

Goring Gap News

EVENTS, PEOPLE, BUSINESS, ARTS AND SPORT IN GORING AND STREATLEY

150 years of Goring Cricket Club



Goring Cricket Club v MCC teams and officials

Photo: Andy Ankerson



Former and current members of Goring Cricket Club on Veterans Day

See article on P35

What d'ya mean - it's not the fishing season!?



If you have some good local photos, please send them in to goringgapnews@gmail.com

Photo: Editor

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Goring Gap News

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for Voluntary Service 2004

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We aim to deliver copies of the GGN to all households in Goring and Streatley.

October 2026 weekend of 17/18

November 2026 weekend of 21/22

December 2026 weekend of 19/20

If your copy has not arrived after five days contact Victoria Brandon. (See above.)

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GRAPEVINE

None of your business

Readers may notice the lack of any Business News this month. There has been no response to the invitation in August GGN to volunteer to be GGN Business Editor. This is an interesting role and not onerous. The local businesses contribute to the Gap community and by servicing larger events enable them to happen. We have lost the banks and the post office – if we want to have local services available, they need local support. GGN Business News is one form of support – helping to publicise local services and changes. If you think you might like to make this your business, please get in touch – details in left panel. *Editor*

Next GGN deadline – sooner than you think?

This is the time of year when your GGN editor and production team plan the dates for making GGN next year. This time last year, there was a good reason why the October deadline had to be on the 30 September. It wasn't just to remind everyone that '30 days hath September'...Whatever the reason was, it has been lost to history. The deadline can't be changed, so please note that the next deadline for submitting articles is noon on Wednesday 30 September.

On the upside, GGN will be delivered earlier than usual next month, on the weekend of 17 October. This is before half term, so please send in details of any planned local half term/Halloween activities. *Editor*

South Oxfordshire District Council planning system

The downtime for the council's planning system is now over and the new system is available. You can access support and view the latest timetables on the new system FAQ page. Land Charges and the Land Charges Register are now live and the new mapping system will follow in the coming weeks. Everyone currently signed up to the council's planning alert system will now need to re-register. See <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk>

Residents urged to respond to voter registration email

Residents who receive a Voter Registration Canvass email this autumn are being urged to respond as soon as possible.

The Voter Registration Canvass helps the councils to keep the electoral register up to date, to identify anyone who risks missing their chance to vote at any upcoming elections and to encourage them to register before it's too late.

With local elections taking place in May 2027, this is an opportunity for residents to make sure they can take part. It only takes a few minutes to respond online and each household only needs to respond once, even if more than one person living there receives the email.

Recent home movers are urged to check they are registered to vote. Electoral Commission research has found that recent home movers are less likely to be registered than those who have lived at the same address for a long time. In Great Britain, 92% of those who have lived in their home for 16 years will be registered, compared with 36% of people who have lived at an address for less than a year.

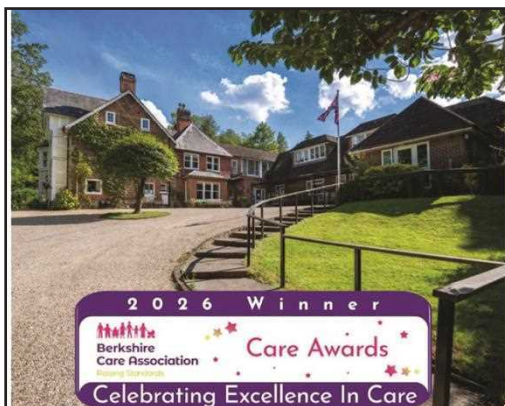
Time to get vaccinated

As we all know, flu and COVID-19 can make some people very unwell. Vaccination is one of the best ways to protect yourself from becoming seriously ill. If you are eligible, you can get your NHS flu and COVID-19 vaccinations free this autumn.

As a general guide, the flu vaccination is offered to children primarily via school and then from 1 December via pharmacies. Other eligible groups, including adults over 65, health workers and people with certain health vulnerabilities, can receive the vaccine from 1 October.

The COVID-19 vaccination will be offered from 1 October to people if they are over 75, in a care home or with a weakened immune system.

Goring & Woodcote medical practice will be holding vaccination clinics on Saturday 3 October and Saturday 17 October. Eligible patients will be invited to these clinics. Booking for vaccinations can be done through the NHS App.



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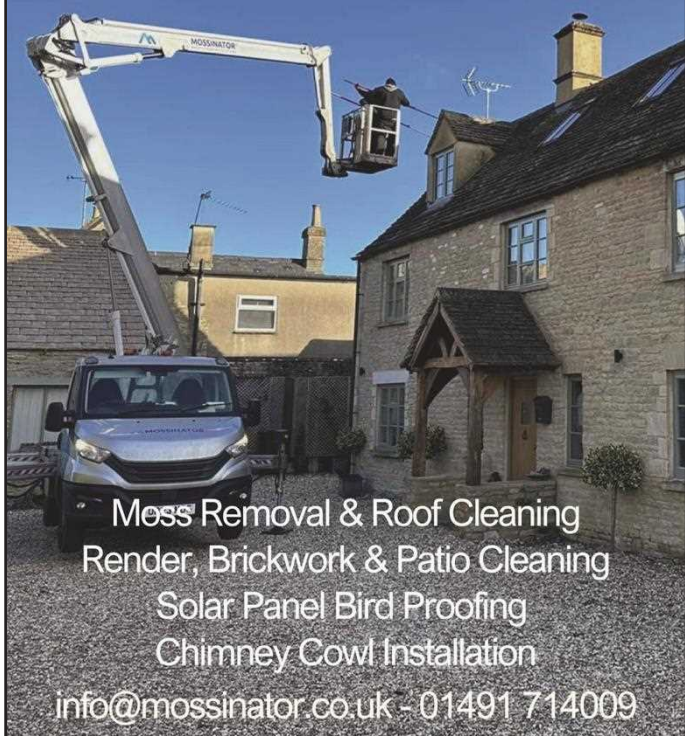
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A year of dashed hopes

After last year's disappointing harvest, like the true optimists that all farmers are, we thought that next year 'things can only get better' to quote a former Prime Minister.

Planting in autumn was perfect and the winter was generally kind with plenty of rain in the early spring to wash the fertiliser into the rooting zone. Prospects were really very good and optimism high. But as we all know Nature laughs at man's hopes and dreams. The rain stopped (30mm since March compared to an average of 200mm+ over the same period) and the sun came out and roasted everything. Most of the crops that we grow in the UK are unable to cope with extended periods over 27°C as they can no longer photosynthesise efficiently and use water to keep cool. The heat also has the effect of speeding up the maturing processes in the plant causing harvest to be close to a month early, meaning that a whole month of sunlight has been lost, when compared to the average.

All this has caused the worst harvest of my life, with yields down by 20-40% across the country with the extended drought causing heartache for cattle and sheep producers as they were having to feed their winter forage in mid-summer. Our arable business relies on the last 10% of average yields for a profit, from which we can pay ourselves and re-invest, so with increasing fuel and fertiliser prices (thank you DJT) as well as extra taxation for employing people, it is going to be a tough 12 months. No new tractors or shiny machinery, but maybe a new bicycle.

Will this cause prices for food to go up in the shops? Well, any rises are not likely to be coming from the arable farmers gate, currently the price of wheat has moved from 19p to 20p per kg with any shortages being covered by imports. To put the cost of bread into context 1kg of wheat makes enough flour for nearly 2 large loaves or 10-11p per loaf. For potatoes and vegetables, the story is likely to be different as many farmers ran out of irrigation water and are not allowed to abstract anymore and so crops had to be harvested before fully grown. Imports of these crops are more problematic as Europe has been suffering just the same as the UK so supermarkets will have to go to different continents for produce.

We do grow one crop that enjoys the heat in the form of maize as it has a different photosynthetic pathway, but even that was in trouble due to the lack of rain and had to be harvested in August rather than September.

What is the future of farming? In the short term there will be a lot more environmental cropping which the Government/taxpayer seems happy to pay for, but can this last for more than a few years before the money can no longer be found? Is this year climate change or just weather? There are going to be more horse fields, less intensive cropping for niche high value products. Is this storing up trouble for the future by taking land out of food production, I don't know, but I do think that we are in danger of becoming totally reliant on imported food if we are not careful.

On a brighter note, next year really can 'only get better'!

Guy Hildred



Parched farm fields

YouTube film about the George Michael weekend

Who Knew? is a new independent film company exploring events and people that are less known about in the public eye. We recently got the exciting opportunity to visit Goring to join in at *Outside25* at Mill Cottage, celebrating the life and works of George Michael. Every year, hundreds of George Michael fans gather in Goring-on-Thames to celebrate the life and music of one of Britain's most loved artists. We went to the George Michael weekend to discover why, years after his passing, this community still means so much to the people who come.

What we found was something much bigger than a celebration of an artist. We found a community built around shared memories, friendships, loss and the music that has followed people through some of the most important moments of their lives.

You can watch our video on YouTube, just search *Who Knew George Michael Weekend* and let us know what you think! We hope everyone enjoys it.



Emily Sharpe
Director
Who Knew Studio

Production team



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Local musician David Caswell releases his first album

'If you want to be a songwriter, write songs,' says David Caswell, as I talk to him about how he came to be releasing an album. A valuable life lesson which can apply to almost anything. He may not be selling out concert halls or topping the charts, but that's never been what's important to him. His pure adoration for music is what has brought him here. And in simply doing what he loves, he's achieved his lifelong dream.

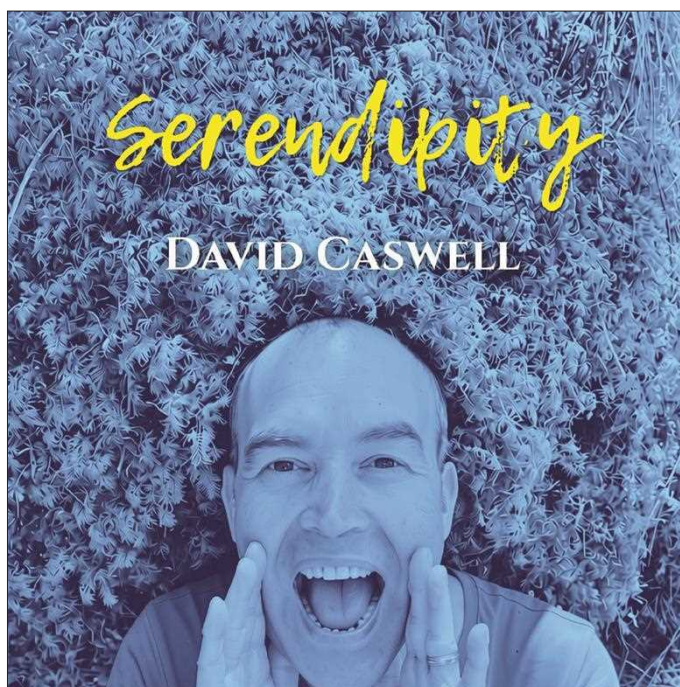
David Caswell is a musician and singer/songwriter who lives in Goring, perhaps most well-known for the local gem, The Mysteries, who regularly liven up the pubs in the village and beyond with their infectious energy. He tells me how he's always loved music and dance, from classical music and performing in shows at school, to playing in bands in his twenties, but as he started his career and had children, life took over. It was forming The Mysteries, with Mark Cusack and Leigh Williams, which started up the craze again and, around three years ago, David began releasing his own music for the first time. There was no real turning point for deciding to record an album. 'It was always on my bucket list, and when I got into the studio, all the songs felt ready and I just thought, this is the moment,' he shares.

The album title, *Serendipity*, references this concept of happy accidents. A moment which sticks with you long after, altering your trajectory. These seemingly inconsequential but significant events are what the album is about. Writing it, David envisioned each song as its own moment, rather than just one piece in a wider story. Often, he would start with a clear concept of the moment he wanted to convey and work from there, his songwriting unfolding as an endeavour to capture the feeling behind it. *The Right Words*, for example, is about being scared to say something out loud to someone. This awkward state of in-between is reflected in the unexpected contrast between chorus and verse, coupled with the lilting rhythm of the drums which repeats throughout, holding the two parts together.

Just as there's no single story, David didn't draw on one single influence for the album either and has always played with lots of different genres in his songwriting. 'But I don't think it feels too dislocated,' he counters hesitantly. And it doesn't. The album glides comfortably from 80s synth-pop to soul funk to soft rock, without ever feeling like direct imitation, layering instruments, vocals and electronics. Every song has its own unique touches, from the opening organ in *Is Anybody Out There?* to the clarinet line played by Paul Raymond on *Just Be*.

The captivating sounds which make up the album is a reflection of the synthesis of people behind it and it's the people which connects it together. They are the invisible string running through the album, defining it as one recognisable entity, and each leaving their own imprint. David's raw and expressive vocals stand out throughout, but we also hear Mark Cusack on the drums, Paul Jacques on the distinctive fretless bass, harmonies from Hannah Bates and Ava Eales. Responsible for melding the sounds into rich yet expertly balanced pieces, is producer Pete Brown. Pete also plays slide guitar on a couple of the tracks; a technique traditionally used in blues music, involving a metal tube on one of the player's fingers.

David wrote all the songs himself (apart from the title track which he wrote with bass player Paul) before getting into the studio, but every musician involved contributed their own creativity to the project and Pete's mixing and mastering skills elevated it further. With *Serendipity*, David's music has reached a new level of sonic fullness.



The Album cover

Photo : David Caswell



David performing at the Foodies Festival.

Photo by Feather and Lens Media



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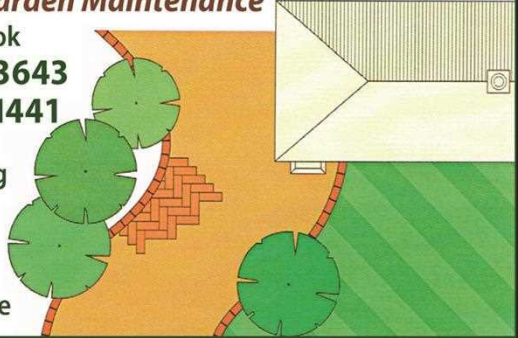
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MUSIC and ARTS continued

David is a big fan of Pete, who is also based locally, working from The Brown House Studio near Wallingford. Pete comes from a musical family, his dad, Joe Brown, is a successful pop artist who began in the sixties, and his mum, Vicki Brown, was a backing singer in many hits from the sixties to nineties.

Pete himself has an impressive history too, having produced, engineered, played and written for the last fifty years. He has produced for his sister, multi-platinum artist, Sam Brown, whose album *Stop!* has sold over two and a half million copies worldwide, the band Big Country and many more artists. 'He has an amazing ear,' says David, diving excitedly into a story about the array of historical instruments at Pete's studio, which added another layer to the album. The album's single *Aqualung* includes an original Hammond organ, which generates sound using rotating metal wheels to create electrical currents, lending the song its synth effect. David's son Toby, who is now a jazz pianist, having inherited his father's love of music, came home to help record the album and, having never used one before, played the instrument for the track. A fitting image for the album where nostalgia meets the new in an effortless union.

The people are an integral part of the journey to a finished album and 'it's about the journey not the destination,' says David who clearly loved putting this album together. His passion is writing songs, and his purpose was simply to do it and enjoy it, and for other people to enjoy it too. When I told him that I'd been dancing along the night before whilst listening to his album, he was thrilled. *Aqualung* has now been played on BBC Oxford & Berkshire, Fiesta FM, Wallingford Radio, Spectrum on Air and XPTV, but in its truest state it's played live by David and his band, bringing a room of people to their feet.

You can find David Caswell on Spotify and listen to *Serendipity*, which is out now. He has already played his new music live at Goring Gap Festival and Bunkfest and I recommend checking out when he's playing next at www.davidcaswell.com

Sophie Doornik



Paul Jacques, David Caswell & Mark Cusack
Photo: Paer Johansson

The Goring and Streatley Young Musicians Trust



Jazz performers at Goring Village Hall

Photo: David Salmon

On Friday 14 August a capacity audience filled the Village Hall for a varied evening of jazz performed by present and past members of the Goring-based Roy Bailey Big Band, and the G & S starter band, to raise funds for our Young Musicians Trust. The rhythm section comprised Peter Howard on bass and bass guitar, Jon Buxton, drums (both regulars with the RBBB) and Martin Pickett, a 'good friend' of the band, on keyboard, replaced on a couple of numbers by the starter band's Toby Caswell.

In the first set, they backed two youthful soloists: the vocalist, Anna Shackleton, and Zach Sewell on alto sax. Anna's warm contralto and winning smile compellingly sold us unfamiliar songs like Cole Porter's *Dream Dancing*. Zach, now studying jazz at the Trinity Laban Conservatoire in London, was very impressive. In

Ray Noble's up-tempo *Cherokee*, he mastered the challenging chord-sequence with fluently inventive improvisation and a confident, unflustered delivery. Later, he imposed his own personality on the wistful ballad, *Lover Man*. A solid jazz career surely lies ahead for Zach.

Later in the set, an ensemble drawn from the starter band, and comprising three trumpets, tenor sax, trombone and French horn, took the stage to play under the feisty direction of Claire Salmon. The exciting bop classic *Night in Tunisia* was followed by *Your Time Will Come*, a haunting ballad in 3 / 4 time, showcasing the emotive trumpet of Iris Rushbrooke. The set ended with some great ensemble work on *Runaway Baby* and a fruity trombone solo from Emma Storrie.

Back for the second set, the band kicked off with the jaunty *Bernie's Tune*, made famous by the Gerry Mulligan Quartet in the early 1950s, but still fresh, driven by the drumming of Jon Buxton, and with a solo from Zach Sewell, switching to tenor sax. Then more small-group ballads from Anna Shackleton, on familiar ground with *You Go To My Head*, and *Misty*, where Martin Pickett played his best solo of the evening. The big band returned to round off a hugely enjoyable evening with the energetic, bluesy *In the Doghouse*. When the enthusiastic crowd demanded an encore, we were given the ever-popular *Blue Skies*, written by Irving Berlin, exactly 100 years ago.

Gus McGil

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MUSIC and ARTS continued

Christmas comedy show from Croft & Pearce

Croft & Pearce – award-winning comedy act, ‘masters of characterisation’ (*The Telegraph*) and stars of BBC Radio 4 – are bringing a new festive show to Goring this December.

Goring resident, Fiona Pearce, and her comedy partner, Hannah Croft, will be debuting their new show *Croft & Pearce: A Christmas Carole* for two nights at Goring Village Hall on Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 December.

The double act have performed in theatres around the UK and Europe, including sell-out runs at the Edinburgh Fringe, as well as writing and performing for Radio and TV. Croft has recently amassed a following doing bilingual stand-up in Italy (Instagram: [@hannahcroftcomedy](https://www.instagram.com/hannahcroftcomedy)) and Pearce’s writing credits include *Have I Got News For You* and the BAFTA-nominated topical comedy show *The Mash Report* (BBC2).

The duo said: ‘We know the run up to Christmas is a busy time so we’re keen to give the good people of Goring & Streatley yet another thing to do in December. Our new show is a festive comedy packed with fun characters to get you in the mood for the onslaught of Christmas. We hope to see you there!’

Tickets are on sale through www.croftandpearce.com with an early bird discount for GGN readers until the end of October (discount code: FIGGYPUDDING)

Fiona Pearce



New musical scholarships

St Thomas’ Church encourages a new generation of musicians with organ and choral scholarships

We are delighted to announce that Theo Woolley has been awarded an organ scholarship at St Thomas’ Church. Theo, who has always lived in Goring, took his Grade 8 piano earlier this year and decided that learning the organ would be the perfect next challenge! Theo says: ‘I love how every organ is a work of art in its own way. Despite the incredible power of the organ, it can be a really peaceful instrument to play. I have already met so many interesting and lovely people whilst playing the organ over the last couple of months.’ Theo is now looking forward to playing at services and with the choir in the coming years.

As well as welcoming Theo, we say *au revoir* to Toby Best (organ scholar 2024-2026) and Annabel McLean (choral scholar 2025-2026) who are both off to university but are looking forward to being back at St Thomas’ for the Christmas services.

If you are interested in applying for an organ or choral scholarship, please contact us at the email address below.

St Thomas’ church choir always welcomes extra singers – either to join us week by week or to sing with us occasionally for the major festivals. If you are interested in singing with us, please contact the church office by email: officeofsandss@yahoo.com or phone 01491 875651

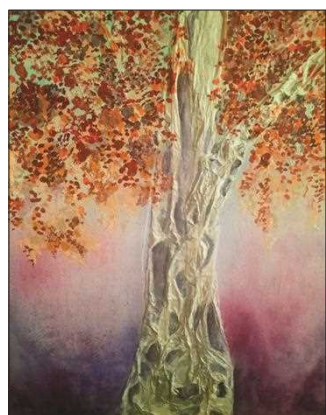
Elizabeth Parkinson



Theo Woolley organ scholar

Photo: Catrin Woolley :

Wallingford and District Art Club



Trees by Aurora Spain

On Saturday 3 October, American artist Robin Danely will be making a return visit to the Wallingford and District Art Club. She will run a workshop focusing on a portrait in oils or acrylics. Robin, who lives in Oxford and has featured on *Sky Arts Portrait Artist of the Year*, shares her dynamic and expressive approach to painting from life. The workshop will run 10am-4pm at Centre 70 in Wallingford. The fee for club members is £50 and £65 for non-members. To reserve your place, please email admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk

Our next demonstration is at 7.30pm on Tuesday 24 October, in Centre 70, Wallingford. Aurora Spain, a Berkshire-based artist, will be showing us the stages she works through when painting abstract trees. She expects some of her techniques will be new to us. Aurora says she constantly challenges herself with new and old techniques to achieve her vibrant paintings. She uses images taken from her imagination and from close observation of nature. Teaching and demonstrations are part of her artistic development. Her website shows the range of her work. The demonstration is free for members. The fee for visitors is £10, payable in advance by contacting admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk or payable on the night.



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Getting active in the Gap

Climate change and the obesity crisis are two of the most pressing challenges that face our society. Both threaten our way of life and indeed our life expectancy. At a local level it's a paradox that defines modern village life: we live in one of the country's most breathtaking landscapes, yet our streets often favour the engine over the pedestrian. Increased car ownership has meant it is non-motorised road and pavement users, including young children and people with mobility issues, who often draw the short straw.

Goring Gap Active Travel (GGAT) is a non-profit volunteer group founded in March 2026, which works to encourage and support walking, wheeling and cycling in the local area.

Walking

Goring Parish Council has recently been consulting on proposals for improving safety at a number of road crossings in the village (see July GGN Pages 20/21). Separately from this, GGAT recently conducted a pedestrian safety walk in Goring. A group of nine people identified issues that make walking around the village difficult for those with mobility impairment. These included crumbling pavement surfaces and over-growing hedges. The group's report is now available on the GGAT website and shows how widespread these problems are.

Wheeling

Wheeling is the term transport planners have adopted to refer to the use of wheelchairs, mobility scooters, baby buggies and other mobility aids. Many of these have small wheels, which are very sensitive to poor surfaces. GGAT has proposed to Goring Parish Council that the footpath from Elvendon Road to the Bourdillon Field and Milldown Road should be resurfaced for the benefit of these users. It is understood that the Parish Council is discussing this project with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). As the highways authority, it is OCC that controls repairs to footpaths such as this.

We have also been working with the Wallingford chapter of Cycling Without Age, a charity dedicated to making it possible for people with reduced mobility to get outside on a tricycle rickshaw and once again experience 'feeling the wind in their hair'. We are currently in discussion with some of the local care homes about getting involved in the scheme.

Cycling

Many people would like to cycle more, but have not done so for years and so feel they lack the necessary confidence and/or fitness. GGAT has held some successful pilot confidence-building sessions and plans to do more.

Negotiations with relevant local landowners affecting the Goring to Wallingford Greenway are continuing behind the scenes, with no breakthrough yet on an agreed route. The Greenway would provide a safe traffic-free route for commuters, shoppers and leisure users alike, and is eagerly awaited, not least by teenagers with Saturday jobs in Wallingford.

Planning for the future

In 2017 the government introduced the concept of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) as a framework with which local authorities can 'develop strategic plans to improve conditions for cycling and walking, in order to support increases in travel on foot and bicycle'. Important for promoting change, LCWIPs have been produced for Didcot, Wallingford and Henley.

GGAT met with Councillor Maggie Filipova-Rivers, staff from Oxfordshire County Council and representatives of Goring and Whitchurch parish councils to push for a local LCWIP, covering the area from the A4130 Wallingford-to-Henley road south to the River Thames. With an eye on the forthcoming local government reorganisation, we recommended it should also include Streatley, Basildon and Pangbourne.

Making it count

To develop an LCWIP and set priorities, data is needed about the location and use of the main travel routes. GGAT realised that there is very little information publicly available about the number of people using The Ridgeway west of Streatley. This is a major route for long-distance walkers and cyclists, as well as many local leisure users. We decided, as volunteers, to go out and count them.

Taking advantage of the fine weather, we logged the walkers and cyclists using The Ridgeway bridleway at the end of Rectory Road over three days (Saturday, Sunday and a weekday). We found that 45% of the users are cyclists, a significantly higher proportion of the users than previously reported. Full details are in the Traffic Survey report on the GGAT website.

Get involved

We live in an incredibly beautiful area ripe for exploring. Whether you are commuting, running errands, or simply heading into town for lunch, why not choose the healthier, greener path?

Scan the QR code (or visit <https://www.goringgapactivetravel.co.uk/news>) to go to the GGAT News Page, to:

- Sign up for the monthly newsletter
- Find out about monthly social rides
- Register for confidence-building rides
- Read the Pedestrian Safety and Ridgeway Traffic Survey reports
- Make a donation to support GGAT's work



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And I would cycle 2500 miles ... North Cape 4000, an unsupported bicycle adventure

This year I entered a cycling challenge along with 700 others from over 50 countries. The challenge, called North Cape 4000, is to cycle from Northern Italy, through eight countries to Nord Kapp, the most northerly tip of Norway and of Europe, a total distance of 4000 kilometres (2500 miles).

All riders are totally unsupported, so I had to organise accommodation and food for myself. The only thing the organisers provided was a route, which had to be followed.

Once registered, the hard work began

I started training in December, riding once a week for four or more hours in the cold and wet, and gradually increased this until in the final two months I was doing two consecutive days of 250km every week, which I hoped would be sufficient. As I wouldn't be able to choose the weather during the event, I made sure I went out training in all conditions, even riding during the heatwave, and thunderstorms.

I decided to pre-book all of my accommodation which saves time if everything goes to plan. Other riders decided to book last minute, while some took camping equipment.

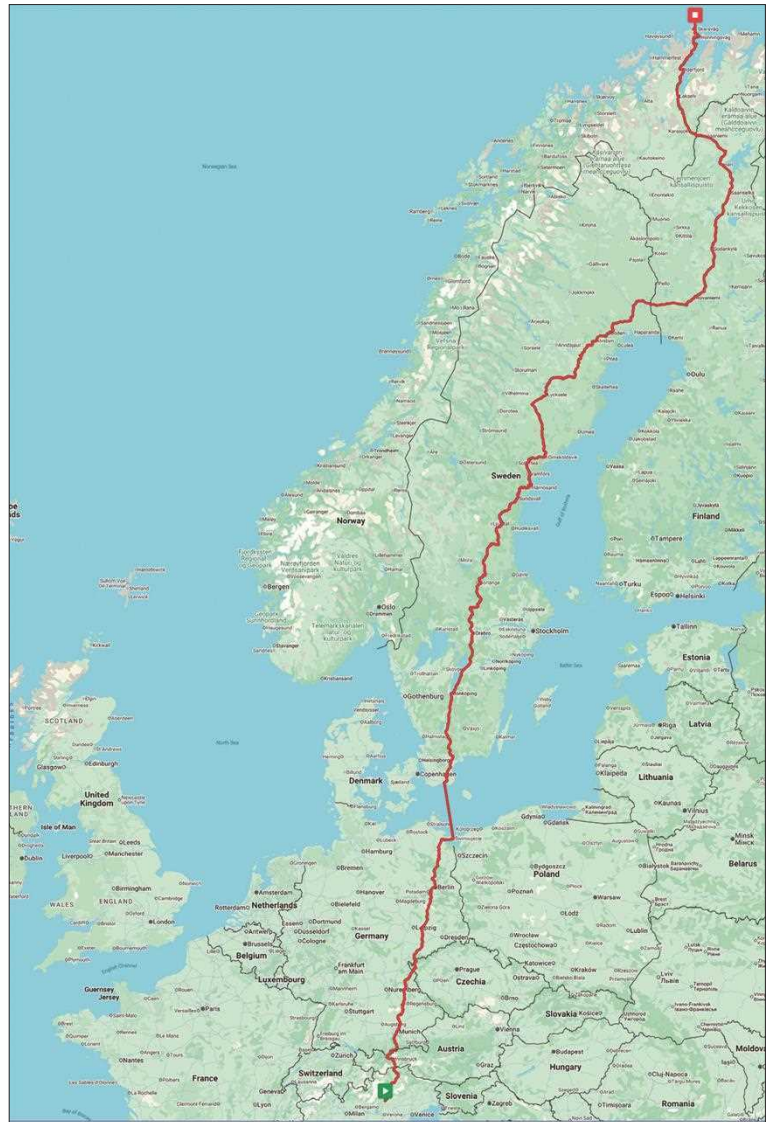
I then scanned the route making a note of any source of food (cafes, supermarkets, or petrol stations). In some areas, particularly in northern Sweden, there were long stretches with nothing but lakes and pine trees, so this information was essential.

Having done all this planning, what could possibly go wrong?

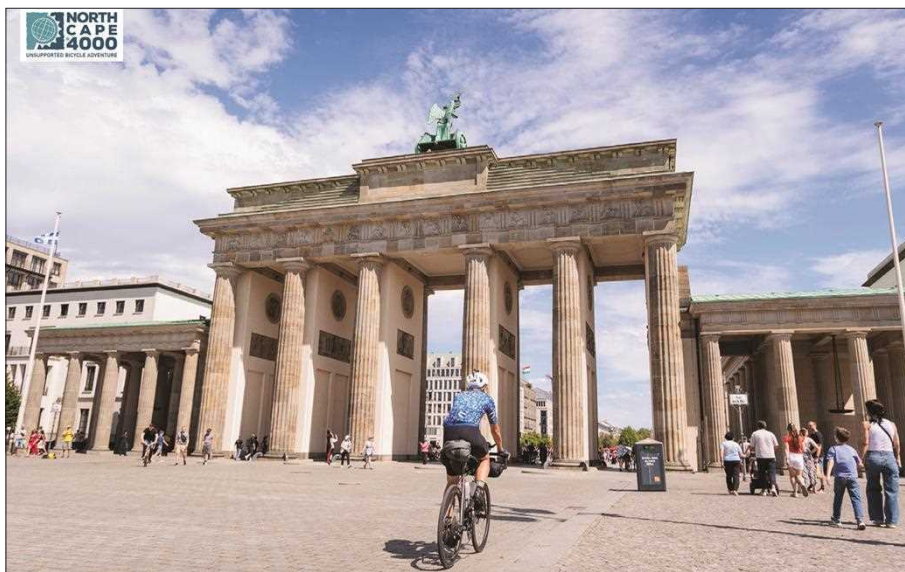
The ride

The first two days were uneventful, with a mass start at 8am followed by lots of hills as we cycled north through the Alps and Tyrol.

The third day started well, but then CATastrophe. A cat suddenly darted under my front wheel, giving me no time to react. The bike and I both went flying. I ended up with a badly grazed knee and a very sore shoulder which I had obviously landed heavily on. The cat had vanished.



The route to the North Cape



Arriving at the Brandenburg Gate

The bike was damaged in several places, and I decided it was unsafe to ride until at least the rear wheel had been repaired. Being 20km from the nearest town, I called a taxi to take me to a bike shop. The first two shops I tried couldn't do anything that day, but the third one took it in, and within two hours the back wheel was fixed. They didn't have the parts to repair the other problems, but I decided it was good enough to continue.

After a taxi back to where I had crashed, I continued the route having lost about eight hours. There was no way I could get to my planned overnight stop, so I booked a new stop 80km earlier. That night I collapsed into bed, battered, bruised and exhausted. But at least I was still going – it would have been very easy to quit after the accident.

The following morning, I contacted a

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Google review, May 2026



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bike shop in Berlin to ask if they could obtain the remaining parts by the following afternoon which they could. I then spent the rest of that day and the following morning trying to make up the 80km I was behind schedule, so I could get the bike to the shop. I arrived at the Brandenburg Gate exactly as planned at 2pm, dropped off the bike and two hours later it was fixed. Things were looking up!

On Day 6 I rode in 40°C to catch the overnight ferry from Poland to Sweden. The following six days passed without incident in pleasant weather through endless forests and beautiful blue lakes.

Day 13 was wet, with an extremely cold northerly wind. I spent all afternoon battling the headwind with nowhere to get hot food. I eventually arrived at a crossroads where I knew there was a cafe. However it was nowhere to be seen, so I asked someone getting out of a car. He took one look at me, grabbed my bike and said come with me, leading me inside and supplying me with coffee and cake. There was no way in the prevailing weather I would be able to complete the 60 km to my planned stop, so I asked if there was anywhere nearby that I could stay, which again he kindly organised.

The weather remained changeable for the remaining days, cold with a mix of sunshine and showers, but the strong Northerly headwind had fortunately gone. On the 15th day I crossed the Arctic Circle. Only 700km left! From here on, there were reindeer roaming the now quite barren landscape.

The last 70km of the route was on the island of Mageroya, accessed via a 7km long tunnel 200m below sea level. Vehicle noise echoed loudly inside the foggy tunnel and sounded very intimidating. I was certainly glad to get out the other end of that! The island is very barren with little vegetation, allowing the gusty wind to suddenly whip across the road to catch out unwary cyclists and blow them half way across the road. It was also very hilly with long steep climbs making progress slow.

It was 9am, 18 days and an hour after setting off, when I eventually reached the Nord Kapp visitor centre and the end of the route. Of the 700 starters, only 314 completed the route within the 20 days.



Geoff Crowther After 18 days and 4000km, the finish line

Join us! New GAP Festival Artistic Director and Festival Manager

If you have enjoyed the amazing Festival we hold every two years here in Goring and Streatley, now is your opportunity to shape its future! Our beloved Ginny Avery is stepping down as Artistic Director after leading us through three Festivals. She said 'I have enjoyed creating these immensely. It's been hard work but very rewarding, seeing so many people in the villages come together to celebrate the best of the arts, right on our doorstep! It's been a blast, but it's time now for someone else to stamp their mark.' Also stepping down is Ginny's right-hand man, our equally beloved Max Heron, who as Festival Manager for the past four years has been responsible for ensuring Ginny's creative ideas actually happen. We are looking to recruit two people (or possibly more, any ideas are very welcome) to join the friendly and experienced planning team.

The role of Artistic Director is a lot about ideas, but also about knowing people – knowing what locals want to see, hear and do; knowing artists, musicians and groups who can produce something truly spectacular; working with both artistic talent and our many volunteers to make it all happen. If you have that wonderful mix of creativity and planning, this is an exceptionally exciting role that would suit someone with many connections in the villages and beyond.

The role of Festival Manager is key to a successful Festival. You'd be working very closely with the Artistic Director, keeping tabs on who is doing what and where, booking venues and equipment, and ensuring the Festival runs smoothly and safely. If you can be everywhere at the same time, without the need for teleportation, and keep a calm face, you are the right sort of person!

Planning meetings are held about once a month, more frequently as we get closer to the Festival itself, which is next due in June 2028. In between, you'll be liaising with the team and with your contacts in the arts world and local venues. This can happen in your own time and at your own pace – it is a big commitment but very satisfying and a whole load of fun. If you are interested in receiving a more detailed role description for either role, or having a chat about what it involves in more detail, please email me. Ginny and Max would be more than happy to talk to you about their own experiences too!

Geoff Brown

Festival Chairman, geoffsbrown@live.co.uk



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

who accepts no responsibility for views expressed

The Editor welcomes your letters – normally no more than 350 words please – but reserves the right to edit them

Support for Battle Road Quiet Lane

Dear Editor—I am writing in support of the proposed Quiet Lane at Battle Road.

We have many quiet country lanes in the area and it constantly surprises me that, although there is a wider and faster road nearby, drivers choose to use lanes that need passing places, have potholes and are winding and narrow. The 60mph speed limit on some lanes is also a big shock to other road users.

Battle Road is one of those. It is useful to residents living along it or at the bottom for access to Woodcote; not a big number. Unfortunately, satellite navigation systems direct traffic, such as delivery drivers, up the road. The price paid for this includes flat tyres, slippery gravel and too little room to pass oncoming traffic without mounting the already shredded verge (hence the gravel). The alternative, Reading Road, has none of those problems and in fact, you save two minutes using it.

That is why I support the proposal to turn Battle Road into a Quiet Lane. Access for those living along it will be preserved but cars going to Woodcote will be encouraged

to use Reading Road. This is wider and doesn't have many cyclists, horse riders and walkers on it, leaving Battle Road for residents and making it safer for other road users to ride or walk without fear or intimidation. People can enjoy the footpaths, including the super loop crossing Battle Road, making the most of the surrounding hills, fields and meadows in peace.

Barbara Karayi
Manor Road

Open Air schooldays

Dear Editor—The article about the 'Open Air Factor' in August *GGN* Page 24 made me think of my first school which I went to from 1934-1939. It was the Open Air school in Regent's Park, London. Our lessons took place outside winter and summer. If it rained, we folded our desks and took them inside to continue there. In winter we wore clip-on thick rugs over our coats, like a long skirt, with fur gloves and scarves. I did not catch any of the childhood diseases whilst there and very rarely had a cold. I was well ahead when I went to my next school.

Toni Watson

Goring Transport Office

Every year over 300 residents of Goring are able to get to the doctor's surgery, to the dentist or to any one of the hospitals that serve Goring because of the Goring Transport Office. Entirely staffed by volunteers, this unique service is able to pick up a patient from their Goring home and then take them by car to either the Woodcote or the Red Cross Road doctors' surgery, to the local dentist, to the West Berkshire Community Hospital, Townlands Hospital in Henley, Abingdon Community Hospital, Wallingford Community Hospital, any of the Oxford Hospitals and, of course, the Royal Berkshire Hospital.

All the volunteer drivers are Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked. At the moment there are 15 volunteer drivers – and one of the unique elements in the way the service is provided is that there is no compulsion for any driver to accept giving any particular lift or to drive on any particular day. This approach recognises that all sorts of circumstances might arise that mean a driver is not able to be available – and the service is flexible enough to accommodate this freedom.

Each patient is asked to make a small contribution to the petrol cost and office expenses and these range from £5 for a lift to either of the doctors' surgeries or the dentist and up to £25 for the Oxford hospitals, with smaller charges for elsewhere. The service is entirely funded by these payments to the drivers as there are no grants or other financial support. The driver will wait for the patient when they are being seen and return them to their house. It is a brilliant service as many of the people who have used it will testify. There is an arrangement with the hospitals so the drivers do not pay for parking.

A team of currently ten people administer the lifts – volunteering on the same basis as the drivers so they are only asked to be in the office when they have no other obligations. Alan Matthews, who manages the service, also as a volunteer, always stresses that this flexibility is a core value.

To arrange transport please call during Goring Transport Office hours – 10am-12noon, Tuesday through Thursday. Every month *Goring Gap News* has a small panel headed Medical Information, which gives the telephone number: [01491 873565](tel:01491873565). The admin staff will contact the drivers – very mindful that they shouldn't overburden any of the volunteers – until they find a driver who is available and willing to take on a particular journey. If more volunteers on the admin side can be recruited, the office hours could be increased.

Can you help?

Because the service has been going for a good number of years, there is a real demand now for some younger – recently retired? – volunteers to step forward to make sure this really quite vital service continues in Goring. Volunteers as either drivers or administrators are really needed – and you have the promise that the service works round its volunteers and is grateful for any time that you can give. There is no pressure on anyone – and you can do as little or as much as you feel able to do.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering either as a driver or as an administrator, then please contact Alan: amatthews@bigbeech.co.uk

Paul Davies

The Gap Hall of Fame

Wing Commander Howard Rennix (Digger) Larkin, 1912-1980

'Digger' Larkin as he was universally known was born in Sydney, Australia in 1912 and lived in Goring from the 1950s until his death. His father Ted was killed in Gallipoli in 1915 as was his uncle shortly afterwards, leaving his mother to bring up two boys on her own. She must have done a fine job as Digger's elder brother Ted qualified as a doctor. Ted moved to Britain to undertake specialist training in neurology and Digger also moved to Britain and joined the RAF in October 1934.

His promotion from Flying Officer to Flight Lieutenant was Gazetted in March 1939. He was awarded the Air Force Cross (AFC) in January 1941 while holding the rank of Squadron Leader. He served in 217 Squadron of Coastal Command flying Bristol Beauforts. He was shot down and taken prisoner in the Dunkirk area in February 1942 and held as a POW until the end of the war. He never talked about the war as was most usual for men of that time, so it was only because he is mentioned in Douglas Bader's memoir *Reach for the Sky* (written by Paul Brickhill) that we know he spent time in Colditz Castle. He had been held in Oflag IX and Stalag Luft 3 beforehand. Bader describes how he and Digger put razor blades into potatoes and fed them to the wild boar in the castle moat but it never seemed to have any effect on them.

After the war he met and married Eileen who had been a nurse and they bought Thames Bank on Thames Road, a large Victorian building which has subsequently been converted to flats. They ran it as a nursing home for both convalescence and long-term residential care with some of the rooms having French windows looking down to the river and across to Lardon Chase and Streatley Hill. One of the long-term residents was Mrs Joyce Miller, widow of Captain Tom Miller whose former residence is now the site of Miller's Close. Digger and Eileen lived in 'The Pav', the tennis pavilion they had converted and enlarged.

They were very successful and Digger became a shrewd business man, especially in buying and selling property. For example, he bought The Grange and sold off the land to build Grange Close. However, he was a great supporter of the (Royal) British Legion and his Wheel of Fortune was by far the biggest money spinner in the annual fete.

They also owned the farm behind the Swan in Streatley which (I think) is now part of the Swan car park. One of Eileen's prize-winning Jersey cows, Princess Buttercup 23, had the starring role in *The Negotiable Cow*, a BBC dramatization of an AP Herbert story of that name aired in June 1967.

I lived in Goring in my youth and my family knew the Larkins. Sometimes on a Saturday night Digger and Eileen and some friends would go out to The Chicken in the Basket in Benson. The usual 'Bill of Fayre' was prawn cocktail, chicken in the basket followed by Black Forest Gateau, washed down with a bottle or two of Mateus Rosé. Eileen 'didn't drink alcohol' so would have a Babydam, which was a pear cider in a miniature champagne bottle and served in a wide champagne glass. They knew how to live in those days!

Digger was active in local politics: he was a councillor in the Goring Ward on Henley Rural District Council in the 1950s. He was President, Chairman and later Vice-Chairman of the local branch of the British Legion, Chairman of the Goring & District Musical Society (now the Chamber Choir) and President of the Bowling Club. He was heavily involved in the local branch of the Conservative Association and Eileen was on its committee. They allowed the grounds of Thames Bank to be used for the annual Conservative Association fête. Digger was also a member of the Goring and Streatley Golf Club and played in matches with outside clubs.

Sadly, Eileen developed breast cancer and died after a long illness.

Some years later Digger met and married Sylvia (a nurse) and they had a daughter Sarah. Unfortunately, Digger did not live long enough to see her grow up: many years of heavy smoking caught up with him and he died at the age of 68. After Digger's death Sylvia and Sarah moved back to Sylvia's native Cornwall.

Acknowledgement

I am most grateful to the Australian Prisoner of War (POW) organisation for the copy of the POW card and some details of Digger's RAF career. Should anyone be in Victoria, Australia the National POW Memorial in Ballarat is well worth a visit as is the National War Museum in Canberra. I am also most grateful to Janet Hurst for information about Digger that she has dug out of the Goring Gap Local History Society archives.

Oliver Weldon



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Vorname: <u>Howard, R.</u>										Dienstgrad: <u>W/ Cdr.</u>														
Geburtsort und -ort: <u>11.9.1912. Sydney</u>										Truppenteil: <u>R.A.F.</u> Komp. usw.: <u></u>														
Religion: <u>R.C.</u>										Zivilberuf: <u>Pilot</u> Berufs-Gr.: <u></u>														
Vorname des Vaters: <u>Edward</u>										Matrikel Nr. (Stammrolle des Heimatstaates): <u>37048</u>														
Familiennamen der Mutter: <u>Tullacock</u>										Gefangennahme (Ort und Datum): <u>8.2.42. Dinkelsbühl</u>														
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Größe: <u>1,75</u>										Name und Anschrift der zu benachrichtigenden Person in der Heimat des Kriegsgefangenen: <u>Bruder: Dr. Larkin, Willoughby Barley Lane, Goodmayes, Essex</u>														
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So where is Battle Road? And why 'Battle'?

Seeing the proposals for road changes and enhancements to Goring's roads may make people wonder where Battle Road actually is. Although there have never been any road signs bearing the name, Battle Road appears on official maps (even in SatNav systems) and is the stretch of road from the top of the slope as you go up Elvendon Road, down past Battle Farm as far as Elvendon Priory. After this it officially becomes Elvendon Lane until it reaches the crossroads at the top near Woodcote. All the properties now use the address Elvendon Road on a day-to-day basis, but many people have asked, 'But why is it Battle?'

Battle was evidently more significant in days gone by, and 'Battle Road' was a recognisable address, worth putting on the map. However, an Ordnance Survey map from the early 19th century shows the Battle area as a complete blank – from 'Cleve Mill' down by the river up to 'Ilvingdon Farm' (which later gained the more elegant name of Elvendon Priory) further east. It simply has an overall label: 'Goring Field'. The old maps held in the Goring Gap Local History Society's Archives that detail the field names and landowners of the 18th century make no mention at all of the word Battle. The first occurrence of the name 'Battle' seems to be Battle Farm in the mid-19th century – which rather implies that Battle was thought of as a place. All the other 'Battles' appear after that.

An old map of 1876 shows the beginnings of development, in the form of just three buildings: the farm itself, two semi-detached farmworkers' cottages and Stone Hall, which later became Battle House, surrounded by gardens and orchards. These gradually grew into a little hamlet of around six properties, with an expanse of fields before Cleve or Goring were reached.

So was there a battle here? It is very tempting to think that when the Civil War was raging in the 17th century, as Goring lies in a direct line between Oxford and London (headquarters of Royalists and Parliamentarians respectively) there could have been at least a skirmish in this part of Oxfordshire. There was certainly a significant Civil War battle at Chalgrove, around 12 miles to the north. But although records show battles at places such as Islip, Wolvercote and Oxford itself, there seems to have been no fighting around Goring.

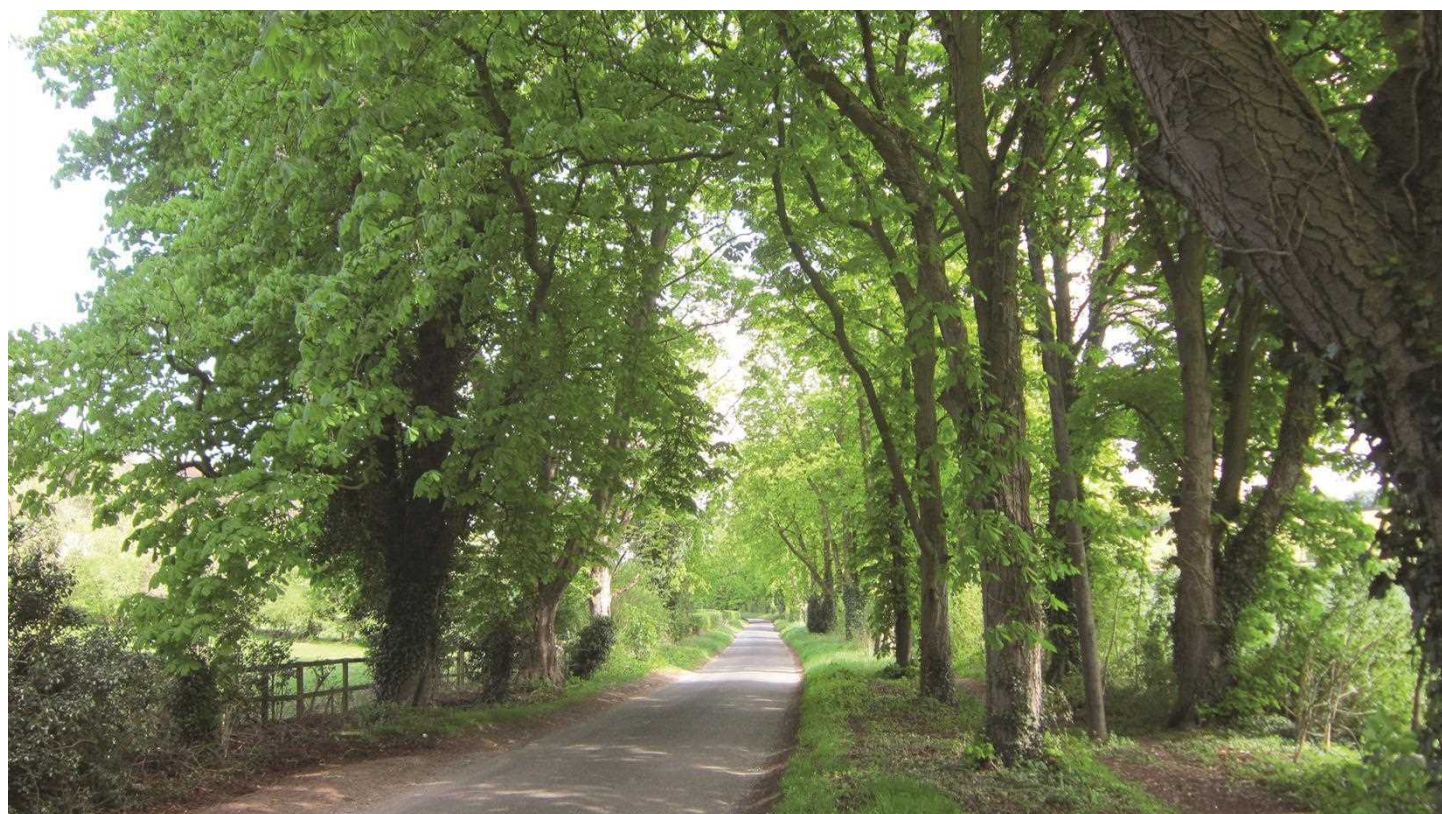
Some historians have made a connection with a gentleman named William de la Bataille who in 1260 was given land by another landowner, as recorded in the Goring Charters: *'John Strandput grants to William de la Bataille (recorded elsewhere as Wilhelmus Batayle) and Avice his wife half an acre in Dolmed, Goring'*. Dolmed cannot be found or linked to anywhere else. And the name Bataille disappears, until Battle appears in the mid-19th century, almost 600 years later.

Perhaps there is a much more prosaic answer. On a map dating from 1727, the road is labelled 'Steepstone Way', and as anyone who has pushed a pram or pedalled a cycle up the sudden steep slope in Elvendon Road knows – just as the labourers who trudged up to the first buildings here must have muttered – it's a real battle getting up this hill... Is this how it got its name?

But for now, the mystery remains. If anyone can shed more light on this intriguing and puzzling name, I would be glad to hear.

Helen Turner

(This is an abridged version of an article in the 2025 edition of the Goring Gap Local History Society's annual *Journal*.)





Football fun



Enjoying the action songs



The Drama Team in action

Goring Free Church King's Club Makers

During the week of 27 July – 31 July we held our holiday club, King's Club. *Mega Makers* saw the God's love just gets bigger and bigger! This was the 'Mega Machine' which transformed small objects into big ones. The stories we followed were taken from Matthew 23, looking at some of the miracles that Jesus performed with a celebration as we looked at Jesus's resurrection.

60+ children, aged 5-11, attended each day and were playing games, making crafts, being entertained by the drama team and generally having lots of fun! As well as this, on the Friday afternoon, we had a picnic in the garden for parents and siblings where the children could enjoy an inflatable assault course as entertainment. A big thank you to everybody who was involved, as a fun time was had by children alike! Please visit our website

<https://www.goringfreechurch.org.uk/>

and view the highlights slideshow which covers the week and a short video clip of the Makers.



The assault course (left) and running games (right)



All photos by Helen Abbott and John Fung



*The Mega Machine in action (above) ...
... (And the resulting reaction (below))!*

2026 – Mega

Our annual children's event where children learn about how the world is mirrored through the lens of the Bible into bigger versions. The event includes a Gospel and included a performance, finishing on Friday afternoon. The children enjoyed singing, dancing, and puppet shows and the event has become our custom for the Rectory Garden for the children to enjoy a bouncy castle and a huge thank you has to go to all the adults and children who have had by all, adults and

[special-events/kings-club/](#) which provides an overview of the Mega Machine in action.

Ruth Cordle



Ten years of Goring & Streatley Station lifts



Old footbridge - platform 1 - 5 Nov. 2012



Lifts opened on 16 September 2016 - credit Henley Standard

For any resident of Goring or Streatley who moved here in the past decade, or who was born in 2016 or later, it may come as a surprise to learn that our station has not always had passenger lifts. After all, the need for them is so obvious.

I say this because this month marks ten years since the lifts were opened, on 26 September 2016, by the then MP for Henley, John Howell and the then chairman of Network Rail, Sir Peter Hendy. Sir Peter is now Lord Hendy and, at the time of writing, the minister for railways in the Labour government.

The opening ceremony (see picture) was the culmination of what now seems a remarkably short campaign of lobbying by local disabled people to have lifts installed while the new station footbridge was being built, as part of the Great Western route electrification programme.

The original plan for the footbridge, known to railway engineers as the 'Goring skew', envisaged lifts being added at some uncertain date in the future. As the experiences of Tilehurst and Theale stations have since shown, that date could have been eleven or more years into the future – or not at all, in the current railway investment climate. The timely installation of lifts at Goring has proved to be a snip at less than £1.5 million, because the more recently added lifts at Tilehurst cost £3.5m and those at Theale in excess of £9 million. The Tilehurst lifts were opened this year, some 13 years after its new footbridge was built. Lifts at Theale were opened in 2025, nearly 14 years after approval and 11 years after funding was granted. At Goring we had to wait barely two years.

The relative success at Goring was attributable to several factors that could be summarised as being able to marshal support and being prepared to seize the opportunity if it came – plus good luck (see side panel).

Of course, not everyone was supportive. In March 2015, some six months after the government had given the green light, GGN published a letter, sent in the name of some of the 'Residents of Yew Tree Court'. This said: *Residents of the Court have lived in peace with the station and rail traffic for over 30 years and stress that we welcome the electrification of the line, mobility improvement measures and other changes but, as the scheme is currently proposed, there is no doubt that the living environment in the Court is going to be significantly affected for the worse.* Eleven years on, one repentant resident of Yew Tree Court was overheard at the station saying: '...to think, we were once opposed to these lifts.'

The initial plan of Network Rail, the owners, and GWR, the train operator, was for lifts to be in use only when the booking office was staffed. But favourable experience, and pressure from users, gradually persuaded the train companies to extend the operating hours and lifts are now available under passenger control at most times of day and night when trains call at the station.

Main reasons the government agreed to include lifts in the electrification programme:

- Good luck, some of it self-made.
- A ready-made campaigning group (MIGGS) lobbying for lifts even before electrification was confirmed.
- Helpful legislation, especially the Equality Act 2010 and previously little-known 'interoperability' regulations adopted by all EU railway systems from 2012.
- An active MP, who suggested, then presented, a 1,000-signature petition to parliament that made it difficult for civil servants to dismiss our case.
- Support in writing from leaders of all local authorities – county, unitary, district and parish.
- Favourable demographic data and growing passenger traffic.
- If only one station between Reading and Didcot was to have lifts, Goring would be the best location, midway, on level ground and with local bus connections.
- Proximity of Flint House police rehabilitation centre, whose policy was for patients to arrive and depart by train.
- Economic sense – if lifts were going to be added, it would be cheaper to do the whole job in one go.
- A receptive Coalition government.
- Political wisdom – we campaigners had learned not to rely on the government's 'Access for All' scheme, which was and remains its standard 'fob-off' line when presented with demands for improved accessibility.

Of course, it can be foolish to tempt fate, but the lifts at Goring & Streatley have so far proved to be resilient by national standards. Over the past ten years, I personally have become something of a lightning rod for complaints when the lifts have broken down. So, I can add the following comments with reasonable confidence: There are 1,403 passenger lifts in the network, spread over 540 Network Rail stations. On average, according to official statistics, these are each reported faulty just over six times a year: in 57% of cases due to wear and tear, in 29% due to misuse or vandalism and in 14% due to external issues, such as failure of the local power supply. If this breakdown frequency were applied to our lifts, we could have expected 3 lifts x 6 faults = 18 faults a year, so in 10 years, 180 breakdowns would be expected. In fact, there have been fewer than 20 reported breakdowns during this time (although one fault in 2024 lasted for three weeks). On three occasions, wheelchair users have been stranded on the island platform late at night. In one of these instances, a fast train was stopped specially at Goring around midnight, to pick up the stranded passenger and take him and his wheelchair to Didcot, from where a taxi home was provided by GWR.

The campaign for lifts at Goring was initiated by disabled people but the people who benefit include elderly people in general, parents and carers with pushchairs and passengers with heavy luggage or push-bikes. Other stations have not been so fortunate, one being Cholsey, which now has an active campaign for improved accessibility, led by the local parish council. Oxfordshire County Council has published an ambitious plan for building new stations on the Cowley line but, sadly, has shown precious little interest to date in improving accessibility at its existing ones, such as Cholsey and Radley. With railway investment plans apparently now in relative decline nationally, there is not much prospect of change in the foreseeable future.

John Boler

Wednesday 12 August

Summer holidays rather 'eclipsed' the news about the coming eclipse and so like many others, on the lunchtime of eclipse day we found ourselves googling how to view it. There had been no pre-purchasing of viewing glasses for us so as the BBC suggested, the Weetabix was rudely ejected from its box, the bottom lined with paper and a pin hole and viewing hole made in the top. Meanwhile our interesting, round chocolate box (sadly they were all gone) had a pin hole made in the bottom, the colanders were found in the cupboard and sheets of white card excavated to serve as screens.

There was a fairly lengthy discussion about the best viewing point, won by Cow Hill on the basis that it was easy to get to and other people were going there. After a somewhat hurried early supper we set off, bearing our motley collection of potential viewing methods and a substantial snack reserve. We chose our spot in what we thought would be plenty of time, but immediately the Weetabix box revealed a less than circular sun! Thrilled with our viewing success we had to show any passers-by. Among these were the Coffey family who were also equipped with home-made viewing apparatus – a box fashioned out of a Harry Potter parcel they'd recently received via the postman. They were evidently impressed by our scientific method, or possibly the snacks, as they stayed and were our eclipse-buddies.

The colander gave pretty images and the chocolate box worked after a fashion, but the boxes gave brilliant images. Between us we had several viewing boxes and it was literally awesome to see the shadow on the sun slowly increase. The light darkened around us into an uncanny and unfamiliar evening light and despite our 21st century knowledge, it was a magical experience. How much stranger such events must have been to ancient peoples.

Once the shadow on the sun had receded, we said our farewells to our eclipse buddies and headed off down the hill, passing other groups carrying boxes of various shapes and sizes as if it was some sort of weird cereal event, rather than a very special experience with the star of life on earth.

Gill Haigh



Magical experience - safely watching the eclipse



Partial eclipse

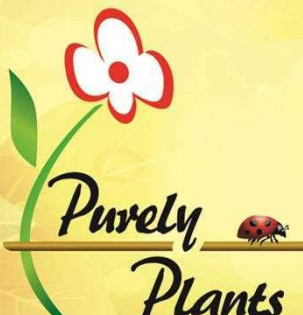
Photo: Pete Cox



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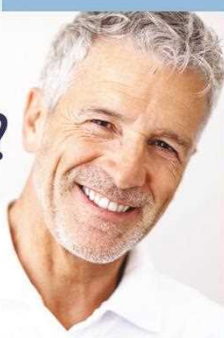
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Streatley Parish Council update

With no meeting in August due to the summer break, it has been nonetheless a busy time at Streatley Parish Council (SPC). There are some changes to report.

At the end of the July meeting Cllr Colin Smith stepped down as Chair of the Council due to increased pressure of work in his daytime role. Colin joined SPC in 2020 and has been Chair since May 2022. Although relinquishing the role of Chair, Colin is remaining on the Parish Council and the SPC would like to record their thanks for his past unstinting service and support. Colin nominated Cllr Adrian Lockwood as the new Chair, a motion which was unanimously approved by the meeting. Adrian joined the Parish Council in 2023 and has served as Vice Chair for the past year.

Also in July, Cllr Mark Davis announced his resignation as a councillor, again due to the pressures of work, thereby creating a vacancy on the Parish Council. If you are interested in joining as a councillor, details can be found on our website and please contact Adrian Lockwood: adrian.lockwood@streatley.org

Following the resignation of the Council's Clerk and a subsequent riding accident leading to absence, Gill Smith has kindly stepped in as acting Clerk. This has created a vacancy for the position of permanent Clerk. If you are a local resident and would like to make a positive contribution to the community, please consider this opportunity. This part-time position offers flexible working hours and would suit someone with a logical outlook, knowledge of finances, Microsoft Office and general clerical duties. Attendance at monthly meetings and ad-hoc events is required. Previous clerking experience or professional clerking qualifications would be an advantage. Further details may be obtained from the acting Parish Clerk, Gill Smith (07305 085175, email: clerk@streatley.org)

Highways and other matters

At the time of writing, the month long A329 closure at Moulsoford/Cholsey is drawing to a close. This has led to the B4009 via Streatley High Street (and on via North Stoke) becoming an unofficial diversion to Wallingford. Add the hot summer weather drawing in many visitors to our picturesque village and at times Streatley High Street has struggled to cope with the sheer volumes of traffic. It is hoped that normality will soon be (or has been) restored.

The additional traffic and visitors have led at time to issues of parking within the village, with some visitors and residents taking to parking in Church Lane. We would like to draw attention to the fact that Church Lane is a private road with parking only for users of the Church and Morrell Rooms. Parked vehicles have caused access issues, especially for Thames Water, which needs 24/7 access for vans and tankers to their works at the end of the lane. This is for site collections and checks, along with site cleaning. On several recent occasions unauthorised parking has blocked access. Worst-case scenario is that in an emergency this could result in pollution or site flood. The same applies for access by other emergency services. At the time of writing, various parking enforcement measures are under consideration and we ask local residents to please cooperate.

Meanwhile the saga of the Virgin cabinets has yet to reach the end game. Passing the two-year anniversary of the start of installation of the grey cabinets at the crossroads and the one-year anniversary of the agreement to move them to a less obtrusive location adjacent to Lardon Cottages, the only work performed is the installation of the new foundations. We still await the relocation of the cabinets and continue to address the issue with West Berkshire Council (WBC) to motivate Virgin to perform the remaining works.

On a more positive note, following the campaign by SPC to have a speed limit applied to Streatley Hill and especially the various pedestrian crossings at its summit, we are pleased to advise that the public consultation by WBC was overwhelmingly supportive and we are advised that the new 40mph speed limit should be in place by the end of this year.

Still on the subject of traffic calming, three new vehicle activated SID (speed indication displays) are due to be installed on the Wallingford, Wantage and Reading Roads by late September. One of these (Wallingford Road) replaces an older and failed speed reminder sign, but the other two new signs have been majority funded by the Parish Council with some additional support via a local authority member's bid.

Finally, we would like to thank the unknown volunteer (or volunteers) who made a stunning job of pruning back and clearing footpath 13/2, which runs between Vicarage Lane and the Reading Road. This well used cut through is now a sheer delight to walk along. If you would like to volunteer in some small way to keeping our village neat and tidy, do get in touch.

Streatley Parish Council

Wallingford Thames Ladies Probus Club

Have you thought about joining our local Ladies Probus Club? This Club offers retired or semi-retired professional and businesswomen from the local area a friendly, monthly lunchtime meeting, enjoying interesting high-quality speakers covering a wide range of topics. We also make occasional outings to interesting destinations such as the theatre and local gardens.

Founded on a friendship platform, we endeavor to keep ourselves well informed and are supportive of each other. We meet at the Goring and Streatley Golf Club on the first Wednesday of each month where we enjoy excellent facilities and tasty lunches. We have a few vacancies and would be delighted to welcome new members.

Further information and our programme of speakers is available at <https://www.wtlp.org.uk>

If you are interested in joining or would like to attend a meeting as a guest, please contact the secretary on email: secretary.wtlp@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Julie Cotterell

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A hot summer at the library!

It may have been hot, hot, hot outside, but things have been lively inside (and now outside!) at Goring Library this summer. Our new garden has really come into its own and Scrabble Club made the most of the sunshine with games al fresco. Families got creative with a special craft event, helping to build a giant *Very Hungry Caterpillar*.



Photo: Lisa Hewlett

The colourful creation celebrated our new pollinator-friendly garden and Goring's participation in Britain in Bloom. We're hoping the real caterpillars are equally impressed!

The Summer Reading Challenge – *Read to the Beat!* has once again been a huge success, with more than 160 children signing up and an excellent number completing their challenge. It's been wonderful to see so many young readers coming through the doors – and hopefully discovering that books make excellent company, especially when it's too hot to do anything else!



Photo: Lisa Hewlett

There's been plenty going on throughout the holidays, including a puppet-making workshop. We had a Lego session where children built an entire music festival – complete with camping areas and, rather impressively, festival toilets! There was also a special story time with Jonathan Clifton and there were trails and crafts with a musical theme all summer.



Photo: Lisa Hewlett

Our chess players have also been kept on their toes, with visitors taking on Dave, an ex-county player, in a chess challenge.

A huge thank you to everyone who has joined in, volunteered, supported our events or simply popped in for a book this summer. Your enthusiasm helps make the library such a special part of our village.

And if you haven't joined us yet, come and see what you're missing! Membership gives you access to thousands of books, eBooks and other resources. You can also become a Friend of Goring Library, helping to support the fantastic programme of activities and events we provide for children and adults throughout the year.



Photo: Jane Crowther

Kate Cheng
Manager of Goring Library

Cyber-crime in Goring Library

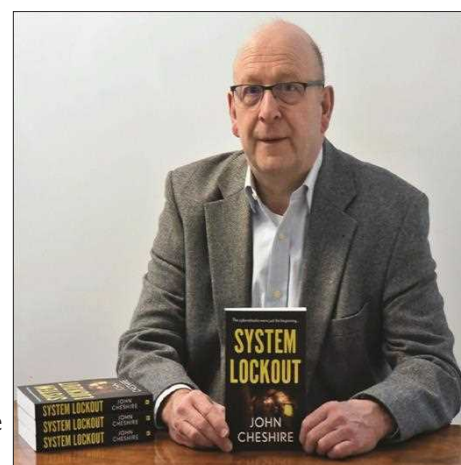
System Lockout by John Cheshire is a topical crime thriller! It's not your usual murder mystery; although there is blood and there is destruction. Here, the 'who done it' genre refers to cyber-criminals, targeting major national infrastructure companies and demanding vast ransoms in cryptocurrency. Does this sound familiar?

The author, John Cheshire, has personal experience of working in a Big 4 consultancy and has had a lifelong career in IT. The scene and the characters that unfold are in a world he knows well. The story is told through the eyes of a university recruit who reacts to the developing situation, firstly with concern and eventually with horror. In essence we have a modern espionage story told against the background of cyber-attacks which we are all now much more aware of.



To discuss cyber-crimes in general and those currently in the news, join us in Goring Library on Wednesday 14 October to chat with John and of course to hear more about his novel. Doors open at 7pm, the talk starts at 7.30pm and the ticket price of £10 includes refreshments. Tickets from the library.

Gaye Walsh



John Cheshire

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LIVES REMEMBERED

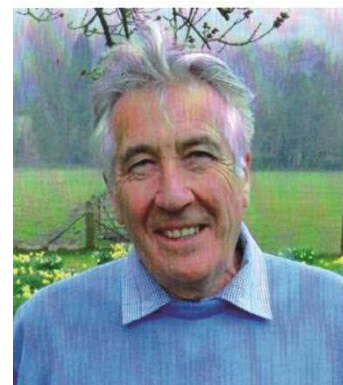
Charles Brian Cranshaw 26.01.1933 – 26.06.2026

Charles Cranshaw was born in Essex. His parents moved to Slough, where his father had a factory making plasterboard. World War II brought difficulties transporting the main ingredient, gypsum, from Latvia, resulting in his father's bankruptcy. The family moved to Ascot and stayed with his grandparents, where Charles experienced lorry rides and ice-cream from the American soldiers stationed on the racecourse.

His father was involved in the building of the Mulberry harbours. On D-day Charles watched the lorries lining up in his grandparents' road, ready to take the harbours to France.

He went to Ranelagh School and served an apprenticeship at Burgess & Co Engineers in Bracknell, where he worked in the drawing office. Charles was promoted to Sales Director and opened two branch offices in Hertfordshire and Sussex. The company was taken over, eventually landing in the hands of Babcock. Much to Charles' delight, the Flying Scotsman engine was brought into the workshop for maintenance. During that time his son, Mark, from his first marriage, came to live with Charles and Gill (Charles' second wife) in Earley.

After moving to Goring over 30 years ago, Gill's aunt joined them. Charles got involved with Friends of Goring Library. He was a planning officer for the Chiltern Society and a councillor on Goring Parish Council. He was a founder member of Goring Gap Probus, enjoyed the talks and trips with Goring Gap Local History Society and the jazz nights in the village. On retirement he worked part time for a Bristol Company, Fulton Boilers. He was first and foremost a steam engineer and loved his steam train trips and had a great love of Goring and its people. Sadly, after a long illness with Parkinson's, he died in the wonderful care of Sue Ryder. He had previously volunteered with the charity, raising funds at the Nettlebed sales for five years.



Margaret Ballard 08.05.1933 – 06.07.2026

Margaret Ballard (nee Morton) was born in 1933 to Gwen and Ronald Morton. Margaret started her life in Acton, London where her father was headmaster of a London County Council school. In September 1939 Margaret, her parents, and two older brothers, John and David, were evacuated with the school to Goring. They arrived with labels and gas masks at the village hall after a complicated journey by train, starting at Paddington via Twyford, Henley, then by charabanc with wooden seats to Goring. They were met on arrival by officials and accommodated in the servants' quarters of a house by the river. The village school amalgamated with the London school at Clevemede. The family eventually found a rented property and at the end of the war, bought 1, Cleeve Park Cottages and stayed.

Growing up, Margaret learned to swim at Cleeve Lock, and to skate on the Streatley banks of the Thames. In time, David joined his brother John at Wallingford Grammar and Margaret went to the Abbey School in Reading, leaving in 1951 with her school certificate and four A-levels. Despite ambitions to go to stage school or art college, Margaret was encouraged to take a six-month secretarial course and then worked for several insurance companies as a secretary.

The Morton family had always involved themselves in village life. Ronald and Gwen were involved with Goring Free Church, the choir, WEA, WI and ran the Silver Threads Club for many years. John and David were Sea Scouts and Margaret joined the Brownies and then Guides, eventually becoming Captain after Miss Lee Warner retired.

Margaret met Bob when they were both working at The Phoenix Assurance offices in Reading. They were married in Goring Free Church in 1958, with a guard of honour from the local girl guides. The wedding reception was held at the Morrell Room in Streatley.

In the 1960s Margaret and Bob's family began to arrive. Neil in 1960, Mark in 1962 and Cressida in 1964. In 1967 Margaret was elected to the parish council and was appointed Chairman of the Burial Ground Committee. She was then informed that the parish church graveyard was full and a new burial ground was required. In the 1930s the government of the day had written to parish councils giving them the option of taking responsibility for finding and running a new burial ground should the parish churchyard become full. Goring Parish Council agreed, hence the appearance of White Hill burial ground, three decades later. Margaret went several times to the Home Office in Westminster to ensure all rules and regulations were followed and water resources protected. Buildings on site were provided for registration and shelter for mourners, plus a home for equipment and tools for ground maintenance and care. When all was ready, the Bishop of Portsmouth attended to consecrate the ground, by walking the boundaries, reciting prayers and singing hymns, accompanied by Margaret, the Vicar, members of the Parish Church and Parish Council and general public. Margaret was grateful for the help provided by Norman Tull, the Parish Clerk, in bringing the task to fruition.

From 1969 to 1972 Margaret worked as Assistant Accountant for Smallbones, the builders in Streatley. In 1972 Margaret and Bob and family left Goring for North Wales, Bob being promoted in the NHS to take up a post with the two main hospitals in Wrexham. As the years went by and the family grew up, Margaret took on a number of senior secretarial roles



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LIVES REMEMBERED continued

for Clwyd Health Authority. She became Administrator/Librarian for Wrexham Maelor Hospital in 1986 and subsequently the manager of the new purpose-built Postgraduate Medical Centre, planning and commissioning the new building 1989 to 1994. Margaret also did two Open University degree courses gaining BA 1985 and BSc Honours 1996.

In 2000, Margaret and Bob moved to South Petherton, a lovely village in Somerset to be near to family and grandchildren and enjoy retirement. Margaret finally achieved her ambition to act, joining the village drama group soon after arriving and then becoming secretary. She took part in numerous productions both on and off the stage between 2001 and 2015. She also was in demand as a guest at the Warehouse Theatre in Ilminster, appearing in eight different roles from 2003 to 2015.

Sadly in 2016 Margaret was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and died peacefully at home on 6 July 2026, aged 93. The family are hoping in due course to bring Margaret's ashes back to Goring.

Could you help Cynthia?

Cynthia so wishes she'd learnt to drive. Her husband always drove them everywhere together, but since he died, she's felt increasingly isolated... The children moved away and have their own lives, her friends are getting frail. It's a major problem getting on and off public transport and the service is pretty infrequent anyway. And how can she afford taxis on a state pension, when it's bad enough trying to keep pace with the rent?

There are hundreds of Cynthias living quietly, often out of sight, in the eastern parishes of West Berkshire and Oxfordshire, including Streatley and Goring.

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A Citizens Advice volunteer recently commented on the way many clients are transformed after benefitting from the close attention and help of an adviser. Lewis told the *Henley Standard*: "There are problems that seem insurmountable to those experiencing them, but we break down those seemingly impenetrable problems into manageable steps, providing a route out of despair. This process has a profound impact on the resilience and happiness of our clients."

What kind of basic skills will you need to volunteer with us? You will need to be confident with computers and have a both a willingness to learn and a positive desire to help people. In the course of your volunteering you'll learn new skills and meet new people, helping clients with problems in the areas of debt management, benefits, employment, housing and relationships (no prior knowledge necessary).

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GCC's 150th anniversary: ten extraordinary days of cricket, community and celebration

Goring Cricket Club has just completed one of the most remarkable periods in its long and proud history – a ten-day celebration marking 150 years of cricket in our village. What began as an ambitious idea grew into a festival of sport, heritage, friendship and community spirit that will be remembered for years to come.

The scale of the programme was bold: ten consecutive days of matches, events, gatherings, golf and even a live player draft. Yet thanks to the dedication of volunteers, the enthusiasm of players and supporters and the unmistakable Goring spirit, the club delivered a celebration worthy of its milestone. See photos on Page 1.

A summary of the 10 days of events is:

Day 1 – 2nd XI triumph

The celebrations began with a superb all-round performance from GCC's 2nd XI, who defeated Purley 3rds by 114 runs to leapfrog them in the league. Highlights included a brilliant unbeaten 72 from Alex Gilliam and Himanshu Vij leading the bowling figures with 3/14. The club gathered at The Boundary Bar following the match and enjoyed the first of many tasty celebration BBQ's.

Day 2 – Over 18s vs Under 18s

One of the most anticipated fixtures delivered a thrilling contest, with the Under 18s chasing down 182 to win by three wickets. Standout performances for the youngsters came from Charlie Goss (37), Patrick Dineen (30), and Ozzie Matthews (29).

The match was played in great spirit and showcased the depth of young talent at the club, as well as the desire for both young and old to claim bragging rights.

Day 3 – South Oxfordshire T20 Super Cup

A high-scoring encounter between the South Oxfordshire T20 League Champions (Woodcote) and Goring as Cup holders, saw our greatest local rivals Woodcote impressively chase down 175 in just 17 overs.

GCC's innings featured strong contributions from Joe Richards (36), Navneet Singh Chawla (38) and a blistering 50 not out from Himanshu Vij. Despite the defeat, the match was a spectacle for supporters and the skipper Rich McNeill's homemade curry was one of the culinary highlights of the week.

Day 4 – U13 Girls shine

The academy showcase began with a nail-biting two-run win for the GCC U13 Girls over Warborough. Excellent bowling from Gracie Burch (3/9) and Alexandria Johnson-Cox (2/10) set up the victory, with strong batting contributions from Rosie Ruxton, Burch and Johnson-Cox.

Day 5 – U11 and U13 Mixed T20

A brilliant finale to the junior season, well attended and full of energy, showcasing the enthusiasm and skill of the club's younger players with both teams a combination of our U11 and U13 groups.



U11 and U13 GCC cricketers at the academy event

Day 6 – Golf Day

A break from cricket saw members head to Goring & Streatley Golf Club, where the Chairman produced the round of his life to win the Overall Champion Golfer title with 47 stableford points. Ted Coyle (43) and Tom Ferry (41) completed the podium, while George Grafton won the Junior Champion award.

Day 7 – GCC vs MCC

Fifty years on from the Centenary match, GCC hosted the Marylebone Cricket Club in the flagship event of the 10 days. After bowling MCC out for 177 — with standout spells from Jack Walsh (3/20), Rhys Tong-Jones (3/43) and Navneet Singh Chawla (2/26) — the visitors showed their class with the ball, dismissing GCC for 69.

Despite the result, the occasion was a proud moment for the club – hosting the most famous cricket club in the world and receiving great feedback on the event from our visitors and the local community who attended in great numbers.

Day 8 – Washout and live draft

Rain put paid to the 1st XI fixture, but spirits remained high as members gathered in the Boundary Bar for the GPL T150 Big Bash Blast live draft — a lively and entertaining event that showed the three teams revealed for Bank Holiday Monday's finale.

Day 9 – Legends Day

A wonderful day of nostalgia saw former players return for a three-team Hundred tournament. The teams – Reg Jeffries XI, Chris Vickery XI and Les Shepherd XI were named after three true heroes of the club who are sadly no longer with us.

Each team won a match, making everyone a winner in a celebration of club history. The day was filled with memories, laughter and competitive cricket.

Returning legends included well-known names such as Graham Nicholson, Jon Armitage, Adrian Chilcott, Mike Goodenough, Ben Hunt, Jim Ross, Doug Sarney, Ian Grant and Will Smith – who all debuted for the club in the 80s/90s and played thousands of games for the club between them.

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Day 10 – Intra-Club Hundred Tournament

The finale featured three GCC franchise teams – Joritos, TD's Sweet Chilli Gs and Oz's Earth Quakers – of current players battling it out in a round-robin of Hundred matches.

Each franchise won one match which meant a dramatic ball-off took place to decide the winner — with Joritos triumphant as the sun set over the celebrations. It was a fitting end to an unforgettable 10 days.

A celebration built on community and volunteers

The anniversary events were powered by an amazing group of volunteers whose efforts ensured every day ran smoothly. Their contributions – often unseen – were essential to the success of the celebrations.

There are too many to cover in this article, but special mentions are required for the 150th committee – Stephen Wincott, Andy Ankerson, Jamie Vickery, Alex Crawford and Tom Hedge – and groundsmen, Keith Walker and Peter Irving.

Keith and Peter's tireless work on the ground throughout the summer, and especially in the final weeks, kept the cricket square looking immaculate, despite the challenging weather conditions.

The 150th committee spent many months generating ideas, planning logistics and shaping the programme. Their work culminated not only in a seamless ten days but also in the creation of a spectacular commemorative book, a lasting tribute to the club's heritage.

Thanks must also go to our local village sponsors who supported us through advertising in the commemorative book – Goring & Streatley Golf Club, Warmingham, Davis Tate, MS Interiors, Goring Village Butchers, Coppa Club and Masooms. If you would like to obtain a copy of this fantastic and informative memento, please e-mail jonnyrussell100@outlook.com

Jonny Russell, Chairman

Young local karate star selected to represent Great Britain at Worlds

Seven-year-old Nikita Kostenko from Highmoor is preparing to take his first steps onto the international sporting stage after qualifying for two Karate World Championships in different styles and earning the opportunity to represent Great Britain.

Nikita's karate journey began just two years ago when he started training at Champion Karate Club, a community-based karate project founded by his mother, Valentyna Korovina, who is also his coach.

Despite his young age, Nikita has already shown remarkable dedication and determination. He trains regularly, spends additional time developing his skills and continues to work hard to improve as a young athlete.

Nikita is a pupil at Whitchurch School and works hard to balance his education with his demanding karate training schedule.

Nikita was able to begin competing officially only after reaching the minimum age requirement in late 2025. Since then, he has taken part in six tournaments achieving an impressive total of 12 medals.

After successfully passing the official selection process, Nikita has earned the opportunity to compete at two Karate World Championships in different styles. The first championship will take place in Croatia from 21–26 October, followed immediately by the second championship in Cairo, Egypt, from 27 October–2 November.

'We are incredibly proud of everything he has achieved in just two years. This is a huge opportunity for him and an important step in his sporting journey,' said Valentyna Korovina.

To help Nikita take part in both World Championships, his family is actively raising funds through a GoFundMe page (<https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-nikita-representing-great-britain-at-karate-worlds>). Updates about Nikita's preparation, fundraising events and his journey will be shared through this page.

Valentyna Korovina



Woodcote 10k – Sunday 10 January 2027 – entries now open

The Woodcote 10k is now in its 44th year and is organised by The Rotary Club of Pangbourne. The course is billed as 'The Tough One'; the toughest 10k in the South Chilterns and perhaps beyond too!

Licensed by England Athletics and attracting both Club and non-affiliated runners, the Woodcote 10K is something of a challenge. Just completing the undulating, meandering course, along back roads, flanked by woods and farmland, gives a real sense of achievement.

The 2027 event is taking place on Sunday 10 January with a 10.15am start from Woodcote Village Hall.

Entry is online at www.woodcote10k.org.uk and limited to 600 runners. The cost of entry is £25, discounted to £22 for affiliated Club runners. Minimum age for entry is 15 years.

All profits from the event will be shared with My Cancer My Choices, West Berkshire Homeless and other charities and good causes supported by the Rotary Club of Pangbourne Charitable Trust.

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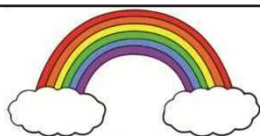
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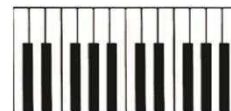
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www.airbnb.com/h/central-goring-3-bed-house

Please call Debs on 07958 748412
to arrange a viewing or to discuss availability

TRIPLE ENSEMBLE RECITAL, ST THOMAS' CHURCH

Saturday 17 October, 3 – 4pm at St Thomas' Church. Come and enjoy a recital from three local musical ensembles, the Clarinet Ensemble, Flute Ensemble and The Jazz Group, all formed from members of the excellent Goring and Streatley Concert Band.

Established over the last three years, all three have flourished and rehearse regularly, performing at a number of indoor and outdoor venues in Goring and surrounding area. In this three-part recital you will hear a variety of pieces from each group's repertoire including – classical, jazz, popular, blues, folk and ragtime. Composers will include Scott Joplin, Schubert, Pachelbel, James Power, Herbie Hancock, and Bart Howard. This will be the first time that all three ensembles perform at the same recital, so it promises plenty of variety, with music to suit all tastes. Why not come along and support your local musicians! There will be no charge but donations to Wallingford Food Bank will be welcome.

OPUS ANGLICANUM, CONCERT

Our Lady & St John Catholic Church on Friday 25 September at 7pm. The acclaimed vocal ensemble Opus Anglicanum returns with an evocative sequence celebrating the traditions of our land. Readings from Dickens, Shakespeare, John Betjeman and Jane Austen combine with the music of Purcell, Stanford, Vaughan Williams, Butterworth and more light-hearted songs, telling hilarious tales and poignant stories, highlighting the best aspects of this land. Tickets £20 and £10 followed by a reception <https://galileegoring.org.uk> eventbrite.co.uk 01491 872181.

PEACE PILGRIMAGE PASSING THROUGH.

The 2026 Franciscan Peace Pilgrimage is a relay-style walking prayer across England organized by the Society of Saint Francis to mark the 800th anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi. The route passes directly through Goring and Streatley on the final leg to reach their community houses in London. They will have started in Northumbria on Lindisfarne and gone down to Dorset, then back up to Gloucestershire and down the Thames. They will be with us on Saturday 26 Sept. You can join them that day from Dorchester or go on with them to Reading on the Sunday. St Thomas' Church, Goring, will be open all day with resources for praying for peace in all its forms. We will have a vigil for peace in St Thomas' at 5-5.45pm. All welcome.

YOUTH ALPHA, ST THOMAS' CHURCH

Explore Life, Faith and Purpose. Sunday 27 September from 5-6.30pm. For 11-15 year olds. A space to be listened to and ask question with games, pizza and a mocktail – everyone welcome. Contact: vicarofgsandss@yahoo.com.

ST MARY'S CONCERT

On Sunday 11 October, at 4pm St Mary's Concerts are delighted that Gary Jordan and Seth Williams, the Acorda Duo, will be returning for a Classical Guitar and Piano concert in St Mary's.

They are taking a tour round Europe with their programme this time, beginning in Germany with Telemann *Sonata No. 4*, moving on to a walk in the Italian Alps with Ivan Andrews' *In Val Gardina*, to southern Spain for Manuel Maria Ponce's *Concerto del Sur* and then to Poland for *Eight Miniatures* by Marek Pasieczny inspired by traditional Polish folk music. Tickets cost £12 full, £10 concessions, sold on door only but we will fit everyone in. (Cash payments please). The concert will finish with the ever popular Friends of St Mary's tea and cakes in the Morrell Rooms (donations for tea and cakes).

Further afield

AFTERNOON TEAS AT ALDWORTH ST MARY'S CHURCH

Every Wednesday in August and 2 September. 3– 4.30pm. Delicious homemade cakes in the company of The Aldworth Giants. For further details and to book groups contact Gill Wilding 01635 578624 or gillwilding@hotmail.com

PANGBOURNE ART GROUP ANNUAL EXHIBITION

Local artists are displaying their work at Pangbourne Art Groups annual exhibition at Pangbourne Village Hall on Saturday 17 and Sunday 18 October from 10am-5pm. More than a hundred paintings will be on display and visitors can also buy cards and enjoy coffee, tea and homemade cakes. We are a friendly club meeting on Wednesday afternoons from 1-4pm and welcome artists of all abilities.

BENSON GARDENING CLUB

On Thursday 1 October Benson Garden Club will have Gillian Taylor coming to speak on *More Colour, Less Work – Fact or Fiction?*. Gillian will examine how we can make our gardens more sustainable in terms of labour, water and nutrition whilst still providing beauty, colour, structure, and insect friendly plants. Gillian is an experienced horticultural writer, speaker and plantswoman. Amongst other things, she is a member of an RHS Trials Forum, an International Rose Trials judge and a Liveryman in the Worshipful Company of Gardeners. Benson Parish Hall, OX10 6LZ. Doors open at 7.15pm for a 7.45pm start (£2 for members, £5 for visitors – just turn up on the door, no need to book). Further information about this thriving club can be found on our website bensongardeningclub.weebly.com or please feel free to email bensongardeningclub@gmail.com

WHITCHURCH AND GORING TWINNING QUIZ

Saturday 31 October. Goring Heath Parish Hall RG8 9AG. 6.30pm for prompt 7pm start. Are you a fan of a pub quiz, or maybe TV's The Chase, Mastermind, Eggheads or University Challenge? Whatever your preference (or level!), come along to our friendly Quiz Night. £15 per person, to include a delicious chilli supper. Licensed bar. Teams of 4-6, come as a team or join others to make a team on the night. Book tickets via Sarah Dragonetti sarah@dragonetti.co.uk adding whether you want the vegetarian chilli.

October at Wallingford Corn Exchange

Live theatre coming up includes the Sinodun Players presenting *The Immaculate* by Oliver Lansley on Tuesday-Friday 27-30 October. Directed by Julie Utlej. £12 (Tuesday), £15 (all other performances).

On Sunday 11 October, 2.30pm, there is *The Witch Who Couldn't Sleep*, a family musical. £12 (adults), £10 (under 10s). On 10 October, you can see *Animal Farm*, adapted and directed by Guy Masterson and starring Sam Blythe. £18 (adults), £15 (under 16s).

Thinking about volunteering at the Corn Exchange? On 3 October, 10am-2pm, there are Volunteer Recruitment Open Day tours.

October live screenings include NT Live's *The Misanthrope* on 2 and 3 October and *Exhibition on Screen: James Whistler* on 1 and 14 October. For more information and cinema listings see www.cornexchange.org.uk

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Monday 21 September

Goring Gap Local History Soc. 2.30pm. GVH. Karen and Bret Wiles: *The Women's Institute in World War II*. Contact Janet Hurst, goringgaphistory@gmail.com

Tuesday 22 September

Chess Club. Children 4.45-5.45pm. Adults 5.45-7pm. GL.

Wednesday 23 September

The Arts Society, Goring. 11am and 2pm. GVH. *The Irritating and Influential James Abbott McNeill Whistler*. Speaker: Julia Musgrave. Refreshments available at 10am and 1pm. Guests are welcome to attend for £5 through prior booking. email: info@theartssocietygoring.org.uk Details of all events and activities may be found at www.theartssocietygoring.org.uk

Thursday 24 September

Goring Gap U3a. 10.30-12noon. GVH. Speaker: Colin Wade: *The Joys and Perils of being an Author*.

Friday 25 September

• **Goring Unplugged.** 7.30pm for 8, GVH. Entry is £5. BYOB + nibbles.

• **Author Talk.** 7pm. MR. Tickets £10. Free refreshments.

• **Opus Anglicanum concert.** 7pm. Our Lady & St John Catholic Church. See P39.

Saturday 26 September

Genie News Copy deadline. *Genie* is published twice a month. Email us: news@genienews.org

Wednesday 30 September

• **Goring Gap News.** Copy deadline for October events. News and articles of local interest to goringgapnews@gmail.com

Thursday 1 October

• **Storytime.** 10.30-11am. GL. Drop-in.

Friday 2 October

• **Goring & Streatley Wine Society.** 8pm. GVH. *Go Brazil*. Presenter: Nicholas Corfe. Enquiries email gswinesoc@gmail.com

Monday 5 October

• **Goring and Streatley Bridge Club.** 6.45pm. GVH. Held every Monday.

Tuesday 6 October

• **Goring Mobile Post Office.** 1.30-4pm. Westholme stores, Wallingford Rd, Goring. Every Tuesday.

• **GLIB Library Book Group.** 5-6pm. See library staff if interested – Full.

Wednesday 7 October

• **Goring Village Green Fingers.** 7.30-9.30pm. SL. *Gardening on chalk* by local resident Amanda Heron. Competition: 'Pale and interesting'. A selection of anything in your garden. Visitors welcome at £5. www.villagegreenfingers.uk

• **The Arts Society, Goring.** GVH. Special Interest Day: *Caravaggio*. Speaker: Chantal Brotherton-Ratcliffe. Members only. Email: info@theartssocietygoring.org.uk Details

of all events and activities may be found at www.theartssocietygoring.org.uk

• **Knit & Natter 3-5pm.** GSC. (weekly, every Wednesday). Drop-in.

Thursday 8 October

• **Goring Mobile Post Office.** 8-11.30am. Westholme stores, Wallingford Rd, Goring. Every Thursday.

Friday 9 October

• **Goring by Cleeve WI.** 7.30pm. SL. Beechwood Group Meeting. Speaker TBC. Contact Katrina Cooper: 01491 875334, kcooper@rsk.co.uk

• **GREADIES Library Book Group.** 10-11am. GL. See library staff if interested. Full.

• **Bingo.** Meat draw. GSC. (weekly, every Friday).

Sunday 11 October**Classical Guitar and Piano Concert.**

4pm. St Mary's Church. Gary Jordan and Seth Williams, the Acorda Duo. See P39.

Monday 12 October

Genie News Copy deadline. Email us: news@genienews.org

Tuesday 13 October

Lego Club. 4.45-6pm. GL. Please book. 01865 815155.

Wednesday 14 October

• **Goring by Cleeve WI.** 7.30pm. SL. *My Chelsea Show Garden*. Speaker: Rob Jones, from The Garden Design Company Ltd. Contact Katrina Cooper: 01491 875334, kcooper@rsk.co.uk

• **The Soundbar Open Mic,** The Miller of Mansfield. Sign up to play from 7.30pm. Music 8 – 10pm. Fancy playing?

Come along or get in touch, HelloSoundbar@gmail.com

• **Stay and Play.** 10-11.15am. GL. Drop-in

• **Evening Talk.** 7 for 7.30pm. GL. With John Cheshire, author of *System Lockout* – a topical crime thriller. See P29. Please book 01865 815155 or Eventbrite

Thursday 15 October

Pick a Flick. 10.30am-2pm, CR. *Notting Hill* (1999). The ordinary life of the quiet owner of an independent travel bookstore in London changes when a world-famous Hollywood actress walks into his shop. Please contact Sarah Fraser 01491 871838 or Jenny Boyd 01491 872109 to book and to ask for transport if required. The cost is £5 per event, including a light lunch.

Saturday 17 October

Triple Ensemble Recital. 3-4pm. St Thomas' Church. See P39.

Monday 19 October

Goring Gap Local History Soc. 2.30pm. GVH. Katrina Cooper: *Soldiery of the English Civil War seen through the lens of the Sealed Knot*. Contact Janet Hurst, goringgaphistory@gmail.com

Tuesday 20 October

• **Social Scrabble Club.** 4.45-7pm. GL. All welcome with refreshments.

Wednesday 21 October

• **Goring Gap Textile Group.** 7pm. CR. This group meets every third Wednesday of the month. The programme is rich and varied: some evenings we have a new textile related activity, other meetings are social get-togethers to share our love of textiles. New members welcome. Members £2, Visitors £3.50. More details contact gaptextilegroup@gmail.com

• **Coffee Morning.** 10.30am-12noon. St Andrew's Church South Stoke. The 3rd Wednesday of every month.

Saturday 24 – Saturday 31 October

Half term. GL. Free crafts and trail. Theme: Enchanted woods. Drop-in.

Monday 26 October

Genie News Copy deadline. *Genie* is published once a month. Email us: news@genienews.org

Tuesday 27 October

Chess Club. Children 4.45pm-5.45pm. Adults 5.45 – 7pm. GL. Drop-in.

Wednesday 28 October

The Arts Society. 11am and 2pm. GVH. *The Extraordinary and Outlandish Royal Pavilion*. Speaker: Patrick Conner. Refreshments available at 10am and 1pm. Guests are welcome to attend for £5 through prior booking email: info@theartssocietygoring.org.uk Details of all events and activities may be found at www.theartssocietygoring.org.uk

Thursday 29 October

• **Goring Gap U3a.** 10.30-12noon. GVH. Speaker: Muriel Pilkington: *Topic TBC*.

• **Storytime with craft.** 10.30-11am. GL. Drop-in.

For more events on the Events Calendar at www.genienews.org

The following abbreviations are used:

Bellême Room	BR
Canterbury Room	CR
Free Church Hall	FCH
Goring Community Centre	GCC
Goring Library	GL
Goring Social Club	GSC
Goring Village Hall	GVH
Morrell Room	MR
Storton Lodge	SL

An enchanted springtime in Lucca

During April, May and some of June I lived in Lucca, Tuscany, fulfilling a long-held ambition to spend proper time in Italy, not just the odd week or two weeks being a frantic tourist. It was always the plan when I retired to work overseas (I did that) and live in Italy. It's taken over twenty years to 'do' the Italy bit of the plan.

I chose Lucca, because I hadn't been there and it is near Florence. Various family members wanted to visit Florence, although I've had the good fortune to have been there many times. Lucca is a wonderful walled city dating back to The Etruscan era. There are also Roman, medieval and other ancient influences and a beautiful comparatively modern area outside the walls. I rented a spacious flat inside the walls with a lovely view over the communal gardens, and the mountains.

My vague plan was to speak Italian all the time, go to the recommended language school (which was a six-minute walk from the flat), visit every art gallery and museum in the city, eat gelato every day and witness everything going on in the city. I only achieved one of the above...language school for two courses. The others dwindled away as the difference between living somewhere and being a tourist became ever more apparent. I'd completely forgotten that I still had to do daily chores such as shop, cook, and vacuum. Fortunately, I had time to take the tourist bit slowly. Such a revelation...

The days took on a shape for me which also suited my many lovely visitors: flexible breakfast time, a leisurely stroll along another street/alley, art gallery or whatever, take a photo of something unusual and head home for a late lunch. A mandatory siesta in the afternoon and off again about five for another 'wab' – my daughter-in-law's family word for wandering about till you find somewhere nice for a drink and a meal. I think I walked an average of three and a half miles every day.

Lucca has many wonderful art shops and galleries; I think I visited them almost all. Some had fascinating, incomprehensible modern stuff which I love, some were dedicated to particular Italian artists (I was shown a photograph of Gualtiero Passani with Picasso). Then there were the city galleries. These were disappointing as they had a sort of unloved atmosphere and were grubby and deserted!

My last three evenings were spent listening to the graduation students from the Music College giving their final performances. Wonderful. I haven't mentioned Puccini, who was born and lived in Lucca. The Puccini Museum was great.

On reflection the most disappointing thing was that I didn't speak Italian as much as I'd hoped. Every time I spoke my best Italian they answered in English, so I had to say, in Italian, please speak Italian. The last five weeks or so I said: 'Why are you speaking to me in English?' Fortunately, this made people laugh and continue in Italian. The trouble being, of course, they all speak far better English than I do Italian.

It was a wonderful experience; I was so sad to leave but it was time to come home. I shall definitely go back to Lucca for a visit. Maybe this is a bit strange as there are so many other cities in Italy where I haven't been, but I can't wait to go back!

If anyone else has the same idea, I can't recommend it enough. Just do it!



Frances Thompson Frances and her daughter in Lucca

MEDICAL INFORMATION

- In an emergency dial **999**
- **For medical advice** at all times, including surgery out-of-hours, dial **111** or use <https://111.nhs.uk/> You will be told how to obtain any further help if needed
- **Local pharmacies** can offer advice and treatment for some conditions. Goring Pharmacy: **01491 872124**
- **Nearest First Aid Units:** Townland Hospital, Henley **01865 903755**, or West Berkshire Community Hospital, Thatcham **01635 273508**, or Abingdon Community Hospital **01865 903476**
- **Goring & Woodcote Medical Practice:** Monday-Friday 8am-6.30pm **01491 680686** Requests for appointments are triaged to direct patients to the correct help and should be made using the form available at www.goringwoodcotemedicalpractice.nhs.uk If you are unable to use the form, the practice can be contacted on the above number to support you.
- **Nearest Casualty Department:** Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading **0118 322 7020**
- **Emergency Dentist** – call **111** for advice
- **Goring medical equipment** – including, wheelchairs, toilet aids, mobility aids and more: **01491 874333** or **07966 245264**
- **Goring transport office** – 10am-12noon Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, to arrange volunteer transport to local surgeries, dentists and hospitals **01491 873565**.

A swan at sunset



Photo : David Slarks

Sunset over the Gardiner Cricket Ground after junior cricket



Photo : Les Billing

Sunset over The Gap



Photo : Elisa Beamson

Viewing the eclipse from Cow Hill



Photo: Sarah Haigh