass Edward Price, together with the Wigmore Chamber Orchestra.

Tickets are available from Julia Sims 01525 240671 or from Room No 9, High Street, Leighton Buzzard.

Price: £17.50 Adults; £8 children

Don't miss this unique opportunity to hear the Stewkley Singers perform such a thrilling and powerful work. Please support your local choral society and buy your tickets from 8 April.



*Giuseppe Verdi*

## BASIL ELDING - 1938 to 2024



Basil Elding came to Stewkley aged 16 and worked for the Judds at the Grange while lodging with Mr and Mrs Willis in Dove Street, where he met Anne Bliss his wife for 63 years. They were married in St Michael's Church on New Year's Eve 1960, with snow on the ground, and a reception in the Village Hall afterwards.

Basil did his National Service with the Anglian Regiment although he qualified for exemption as he was a farm worker. The newly-married couple lived in Fishweir to start with, moving to Dean Road, then Whaddon. followed by Newton Longville and Soulbury, ending up in Stewkley again for 46 years.

Basil worked at the Faulkner's Egg Packing business in Stewkley and later joined his father-in-law, Henry Bliss, in the building trade. Basil was a keen footballer. He played for his regiment and the Stewkley Football Club.

Basil died on 28 February and his funeral took place in St Michael's Church on 8 March, followed by interment in the Lawn Cemetery. Basil leaves his widow Anne, son Michael and two grandchildren, Emily and Henry. Basil's son Mark predeceased his father.

## SCHOOL REPORT *from Mr David Morley*

We are always looking at new and innovative ways to engage with our young learners that will make lessons both inspiring and enjoyable.

We have been working with our children to embed learning into long-term memory, helping them to build on both previous knowledge and future learning. Our Marvellous Memory Machines have helped us to explain the importance of retaining and recalling information. Each class was able to come up with their own design ideas which featured lights, buzzers and one even had a propeller.

It has been a very busy couple of weeks at St Michael's. Our Year 1 children have loved their Great Fire of London Topic and watched in awe as their models of London houses ignited, fanned by the flames. World Book Day is always very popular. This year the children wore their pyjamas and carried their bears with them as all 7 classes visited all 7 teachers throughout the day to engage in some really exciting activities. We love raising money for good causes and this month our children all wore funny hats on Red Nose Day.





# Girls' Cricket

@ Stewkley Village Cricket Club

**Come along and join the fun!**

**Mondays 6-7pm at Recreation Ground, Stewkley**

**Ages 9 to 13**  
No experience or equipment needed

ECB qualified coaches





**Free taster sessions on 15th and 22nd April**

For more details contact:  
[clairemunday@hotmail.com](mailto:clairemunday@hotmail.com)  
[jones.liz.email@gmail.com](mailto:jones.liz.email@gmail.com)



**#WE GOT GAME.**





# Stewkley VCC

## WOMEN & GIRLS softball CRICKET

Age 13+

**learn new skills  
make new friends  
be part of a team  
have fun  
get fit**



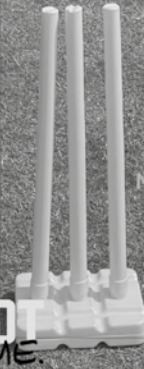

**First two sessions FREE**  
Qualified coach

Mondays  
7-8pm  
from April 15th

No experience or equipment needed

**#WE GOT GAME.**

more details - [clairemunday@hotmail.com](mailto:clairemunday@hotmail.com)



### STEWKLEY ARTIST AT MALL GALLERIES, LONDON

A watercolour painting, Shadow Patterns, by Stewkley artist Diana Sheldon has been selected by the Royal Institute of Painters in Watercolours following an international open call for its 212th Annual Exhibition, where paintings by members and non-members can be shown together.

Running from 28 March to 13 April it is held at Mall Galleries The Mall, St. James's, London SW1 5AS

You can go to Diana's website at <https://dianasheldon.co.uk/blog> where full details of the RI Exhibition can be found.



### BREAK FROM THE SHOW RING BRINGS SUCCESS AT CRUFTS

Bracco Italiano, qualify for Crufts after a ten month break from the show ring. To his 13-year-old owner's delight, Bosco then achieved second in a large postgraduate breed class and first in the Good Citizen class on Gundog day at this year's Crufts!

This year will see more shows and junior handling with Lucas' aspirations to handle Bosco at the world's largest dog show in 2025!



### SCARECROW TRAIL 2024 ENTRY NOW OPEN

As advised is last month's Grapevine, St Michael's and All Angels Church will once again be running a Scarecrow Trail in conjunction with its Open Gardens Weekend on 15 and 16 June.

Entry is free, and the Scarecrows will be judged by all who visit the Gardens, with a small prize awarded to the winner. You can enter as an individual, family, group, neighbours or friends; all entries to be prominently displayed over the two days of the Open Gardens.

You need to register your entry so that a map can be drawn up, showing the position of each entry. Once registered you will receive an entry number to display by your scarecrow.

To register call Denise Draper 240524.  
**GOOD LUCK!**



# DOWN MEMORY LANE

## Malting and brewing of beer when it was safer to drink beer than water.

Agriculture has always been central to life in Stewkley and the malting and brewing of beer were closely connected to it. There were three 'maltings' or malting yards in Stewkley. One was in Fishweir, another at The Old Swan, and the third on the site of today's Maltings Close, where Jones' bakery once stood.

It was a ritual fundamentally unchanged from medieval times using threshed, germinated barley, boiled in great coppers with yeast and hops in the fermentation process. The first brewing was taken off as 'best beer'. More malt and water were then added, and the brew boiled up yet again to make 'small beer'.

Before mains tap water came to Stewkley in 1940, drinking water depended on locally dug wells and pumps. This had been so for centuries, and drinking water was sometimes unsafe and unpleasant. To maintain hydration, households, workplaces and even schools, had small beer to drink. It was generally between 0.5 and 2.8% ABV and was a staple of daily life, and indeed often safer to drink than water from the wells. Both 'small beer' and the higher alcohol content 'best beer' were consumed in large quantities. Because of this phenomenon, in the mid-19th century, there were ten licensed public houses or beer houses in the village, serving a village total population of about 1,500. An even more astonishing statistic, towards the end of that century, there were only about 300 adult males in the population who might have felt the need to quench their thirst with a 'best beer', but only half of that number ever visited a pub (perhaps because they were Methodist?) By the mid-1950s (a dozen years after



Swan public house, Chapel Square, Stewkley, 1907 above and current day below.



mains water arrived in Stewkley), the number of pubs remaining had fallen to six, and today we're down to just the Carpenters Arms. However, that's another story and not just because the water's now safe to drink!

Kate Mayne (*Stewkley, Bucks, 1955*) recalled that the principal village brewery was at the Old Swan on Chapel Square. In the mid-19th century, the Old Swan was owned by Thomas Hedges who also owned the White Horse Hotel at Islington Cattle Market in London. Beer for his London premises was brewed at the Old Swan in Stewkley and hauled by horsedrawn waggon up to London. The beer was apparently much liked by dealers and drovers attending the cattle market. When they called at the Islington White Horse, they invariably ordered a pint of 'Old Stewkley'.

FROM THE GRAPEVINE

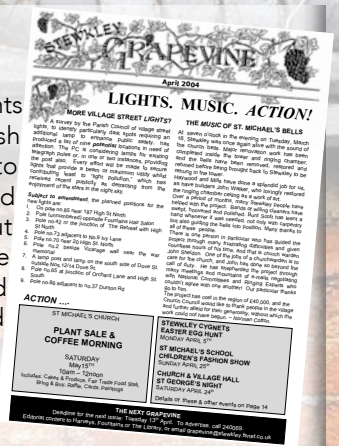
10 YEARS AGO...

From April 2014, little Lucia Pollard was pictured enjoying her 1st birthday...94 years young, the late Bert Brewer hung up his Grapevine delivery bag for the final time...obituaries were published for the late Roger Olney, Joan Bowsher and Ian McNally...the annual Senior Citizens' Afternoon Tea was as well attended as ever...approval by AVDC for a single-storey extension to create storage to the Village Hall was announced at the latter's AGM...Stewkley Explorers enjoyed a practice Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award expedition in the Chiltern Hills...Nature Watch reported that the drier, sunnier first half of March had brought out some insects early from hibernation, especially the bumble bees...and dog poo was again the subject of consternation with fouling on the Recreation Ground.



FROM THE GRAPEVINE 20 YEARS AGO...

From April 2004, nine new streetlights were to be erected by the Parish Council in particularly dark spots to enhance public safety...the sound of St Michael's Church bells rang out through the village once again as the major conservation works by Hayward Mills Associates to the bells and ringing chamber were completed. Vicar the Rev Norman Cotton paid particular tribute to churchwarden and bell ringer John Sheldon for the countless hours of frustrating difficulties he spent in "shepherding the project through many meetings and mountains of e-mails, negotiating with national committees and ringing experts who couldn't agree with each other!"...Tennis Club juniors enjoyed a successful year in MK League with U-15s, Shane Orchard, Chris Collins, Joel Lewin, and the U-18s, Daniel Willey and William Oakes, all unbeaten...Stewkley was about to be reduced to its pre-1946 state of only one village public phone box...and parish charity, the Stewkley Fund for Disabled Ex-Servicemen was wound-up



ANDREW BEER - 1939 to 2024



Andrew Beer, resident of Stewkley for 53 years, died peacefully at home on 15 February 2024.

Andrew and Elizabeth moved from London as newly-weds to Grove Cottage, 44 High Street South, in 1971 (having met as performers singing in amateur Gilbert and Sullivan); they later moved to Winsor's Farmhouse, High Street North in 1973, and

to New Winsor's behind the Carpenters Arms in 2007.

The couple completely renovated the mainly late-Tudor, derelict Winsor's Farmhouse over 33 years while living there (initially uncomfortably). They used traditional Stewkley-made orange bricks from the old kiln in Dunton Road. The Beers' builders were all Stewkley born and bred: Gerald Smith, John Kemp and the Fenables boys, Chris and Mick.

The Winsor Farmhouse's barn was used for storing the community's old newspapers. The paper was tied into bundles with bailer twine and stacked into an artic lorry by a willing chain of volunteers, before being made into egg boxes in King's Lynn - early recycling and a fundraiser for St Michael's Church.

The Beers were committed members of St Michael's Church and also enjoyed the Church's links with the Methodist Chapel, especially the monthly lunches at the Chapel. Andrew masterminded three annual "Mad Sales" - jumble sales in aid of the Church Roof or West front restoration. These sales raised a large amount, but inevitably resulted in lots of left-over junk to be taken to the tip.

Andrew was, since his schooldays and until a few years ago, an active hobby-beekeeper with perhaps 15-30 hives scattered on various friends' farms and land around Stewkley. He was able to instruct and encourage several village inhabitants to take up beekeeping and was eager to nurture younger beekeepers. One of his regrets was failing to complete writing his book Bees and the Law, which he felt needed writing for use by beekeepers.

His mixed-flower honey was a regular gift to friends and family. Andrew was also a keen supporter of the Bees Abroad charity, which seeks to help and advise bee-keepers all around the world. He was able to visit both Chile and Ghana in connection with the charity.

Our Andrew was, alongside this, a keen gardener and would often enter copious amounts of his produce in the annual village Flower and Vegetable Show. Stewkley-born Martin Thorgood and others helped with the garden.

As for music, Andrew was a founder member of Stewkley Singers but mostly helped front of house. He was in the audience for every performance of the Danesborough Chorus which Elizabeth sang in, mostly in Woburn Church.

Andrew was a humble, gentle man, who worked in the City of London as a solicitor for well over 30 years. He had many friends in London, in Stewkley and on the train in-between. He went on to work for law firms in Dublin after finishing his work in London. For very many years Andrew owned a 1926 20hp Rolls Royce, and after long days in London he would drive the car for weddings, raising money for the church roof. He was a long-standing member of the Rolls Royce Enthusiasts' Club, and took part in rallies to Ireland, Prague and Vienna amongst others.

Andrew and Elizabeth's two children benefitted from their Dad's unflinching support whatever life threw at them: watching Liverpool play football, fly-fishing together in Scotland, tending a garden plot or getting advice on pruning or car maintenance and teaching them about the importance of perseverance and hope.

Andrew had a dependent brother and sister who lived in Thame. He took his promise to his parents to look after them seriously and they were well-cared for.

He will be greatly missed by many people, especially his family. A Thanksgiving Service will take place at St Michael's Church, Stewkley on Wednesday 10 April. More information is available from beerthanksgiving@gmail.com 'or ring Elizabeth Beer on 240235.

## PARISH COUNCIL MATTERS

*Notes from the Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 4 March 2024 at the Village Hall.*

There were no planning applications for consideration this month.

### Potholes

Whilst parishioners are always encouraged to report potholes on FixMyStreet <https://fixmystreet.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/>, notification of a very large pothole on the road from Stewkley to Wing was noticed on the Village Facebook page on 19 Feb and due to the apparent seriousness, two people already at that point having damaged tyres, and the additional worry of darkness approaching when it would become even more hazardous, the pothole was telephoned in to the Buckinghamshire Council Emergency Line, and was dealt with in around two hours. The reason it was accepted by BC as an emergency was not simply the size of the pothole, but the fact that it was located in a position that was almost impossible to avoid. The reason for sharing this is to reiterate the importance of continuing to log potholes on FixMyStreet, but also to make parishioners aware that if you do come across a particularly dangerous pothole, it can be 'called in' by the Parish Clerk. If you need to do this, please either email [stewkleyparishclerk@gmail.com](mailto:stewkleyparishclerk@gmail.com), or telephone 07399 673145 with the specific location.

### Other Matters

- There were two 'green' related matters the Clerk was asked to investigate at the last meeting (i) the overgrown leylandii on Maltings Close, and (ii) a damaged grass verge on High Street South. The Maltings Close Management Company has confirmed they will take care of the leylandii in early spring, weather permitting, and on reaching out to the homeowner with the damaged grass verge, they had already re-turfed it.
- Town and Parish Councils have been given the opportunity to apply for a free, framed portrait of His Majesty the King, to celebrate his new reign. An application has been submitted on behalf of Stewkley Parish Council.
- Following approval at last month's meeting, an order was placed on 6 February for a new display cabinet to hold the Best Kept Village cup in the Village Hall.
- Two faulty streetlights were reported over the weekend – one in Parsons Close (LC043), and one on the bend by the War Memorial.
- With the rising cost of the PC's energy bill for streetlighting, the Clerk has reached out to SSE to get a comparison quotation and will update Cllrs on the outcome.
- Cllrs agreed that rather than hold the usual format Annual Parish Meeting, where groups each present a report of their activities during the past year and potential plans for the future, they would instead stage a meeting for the whole community, specifically focused on the theme of Anti-Social Behaviour. Reports from groups will still be requested and if supplied, published on the PC website, but it was felt that parishioners would see much more value in an interactive 'topic related' community event.

### Date of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 2 April 2024 at the Village Hall at 7.30pm.

## NEWS FROM STEWKLEY PLAYERS APRIL 2024

Thank you to everyone who came along and supported our 129th production Boeing Boeing at the Village Hall from 20 to 23 March 2024. It was fantastic fun and a great success for our Producer Tony Crack and everyone involved with the production. A full review by Karen Gurnett is included on page 24.

Our Settling Up Meeting for Boeing Boeing will be held in the Village Hall on Monday 8 April at 8pm.

As most of you know, Sue Neale has now retired as Box Office Manager. Sue will be missed enormously but will continue to help Front of House and remain a vital part of Stewkley Players. However, this means that we'll be changing the way tickets are purchased. Tickets for our autumn production will be available from the Village Hall on Sunday mornings: 27 October, 2, 10 and 17 November (10am -12 noon) and Monday evenings from 28 October, 4, 11 and 18 November (7-9pm).

Thank you also to everyone who joined us at our pre-production Breakfast on Sunday 25 February where we served 157 breakfasts. Our raffle was also hugely popular with Debbie Ball being the lucky winner of our Hamper – congratulations Debbie.

Adieu Adieu – our murder mystery evening – is on Saturday 27 April in the Village Hall at 8pm, produced by Bunt Scott in aid of the Village Hall Roof Appeal. Tickets are £20 each, to include supper, and are limited, so please make sure you get your tickets early. Please call Jilly on 07522 862929 for an evening of great fun and entertainment.

Hope to see you soon.

Erica McDonald, Chair, Stewkley Players

## STEWKLEY TENNIS CLUB *from Neil Shefferd*

With the winter season coming to a close, Stewkley Tennis Club's men's team recorded two draws and a narrow 5-3 loss in March.

The ladies' team enjoyed some good matches during the winter, and is looking forward to more fixtures in the summer league, while also hoping to arrange some ladies' social tennis during the summer months.

Yearly membership of the club runs from March 2024 to the end of February 2025, and as the weather hopefully improves, now is a great time to join.

Prices are £85 for adults, £190 for a family and £20 for juniors, including joining fees, with full details available at [www.clubspark.lta.org.uk/stewkleytennisclub](http://www.clubspark.lta.org.uk/stewkleytennisclub).

## ROYAL BRITISH LEGION – STEWKLEY AND DISTRICT SUPPORT *from Steve Nicholl, Chairman, Stewkley & District Branch, British Royal Legion*

As I am sure you know, as well as preserving and passing on Remembrance of the values underpinning past sacrifices, the Royal British Legion is focused on support for past and present members of the Armed Forces and their dependents suffering physically, mentally or just from a lack of comradeship.

But we can only provide support if we know of the need. We try to keep our ears to the ground in this caring and sociable area. However, social isolation can be present even here.

In an effort to ensure that we do not miss any potential beneficiary in need, for at least the next few months, some RBL Stewkley members will be in the Carpenters Arms on the third Wednesday of the month (7.30 to 9.30pm at least). Please come and chat if you think there is something we could or should do; or just to talk. Alternatively, contact me direct: Steve Nicholl, 07736 811479 or [Stewkley.Chairman@rbl.community](mailto:Stewkley.Chairman@rbl.community).

To contact Grapevine

email: [team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk](mailto:team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk)

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## Methodist Chapel

Minister: Rev Noreen Daley-Lee

Tel: 240083

Email: noreendaley1@hotmail.com

Stewards: stewards@at-the-chapel.co.uk

Tel: 240337

### SERVICES and NOTICES for APRIL

7	10.30am	Ken Harris
14	10.30am	Communion – Rev C Collins
21	10am	Café Church
	2.30pm	St George's Day Parade
28	10.30am	Rev Noreen Daley-Lee
	5pm	Young people's group

### EVENTS FOR ALL IN THE CHAPEL SCHOOL ROOM

- **Mend It** Saturday 6 April, 10am to 12 noon. Refreshments available.
- **Social fellowship** – Monday 15 April, 2.30pm. All Welcome.
- **Afternoon Tea** Saturday 20 April, from 2.30pm. Pre-booking required. Call Sue 240761 to book, pay and collect..
- **Daisy Club** for parents, carers and babies under school age. Wednesdays 10am – 11.30am. New term begins Wednesday 25 April.

### MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER



#### Cleanliness is next to Godliness

I was pleasantly surprised on hearing the prehistoric idiom "Cleanliness is next to godliness" mentioned in a conversation at a church event a few weeks ago. Like this individual, I grew up with the idea that the saying signifies people have a moral duty to keep themselves and their homes clean. It is an archaic proverb found in Babylonian and Hebrew religious tracts.

The inauguration of the idiom in the English language, in a modified form is found in the writings of philosopher and scientist Sir Francis Bacon. He wrote, "Cleanness of body was ever deemed to proceed from a due reverence to God." John Wesley, the co-founder of Methodism, may have been the originator of the slogan. In 1791, he referenced the phrase in one of his sermons as we use it today. Wesley wrote, "Slovenliness is no part of religion. Cleanliness is indeed next to Godliness."

However, the general principle behind the practice dates back long before the time of Wesley to the worship customs mentioned in the book of Leviticus. The Israelites were certainly concerned about the concepts of "clean" and "unclean" because a major portion of the Mosaic Law outlines the principles of each. Among the unclean things that God's people were to avoid are dead bodies and carcasses, eating certain animals, leprosy, and bodily discharges.

But Jesus extended its meaning in a discourse about traditions in Matthew's Gospel where He challenged the religious leaders, "It is not what goes into the mouth of a man that defiles and dishonours him, but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles and dishonours him." Initially after hearing the idiom, I didn't know if that person was only referring to keeping the church clean or something far deeper. On contrary, the Biblical understanding of this archaic proverb has an inward resolution that modifies or metamorphoses the outward that not only please us but God.

Therefore, shining the cupboards and counter-tops should reflect what is within the heart. The idiom refers to our responsibility to have a relationship with God whereby we explicitly recognise Him, listen to what He says, and obey with the goal of the keeping our hearts pure, clean, and assertive to the things of God. We believers must hold to the central reality of our faith, Christ, for He is the source of all our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. I think "Cleanliness is next to godliness" is not an illusion. How eerily prophetic those words can be!

Rev Noreen Daley-Lee



## St Michael's Church

Benefice Rector: Rev Howard Robson

Tel: 01296 688593

Team Vicar: Rev Dr Andrew Krauss

Tel 07508 213154

Church Warden: Donald Peebles

Tel: 07966 035623

Email: d.peebles@ucl.ac.uk

### SERVICES and NOTICES for APRIL

7	10am	Holy Communion
14	10am	Messy Church
21	10am	Holy Communion
28	10.30am	<b>Benefice Communion - Wing</b>

† **Aperitif O'Clock** – Saturday 11 May in St Michael's.

† **Open Gardens** - Saturday 15 and Sunday 16 June.

† **Food bank:** the porch is open for donations for the Leighton/Linslade Homeless Service. Many thanks for contributions.

† To sponsor the illumination of St Michael's to celebrate a special event or in remembrance of a loved one please contact Tracy Scott on 07775 684803.

### MESSAGE FROM THE COTTESLOE TEAM VICAR

REV DR ANDREW KRAUSS



#### The New Life of Easter

First of all, happy Eastertide to everyone. Eastertide comprises fifty days of celebration concerning the Resurrection of Christ, and it is rightly said that this is a celebration of the promise of a new form of life – a new way of being as we are drawn to participate even in the life and the nature of God Himself in

Christ. Resurrection is not merely some form of resuscitation, in which life just somehow comes back but otherwise continues exactly how it always had done.

People often remark on Easter as being fittingly represented by the re-emergence of life in the springtime, but this doesn't actually capture the more 'radical' sense of newness suggested by the Resurrection Life, since the new growth of spring is simply a resprouting of what we are already accustomed to. The word 'radical' comes from the Latin word radix, meaning root. Eastertide, in this sense, aims to get nearer to the root of what a truly fulfilling life – one that is actively drawn into the Life of God through and in Christ – actually is. This is the Easter promise of an ultimate renewal of life, known in the New Testament texts as the 'new creation'.

In Christian tradition this new creation is something we are called to explore, and to do so means learning from the lesson of Lent that other things might need to be 'let go of' first. A classic Easter Sunday text is therefore the story of a woman called Mary Magdalene encountering the risen Christ outside the empty tomb. Though she doesn't recognise that it is Christ at first, as soon as she does her first reaction is to cling to Him, and she is immediately told by Christ not to do so, because He, the Son of God, must return to the Father, in order to draw her and others into the Life of God. Like Mary, our journey does not simply end at Easter, nor does it end by clinging to our first conception or partial recognition of the risen Christ. Instead, Easter is the new beginning of a new form of exploration concerning a newly promised transformation of life to come.

A blessed Eastertide to you all

Andrew Krauss

Grapevine

advertising and copy deadline 15th month

email: team@stewkleygrapevine.co.uk



Nature Watch featured the bracket fungus commonly known as turkeytail (*Trametes versicolour*) two years ago in April 2022. The colours in this one (*header*) are so beautiful though, it seemed worth revisiting. As a quick reminder, the Latin name *versicolour* means "of several colours".

Common throughout the UK and seen throughout the year, turkeytail is most often found on rotting stumps or branches of hardwood such as oak or beech. The 'fans' frequently form in tiers around the wood. As with all fungi, what is visible is the fruiting body, forming from the hyphae (network of tiny filaments) that lie below the surface.

The beauty of these colourful fans made them popular as table decorations, and they were even sported on hats.

### Wet, Wet, Wet

Richard covers the unprecedented rainfall levels in this month's Farm Watch; as well as farmers, all dog walkers are familiar with the water-logged fields and knee-deep mud. But how is wildlife dealing with the conditions?

The appearance of two roadkill badgers close together on the Dunton Road prompted a tweet (an X just doesn't have the same ring to it) to the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust to



ask if maybe their sett had flooded causing them to move onto the road. The speedy response was, "Their sett may have been flooded but waterlogged fields also make it harder to find food, they may have been foraging along the road."

Badgers are omnivores, eating both plants and animals. The main staple, as much as 60%, of a badger's diet is earthworms; an adult badger can eat as many as 200 worms in a single night. But digging for worms is difficult when the ground is under water. When there is a shortage of worms, badgers will shift to other sources of food, such as snails or slugs; maybe these were what they were searching for on the verge. They are nocturnal and are not easy to spot at night.

Badgers are also known to occasionally eat hedgehogs and have been blamed for the decline in hedgehog numbers – though this decline is most likely the result of habitat loss!

### Mad March Hares

Despite the continued rain through March, the 'mad March hares' chasing across the fields are a sure sign of spring.

This one (*below*), a brown hare, was taken by surprise while trying to sneak across a patio without being spotted.



The brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) was thought to have been introduced to the UK by the Romans, but more recent dating of bones found in Hampshire and Hertfordshire suggests they were introduced as early as the Iron Age. They are now the most familiar in the UK and early spring is mating season, when amorous males chase females across the open fields. It is the females that do the 'boxing', their way of fending off overly persistent males. Keep an eye out for their antics and also watch where you step if out in the fields; baby hares (leverets) can be born as early as March and could be waiting in a 'form', a shallow depression in the grass, for their mothers to return.

### Fattening Up

This caterpillar was spotted on a rose bush in a Dunton Road garden. It is a caterpillar of the scarlet tiger moth (*Callimorpha dominula*). The caterpillars actually hatch in late summer and then, partially grown, they are inactive through the winter until they emerge again in March to continue feeding.



As they feed, larger caterpillars spread out, feeding more extensively on brambles and other trees or shrubs. When fully fed they spin a silken cocoon in which they pupate in late spring, and the adult moths appear in May to July.



# Farm Watch

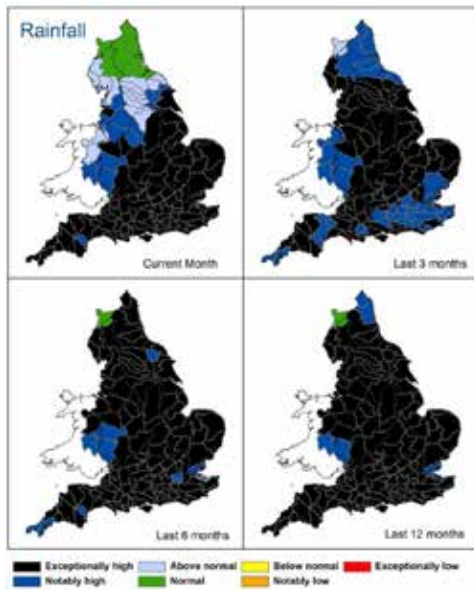
by Richard Heady

It wouldn't be Farm Watch without a whinge about the weather, but this time I have facts to back up my discontent. "It's been the wettest year and 18 months across England since records began in 1871", David Throup (fellow at Worcester University) stated. We have had wet summers, autumns, winters and springs before, but it is unusual for the four to come in the same year. So, in brief, the fields are still saturated and we are no closer to planting our crops than we were last month, and we are continuing to wonder if we will get them planted at all.

We did have a brief dry week at the beginning of March, which I used to put some fertiliser on our October-planted barley. The weather forecast had 6mm of rain predicted for the following

We have recently purchased a new-to-us tractor, the biggest we have ever had on the farm. The aim is to increase our capacity so that I can pull wider machinery and cover more ground in the short weather windows we get. The price of farm machinery is ridiculous, and when quoted £160,000 for a new tractor we decided to go down the second-hand route. It's the first Massey Ferguson (red tractor) we have had on our farm and, with its new gismos and software, it's going to take a while to get to grips with it.

It is lambing season, and although I don't have sheep myself anymore I still love to get stuck in, given half a chance. The



day and then another dry week. I thought this light rain would nicely wash the nitrogen and sulphur fertiliser down to the barley roots and then let it absorb. But yet again the weather made a fool of me when we recorded over 15mm of rain the day after and then another 15mm two days later. This is so disappointing. We try our best to avoid polluting waterways with nutrients, and rely on weather forecasts to do this, not to mention the wasted expensive fertilisers.

saturated pastures have not been ideal for new-born lambs, but as long as they get a healthy dose of colostrum and enough good quality milk from their mums, they cope just fine with this dire weather.

At this time of year it is extra important to keep your dog on a lead around sheep because, if chased, the sheep might abort their unborn lambs, causing great distress to both the ewe and the farmer.

## STEWKLEY WALKERS from Neil Shefferd

Stewkley Walkers enjoyed more favourable weather and good turnouts for their first two walks during March.

The first walk took place around Wendover, including via footpaths diverted due to works for HS2 and a climb up to Coombe Hill, where, with clearing skies, good views of Aylesbury Vale and the Chiltern Hills were afforded.

The group also paused for a photo at a monument (right), which commemorated men from Buckinghamshire who died in the Boer War.

The second walk was a change to the originally planned one on that date, with the group enjoying a wander around Furzton Lake, and conditions were a considerable improvement on the previous month's wind and rain during a walk in the same area.

For the second walk in a row there were more than 20 walkers, with dogs coming on both walks. It was noticeable on the Furzton Lake walk, which was mainly on hard-surfaced paths, that some parts were still flooded following heavy rain earlier in the month.



## VILLAGE HALL ROOF PROJECT TO GO AHEAD *from Janette Eustace*

With the help of several funding bodies, the project to renew the 100-year-old main roof of the Village Hall, as well as installing a solar power system, is finally reaching a conclusion.

The £125,000 project has been possible with the help of almost £90,000 from grant-giving bodies, a major donation of tiles from an international company with local connections, village fund-raising organised mainly by the Stewkley Players and individual donations from villagers.

Replacing the asbestos tiles that were put in place when the hall was built in 1925 is the first task, followed by the installation of new tiles provided as a donation by roofing company the BMI group. Villager and BMI employee Dean Millward worked with the Village Hall Committee to obtain the in-kind donation of Redwood Cambrian slate tiles from the company.

The part of the project that will see solar panels mounted on the roof and linked to an internal battery system is expected to help the Village Hall Committee cope with the increasing cost of providing power in the hall.

The biggest single grant, of £56,000, has come from the FCC Communities Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation that awards grants for community, conservation and heritage projects with funds donated by FCC Environment through the Landfill Communities Fund. FCC Environment itself is one of the UK's leading waste and resource management companies.

A second grant came from the ACRE Platinum Jubilee Village Hall Fund. This fund which has approved a contribution of £23,500 was set up by the Government's Department for the Environment to mark the late Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.

The third grant of £10,000, comes from the Hearts of Bucks Community Fund. This organisation is a registered charity that works in partnership with individuals, businesses, and public sector organisations and as such is one of the largest funders in the county.

It is hoped that work on the project will commence in May or June, with the remainder of the monies coming from the Village Hall Committee's financial reserves.

## COFFEE STOP

March's Coffee Stop welcomed one of the team from Calibre Audio. This national charity, based in Aylesbury, provides a free postal service to members of unabridged audio books for both children and adults who have a physical disability that prevents them from accessing reading in the usual way.

It was launched in 1974 as a cassette library and nearly fifty years later has grown into a valuable digital resource, allowing those who use the service to receive books either by downloading, streaming or memory stick, which they play on their home devices. It can be accessed from Alexa. The books are read aloud and recorded by volunteers and dispatched from an ever-growing library base.

As with many charities fundraising to continue to expand and improve opportunities for its members is increasingly challenging. We heard a little of how raising the funds needed was undertaken, and know that the £233 we raised would play a small part in that.

Calibre's website [www.calibreaudio.org.uk](http://www.calibreaudio.org.uk) has a lot more information about this charity, ensuring those who belong are able to explore the magical pleasure of books which many of us just take for granted.

Coffee Stop's next charity will be Parkinson's U.K. and takes place in the Pavilion on Thursday 4 April 10:30am to 12 noon. Everybody is welcome.

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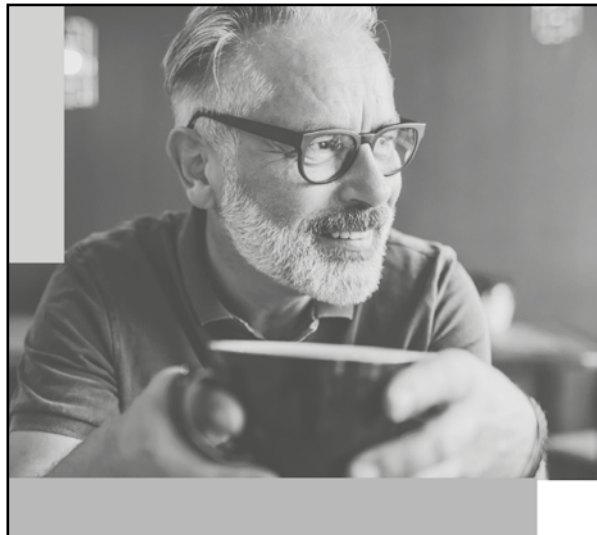
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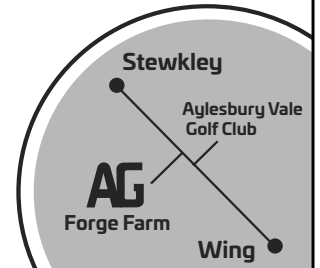
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### What Bin is it this week?

Bins should be out for 6.30am.



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April 2024		Food Waste	General Waste	Recycling	Garden Waste
Thursday	4	YES	YES		YES
Wednesday	10	YES		YES	
Wednesday	17	YES	YES		YES
Wednesday	24	YES		YES	

NB: Bletchley Road, Dean Road and Mursley Road are all collected the day before.



#### One up, one down, one pending

Marc Camoletti's classic French farce took to the stage for The Stewkley Players 129th production, Boeing Boeing.

Set in the 1960's and epitomising the glamour of airline travelling in that era, the plot revolves around Bernard, set in his minimalist apartment in Orly and his timetabled liaisons with his three blissfully unaware fiancées: one American, one Italian and one German.

Bernard, played in a beautifully smarmy fashion by Chris Mills, manages his travelator of 'tried and tested' beauties, so he can enjoy his polygamous relationships without the sanctity of marriage. Chris handled the word heavy script faultlessly.

Bernard himself is managed by his Housekeeper Bertha (Jo Dover-Clarke), the glue of the plot, who skilfully, yet cheerlessly, changes the menu according to nationality and their photograph on the sideboard with each separate arrival of the Fiancée of the moment.



Bernard is visited by an old friend Robert (Tom Wass), who witnesses the everchanging and frenetic fiancée swaps 'if these planes get any faster, your maths isn't going to add up'. Robert has an air of Basil Fawlty in his performance and the initial innocence of his performance is replaced by a playboy persona as the play lurches forward, attracting the accidental and purposeful attentions of two out of the three Fiancées.

The three air hostesses each individually carved out their own personalities. Jilly Scrivener as Gloria, the American fiancée delivered a whiney demanding rendition (and who will forget the 'flash'?); Debbie Kilkenny as the Italian Fiancée Gabriella gave a passionate performance, but Helen Faulkner as the vociferous German fiancée, Gretchen, stole each scene. The brutal assaulting flash of yellow on her arrival scored the most laughs and reactions from the audience.

The producer, Tony Crack, ensured the flow and dynamics were on point, particularly when the three fiancées all fly in at the wrong time and door slamming chaos ensues.

