

Goring Gap News

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

Varsha and Jack retire from Westholme Stores



With thanks for 37 years of service in Goring and wishing them a very happy retirement. See Pages 22-23.

Photo: Ron Bridle

Happy frog in Goring pond



Photo: Lynn Curtis



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Goring Gap News

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for Voluntary Service 2004

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News and articles of local interest, original poems, drawings and photographs are invited for the Editor's consideration. Articles and digital picture files (at as high quality as possible - at least 1.5MB for colour) can be sent to goringgapnews@gmail.com or submitted on memory stick, along with any handwritten or typed material, via the post box for Goring Gap News in Inspiration, 1 The Arcade, Goring, RG8 9AY, by courtesy of the proprietors. See website for more details.

Deadline for next issue: 7 May

Distribution

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

May 2025 weekend of 24/25

June 2025 weekend of 28/29

July 2025 weekend of 26/27

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

Extra copies can be purchased from Inspiration and Westholme Store.

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GRAPEVINE

80th Anniversary of VE Day

To mark the 80th anniversary of VE day on Thursday 8 May there will be a short service of thanksgiving and prayers for peace at Goring War Memorial at noon. This will be in St Thomas', Goring, if the weather is wet or wild. Please also see article Page20.

Oxfordshire County Council election 1 May

Goring & Woodcote Division

The following people have been or stand nominated for election to this division:

Donahue	Jim	Local Conservative
Filipova-Rivers	Maggie	Liberal Democrats
Hollingsworth	Louisa	Labour Party
Hulbert	Doug	Reform UK
Pierpont	Caroline Jane	The Green Party

The election takes place on Thursday 1 May 7am-10pm.

Christian Aid Week 11-17 May

Christian Aid has been working tirelessly for the last 80 years to end poverty worldwide. This year the focus in Christian Aid week is on climate change and the effect it is having on farmers in Guatemala, Central America. Gruelling heatwaves and extreme weather are ravaging the farms of indigenous communities. The people in these communities have done the least to cause the climate crisis, yet they endure its impact the most. Working through their local partner, Congcoop, Christian Aid is helping to provide vital agricultural training and tools that unlock climate resilient farming methods. By donating during Christian Aid Week, you can help these farmers to protect their communities from hunger and poverty.

As in previous years, we shall be distributing envelopes and hope to reach every house in Goring and Streatley. This is quite a big undertaking and we would welcome offers of help. If you can cover your own road, or even part of it, that will be much appreciated. Please leave a message for me at St Thomas' Church office, tel. 01491 875651, if you are willing to deliver envelopes. (Please note that we don't collect the envelopes, we ask people to take their donations to collection points in the village.)

On Wednesday 14 May, there will be a Ploughman's Lunch in aid of Christian Aid at Oriel House, Thames Road, from 12noon to 2pm. Entrance is free but donations to Christian Aid are welcome.

Judith Aguda

Streatley Litter Pick

Streatley Parish Council apologises for the recent cancellation of the Streatley Village Litter Pick on 29 March. The event will be rescheduled, and the revised date will be published on the SPC website www.streatley.org. This is once the Parish Council has had a chance to discuss options at its next meeting on 14 April.

Nick Barnes
Streatley Parish Council



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Goring on Thames Parish Council

Join us on 31 May – your voice matters!

The Annual Meeting of the Parish takes place next month at Goring Village Hall and we want as many of our residents as possible to be part of this important event. Whether you're passionate about the future of our community, eager to share your thoughts, or curious about what's happening locally, this is the perfect opportunity for you to get involved.

Why attend?

Stay informed about local projects

- The Parish Council will present updates on ongoing and upcoming projects, giving you a unique opportunity to understand the plans shaping the future of our village. Projects include new playground, enhancements to Sheepcot Field (including the Pavilion and an all-weather pitch), a natural burial ground, traffic and parking initiatives, updates on the Neighbourhood Plan and more.

Have your say

- Your opinion matters! The Annual Meeting is not just a presentation – it's a discussion. We encourage all residents to come along and contribute their views on the direction of local projects, services, and policies

Discover local clubs and societies

- Whether you're looking to join a sports team, a book club, or a gardening group, you'll find something for everyone. At the meeting, you'll be able to meet representatives from these organisations and find out how to get involved.

Meet your neighbours and make connections

- The Annual Meeting is a great chance to connect with other residents and strengthen the sense of community. Whether you're new to the area or have lived here for years, it's a wonderful opportunity to get to know your neighbours and contribute to the vibrant life of our parish.



Parish Annual Meeting 2024

When and where?

The Annual Meeting of the Parish will be held at Goring Village Hall on 31 May. Doors open at 4pm, and the formal part of the meeting will take place from 6pm with an address by the Chair of the Parish Council. The event

will finish at 7pm. Refreshments will be available.

Remember, this meeting is about you – the residents. It's an opportunity to come together, learn more about what's going on in our parish, and actively contribute to our community's future. Your voice is important, and together, we can build a stronger, more connected parish for everyone. For further information contact Councillor David Bermingham at d.bermingham@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk or the clerk at clerk@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk

We look forward to seeing you there!

Cllr David Bermingham

Council meeting report

The principal points of the Goring Parish Council meeting on 10 March are summarised below. The draft minutes are available at

www.goringparishcouncil.gov.uk

An extraordinary full council meeting was confirmed for Monday 24 March at 7.30pm to approve a supplier and a design for the Bourdillon Playground Redevelopment.

An appeal was made for potential volunteers for a Community Speed Watch team to get in touch with the Travel and Transport Committee.

Approval was granted for new permissive path signs to go up on a new path alongside Reading Road. This is a joint scheme coordinated by Goring Heath PC, Goring PC and the Elvenden Estate. The new path connects the bridleway from Great Chalk Woods to the footpath into Elvenden valley.

New fees and tariffs were approved for sports clubs, car park and amenity hire for the Year 2025-6.

A solution for recording committee and full PC meetings was approved and budgeted. It is envisaged meetings will be uploaded onto a social media platform, eg YouTube. A trial will start with specific committee meetings soon.

'No Mow May' was approved.

A skip was approved to complete the clearance of waste material from the OJFS.

The cost of 40 hanging baskets supplied from Window Flowers of Henley was approved for 2025-6.

Next meetings: Bellême Room, Goring Village Hall, 14 April 7.30pm, then 12 May.

See www.goringparishcouncil.gov.uk for the agenda.

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Bach's 340th Birthday Concert by Christopher Burrows in St Mary's on 23 March

This was a technically and emotionally brilliant performance of some of JS Bach's most difficult compositions.

Christopher began by explaining that in his opinion, and I would entirely concur, Bach's non-religious compositions, often based on complex mathematical permutations of a simple original tune, were written by the composer to be played with fervour, emotion and also a sense of fun and enjoyment and not as rigid pieces with no expression. Christopher gave us a spirited and most impressive performance of pieces including some so complex that few performers attempt them. He played Bach's *Tocatta in E minor*, three of Bach's *Little Preludes*, *Prelude and Fugue in C minor* from the *Well Tempered Clavier*, *Contrapunctus I* from the *Art of Fugue*, *French Suite No 3*, four pieces from the *Goldberg Variations*, *Ich ruf zu dir Herr Jesu Christ* and finished with *Tocatta in D Minor*.

My own favourite piece was the one I was especially thrilled to see in the programme which was the final *Tocatta in D*

minor, one of Bach's earliest keyboard compositions, published originally by his oldest brother, in which the composer displays his revolutionary approach to musical rules with an exciting experiment in Italian *Tocatta* form which begins at very high speed and gets faster, ending with a very wild fast dance in which Bach works through every musical key.

Christopher used an electronic keyboard for most pieces as the clavier instruments in Bach's time were different to modern pianos which do not have the speed of notes needed for many of the pieces. It was an impressive and enjoyable performance and everyone leaving the concert had big smiles on their faces.

The concert was followed by a social time with tea and cakes in the Morrell Rooms provided by Friends of St Mary's (FoSM) to whom any profits from the donations go.

We would like to thank Christopher very much for working so hard to entertain us in honour of Bach's birthday. I would also like to thank all the wonderful volunteers who work so hard to make these concerts a success, run the ticket sales and serve the teas, especially John Rogers, Elaine Cox and Linda Ogle, and to all our splendid cake makers. Finally, thanks to our wonderful audience, who are not put off by the weather and without whom our concerts could not take place.

Our next St Mary's Concert will be piano duets by Ikuko Inoguchi and Sally Goodworth on Sunday 11 May at 4pm

Stella Robinson



Spring concert triumph!

A combined band of around 70 members from Goring and Streatley Concert Band and Starter Band launched their 2025 season with a superb concert in Benson Parish Hall on Sunday 30 March. Andy Townsend and Claire Salmon, Musical Directors of the Concert Band and Starter Band respectively, led this large group of musicians through a varied and challenging programme.

We heard a wonderfully powerful rendition of the *Dies Irae* from Verdi's *Requiem* – congratulations to the brass section; you were amazing! This dramatic piece was followed by the light hearted melody of *Singing in The Rain*, and then *Habitat*, a beautiful piece evoking thoughts of our fragile planet.

In the largest contrast in the programme ('the ridiculous to the sublime' I believe Claire suggested), the upbeat *Uptown Funk* disco piece was followed by a sublime and moving *Symphonic Portrait* from Puccini's *La Bohème*. The Puccini was a challenging piece to play with musical transitions and changes on mood, which clearly demonstrated the skills and strength in the different sections of woodwind, brass and percussion. The concert ended with joyous melodies from the famous *Oklahoma* musical. We were a very lucky audience to hear such a wonderful programme of music from our local bands – thank you. We look forward to your next performance at South Stoke May Fair on Monday 5 May.

Carol Slarks





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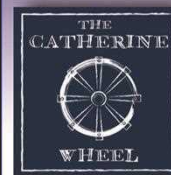
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MUSIC and ARTS continued

Open studios in May

Oxfordshire Art weeks are taking place 3-26 May with studios open across Oxfordshire. See www.artweeks.org For Berkshire, see www.open-studios.org.uk Below are some local open studios.

Hilary Arnold-Baker

Last year I held my first exhibition since moving to Goring in 2021, and converting my garage into a really good studio. This year I shall again be opening in May as part of West Berks/ North Hants Open Studios (formerly Newbury OS). I look forward to welcoming everyone to see my work and the techniques I use, which are somewhat unusual.

I went to Art School as a mature student when our children were at university, graduating just after them, at the age of 51 – it was quite an experience, all the other students were thirty years younger than me. We were trained as Decorative Artists, meaning that we spent three years learning Renaissance techniques, using gesso and gilding in all their forms, as well as 17th century Japanese techniques of lacquer and papier-mâché.

The techniques, combined with the firmly Fine Art approach of the art school fascinated me, and I find that many of the visitors to my studio now are equally intrigued. So, this year, as well as showing a selection of my bowls, boxes and collages, I shall be illustrating the story of water gilding and how it is done, via a series of small panels tracing the technique from start to finish, some of which will be for sale. The best book on the subject is still that written by Cennino Cennini in 1437!

I look forward to welcoming you to the studio in Goring, I am on the corner of Station Road and Croft Road, and will be open on the weekends of 10/11 May and 17/18 May and Wednesdays on 14 May and 21 May.

Other artists opening studios in Goring

Open on 10,11 May and 15-18 May, 11am-6pm (Thursday 8pm, Sunday 4pm), Bridget Thompson, 88 Wallingford Rd, RG8 0HL, Sarah Rushbrooke 47 Milldown Road, RG8 0BA and Jane Dipple and Jacqueline Fitzjohn, The Orchard, Manor Road, RG8 9DP. Bridget, Sarah and Jacqueline work in pottery/ceramics and Jane's work is mixed media.

Simon Pink and Kerry Webb

West Berkshire-based artists Simon Pink and Kerry Webb have lived in close proximity to the South Oxfordshire border for many years, and this beautiful countryside continues to provide numerous sources of inspiration for both artists. Simon and Kerry will be painting in their studio, Hilltop, throughout the Open Studios event and would love to talk to you about their creative processes and show you what they're currently working on. Hilltop will be open from 11am-5pm Saturday/Sunday 10/11, 17/18, 24/25 May and Bank Holiday Monday 26 May. The studio is at: 15B Berkshire Drive, Tilehurst, Reading.

Goring Jazz - The Howard King Quartet

Friday 14 March saw the Village Hall début of a new line-up led by resident bass-player, Howard King, with Rob Howe on piano, Ben Robins, drums, and Phil Chaundy, alto sax – all new faces – and the now familiar Ewen Baird on tenor sax. Not only were some faces new – so, in important ways, was the music. Away from the Great American Songbook and bebop standbys from the 1940s – we were now in the world of Herbie Hancock, Wayne Shorter, McCoy Tyner and the post-bop generation. From the first intriguing chords on the piano, we knew we were in skilled hands. The music still swung mightily, but the harmonic language was different, typified by the Herbie Hancock original, Dolphin Dance. On alto, Phil Chaundy's searing tone and tumbling phrases recall the sound of Jackie McLean, the most influential of post-bop alto saxists. On tenor, Ewen Baird is more measured, with a warm almost vibrato-less tone, and a logical but always inventive approach. Ben Robins's drumming was a revelation – he listens closely to what the others are playing and subtly underscores certain phrases with comments of his own.

It is difficult to pick out highlights from a stimulating and very enjoyable evening, but in Tadd Dameron's *On a Misty Night* – despite the title, a catchy mid-tempo number – the two saxes played the theme in harmony and the talented Rob Howe delivered one of many memorable piano solos. As always, Howard King's resonantly singing bass propelled things along, while giving depth and substance to the ensemble. We must hope that this will be the first of many appearances with his new group in Goring.

Gus McGill





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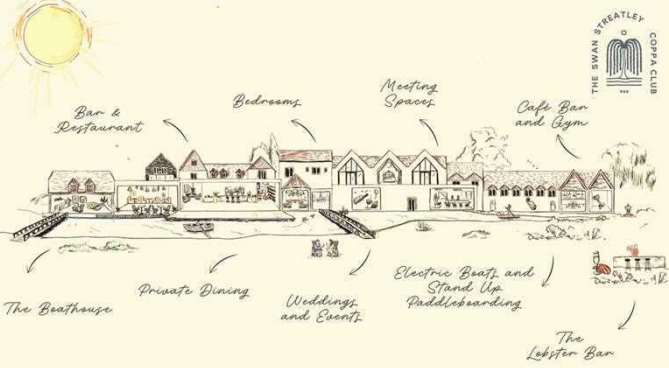


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WHAT'S ON AT THE SWAN AT STREATLEY

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EASTER EGG HUNT Sun 20th April from 10am	PAINT YOUR PARTNER Sun 27th April 2pm	SPRING FORAGING WORKSHOP Sun 4th May 10am
LIVE MUSIC		
AT THE LOBSTER BAR Sun 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th May 2pm		SNAP FOR MORE INFO AND TO SEE OTHER EVENTS 
The Lobster Bar		
APRIL - SEPTEMBER	Summertime riverside bar and BBQ on the lawn.	OPEN THURS - SUN
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THE GREATEST SHOWMAN Wed 21st May 7pm	DIRTY DANCING Wed 30th July 7pm	SNAP TO BOOK TICKETS 

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Young music-making enabled in Trust's first year

The Goring and Streatley Young Musicians Trust is a registered charity set-up in February 2024 to support grassroots music-making in the Goring and Streatley area.



Our charitable aims and activities include:

- Enabling children to learn a musical instrument at primary school for free
- Providing bursaries for follow-on tuition and access to instruments
- Encouraging and increasing participation in our local community music scene.

Making a difference

With a generous grant from the *Goring Gap News* that helped to seed-fund this initiative, and donations from many other individuals and local organisations, we have so far developed positive relationships with four local primary schools to provide activities in line with our charitable aims. This has been very well-received by pupils, parents and teachers alike, and feedback received included:

- 'A whole year of tuition teaching is just brilliant! I can't really put into words how incredible this is...'
- 'Your funds and our partnership are making leading music here an absolute joy and will make such a difference to the children.'
- 'Thank you for all your support with this, we are really excited about it.'
- 'Thank you so much for getting in touch and letting us know that support with music is available locally. We would love to find out more.'

We also ran a Brass Discovery Day in November, courtesy of a grant from the Pangbourne College Community Fund, which provided a mix of interactive sessions for novice brass players. This was led by professional teachers and performers, ably supported by a backing band of volunteers (and a pizza paddle!). Along similar lines, Goring Primary School's new brass players were invited to participate in a fantastic Jazz Workshop for local schools with Mark Armstrong, the director of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra. This was organised by the Oratory School and we are in early discussions with their head of music to run something similar next year for the Trust.

The future

We have funding to run these activities and support instrumental provision in schools for the coming year, but would very much welcome continued support from the community to build funds for subsequent years. Whether it is a monetary donation or running a fundraising event or even just offering your time, we would be delighted to hear from you. No donation is too small.

Alternatively, do come and support one of our fundraising events, including:

- Open Garden and Plant Sale at the beautiful Wallingford Lodge, Wantage Road, Streatley, Sunday 11 May, 2pm-5pm.

- Goring Community Jazz on the second Friday of each month, where we run the bar with all profits going to the charity.

Please see our website for more information including how to contact us or to donate, and do follow us on Facebook or subscribe to our website to receive a quarterly newsletter. Alternatively, we can be contacted at info@goringandstreatleyymt.co.uk or pop by to say hello at one of the community jazz evenings. Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who has helped so far. We are beginning to see tangible results from Trust-funded activities, and your support is very much appreciated.

Paul Gillion, Ruth Jolly, Claire Salmon, David Salmon
Trustees of the Goring and Streatley YMT
www.goringandstreatleyymt.co.uk

La Belle Époque comes to Goring (in six easy lessons)

Curiosity driven, you push open the door of Storton Lodge (next to the Fire Station) on a Tuesday morning in January or early February and you might have been pleasantly surprised.

Here we are – some 12 or 13 of us-enthralled by musical clips, scenes from filmed interviews, life wisdom quotations from great figures, handout notes, books to peruse, all melded together and beautifully presented by our tutor Christopher Carter, fount of musical history knowledge and indefatigable researcher of intriguing personal biography.

This is the WEA (Workers Educational Association) two hours a week for six weeks course transporting us to the music of La Belle Époque in 1880s and 1890s Paris; a heady concoction scene of musical composers and compositions, of the eminent Impressionist painters, novelists, poets and artistic café society flaneurs. We listen to the works of the good and great, the romantic and eccentric, the reflective and the fantastic. Starting with the opéra bouffe of Offenbach we move onto the romantic ballets of Delibes, the Orientalism and serenity of Debussy, the *Ballets Russes* of Diaghilev, the elegance of Maurice Ravel, the strangeness of Erik Satie. To mention a few.

Confession time. I do not play a musical instrument, sing in a choir or have had any musical training, but those few hours of listening, watching, questioning and discussing lifted me from a dull winter's morning into a sun-lit world of excitement, pleasure and imagination.

Music therapy like this for £5 an hour? Lead me to it!

WEA needs an organiser

Previous WEA courses by Chris Carter have covered other great classical composers, and topics by other lecturers have covered various aspects of history, music and art.

The current local WEA organiser, Carole Slarks, has now resigned. If you are interested in understanding more about the WEA and perhaps to taking over as organiser of some fascinating courses, please contact Carole on [07772 054631](tel:07772054631).

Michael Saunders

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Pop-up colour comes to former sorting office

On Saturday 22 March, between 10am and 4pm, walkers strolling over the two bridges by Boathouse Dental Surgery were in for a surprise. The doors of the former Royal Mail sorting office, now for sale (see February *GGN*), were flung wide open. An intriguing little sign gave very few clues as to what was inside. However, the curious who ventured up the steps and inside were rewarded with a pop-up shop selling a colourful array of hand-made and repurposed home furnishings, from tables and chairs to brightly patterned lampshades and fairy-lights.

Goring resident Kate Potter and Henley's Sally Ripon were behind the surprise enterprise. 'What you see,' Kate told *GGN*, 'I've either painted, stripped or just changed its look – I usually say bringing furniture back to life!' Kate, who is trading under the name Dovetail and Feathers, was selling a range of furniture that she repurposes by hand. She said she gets given a lot of the furniture which she then works with, but sometimes she also buys second-hand items that she likes the look of. She likes to vary her work: 'Sometimes we go quite wacky, but sometimes we go more muted.'



Sally and Kate

Sally, who makes the lampshades, is currently trading under her own name. She explained how she makes her lampshades: 'They're made from repurposed frames, so I collect them from the charity shop or the car boot sales and then literally strip them down to the wire and then rebuild them up with beautiful fabrics. I get quite a lot of the fabrics from Lady Sew and Sew in Henley. A lot of people don't know about [the shop] but they have the most amazing range of fabrics; brightly coloured and just beautiful.'

For Sally, her business sprung out of lockdown: 'I just started doing this in lockdown and then my husband said 'Darling, you're not making any more until you get rid of them!' – and so we set this up! I just enjoy doing it, it's quite therapeutic.'

'This is our first time selling,' Kate explained, adding that 'it's all very early days.' This was very evident by the fact that there was virtually no advertising for the impromptu shop, besides the signs which appeared outside and word of mouth. However, by the end of the day it seemed that they had had quite a lot of footfall and that their 'pop-up' had 'popped off' quite well.

In case you missed Kate and Sally's sale, they are planning on holding another one at the same location near the end of this month. Keep a look out for the little sign.

Dan Gordon-Potts

Profile: Beacon Flooring

Hello loyal *GGN* readers! It's time again for another local business owner to have their close-up. For this one, on a very wet day, I waded across a somewhat flooded high street to pop into Beacon Flooring to chat with owner Emily King. Admittedly, it wasn't the best timing as she was having a very busy morning, but she managed to spare a few minutes, thanks Emily!

Business owner: Emily King

Trading name: Beacon Flooring

Address: 16 High Street, Goring

Phone: **01491 454095**

Online: <https://beaconflooring.co.uk>

Open: Monday-Friday 9.30am-4pm (excluding Wednesday), Saturday 9.30am-1pm

How did you get to where you are today?

So basically, I married into this...so there's your answer! I married into this situation

and didn't plan for it, but yeah this is what I do now. My husband Dan has always done this. We've been here ten years this year, but we have another shop over in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire. Dan's dad started it 31 years ago. We've always



Business owner Emily King

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BUSINESS continued

lived in the area. Now we live in Ipsden, but I did for a time go to Goring Primary School. Because we lived locally and this shop came up, we thought oh well we'll give it a go, and I've probably been in here about eight years. Before, I was in credit control for an electrical wholesaler – quite different, although chasing money!

What do you like about your business? I like that it's a successful business and that we've been around for years. We've got a very good reputation around here and we're very lucky that we've got a high street shop that thrives, really. We're always busy – we don't really experience a quiet period and we don't contract anything out; so we work really hard. My husband does all the fittings and he's very particular, he's a perfectionist; very good at what he does.

What advice would you give to local entrepreneurs? Be prepared because it's very tough. There's never a switch off, you don't go home and switch off! Yesterday, for instance, a lot of jobs weren't ready, so they're all booked in, but then someone's telling us they're not ready. We have a huge diary booked up for four or five weeks... so then I have to contact every customer and try to rejig things around. Be prepared but also remember you need to switch off – I'm not great at that. We go on holiday (we had a big one last year) but the only time we have a break is when we go away and then I have people in to help me with the shop.

Anything else you like about being a local business? I like the way we approach people, it's quite a personal service we give. I don't know, it's just a bit more personal coming from somewhere like us than it is going to a big company. I'm just proud that it is a small family-owned business really; they are very rare, but when you find one they are usually very good because they've been in the trade for a long time.

Do you run a small business in Goring or Streatley? Whether it's a high street shop or a hustle on your (high) table top, I'm interested! Get in touch with Dan on [07877 425814](tel:07877425814) or email: dpgpotts@gmail.com

Grocer owner wins female entrepreneur award

Kate Kind of The Goring Grocer has won an award for being one of the country's most impressive entrepreneurs. Small Business Britain profiled her as part of a campaign celebrating female-owned businesses in the UK. Kate told *GGN* that it's not just her that deserves a pat on the back: 'According to research, only 15% of small businesses in the UK are run by women. Goring is bucking the trend.' She says that half the businesses in the village are female-owned and run.

Secret Adventures in Goring

I created Secret Adventures to bring the thrill of adventure to nature starved city dwellers. I ran special adventures in London like kayaking at night under Tower Bridge, urban exploration events in hidden locations, candlelit concerts and adventure film nights.

Since I moved to the Gap, Secret Adventures has specialised in outdoor events in the Goring area. There is a special focus on woodland activities and a celebration of the natural world.

For those interested in hands-on culinary experiences, the Foraging and Wild Cooking event provides an opportunity to explore the art of foraging. Led by trained herbalist and forager Justine Gens, participants embark on a guided walk to identify and collect edible plants from the woods and open glades. The foraged ingredients are then used to prepare meals over a campfire, offering a direct connection to the environment and the food it provides.

The Woodland Feast is a three-course meal prepared over an open fire in beautiful mature woodland. Guests are welcomed with a botanical cocktail and seated at candlelit tables beneath a canopy of trees. After the meal, attendees gather around a campfire to enjoy marshmallows and herbal teas, fostering a sense of community and shared adventure.

Secret Adventures is organising an outdoor woodland film night with silent headphones on 3 May. We would recommend booking soon, as tickets are likely to sell out for this event. Walk through the woods to a beautiful clearing. Watch some of the best short adventure documentaries of all time. These films have won over 20 awards between them and are sure to inspire you on your own adventures.

We also organise and fund special events in partnership with youth charities and local communities, to help young people access nature. Past initiatives have included canoe adventures on the River Wye, woodland pizza making and foraging.

If you would like to book tickets for an event or even book your own private adventure for your birthday, a special party or a team building work event please visit: www.secretadventures.org

Madoc Threipland

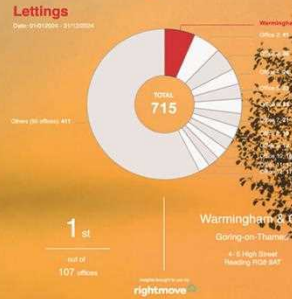


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Young and old writing together in Streatley

Recently Years 3 and 4 at Streatley Primary School had an exciting opportunity to take part in an intergenerational project with Coombe House Care Home in Streatley. Organised by The Corn Exchange in Newbury, the 'Words Together Intergenerational Project' truly brought our community together.

Over the course of three engaging visits, practitioners from The Corn Exchange came into school to deliver workshops. The children planned, developed and wrote their very own fairy tales about things that were important to them, sparking their creativity and helping to enhance their writing skills. Simultaneously, residents of Coombe House participated in interactive workshops, making it a collaborative effort between generations.

The culmination of this project included two wonderful visits to the care home, where our children had the chance to meet the residents. It was heart-warming to see the children playing games, sharing stories and spending time with the residents. The children said how much they loved writing the stories, spending time with the residents and how wonderful it was for them all to share their stories together. The joy on all their faces was a delight to see!

We are eager to build on these sessions, creating further opportunities for connection with Coombe House. What a fantastic experience for everyone involved!



Children visit Coombe House

Mrs Hartley
Years 3 and 4 Teacher
Streatley Primary School

Becoming a school governor

On 24 July last year, I stood at the gates of Streatley Primary School sobbing. My silly tears were not just because my baby boy was growing up and moving onto secondary school, but also because I was genuinely sad to be parting from a school that meant so much to my family. My youngest son has a language disorder and Streatley Primary could not have been more understanding in the way they educated him. My son was never expected to learn the way ordinary children are taught, but was always taught in the unique ways in which he learns.

Soon after the tears dried, I saw a call on social media for governors at the school. I realised there was a way to stay in touch with the place that meant so much and is so important in our small community. Plus, it was a way to say thank you and to try to contribute to the continued success of Streatley Primary.

Getting started

After an interview with the Chair of Governors I got the job – and as luck would have it (or was it fate?) there was a vacancy for a Special Educational Needs (SEN) Governor which meant I would be involved in exactly the area that my son had benefitted from.

I attend half termly meetings with the school's SENDCo, Special Educational Needs Coordinator, and report back at the half termly Full Governing Board meetings. As governors, we don't get involved in the daily operations of the school, we advise on the strategic direction of the school and ensure it has a clear and successful vision.

As I entered school for my most recent meeting, I found the Head Teacher and a group of children working hard in the pond area. The children proudly showed me the toad houses they were building from plant pots and decorating with moss. This is an example of the kind of outdoor activities that children benefit from at Streatley Primary, with its impressive outdoor space, including the pond, the vegetable garden and the outdoor classroom. Of course, the whole school backs onto Streatley woods, which are also incorporated into the school week. 'Out of classroom' experiences are important to all children but can be particularly beneficial to children with SEN. Time to decompress from a noisy and sometimes overwhelming classroom is vital for keeping SEN children happy and able to participate in school life.

A rewarding role

People benefit from being involved in the Governing Board of our school in many different ways. Personally, I get a lot out of giving back to my community and I have the added benefit of staying up to date on a wide range of SEN matters which can then indirectly benefit my son. Others join the board because it is helpful in their own career. Retirees join to keep their mind active. There are many positive reasons for becoming a governor.

Streatley Primary School is currently recruiting governors, and is particularly interested in anyone with marketing, procurement and/or health and safety skills and knowledge. I would encourage anyone looking for a voluntary opportunity in our community to consider applying. You don't need any prior experience of governance or working in the education sector, and all training is provided. It will take a few hours of your time each month. If you are interested in finding out more then please contact our Chair, Sian Armitage on ChairofGovernors@sps.w-berks.sch.uk



With the school reading cat

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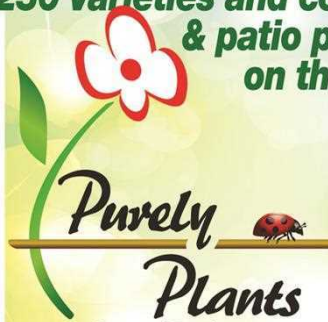
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Wednesday Lunch Club

Dear Editor—I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to the lovely and unsung volunteer heroes who run the lunch club on Wednesdays at The Community Centre. For many of the elderly participants, this could be the only opportunity to get out of their homes each week. They meet their friends, have a hot, nutritious and delicious meal and enjoy 90 minutes of stimulating, fun and creative activities, including music, crafts, quizzes and stimulating discussions. My Mum moved to this area and became a regular participant two years ago and really looks forward to this highlight in her week.

I know it is only possible thanks to the hard-working team of volunteers led by Denise Sayers. These patient and kind ladies do everything: chauffeur, serve, wash up, arrange activities, tidy up and all the admin involved. I know they're always in need of help. So, if anyone has a few hours spare one day a week, many hands make lighter work! Please consider supporting this amazing team, who provide a much-valued service to the older and vulnerable members of our community.

Thank you from me and my mum, Pam Clarke.

Ginny Avery

Re: Goring Parish Council speed survey

Dear Editor—I read with some incredulity in March GGN Page 27, that only 3% of drivers were exceeding 30mph. Obviously, this was not in Wallingford Road.

My neighbours and I believe that only 3% of vehicles do not exceed the 20mph limit when driving from the brow of the hill to the cross roads. This is where the speed is extreme, try putting the twin cables to measure speed there.

That section of road becomes a race track between the hours of 8-9am and 5-7pm. Sadly, I have found that informing the police was to no avail.

Therefore, I challenge Goring Parish Council and Thames Valley Police to come and monitor the speeding at those times indicated, by stationing themselves close to Hinds. No radar gun is necessary.

This is a section of road where parents often have to negotiate crossing with a pushchair and a small child on the other arm, plus of course elderly pedestrians.

Only a camera would stop this potential danger.

Peter Phillips

Are you heat pump ready?

The government is offering generous grants of £7500 towards the installation of a heat pump at your property. This grant is scheduled to end in March 2028, so is it time to think about replacing your own old gas boiler?

After careful consideration, I decided to replace my gas boiler with a new heat pump. For the price of a new gas boiler, I had a new heat pump installed with ten new radiators, a pressurised water tank and the associated equipment. For me, this was a no-brainer.

Since the installation in November the house has been very warm and comfortable. There are many advantages in having a heat-pump such as: heating on 24/7, high tech monitoring of the weather conditions, no explosive gas in the house, 300% more efficient than gas boilers and low maintenance (it works like a fridge in reverse – so when did you last have your fridge serviced?).

The jury is still out at the moment on running costs, but for me the running costs are very minimal as I have a 13kWh battery back-up, solar panels (6kW array) and a part share in a very large wind turbine in Scotland, all helping to reduce my running costs.

I have put together a short video to highlight the problems that you need to consider before starting out on a heat pump journey. Use the QR code to go to

<https://youtu.be/en2CEtHGJuk?si=FtSyPqwog4WbEVxK>

For some properties heat pumps may not be suitable. If you would like to visit a heat pump installation that matches the size of your house contact Nesta

<https://www.visitheatpump.com>

If you have elderly parents in poor health and are living in poorly insulated home, you can get grants of up to £30,000 to have a heat pump, loft insulation and solar panels installed via the ECO4 LA Flex scheme offered by Oxfordshire County Council and other local authorities www.bhbh.org.uk or telephone [0800 107 0044](tel:08001070044)

Chris Rickards



VE Day commemoration

Thursday 8 May 2025 is the 80th anniversary of VE (Victory in Europe) Day, when World War II ended in Europe. Celebrations were held throughout the land at the time and many events are taking place in the UK to commemorate this historic event. Goring on Thames Parish Council will be marking VE Day by mounting red memorial 'Tommy' plaques on lamp posts throughout the village. There will be a short service of thanksgiving and prayers for peace at Goring war memorial at noon.



The plaques will be put up again in November ready for the services and ceremonies that take place around Remembrance Day.

The Council is working with Goring Gap Local History Society, the Arts Society Goring and Cleve by Goring WI to ensure that those local people who served both at home and abroad in the two world wars are not forgotten.

Ideas being considered include the installation of a 'Tommy' bench and metal statues of an 'unknown soldier' and 'women in war' in the Rectory Garden. These items are made by Royal British Legion Industries and sales support that important charity. In the autumn it is hoped to have poppy art installations produced at community workshops, displays and other activities. Watch this space for further details.

If you are interested in being involved in any way, please contact the Clerk on clerk@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk



Janet Hurst

Blooming marvellous!

Now that we've begun to feel the sun again and we can really believe that spring is on its way, the Goring on Thames in Bloom team of volunteers is coming out of hibernation. The containers and areas that they maintain are full of flowers and look splendid.

Greetings cards

We need to make money for all that we are hoping to achieve again this year in the Britain in Bloom competition. One of our volunteers, Rosie Brook, a retired art teacher has designed a range of garden-inspired greetings cards. These cards can be purchased at Inspirations and Goring Hardware. £1 per card will be donated to Goring in Bloom.

When you next need to send a greetings card why not pop along to either Goring Hardware or Inspirations and choose one of Rosie's hand-made cards and support Goring in Bloom?

Plant sale: 10am-1pm, Saturday 3 May, Rectory Garden

A reminder that our amazing bargain bring and buy plant and garden sale will be taking place soon. As well as perennials and shrubs, there will be bedding plants and vegetable seedlings available, plus a choice of house plants. Also don't miss the Farmers' Market stall for home-made preserves, biscuits, cakes and garden produce. Last but not least, there will be pre-loved garden equipment for sale, including some lovely ceramic containers.

Donations of all kinds are welcome. Please bring them along on the day or drop them off at Rest Harrow in Cleve Road the day before.

Help!

We also need more volunteers. Would you like to become one of our happy team? It's a great way to have fun and get some fresh air. We would welcome you with open arms!

If you would like to join us, please contact Stephanie Bridle on [07778 739430](tel:07778739430).



Rosie's floral greetings cards



Arcade pots 2025

Overland – meet the author at Goring Library

Friends of Goring Library are delighted to invite you to our first 'meet the author' talk to be given in the refurbished library, on Wednesday 7 May. Doors will open at 7pm and the talk will start at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £10 to include a drink and are available from the Library, Inspiration and via Eventbrite.

This promises to be a special evening with author Yasmin Corderly Khan who is a British historian and novelist and teaches at Oxford University. She will be talking to us about her latest novel *Overland* which will be available in paperback for the first time on 7 May – so you can have it signed by Yasmin that very day!

Overland is a novel about youth, privilege, class and the sharp echoes of British imperialism.

It tells a story that had been buried for 50 years since Joyce, fresh out of a dead-end job, answered a cryptic advertisement in the local paper: 'Kathmandu by van, leave August. Share petrol and costs.'

It was supposed to be the trip of a lifetime. Joyce was desperate to escape suburban life and share a wild time with aristocrat Freddie and his school friend Anton. But, as the three travellers in their beaten-up old Land Rover cross the borders into Asia, Freddie finds that he can't outrun his family's history, leading to devastating consequences for everyone.

Overland has been described as 'the road-trip novel to end all road-trip novels' from 'one of the most exciting new voices in literary fiction', so hearing Yasmin taking about her book should be a great opportunity.

Yasmin's other books include *Great Partition*, *The Raj at War*, and *Edgware Road*. She won the Gladstone Book Prize and has been long listed for prizes including the Orwell Prize, the Authors' Club of Great Britain First Novel Prize and the PEN Hesell-Tiltman Prize.

Do come along and enjoy an evening with this talented author.

Sara Boorman

A bumper haul from Goring's litter-pick

The community litter-pick was organised by Cllr Robin Williamson on behalf of Goring Parish Council's Place & Assets Working Group, with assistance from Cllr Nick Mallen and local residents Barbara Karayi and Janet Hurst.

Proceedings commenced at 9.30am with a rush of people arriving for equipment, about 40 in total. In no time at all work was underway. The weather was an improvement on last year and around the same number of volunteers appeared to help with the event.

Each volunteer (solo, couple or family) had a choice of which road, park, open space or footpath they wished to clean, they were provided with a high-vis tabard, a litter picker and sack. By 10.45am all of the identified 'patches' were allocated and soon the volunteers

returned, some with bulging sacks, some asking for further roads to tackle.

Upon return every volunteer was offered a hot drink, and a piece of cake provided by Cleeve by Goring Women's Institute, represented by Chris Cox, Carol Wallace and Krys Knox.

Once the smaller sacks had been combined the total haul was over twenty full sacks of waste, mostly drink cans and sweet wrappers, the oddest items were car parts from Reading Road, as a result of accidents. The most anti-social litter was a trail of beer cans thrown from vehicles along Gatehampton Road.



The haul

All photos: Cllr Robin Williamson



Steve Rock, Indie and Maggie Filipova-Rivers



Carole, Krys and Chris with cakes



The Patel family: Varsha, Shrina, Kumud (Jack's mother), Jayesh, Rupen and Nikita

Redcross Stores, Bungalow Stores, Nappers, Parkers, Threshers, Well's Stores, an Indian Restaurant, a Thai Restaurant, another Indian Restaurant: the list of businesses that have come and gone in the Gap goes on. But one has stayed open: Westholme Stores, 'or you can call it Jack's'.

After running their convenience and off-licence store for 37 years, Jayesh (Jack) and Varsha Patel have now finally put their feet up and retired. As of 5 April, they

have handed over their business to new owners.

'It was 15 February 1988 when I first moved here,' Jack tells GGN. 'It was a typical English village. I was quite nervous about coming here, about how people would accept



Jack's in 1988

me.' He came because his sister-in-law ran a shop in Wokingham, and while he was going to see her there, he saw this shop advertised: 'I thought, that looks a nice shop!' Despite then living in Mitcham, London and running a shop there, he says he loved village life ever since he lived in Kenya. 'We came to view the shop here and as we drove through Pangbourne and over the river bridges we just fell in love with the village.' The first day opening the shop doors was an early start: 'Five o'clock in the morning I had to wake up,' he says. 'I had one of the paper boys helping me - I was not quite sure what I had to do.' One thing was clear though, running this new shop was a step up in commitment: 'My wife was still working in London'.

'In those days it was more of a delicatessen - it was something new for us, slicing the ham. Then, gradually, I had ideas of sorting out the business.' Jack says there was no off-licence here, so he extended the opening hours and gradually applied for one and built the trade from there. Within a few months they were running a Bollywood night in the Village Hall. 'Everybody loved it,' he says, 'My wife cooked for 180 people

Jack and Varsha

that day and we raised money for the

Jack also had good fortune. The Goring advert has been in there ever since. He done was fundraising at the Goring & to buy defibrillators for the surgery: 'I

His son, Rupen, tells me one of the things been the coming and going of competing stores, but then of course you had Me he says, more supermarkets sprung up Woodcote. At one point, Jack adds, the village!

'It never stopped me,' Jack says in a didn't. He simply found his niche. He then a very niche market. Supermarket And the market was in Goring. People gained a reputation. One man came from hobby of collecting beer labels. Jack r Suddenly the shop was a tourist stop

A large part of Jack's success lies in and he was willing to change with it.

long before the expanding reign of the in 2009 they launched their curry sau

Varsha's project, 'nothing to do with me Rupen says that it was always Varsha's c first Bollywood fundraisers. Varsha would raffle prizes for village events. It's clear Patels. The work and effort to keep busi However, in that time, Jack has followed the former owner of the shop, Alan Nor owners, Thushy and Daren: 'Get involve all the customers and keep it a personal Jack says, because people like to come a

'I would like to thank all the people who to run this event (see details below). He standing customers who have come reg Harold, who always pick up their paper There are others too. I remember Sam u up his paper and cycle off to work in Be the shop, without whom they could not reflects fondly on seeing them grow up estate agents to builders. To Alex Fletch



Jack cuts the tape to open the railway bridge

a retire after 37 years

Community Centre'.
ing Gap News began that same year and his e says that one thing he is proud of having Streatley Regatta, along with Dr Hamilton, t was something we did for the village'. biggest challenges for Jack and the family has ition. 'Before there were a lot of independent Colls and now your Tesco.' Not only that, o locally, in places like Wallingford and ere were even two Londis shops here in the

a matter-of-fact tone. He's right, of course, it started selling beers and real ales in 2000, ets didn't really stock them; there was a gap. e came from far and wide to buy them. Jack's rom as far as Canada, with his own niche remembers seeing his little book of them. off, bringing more footfall into the village. his adaptability. He saw the market change Of course, change is a constant and it wasn't e supermarket was a serious threat. So, ces. While Jack says it was really his wife ', he helped find a unit to use as a kitchen. dream to sell the sauces, ever since their ld end up offering her cooking lessons as that it hasn't been plain sailing for the ness going has been constant all these years. d some advice – the same advice he got from ris. He would like to pass it on to the new ed in the community. Make sure you talk to service in the village'. That's very important, and have a chat and a laugh.

who have supported us – that's why we want e particularly wants to thank all of his long- ularly for years, including Sam, Derek and s in the morning. 'I still remember them. used to come here, before he retired, to pick nson.' He also wants to thank the 'pride' of have made it: the paper boys and girls. He and have careers, from mechanics to lawyers, er, who did his paper round from the age



e in 2006

of thirteen until he became a lawyer, even when he was studying at Oxford. 'I think he was the longest serving paper boy – he did very well.' There was also James

Elliott, of Davis Tate Estate Agents. 'To see them all succeed in life and get the habit of getting up in the morning and getting on with it – it's very important for the paper boys to learn that.' He would like to thank them all and to all those who helped do deliveries during COVID-19.



Jack was a finalist in the 2019 Drink Retailing Awards

Finally, the Patels would like to give special thanks to Tina Taylor, who has worked at the shop for 23 years. Rupen says: 'She has become part of the extended family; we couldn't have done it without her.' He also clarified that she won't be going anywhere, so there will still be a familiar face behind the counter.

So, what's next for Jack and Varsha? Well, to be clear, they're not moving for starters. Jack says: 'We can't just sit around. I personally have things I want to do – some voluntary work, to get out of the house, and maybe do some holidays, which we haven't had a chance to do – just go and relax.' He says they might do some gardening and they may rejoin one of the walking groups too. To keep their hand in, they may help with Jez's sauces too. But no more getting in to work early and doing the ordering!

'It's the legacy', Rupen reflects on their time in the village. 'The day that signed off that local acceptance was when Dad got asked to open the railway bridge in 2006.' Jack adds: 'Cutting that ribbon was a proud moment for me.' He says there are many memories: 'I've seen a village turning into a town. I've seen a lot of change.'

Farewell celebration

Since opening in 1988 Jack and Varsha's shop has been a staple in the lives of many, providing not just groceries but a warm and welcoming atmosphere that brought neighbours together. Over the years, the store has been a source of support, celebration and connection for families in Goring and the neighbouring villages. They have frequently organised fundraisers to directly support community life. At their last Bollywood event they raised £7,500 for good causes.

So join Jack, Varsha and their family for a farewell celebration on Sunday 27 April from 10am-12pm outside the store. Enjoy delicious Swaadish Brunch Naan and wish them all well. Besides expressing their heartfelt gratitude for the unwavering support, Jack and Varsha invite you to give a warm welcome to the new owners, Thushy and Daren. Although Jack and Varsha are stepping back, they will still be residents of Goring, so they say, please don't be strangers!

Their daughter Nikita has arranged an E-card which you are welcome to sign for Jack and Varsha:

- Scan the QR code or link www.kudoboard.com/boards/0mP2yxHa
- Click on '+ Add to Board' located bottom right
- A Message Window will appear
- Type message with full name
- Click post



You can also contribute to a retirement gift by clicking 'Add gift' or the present icon, located bottom right. If you have any issues uploading messages, email jacks.westholmestores@gmail.com and they will add it for you.

Dan Gordon-Potts

The time I tried to take two swords out of India and got arrested.

This is the first in a new occasional series in the Goring Gap News, sharing stories from the lives of local people. This story is recorded by Dan Gordon-Potts, as remembered by Garry and Sally Alder of Nun's Acre. It all happened in the 1970s in India...

The sabres

Sally: You were about to go flying south, weren't you? And you bought two sabres for your sons.

Garry: They were ex-army sabres from the time of the Indian Mutiny.

Sally: They were a bit rusty!

Garry: They were made for the common soldier, so very primitive things really, sort of curved swords used for striking people down from horseback.

Sally: Do the boys still have them?

Garry: Yes, they still have them.

The flight and arrest

Garry goes on with the story:

The only time I ever flew in India, in all the months I was there, was a short journey from Patna back to Delhi where my Land Rover was.

I was in the departure lounge and this Indian man was sat beside me chatting (as they do) and I had these swords in a paper bag really... They had scabbards so the blades were protected and he asked about them and we were asked to check in and I was asked to remove them from the plane. They suspected that they were weapons and that I could have threatened the pilots with them.

When I got to Delhi the plane stopped on the tarmac, then was shunted over to the edge of the runway to a police post at the airport and a posse of policemen came and I was arrested! It turns out that I was suspected of being an antiques smuggler (the swords were by Indian standards antiques, being more than 100 years old). The punishment for exporting antiques was quite severe so I was arrested, fairly rough treatment, duffed up a bit. After I'd been interviewed, I was put in a cell overnight.

The importance of meeting the right people

The next day I was formally charged with exporting antiques. But luckily, I'd met on my travels a world bank representative. He was in Delhi at the time and had a lot of cash at his disposal! The Indian government was willing to bail me and he was willing to put up the cash. I was allowed out over the weekend anyway, so I went to the English cathedral and, by chance, was talking to the clergyman after the service over coffee and began to tell him the story. He said: 'There's somebody I'd like you to meet' and he introduced me to an immaculately dressed Indian man, who, it turns out later (though I didn't know it at the time) was the head of the Indian Civil Service! Very senior indeed. He was a very useful contact. I told him what had happened and he said: 'Don't say anymore, just be in my office in the secretariat at seven tomorrow morning and we'll see what we can do.'

So, I turned up and indeed he was obviously very eminent because Mrs Gandhi's office was just up the corridor. I told him the full story and he devoted one of his civil servants to look after me and shuttle me around and extract me from the mess I had got into – which he successfully did, though it took over a week. My memory is just going from one office to another and being interviewed by committees.

The sorrowful letter and its surprising consequences

When I eventually got home, I wrote a 'more in sorrow than anger' kind of letter to Mrs Gandhi saying, here was I, you know, a friend of India – you know I'd taught students about India all my working life, and I'd been treated like this! I heard nothing, there was no acknowledgement. And then, out of the blue, we had a phone call from the Indian High Commissioner inviting me to lunch in London! So, we arranged a date and I went up and when I got to Paddington I was greeted by the Indian High Commissioner's stretched limousine: IND1 on the number plate. The flag on the bonnet was rolled up of course, because I was not the ambassador. I was then taken and had a very pleasant lunch with this civilised man of the Nehru family and he didn't like Mrs Gandhi either so we had that in common! After the light lunch he sent some signal, which I didn't see, and some flunky came in carrying a wooden box. I thought that the Indian government were so ashamed of their behaviour they had given me a croquet set! But in fact, this box was solemnly placed in front of me and the lid opened and there were the two curved swords.

Sally: Which you then gave to eight- and nine-year-olds!

A plethora of tales to tell...

Garry and Sally Alder have both lived interesting lives. This is far from the only story that we could share. From my hour of speaking with them I recorded over four pages of stories. Garry's six-month research trip to India in 1974 provided ample



Garry and Sally Alder March 2025

Photo: Dan Gordon-Potts

material, including the six weeks when Sally joined him, leaving their three young children at home. I heard about the couple both setting off to India in their Land Rover, and Sally asking some very confused road workers on the motorway in Paris, 'how to get to India'. Then in Pakistan, both being invited by the Mir of Hunza for supper in a fairytale-like hilltop castle above a pre-industrial landscape. Memorably, they once stood together, looking down from the top of the Khyber Pass into India.

One of the most striking tales was when Garry, now travelling alone, was robbed of 15 years of research papers (the entirety of his work) which he accidentally left in an unlocked Land Rover for five minutes while visiting some friends in Kabul, Afghanistan. That was a disaster and the papers were never recovered. Sally, just about to take the children to school, received a phone call from her husband in India, because his passport and vehicle documents had also been stolen and to be without these was another criminal offence!

There is much to say about Garry's research, which was about the pioneering life of the Asiatic explorer and one of Britain's first veterinary surgeons, William Moorcroft (1767-1825). Despite the loss of the research papers but with the help of Sally, an impeccably trained typist, Garry still completed his planned book containing all the details he discovered about the story of Moorcroft's life (see below), saving this significant explorer and veterinarian from being lost to history.

Dan Gordon-Potts

William Moorcroft

William Moorcroft was born into a dairy farming family in Ormskirk, Lancashire, in 1767. After training as a surgeon, he found himself using his skills to save a cow and this led to him going to Lyon in France to train as a vet. He opened the country's first qualified veterinary clinic on Oxford Street in London which was very successful, but he tired of London life. At this time, the East India Company were the mercantile heart of the British colonial empire and strong horses were essential for their army. Moorcroft's veterinary skills were recognised as invaluable and he travelled to India. Once there, he persuaded himself that he'd never breed a horse of the necessary weight and strength from the stock that was available. He set off into the unknown to look for bigger breeding stock, embarking on a series of pioneering journeys across Asia.

On his journeys, he managed to stay alive by being a sight-restorer. 'Going into the unknown, into Afghanistan, Tibet and the central Asian states, Moorcroft managed to go where no Englishman had ever been, by doing cataract surgery.'

Moorcroft's epic journey did not end happily. When he finally reached Bokhara, where he hoped to finally find the fine horses he was looking for, sadly they were no longer there and he died on his way home through Afghanistan in 1825.

Goring Carers Group in April

Our April meeting was a walk, in glorious sunshine, round Cleeve Water Meadow, Streatley, followed by tea and cake provided for our visit by our host. While the ground was still too boggy to make it as far as the river, the Loddon lilies were out in force to welcome us along with a host of daffodils and other spring flowers while a heron and assorted waterfowl also drew out attention. Unfortunately, the water vole remained tucked up in bed. Everyone agreed that this was a fantastic way to spend a morning and certainly was incredibly relaxing. A big thank you to our host and to Mend the Gap for allowing us to visit.

Our group

Goring Carers Group is for anyone who looks after someone so that person is able to stay at home and we meet on the first Tuesday of each month for approximately two hours. We try to have someone come along to speak to us such as Sue Ryder, Age UK, the Fire Service, local solicitor, etc and we have the occasional outing. It is also a great way to be able to share experiences and talk through problems. Someone has usually been there and can offer practical advice on how they coped or who they accessed to get the help needed. Tea and biscuits are provided.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday, 6 May 2025 starting at 10.30am when I am hoping to have a speaker on financial matters, such as inheritance tax, pensions and grants. Please get in touch with me if you would like more information on the Carers Group or would like to attend our next get together.

Hilary Dobson

dobsonhr@gmail.com

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Station Road improvements 'worth the wait'

Station Road has a new pedestrian priority lane and the verdict of a disabled early user is, 'it was worth the wait'.

MIGGS, the Mobility Issues Group for Goring and Streatley, approached Goring-on-Thames Parish Council with a formal request for a pedestrian priority lane in June 2018. Nearly seven years and three public consultations later, the 'virtual footpath', to use the official jargon, is in place. It came complete with the bonus of a long-overdue, total resurfacing of Station Road. The first reaction of Linda Carter, who lives in Yew Tree Court was: 'It makes everywhere else look shabby.'

The resurfacing and road marking was completed on 27 March. Among others to try it out were wheelchair user, Doreen Wickson, of Lyndhurst, and her niece, Lynn Steward, seen in the photo.

As the name implies, pedestrians have priority in the marked lane and drivers must give way. But vehicles are not excluded entirely, not least to allow refuse trucks and large delivery vehicles to proceed. Drivers may also encroach on the lane when passing vehicles coming the other way, but must always give way to any pedestrians present.

Joan Hill, who lives in nearby Limetree Road, said: 'What a pleasure it is now, to be wheeled along Station Road...so much better not only for me but also for my carers, who also appreciate the difference.'

Another wheelchair user, MIGGS committee member, Bob Gregory from Yew Tree Court, described his first outing on the new road as 'simply remarkable', adding: 'A significant amount of care has been taken by the contractors in re-establishing the road surface and the adjacent borders. They even added fresh soil to those areas. Clearly it has been worth the wait.' Those contractors, by the way, were local firm, Hazell & Jefferies.

MIGGS was approached early in 2018 by an elderly resident of Station Road, asking how people like him might be helped to feel safer walking up and down the road, to and from the station, the surgery and the hardware store. After giving it some thought MIGGS asked Goring Parish Council to approach Oxfordshire Highways, asking for a pedestrian lane and repair of the road surface to remove dangerous cambers and fill potholes and ruts. A sceptical but sympathetic Parish Council asked for evidence that the proposed lane would have public support.



Pedestrian work on Station Road

Photo: John Boler



Doreen Wickson and Lynn Steward

Photo: David Slarks

The first MIGGS consultation, involving all households in Station Road and ten adjoining roads, showed the number who agreed that 'pedestrian safety improvements of some kind are needed in Station Road' exceeded the number who disagreed by nearly seven to one. Accident rates in Station Road are thankfully low but the perception of danger was high among the elderly and people with impaired mobility. Pedestrians often felt intimidated by large vehicles and when passing around parked cars.

The first progress was achieved about two years ago when a 20mph speed limit was applied throughout the village. (MIGGS had asked for this, but in Station Road only.)

The consultation response spurred the Parish Council, which by then had its own Travel and Transport Committee, to conduct a formal but unofficial public consultation. This showed the public strongly in favour but, as the pedestrian lane would require suspension of five parking places, a formal public consultation was required by law, to be conducted by OCC as the highway authority. As a result of this, free, two-hour parking places have been added in Croft Road and Manor Road, with a net gain of one free, two-hour space. Free, one hour parking is also available off Station Road, in Wheel Orchard car park.

MIGGS contributed more than £1,100 to the councils' consultation costs, raised in voluntary donations from local supporters. They would like to acknowledge the strong support received in the latter stages of our campaign from the Travel and Transport Committee and the assistant clerk, Mike Harper.

John Boler
Chairman, MIGGS

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Lunch Club could 'do with a lift', says coordinator

Goring and District Lunch club could do with a lift in more ways than one, current and former organisers tell GGN. 'Things have been really difficult to reignite after COVID-19', says Denise Sayers. Denise has been running Lunch Club since 2017 along with a number of dedicated, long-serving volunteers. However, she says that the number of weekly members could do with a lift: 'We used to regularly have 18 people coming to Lunch Club and now we have around 11 or 12.' Part of the issue is transportation; the less mobile literally need a lift to the Community Centre. Sue Smith, who ran the Wednesday group for 23 years between 1989 and 2012, expands: 'COVID-19 has made it so much worse.

People used to be based at home more and children would take their parents to hospital; transport wasn't needed so much.'



L-R Denise, Lorraine, Jacqueline, Liz and Kryst

Keeping in touch during COVID-19

Denise became involved in Lunch Club after one of her friends, who was a volunteer there, told her that the previous leader was leaving: 'They were trying to find somebody to replace him and having difficulty and so I said I'd give it a go.' While that was in 2017, for much of COVID-19 the club had to shut. However, Denise didn't let that stop her: 'I used to write a newsletter and deliver it by hand to the members ... they were stuck in their homes for ages with no contact. This is a very tight-knit little group, they're all friends with each other.' Denise put puzzles on the newsletter as well as news about other members, including if anyone was in hospital: 'It meant they stayed connected to the Lunch Club throughout the closure until we were ready to come back again.' She also included news about the virus, in case members hadn't seen or understood what was happening on TV. Though she gets paid, doing Lunch Club is more than just a job for Denise. She says she works a lot more hours than she gets paid for, but, she finds it very rewarding and enjoyable.

Lunch Club activities

Lunch Club has a simple format: members turn up at ten o'clock and have tea, coffee and biscuits while doing a weekly game. 'It's a little competitive', says Denise, 'but it's a way of exercising the brain as well as socialising.' After this, there is time for discussion – usually about a topic Denise picks in advance when people 'share their experiences'. Some weeks somebody comes in to provide entertainment or education, from banjo players and hand bell ringers to staff from the Oxford Museum Service giving talks and handing around artefacts. The goal of this part is to provide more than just surface-level discussion. She adds that the highlight of the year is the Christmas lunch which has been held at Goring and Streatley Golf Club for the last few years.

Normally, lunch is served in the Community Centre at about quarter past twelve and is two courses. The food is made at Flint House, so a volunteer drives it down in an insulated box. Denise remarks on the quality of the food and the good relationship they have with Flint House: 'We're always treated very nicely!' Lunch usually finishes by around one o'clock.

Why not volunteer and help?

Lorraine Grove has volunteered for a few years now. She tells GGN: 'We might think it's just a little chat and lunch but actually it's more.' She started when her boy started school. She and the other volunteers expressed how lovely it was for them too, to make new friends and see familiar faces. Lorraine actually found out about it in the GGN... of all places. Denise tells me they're always open to people volunteering in other ways too, whether it's providing entertainment like music, or other experiences and activities she says: 'Come and offer your services!'

If you are interested in helping at Lunch Club, they're particularly looking for drivers to help with transporting members to and from the Community Centre each week on a Tuesday or Wednesday. This is about 30-45 minutes out of your day – 'or less', Denise says. Also, everyone would be grateful if more people came forward to transport the insulated food carrier to and from Flint House. 'It would reduce the burden on those who do so currently each week without fail.'

To get involved, contact Denise on [01491 683768](tel:01491683768) or email sayers.denise1@gmail.com

If you would like to attend as a member, do give Denise a call. Please note that each lunch club session costs £10 per person.

Many thanks to Denise, Sue, the volunteers, and to all the members for tolerating me attempting to get photos while they were trying to enjoy their lunch! For those who are still reading, please also note that I have been cautioned by a member that 'playing music' does not include the bagpipes. This is understandable given the rather 'close' acoustics of the Community Centre...

Dan Gordon-Potts



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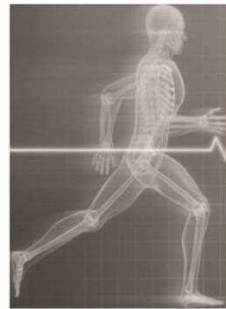
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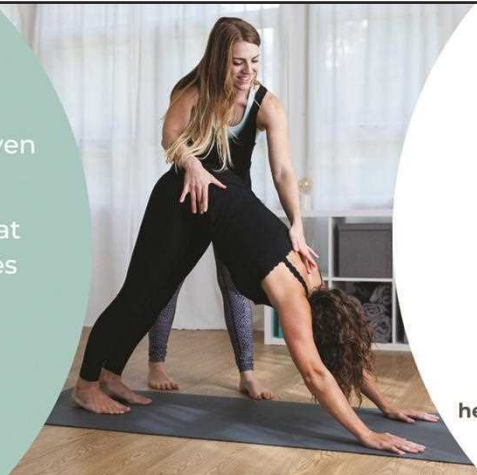
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Supporting the Kabubbu Development Project in Uganda

Hello! My name is Abi and up until going to university 18 months ago I've lived my whole life in Goring and have many happy memories of growing up in the village. Highlights for me across the years have included singing in the choir at St Thomas', helping out at tennis camps during my summer holidays, seeing performers such as Cara Dillon at the local Gap Festival, and attending Goring Free Church with my family. After working my way through the village pre-school and primary school, I began a new adventure at Cranford School at the age of 11. It was there, during my A-Level studies, that I made the decision to become a midwife. I am currently at Cardiff University in my second year of studying midwifery, and as part of my degree I have the opportunity of completing a placement abroad for a few weeks in August 2025. The aim is to observe the various ways midwifery is practised across the world, and to gain further insight into the challenges midwives face in other cultural environments.

Meeting the founders at Goring Free Church

I am very keen to travel to a country where healthcare is drastically different to the UK, whether that be a result of cultural traditions, limited resources, insufficient funding or other reasons. When I was first introduced to Geoff and Geraldine Booker MBE – the founders of the Kabubbu Development Project (KDP) in Uganda – I was very eager to hear their experiences and countless stories of how they have helped the people of Kabubbu, particularly with regards to healthcare provision. Geoff and Geraldine have recently moved to the local area and have begun to attend Goring Free Church, where I met them.

The KDP has a holistic approach to community development, investing in healthcare, education and economic empowerment of the most vulnerable people. These are mainly women, children (with a particular emphasis on orphans and vulnerable children), people living with HIV/AIDS, elderly, people with disabilities and pregnant mothers (adolescent girls). If you would like to read more about the KDP, please visit their website <https://kabubbu.org/>

A lifechanging opportunity

As a result of this, I am now booked to travel to Uganda in August 2025 for three weeks under the umbrella of The GB Trust, which works in partnership with the KDP. Primarily, I will be observing in the midwifery unit of the health centre and will also have the opportunity to work with children in the primary school and within the church. I'm sure this will be a lifechanging experience.

My fundraising challenge – please support me

As part of my commitment to raise support and awareness for the KDP, I plan to do a sponsored walk shortly after Easter, following the route of the 'Four Peaks' in Brecon, South Wales. This walk is considered a challenging route and covers the peaks of Corn Du, Pen y Fan, Cribyn and Fan y Big, and I aim to raise £600 in total, of which 100% (plus any Gift Aid) will go directly to the charity.

If you would like to support this worthwhile cause, please visit my GoFundMe page at <https://gofund.me/d09f9763> or scan the QR code.

Every donation is hugely appreciated, thank you very much in advance for your support.

Abigail Cordle



KDP Healthcare Centre



Abigail



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- **Nearest Casualty Department:** Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading **0118 322 7020**
- **Nearest First Aid Units:** Townland Hospital, Henley **01865 903755**, or Abingdon Community Hospital **01865 903476**
- **NHS Direct** is available for medical advice 24 hours a day, on **111**. Your local pharmacy can also offer you a range of services, including advice and medicines to relieve symptoms of minor ailments.
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- **Transport Office** – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday (10am - 12noon) to arrange transport to local surgeries, dentists and hospitals. **01491 873565**.

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90th birthday for Transatlantic winner

A distinguished Goring resident celebrated his 90th birthday last month at a family pub lunch gathering, followed by tea and cake with fellow Towse Court residents.

In 1969 Tom Lecky-Thompson won one of world's most famous air races, the Great Transatlantic Air Race. As pilot for the RAF team, Tom raced from the top of the GPO Tower in London to the top of the Empire State Building in New York in the fastest possible time. After a helicopter trip to a coal yard at St Pancras Station, Tom took off in a Harrier jump jet and minutes later was doing the first of nine mid-air refuels. He completed the race in a record time of 6 hours, 11 minutes and 57 seconds, a feat which put the UK back on the map for aviation. (See *GGN* June 2019 Pages 24-25.)

We send out good wishes to Tom on reaching this landmark birthday.



Pauline Garrett Tom with his family

Photo: Neil Lecky-Thompson

History and mystery at Shaw House

On 22 March, members of the Goring Gap Local History Society enjoyed a fascinating guided tour of Shaw House, a beautifully preserved Elizabethan mansion on the outskirts of Newbury. Built in 1581 by wealthy cloth merchant Thomas Dolman, the house has seen centuries of history unfold within its walls. This hidden gem has received royal visitors, was requisitioned during the Second World War and has hosted more than one school. It is now owned by West Berkshire Council and received a £6million refurbishment in 2007 which revealed many secrets in its construction.

A royal refuge?

Over the centuries, Shaw House has witnessed numerous notable events and figures including Queen Elizabeth I and Queen Anne, but one of the most enduring legends is its connection to King Charles I during the second Battle of Newbury in 1644. Tradition claims that Charles used the house as his headquarters and was even fired upon by a Parliamentarian sniper while inside. A musket ball is said to have struck a window frame, leaving a visible mark evidenced by a brass plaque which is thought to be dated 1759. However, modern research suggests Charles may never have stayed at Shaw House, though it was certainly at the heart of fierce fighting during the battle.

A house of spirits?

With such a long and sometimes violent past, it's no surprise that Shaw House has ghostly tales attached to it. In a room we were shown we were told that, during restoration in winter 20 years ago, builders refused to stay working there after 3pm when it began to get dark. One guide told us that he has experienced unexplained icy blasts of air rushing through the room.

The bake house

After the guided tour, we were served tea, coffee and cakes in the café which for 400 years was the kitchen for the house. The secrets that lay underground were revealed during restoration work in 2005. An Elizabethan bake house containing two large beehive style bread ovens was discovered, having remained hidden for many years. Located below the café, it is believed that it ceased to be used around 1730, at which time it was filled with soil from a newly dug tunnel in the cellar.

Today, Shaw House is a Grade 1 listed heritage site and events venue, welcoming visitors keen to explore its history and atmosphere. It is open to the public every weekend between February and September from 11am-4pm, and Monday to Friday throughout the school holidays, but closed on Good Friday. There is free admission on its standard public entry but charges remain for activities and special events.

See www.westberkshireheritage.org/shaw-house

Whether you're drawn by its Elizabethan elegance, Civil War connections, or ghostly legends, Shaw House remains one of Berkshire's most intriguing historic sites and if you live in Goring or Streatley, it's only half an hour's drive away.

This visit followed a talk last year on Shaw House given by Sarah Somerville, their Visitor Service Officer, who also entertained us with a another talk on 14 April. The Goring Gap Local History Society is planning a number of other visits and talks later this year and if you would like details, please contact our Secretary, Janet Hurst, at goringgaphistory@gmail.com

Alan Winchcomb, Chairman, Goring Gap Local History Society



Looking at the period costumes

Photo: Mary Clucas

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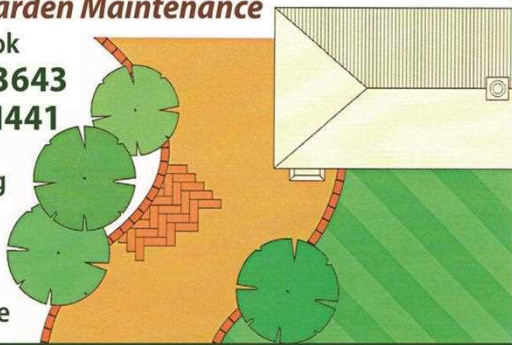
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Goring 10k 2025 – another fantastic success

The 25th Goring 10km was held on Sunday 9 March 2025. The week prior to the race had been sunshine and blue skies and the volunteer committee were delighted that the weather held. The sunshine made for a great turnout with 693 running, 93 of whom entered on the day.

Hundreds of spectators came to see the start at 11am, where Paul O'Loughlin from Warmingham, the race's headline sponsor, sounded the klaxon.

Runners were treated to pop up music in South Stoke which raised smiles, as captured by photographer Simon Booker www.stokerpix.com.

Back on Bourdillon the refreshment tent had activities for the kids and alcoholic drinks on offer for the adult spectators which all contributed to a celebratory atmosphere, just as the volunteers had hoped for in the 25th year.

The winner, James Ellis, set a new course record in the Men's Open category in a time of 00:33:29. The leading woman, Katherine Jones, came in at 00:40:34. Course records were also set in both Grand Master categories – Anthony Whitehouse (pictured, runner 680) 00:44:07 in the M70 and Kate Williamson 01:00:13 in F70.

Awards were presented by Bob

Warmingham and all runners were given an eco-medal by Goring Primary School children and the now legendary finisher's flapjack made by Pierrepoints. All the results are available online:

<https://goring10k.com/results/>

A runner who travelled from London had this to say about the event:

'My first time running the Goring 10k and it didn't disappoint. We were treated to fabulous sunshine on a morning where all was so well organised. From picking up our numbers to gathering in expected finish time order in a pen near the start it all worked well. It was such a pretty route through the countryside but not without its challenges of several hills along the way. At the finish we were greeted with an eco-medal, water and some delicious flapjack. Many thanks to all the volunteers, all of whom will have spent a lot of their own free time organising this lovely race. Some outstanding times were achieved and awards handed out, but for me it was an achievement finishing it to the best of my ability.'

The volunteer committee are still counting the money and paying suppliers, but we hope the event will raise close to £15k for Goring Primary School.

The committee would like to thank all the local sponsors who have contributed to the event – Warmingham as the generous headline sponsor and others giving in kind or financially including; Pierrepoints, KA Technology, Gap HR Services, The Botanical Gardener, Peek Vision, Simon Booker, The Oratory School, Plan B Fitness, Simplehuman, Alliance Complete Facilities Management, Field Seymour Parkes, Content House and The Swan at Streatley.

Elkie Mace, Race Director



Anthony Whitehouse on his way to breaking the 70+ course record

Goring Cricket Club – a new season is upon us

Following the format of our previous new year features and with the cricket season almost here, this is what you need to know about GCC:

What was your club highlight in 2024? Truly sensational success on the pitch. Our new 2nd XI won the league in their very first season and our 1st XI finished in our highest ever Berkshire League position (2nd in the Premier League). The academy continued to grow and have great success in each age group and perhaps most satisfying was the flood of older academy players in to the senior teams.

Why should newcomers get involved in 2025? We are a very welcoming club and there is a level / format for everyone (league, friendly, T20) and you can dip in and out or become a regular. We want everyone to enjoy their cricket and have a chance to be involved in a way that works for them. 2025 also marks a new era as our teams compete in the Thames Valley League for the first time following the merger with the Berkshire League. Goring is a beautiful place to play cricket and we are working on a variety of projects to further enhance the on and off-field facilities.

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Where do I find information on giving it a try/joining your club? You can find more details on our website www.goringcricketclub.com or email me as club chairman jonnyrussell100@outlook.com and I will happily answer any questions. There are home league games every Saturday afternoon from the second week of May, as well as fairly regular Sunday fixtures – so please come down to watch any time.

An interesting fact about your club/sport? 2026 will be the club's sesquicentenary (150th anniversary!). Keep an eye out early next year for details on all the celebrations taking place. The club has also placed an emphasis on growing girls cricket in the last few years. There has been some real success here, including seeing girls play in senior league cricket for Goring for the first time. Both Freya and Ella enjoyed excellent debuts in 2024 – taking a number of wickets between them in a resounding victory. For more information on girls cricket in Goring please contact richardmcneill1@googlemail.com

Jonny Russell

The advantage of a year out

This time last year, local boy Toby Weller was revising hard for A levels and deliberating whether or not to take a year out before university. Now, he could not be more delighted to have taken the decision to train for his Level 2 tennis instructor qualification at Goring Tennis Club. Here's his story:

So, Toby, tell us what you have been up to during your year out between A levels and university?

I have always been passionate about tennis; I started playing when I was about seven years old, and it has been my favourite sport ever since. I already had my Level 1 assistant tennis instructor qualification, so I decided to use my year out to get the Level 2 qualification. I achieved the certification in October 2024 and I spent the rest of the year consolidating my learning and increasing my experience by working for Oxfordshire Tennis at Goring Tennis Club. During this period, I have led and assisted both adult and junior sessions, such as Junior Social play on a Sunday, adult drills Thursday evenings and tennis tournaments at the club.

Wow, can you give us an idea of the kind of tasks you must complete to get your Level 2 Tennis Instructor certificate?

The Level 2 course is very thorough and a major step up from Level 1. The Level 2 course is run over four different Sundays. Alongside these face-to-face training days there are multiple online modules to complete plus some practical elements I had to film and submit including an example lesson I was leading. It was quite a challenge planning and incorporating all the content required into these reels. I also had to complete eight hours of work experience overseen by my head coach, four hours with juniors and four hours with adults.

Sounds intense! Tell us about the highs and the lows of the whole experience.

The best part about the past year was the chance to play more and coach my favourite sport. The tennis coaching course was complex with on-court and off-court coursework and exams. I developed as a coach throughout the process with support from Jonathan Howey, Head Coach of Oxfordshire Tennis and his OT team.

During the last year, Gilly Watt, a coach also with Oxfordshire Tennis, specifically developed my coaching skills with younger age groups and, in particular, children with individual needs. Gilly taught me how to mix lots of fun and tennis skills into a solid base for my coaching sessions.

I am so glad I did the coaching course, even though it was hard work and very challenging. I have developed as a person and I have improved both practical and professional skills that I can take anywhere with me. For example, this qualification has given me leadership, group coaching and team management skills in addition to first aid training. These skills will be invaluable to me at university and in any working environment in the future.

Perhaps the only downside is the weather! Even in the rain, we are usually outside on the courts teaching our sessions, so at times I can end up quite wet, but you get used to it, eventually!

Any advice for students debating whether to take a year out or not?

If you want to or need to take a gap year, go for it! For example, if there is something you want to get experience in eg, sport coaching or other work experience, the year between A levels and university is a great time to take a step back from academia and do something different. Alternatively, if you want to travel the world for a year, doing it when you know you will have the time is a great idea.

Taking a gap year gives you an opportunity to develop yourself before you move on to higher education. The one thing I would say you need is a plan for the year; do not just take a gap year for the sake of it and waste your valuable time, make it count!

If you are interested in finding out more about the tennis club that is on your doorstep, look no further. Full details on all the following events and activities are available on the GTC website, together with instructions on how to book:

<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/GoringTennisClub>

Alternatively, you can also email chairman@goring-tennis.co.uk or phone Jane on 07718 267878

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MORRELL ROOM MUSICAL EVENTS

Saturday 3 May. Simon Mayor and Hilary James. 7.30pm MR. If you are old enough you may remember them as presenters of BBC's *Play School* but they are renowned for playing just about any instrument you can hand them! Simon has played classical violin with the BBC Concert Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, but may well surprise you with a dazzling mandolin piece, or jazz guitar! Hilary, according to the BBC has 'one of the finest voices in the country', and she also plays a variety of instruments, including a bass mandolin that's bigger than she is, and their music is interspersed with much humour and fun.

Tickets can be booked at www.mayorandjames.com/gigs

PIANO RECITAL ST MARY'S STREATLEY

Sunday 11 May, 4pm. St Mary's Church. Sally Goldworth and Ikuko Inoguchi will be giving a recital of delightful piano duets by Mozart, Poulenc, Debussy and Faure. We will be enchanted to welcome the very talented Ikuko once again. Sally has many very prestigious qualifications and awards but she is a piano double in films, for example the hands playing the piano in Hercule Poirot's *Curtains* were hers.

THREE MEN IN A BOAT

Friday 16 May, 7pm, The Galilee, Our Lady & St John Church. Jeremy Nicholas, nominated for an Oliver Award for his one man show in the West End and on BBC Radio, returns to Goring with an evening of dramatic readings from Jerome K. Jerome's dearly-loved comic masterpiece. Details and tickets at www.galileegoring.org.uk

SCOTTISH FOLK DUO BOULDER FIELDS

Friday 16 May 7pm, Nibbles available. Featuring Scottish Singer/ Songwriter Cameron Fraser, who toured with Nirvana in 1989, as well as sharing the stage with The Proclaimers. Their new album blurs the boundaries between Scottish Folk and Americana. Also performing, popular trio Harlequin, with Jonathan Clifton, Chris Hawes, and Anya Goldenberg. Melodic songs, harmony, a lot of fun and usually some homemade instruments. For tickets www.trybooking.com/uk/EQIC

GORING CHAMBER CHOIR, A CELEBRATION OF FOLKSONGS

Saturday 17 May, 3pm, St Thomas' Church. Goring Chamber Choir Presents: *Stories We Share: A Celebration of Folksongs*. We invite you on a musical journey through the human experience as we explore the rich tapestry of folk traditions. This weaves together songs of love and loss, work and adventure, memories and moments of pure joy. From North Country ballads to sea shanties, from Hungarian folk dances to African lullabies, this concert promises a vibrant exploration of life's universal stories. Hear tales of sailors and sweethearts, housewives and war heroes, set to beautiful arrangements that bring these timeless narratives to life. With outstanding soloists and accompaniment by local pianist Olivia Canolle, the concert features a rousing audience singalong that will have you tapping your feet and joining in the music. A celebration of human connection through song awaits! Musical Director: Frances Brewitt-Taylor, Accompanist: Olivia Canolle. Tickets: £15. Free for under-18s. Obtainable from a choir member, from Inspiration in Goring, from Garlands Organic in Pangbourne, on the door www.goringchamberchoir.org.uk

WITHYMEAD NATURE RESERVE, OPEN DAYS

Open every Sunday 10am-5pm from 6 Apr-31 Aug. Loddon Lily Sundays are 6 Apr-18 May when our signature flower is in bloom. Serving cream teas 2-5pm on 27 Apr, 25 May, 29 Jun, 27 Jul, 31 Aug. No need to pre-book for any of these dates, just turn up and enjoy – it's free entry, but donations are welcome! Also offering pre-bookable visits on Fridays for up to two hours at a time between 10am-4pm during the same period. Visit www.withymead.org for more info.

Further afield

READING BACH CHOIR CONCERT

You are invited to join Reading Bach Choir on Saturday 10 May at St Andrew's Church, Caversham, RG4 7PL for *Five Days that Changed the World*. This work by Bob Chilcott explores five key events, such as the discovery of penicillin and the first man in space. Each movement will be complemented by pieces reflecting upon the same milestone with music spanning six centuries, including Josquin, Samuel Barber and Eric Whitacre. Tickets, £18 / Under 18's £5, website www.readingbachchoir.org.uk or on the door.

GORING GAP WALK

Saturday 17 May. 8.30am, Mapledurham House. Participate in this beautiful riverside walk, following the Thames Path and Ridgeway to enjoy the river and scenic villages of the Chiltern Hills. We offer both a full marathon and half marathon distance. Open to all types of walkers from ramblers, casual walkers, those raising money for charity or just friends out for a stroll. The route is clearly way marked with plentiful rest stops along the way. Cost £30. Contact: hello@goringgapwalk.co.uk

CHOLSEY REPAIR CAFE

Saturday 17 May from 10am – 12.45pm. Yet another repair session is on offer at Cholsey Repair Café at The Cholsey Pavilion. You can pause for a good cuppa and cake from Cholsey Community Café, which is in the Foyer. Our aim is to help you repair all manner of ordinary domestic items, including electricals, garden tools, toys, bicycles, textiles and ornaments, but we sometimes branch out into furniture, ultrasonic cleaning of watches and jewellery, and can even help with spectacles and new watch batteries, although it's advisable to get in touch a few days ahead to check whether the particular repair will be available.

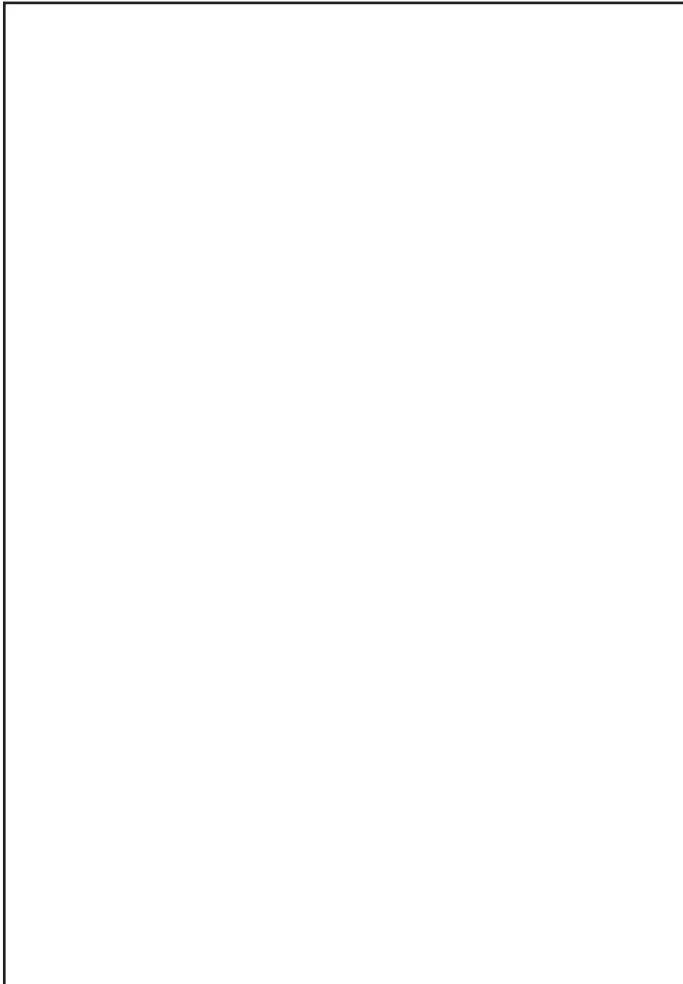
Check our website, www.cholseyrepaircafe.com or email repaircafe@cholsey.com for further information.

WALLINGFORD AND DISTRICT ART CLUB, MAY DEMO

Join the friendly Wallingford and District Art club on Tuesday 20 May at 7.30pm for a live demonstration as professional artist, DJ, paints an acrylic scene in the style of a master artist. DJ has been drawing and painting for as long as he can remember and his style has developed through many years of experience working in professional fine art studios and working for international design companies. The demo will be held at Centre 70 (off Goldsmiths Lane in Wallingford) and is free for club members or £5 for visitors. If you would like further information about this event or other club activities, please visit the club website at www.wallingfordartclub.org

EIGHTEENTH ENGLISH MUSIC FESTIVAL

Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire OX10 7HH, Friday 23 – Monday 26 May www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk
Programme: www.englishmusicfestival.org.uk/2025-may-festival/programme.php




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Wednesday 23 April

The Arts Society Goring. 11am and 2pm Goring Village Hall. *The Art and Craft of John Piper.* Speaker Jo Walton
Guests welcome £5 please
contact Membership Secretary:
membershipgoringarts@gmail.com.

Thursday 24 April

Goring Gap U3a. 10.30-12noon, GVH.
Speaker: Alan Fitzgerald: *The Hidden Rivers of London.*

Friday 25 April

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

Saturday 26 April

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

Sunday 27 April

• **South Stoke Wildlife and Conservation Group.** Pond dipping for the whole family. 10.30-12.30. Please check our website for location details and further events www.southstokewildlife.org.

• **Withymead Nature Reserve, Cream Tea Sunday.** 10am-5pm, Cream teas served 2-5pm. No need to pre-book, just turn up and enjoy.

More info at www.withymead.org

Wednesday 30 April

Geocaching Event. 12-12.30pm. GL.
With refreshments.

Thursday 1 May

Storytime. 10.30-11am GL. Drop-in. Every Thursday.

Friday 2 May

Goring and Streatley Wine Society, 8pm GVH. We are thrilled to welcome back Vivienne Franks for a wine tasting
Vivienne is Hon.Secretary of the Circle of Wine Writers, a Member of the Association of Wine Educators and an international Wine Judge, Certified WSET Educator.
We look forward to what I'm sure will be a very interesting evening. Enquiries:
gswswine23@gmail.com.

Saturday 3 May

Simon Mayor and Hilary James. 7.30pm MR. See page 39.

Sunday 4 May

Withymead Nature Reserve. Loddon Lily Sundays – every Sunday in May, 10am-5pm. No need to pre-book, just turn up and enjoy. More info www.withymead.org.

Wednesday 7 May

• **Friends of Goring Library Talk.** 7pm for 7.30, GL. Yasmin Cordery Khan talking about her book *Overland*. Tickets £10 (to include a drink) available from the Library and Inspiration.

• Goring Village Green Fingers.

7.30pm, SL. Dr Steve Head: *Ponds and wildlife in your garden.* After working as an academic ecologist and zoologist, Steve volunteers nearly full time to run the Wildlife Gardening Forum,

promoting the importance of the garden environment to both biodiversity and people. Competition: A Selection of Insect Friendly Plants from your garden.

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

Thursday 8 May

Goring Mobile Post Office. 8-11am, Westholme stores, Wallingford Rd, Goring. Open every Monday and Thursday.

Sunday 11 May

Recital in St Mary's 4pm. Sally Goldworth and Ikuko Inoguchi will be giving a recital of delightful piano duets by Mozart, Poulenc, Debussy and Fauré. See page 39.

Monday 12 May

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

• **Goring Mobile Post Office.** 8-11am, Westholme Stores, Wallingford Rd, Goring. Open every Monday and Thursday.

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

Thursday 6 May

• **Lego club.** 4.45-5.45pm, GL. Please book in library.

Wednesday 14 May

• **Christian Aid Lunch** 12noon-2pm, Oriel House, Thames Road, Goring. A ploughman's with music. All welcome.

• **Cleeve by Goring WI.** 7.30pm, SL. Jo Robb, River Thames Champion and Laura Reineke, Chief Executive of Friends of the Thames: *The Fight for the Thames*. Just come along on the night or contact Katrina Cooper, [01491 875334](tel:01491875334).

• **Gap Textile Group.** 7-10pm, CR. The Gap Textile Group has an exciting and varied programme of textile related activities at the monthly meetings. If you are interested in joining, please get in touch. Merete Hawkins, [07747 780158](tel:07747780158).

Thursday 15 May

Pick a Flick. 10.30am-2pm, CR. *Thelma* (2024). Inspired by a real-life experience of the director's grandmother, when 93-year-old Thelma gets duped by a phone scammer pretending to be her grandson she sets out on a treacherous quest across the city to reclaim what was taken from her. Pick a Flick is held every 3rd Thursday. £5 per event including a light lunch. Please contact Sarah Fraser on [01491 871838](tel:01491871838) or Jenny Boyd on [01491 872109](tel:01491872109) to book in and to ask for transport if you require it. We look forward to hearing from you.

Friday 16 May

• **Macular Society Support Group.** 2.30-4.15pm GVH. Speaker from MyVision Oxfordshire followed by afternoon tea.

Contact: Rowena Buie [01491 875103](tel:01491875103)

• **Scottish Folk Duo Boulder Fields.** 7pm, MR. See page 39.

Saturday 17 May

Chamber Choir Presents: *Stories We Share: A Celebration of Folksongs.* 3pm, St Thomas' Church. See page 39.

Monday 19 May

Goring Gap Local History Society. 2.30pm, GVH. Aldon Ferguson: *Interpretation of aerial photographs in WWII and beyond at RAF Medmenham.* Contact Janet Hurst, goringgaphistory@gmail.com

Tuesday 20 May

Social Scrabble. 4.45-7pm, Library. Drop-in and play. All welcome, with refreshments.

Wednesday 21 May

Coffee Morning. 10.30-12noon, St Andrew's South Stoke. Every 3rd Wednesday of the month.

Thursday 22 May

Streatley Parish Assembly 18:30-20:00 MR. All welcome. Refreshments provided.

Saturday 24- 31 May

Half term events, Elmer Week, GL.

Sunday 25 May

Withymead Nature Reserve Cream Tea Sunday. 10am-5pm, Cream teas served 2-5pm. No need to pre-book, just turn up and enjoy.

More info at www.withymead.org.

Monday 26 May

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

Wednesday 28 May

• **The Arts Society Goring.** 11am and 2pm GVH. *The Mayan Civilisation of Central America.* Speaker Duncan Pring
Guests welcome £5 please contact Membership Secretary:
membershipgoringarts@gmail.com.

• **Lego Workshop.** 10-11am, GL. Please book [01865 815155](tel:01865815155).

Thursday 29 May

• **Goring Gap U3a.** 10.30-12noon, GVH. Speaker: Sarah Somerville: *Shaw House, Newbury.*

• **Elmer Storytime and craft.** 10.30-11am GL Drop In. All welcome.

See 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

Marvel-ous migration

The marvel of migration is exactly that, how a 25-gram bird can travel over 6000 miles is astonishing; that's a feathery pilot who weighs as much as 22 jelly beans, sans coconut, nearly flying the circumference of the moon. I watch them preparing to depart throughout the last days of autumn and eagerly await the arrival of their song as they return in spring. With the talents of twenty-first-century tech, we are increasingly well-informed of the science, the data and the hardships of migration. And since it's entirely likely you have seen, read, or heard about this feat, I'm not going to talk about it.

Instead, let's take a stroll down memory lane and delve into the history of migration, from a time when the world was a much bigger place, people had less collective understanding, and you didn't need to apply the scientific method we all know and love to back up your outlandish theories.

4th century BCE – Aristotle *Historia animalium*

Aristotle theorized that swallows hibernate in cracks and crevices and that some birds seen in both summer and winter had simply donned different plumages for the colder season but were no less the same. Aristotle did toy with the ideas of different species of birds moving as the seasons changed; however, that was not the reasoning folk chose to focus on.

1st century CE – Gaius Plinius Secundus AKA Pliny the Elder

Pliny wrote that when winter loomed, birds would travel to neighbouring countries in search of sunny retreats on mountainsides. He also wrote that cranes flew to the ends of the world and did battle with pygmy men who rode goats and rams, fought with bow and arrow, and existed primarily on a diet of crane eggs and chicks. I'm not sure how familiar you are with the works of Pliny; let's just say he never disappoints.

1555 CE – Olaus Magnus – *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus*

Olaus Magnus, a Swedish Archbishop, witnessed swallows skimming water to drink and wrote that the crack or crevice was not the winter home for swallows. Instead, he believed the birds would congregate at the approach of winter and dive headlong into water, to comfortably and quietly wait out the worst of it buried in the mud at the bottom of ponds, lakes, and rivers.

1676 CE – Francis Willughby – *Ornithologiae libri tres*

Francis Willughby journeyed far and wide throughout Europe with the intent of understanding his ornithological subjects. Despite his efforts, he found no seams of swallows in the mountains, no soggy swallows in the silt, and espoused the singular logic that they simply migrated.

1680 CE – Charles Morton – *Compendium physicae*

Charles Morton, an English educator, posited that swallows had neither been found in cracks or crevices nor in rivers or ponds and that the answer was obvious. He pronounced his theory, with maths to back it up, that the soaring swallow would head upward, reaching a speed of 125mph and for two months make the arduous journey to Luna. Our moon. Living off fat reserves and sleeping for much of the journey. Galileo's name was thrown into the mix to provide additional support to the reasoning by highlighting Galileo had seen mountains and seas on the lunar surface.

1822 CE – The 'Pfeilstorch' or arrow stork

In 1822, close to the German village of Klutz, a white stork flew into town. At the time, this was a common occurrence; however, in this instance, things were somewhat more notable. The bird in question, the specimen now housed at the University of Rostock, had a 75cm spear through its neck. While not a swallow, nor a carrier of coconuts, this was notable in gaining a deeper understanding of migration. This bird had travelled from central Africa and clearly had somewhat of a scuffle on the way. Understandings of peoples, cultures, and practices globally provided considerable insight into the journey made by this bird, helping to shed further light on the ever-growing matter of migration.

I will leave you with this. We have here, a bird, with a spear in its neck. In the first century, Pliny the Elder speculates a wild assumption as to what cranes were up to when not at home. Does it seem possible that this event was more than a one-off occurrence nearly 2000 years apart? I'll leave it up to you to decide.

Pete Morton
Withymead warden



AI used for all images

GGN helpers lunch party



Chairman, Jeremy Spring, speaking at the thank you party for GGN deliverers

Photo: David Slarks

Loddon Lilies



Photo: John Boorman

Hot air balloon behind Springhill Road



Photo: Simon Tinkler (aged 12)

The Gap in spring



Photo: John Boorman