

Goring Gap News

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

Faith, Freedom and fans (10 years on)



Photo: Neil Horne

George Michael fans have been coming to Goring to celebrate his life and music (including albums *Faith* and *Freedom*) every year since his death on Christmas Day in 2016. For the many 'lovelies' who travel from across the world this is a highlight in their year and Goring is a special place for them. Local accommodation gets booked up a year ahead. George Michael was a philanthropist and, in his memory, fans put fundraising centre stage during the weekend. Local groups as well as national charities have been supported with the substantial proceeds. This year events were held over the weekend of 26-28 June in George's former garden at Mill Cottage, The Catherine Wheel, The Miller of Mansfield, The Bull Inn and Goring Village Hall. The above photo from Mill Cottage shows the band Celebrating George Michael: Audrey Small (backing vocals), Ryan Pope (guitar), Deano Rice (drums), Steve Mitchell (George Michael), Julie Graham (backing vocals), Guy Phethean (keys), and Dave West (bass player and team organiser; back right with sunglasses – original Wham! bass player). See article on Page 42.

Dutch Friesian horses passing The Miller of Mansfield



See P31

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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.

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

August 2026 weekend of 22/23

September 2026 weekend of 19/20

October 2026 weekend of 17/18

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

Extra copies can be purchased from Inspiration and Westholme Stores.

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GRAPEVINE

Bloom under inspection

On Tuesday, 28 July, eagle-eyed judges from the Royal Horticultural Society will be touring Goring to check us out in our entry in the National Britain in Bloom competition. They won't just be looking at plants, but at all aspects of the appearance of the village. We'd be grateful for your help in presenting all of Goring in the best light. Our Bloomers will have been out weeding and litter picking, but if you could please check the area outside your own property and make sure it is clean, tidy and free of weeds, that would be great.

Thank you and wish us luck!

Bloom Committee

Grants available to local good causes

Since 1991 the Goring Gap News Association has been awarding grants to a variety of local clubs, societies, charities, schools and many more.

In 2026 we have already awarded over £6,000 to organisations including Goring Community Centre, the Morrell Room, Friends of Goring Library, Goring Gap Environmental Association and the Heart of Streatley Charitable Trust.

However, we have up to a further £5,000 to award this year, so we are asking whether there are any other local good causes seeking funds for a specific project.

The ground rules are that awards may be made, in accordance with GGN's awards policy, to any local non-commercial organisation or, in certain circumstances, to an individual aged under 25. In general, approval for an award is given to:

- charitable and benevolent associations
- people under 25 who are performing voluntary service
- one-off projects but not those requiring recurring funding
- projects which do not compromise the impartiality of GGN

If you believe that you meet the above criteria and would like to apply for a grant, please submit your request to ggn chair@gmail.com no later than 31 August; all applications will be considered at our next quarterly committee meeting on 22 September.

Free exercise on offer at GGN

No gym membership needed and a bonus offer of 100% gratitude...please read this message from Victoria, our GGN Distribution Manager:

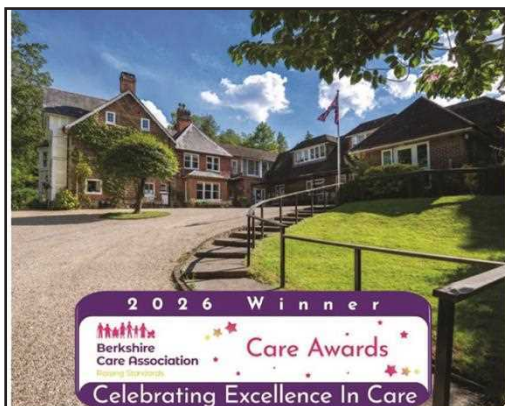
We are very grateful to Joe Ritchie who volunteers and steps in to deliver GGN when the regular person is incapacitated or away. Recently, due to several concurrent situations – illness, hip replacements, holidays – the Distributing Team and neighbours have been stretched beyond what is sustainable.

Please could you offer to be a stand-in like Joe? I need two extra people to deliver in Goring for at least August and September, possibly October. The job takes about an hour or less, once a month. You would be much appreciated.

Please email me: ggn distribution@gmail.com

If you'd like a permanent round, we currently need a monthly deliverer for Lockstile Way and Lockstile Mead. Please get in touch as above.

One last thing – if you find that your copy is late in the hot weather, please be patient – our brilliant deliverers work to bring you your GGN come rain or shine, but too much shine may not be safe for some deliverers and they must feel free to wait for a cooler day.



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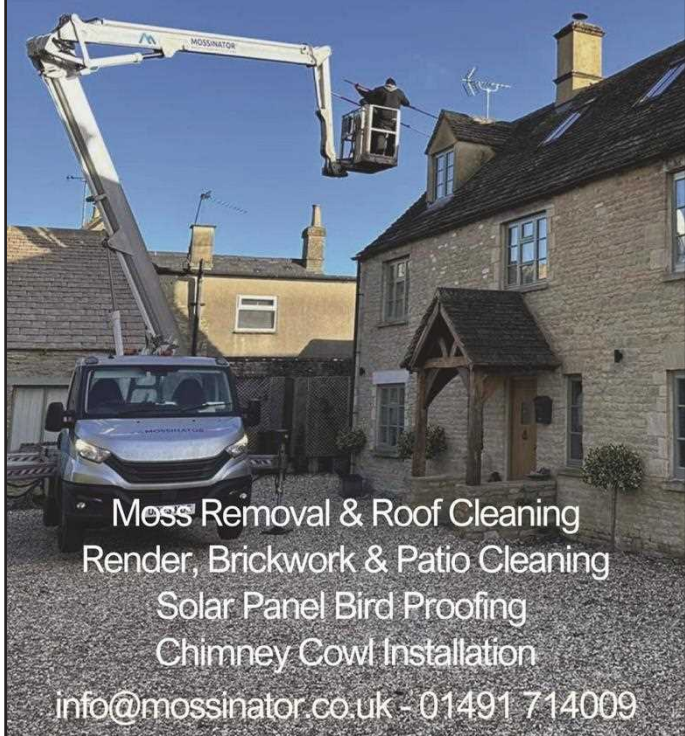
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A new chapter for Streatley CE Primary School

On 1 July, Streatley CE Primary School officially became part of the Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST), marking the beginning of an exciting new chapter for our school.

Many people will have heard the term *academy* or *academy trust* but may not be entirely sure what it means. An academy is still a state-funded school, free to attend and inspected by Ofsted in exactly the same way as any other school. The key difference is that, rather than being maintained by the local authority, it is part of a trust – a group of schools that work together, sharing expertise, resources and specialist support.

For Streatley, this move is about building on the many strengths our school already has. Over the past year, staff and governors have worked closely with ODST to ensure a smooth transition, developing strong relationships and shared ways of working before officially joining the trust.

Being part of ODST means our teachers and staff will have access to a wider network of colleagues, enabling them to share ideas, learn from one another and continue developing the high-quality education our children already enjoy. The trust also provides additional expertise in areas such as finance, estates management, governance and school improvement, allowing school leaders to focus even more on teaching and learning.

Importantly, Streatley will retain its own unique identity and its close connection with the local community. As a Church of England school, our Christian values remain at the heart of everything we do, while benefiting from being part of a family of schools that shares the same ethos and commitment to excellence.

The governors are confident that joining ODST will create even greater opportunities for our pupils, provide valuable support for our staff and help ensure a strong and sustainable future for the school. We look forward to working with parents, carers and the wider community as we begin this exciting new chapter together.

The Friends of Streatley School recently organised a celebration marking the end of the school year, the move to academy trust status and the opening of the new outdoor classroom and kitchen funded by Mend the Gap. The photo shows representatives of the Trust and Mend the Gap with the headteacher. From the left: Mark Jones, ODST HR manager, Katie Adams, ODST HR Partner, Lesley Roberts, Streatley Headteacher and Janet Tuppin, Mend the Gap Project Support Officer.



Debi Beaumont
Vice Chair of Governors

Goring Parish Councillor wins Oxfordshire Clerk of the Year

Cllr Bryan Urbick, Clerk to Harwell Parish Council and a familiar face on Goring's own Parish Council, has been named Clerk of the Year by the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC). The award was presented by the High Sheriff of Oxfordshire, Jawaid Malik, on 25 June 2026.

In his nomination, Harwell Council Chair Vaughan Humphries described how Bryan took on a council that was fragmented and unstable and gave it structure, accountability and a renewed sense of purpose. He highlighted Bryan's insistence on doing more than the legal minimum, his ability to handle difficult conversations with integrity and his role as a mentor both within Harwell and across the wider clerking profession. Vaughan summed it up as a sustained transformation, turning the council into a stable, engaged and community-focused organisation.

Bryan has also recently taken on the permanent role of Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer at Milton Parish Council, where he has spent the past two months rebuilding governance from near-collapse: new structures, new policies and a new way of working.

This type of hands-on intervention is not new to him. When Goring's previous Clerk retired, Bryan stepped in as voluntary Proper Officer while still serving as a Councillor, staying in the role until a permanent Clerk was appointed. After the last parish elections, he did the same for Woodcote Parish Council, which was struggling at the time, again serving voluntarily until a new clerk was found. It was during his time at Woodcote that he completed his Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification.

He is a published contributor to *The Clerk* magazine and will be presenting at the Society of Local Council Clerks' national Practitioners' Conference in March 2027.

Many congratulations from all of us in Goring.

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Arts Society Goring Liverpool Tour: Sunday 10 May – Thursday 14 May 2026

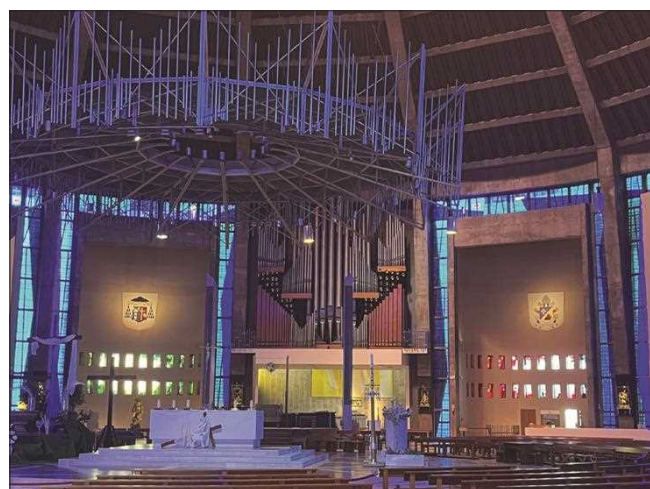
When Rosie Mortimer was advertising her most recent tour earlier in the year, a number of us, ignorant southerners, were sceptical. A successful *Success Tour to Liverpool*, as a European Capital of Culture? But surely Liverpool is just the Beatles and a football team...

Early on Sunday morning, a coach arrived in Pangbourne. It was driven throughout our tour with consummate skill by our ever-cheerful Polish driver, Andy, who had also been our driver last year for the visit to Wales. He picked up 34 of us from various points in the Goring area, on our way to an eye-opening three days 'up north'.

Our midday stop was at Lichfield, visiting the three-spired medieval Cathedral. Knowledgeable guides were on hand to take us round. They went out of their way to make us feel very welcome as we were shown the ancient St Chad Gospels, the Lichfield Angel, the Herkenrode Glass and the Cathedral's many other treasures. Despite an ominous weather forecast, we were able to explore the city in brilliant sunshine and even eat our sandwiches *al fresco* in the nearby beautifully maintained Museum Gardens.

We arrived in the early evening at the Portman hotel at King's Dock on the Liverpool waterfront, transformed in recent years from decrepit warehouses to a vibrant conference area. Servicing that market, our hotel was bustling. Later, the night being fine, a number enjoyed Liverpool by night from the nearby Ferris wheel.

Our blue-badge guide the following morning seemed to confirm the earliest suspicions about Liverpool as he announced that we would start by visiting various Beatles locations around the City. We were warned that there were to be dire consequences for us southerners if, as we approached Penny Lane, we did not deliver a lusty rendering of the Beatles song of that name. We only knew the chorus and not all the verses, but there were no consequences, apart from group photos to prove that we had been there. On then to the magnificent St George's Hall, past many streets of handsome Georgian terraces, the city having, our guide assured us, more Georgian houses even than Bath. He also pointed out that Liverpool has no less than four universities, as well as four theatres and its Philharmonic Orchestra. A brief visit followed to St George's Hall, one of the finest examples of neo-classical architecture in the world and housing the truly imposing City Library, and so to the Anglican Cathedral.



Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral

All photos by Rosie Mortimer



Arts Society on Penny Lane



Brick-built in the 20th century, the city fathers

clearly intended that, as the largest cathedral in Britain, it should truly reflect Liverpool's status at the time as the most up-and-coming city in the realm. It seemed that, not to be outdone, the Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, started in 1930, was intended to surpass its Protestant neighbour. However, World War II intervened, so that only the Crypt of the original Lutyens design was actually completed. Subsequently, following a worldwide competition in the 1960s, an inclusive cathedral was created in the round, bathed in light from a soaring lantern tower above, with beautiful modernist stained glass giving different light effects round the church.

Our visit on Tuesday was to the Walker Art Gallery, another imposing Victorian edifice at the very centre of cultural Liverpool. There, our knowledgeable guide sensibly concentrated on a detailed exposé of the importance of just a very few pictures, letting us explore the Gallery further when she had finished, especially its collection of pre-Raphaelite artworks.

Continues on P9.



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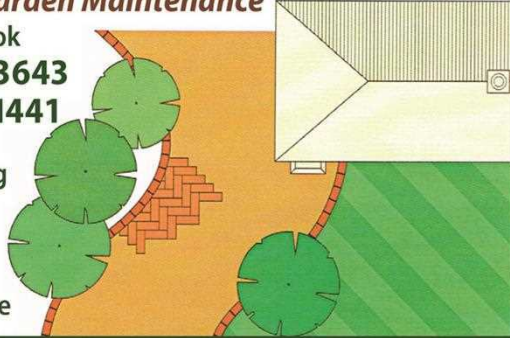
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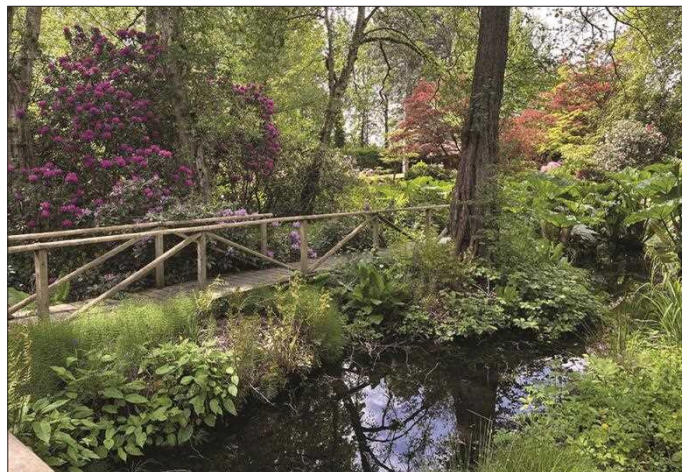
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MUSIC and ARTS continued

The afternoon saw the group scattered across the city, enjoying Liverpool by day. There one sensed a renewed civic pride, especially in the skilfully restored dockland area, a sharp and refreshing contrast to the grime-filled photos of this district in yesteryear.

Wednesday morning had us driving through the Mersey Tunnel to Everton and Port Sunlight village. Founded by 'Soap King' William Lever in the late 1800s, the garden village is a unique example of early urban planning in Britain. Built to house workers from the nearby Lever Brothers' Soap factory, the village represents many periods of British building history. Within the village is the Lady Lever Gallery, founded in the 1920s, and our first port of call. A free flow visit saw us immersed in a magnificent collection of paintings and sculpture, as well as Wedgwood porcelain, chinoiserie and much more. A blue-badge guided visit by coach to the village followed, then lunch at a choice of options, and we were off, back under the Mersey through the countryside clear of Liverpool, to the National Trust's Speke Hall. Rain threatened and, for the only time on our trip, briefly materialised as we were expertly guided round the



Japanese Garden at Winterbourne House

outside of this rare timber-framed Tudor house. After a period of neglect, it was restored during the Victorian era, and now represents a unique combination of 16th century simplicity and the 19th century Arts and Crafts aesthetic.

The long drive home was agreeably punctuated by a break in Birmingham. We wondered what a visit to Winterbourne House and Gardens actually portended.

The answer was absolute delight as, after a detailed introduction by one of the staff, we were able to enjoy this charming example of an Edwardian suburban villa and gardens. The house's interior features beautiful examples of craftsmanship from the Arts and Crafts movement, and the seven-acre botanical gardens are Grade II listed. Once more aboard our coach and Andy's care, we sped down the M40, to reach Goring in ample time for any evening activity. So – was Rosie's *Success Tour* to cultural Liverpool indeed a success? Yes, resoundingly.

Would you like to join the Arts Society Goring's next tour, to the Cities of Castile, exploring the historic cities of central Spain, Salamanca, Avila, Toledo, Segovia and Madrid? We are travelling by air on 14 October and returning on 22 October with our own coach and specialist Spanish guide. Full details from Rosie Mortimer [07900 260001](tel:07900260001)

Nigel Suffield-Jones



Gormley figure up to its knees

The Ewen Baird sextet at Goring Community Jazz

The show on Friday 12 June was originally billed as *The Trumpet and Tenor in Jazz*, with Andy Townsend on trumpet. However, he dropped out and was replaced by the young Adam Beveridge, whom we last heard playing (and singing) with the Roy Bailey Big Band in Goring in November. Perhaps to compensate for Adam's inexperience, Baird had brought in a GVH regular, Ross Law, on trombone. The house trio completed the ensemble, but the evening had, understandably, a somewhat makeshift feel.

Of the three frontliners, Ewen Baird was the one I enjoyed listening to most. He has a warm, mellow tone, a formidable technique and no shortage of ideas. Adam Beveridge has a hot tone, and can swing, but his articulation needs work, and his invention often came to an end before his solo did. The burly trombonist, Ross Law, plays with energy and verve, but his improvising tends to go slightly off-piste.

The programme consisted mainly of modern jazz originals, mostly unfamiliar (to me, anyway, and possibly to some of the players). Things certainly improved in the second set. Baird was featured alone in the ballad *I Want to Talk About You*. His breathy-toned, pensive solo was beautifully structured.

In the mid-tempo *Why Wait?* the horns played the theme in harmony over a 2-note bass riff, and Adam Beveridge, on flugelhorn, found his stride in a thoughtful, melodic solo. *Ricorda Mi* by pianist Joe Henderson, was a fast samba in which all three horns turned in exciting solos, and Howard King on bass contributed a nimble chorus or two. The final number, *The Night has a Thousand Eyes*, found Baird in great form, and we heard a masterly solo from Nick Hill on piano. Considering the last-minute change of personnel and, presumably, lack of rehearsal time, the group did a commendable job.

Gus McGill

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u3a Art History Group

Liora Myers initially formed the u3a Art History Group and has been leading it for four years. The group has covered a broad range of art, including painting and sculpture, architecture, and art movements, from impressionism to pop art. There are currently seven active members of the group and for two hours, once a month on the third Friday of the month, they meet to discuss, comment and learn about aspects of art history

The subject of each meeting can be an art movement of historical interest, and these have included, for example, Bauhaus, Fauvism, Art Deco and Naïve Art. Alternatively there might be a theme or a particular type of subject, like portraits, seascapes or everyday life, such as travel and, say, farming. There have also been different specialised topics such as hidden images in art, Turner Prize winners and women impressionists.

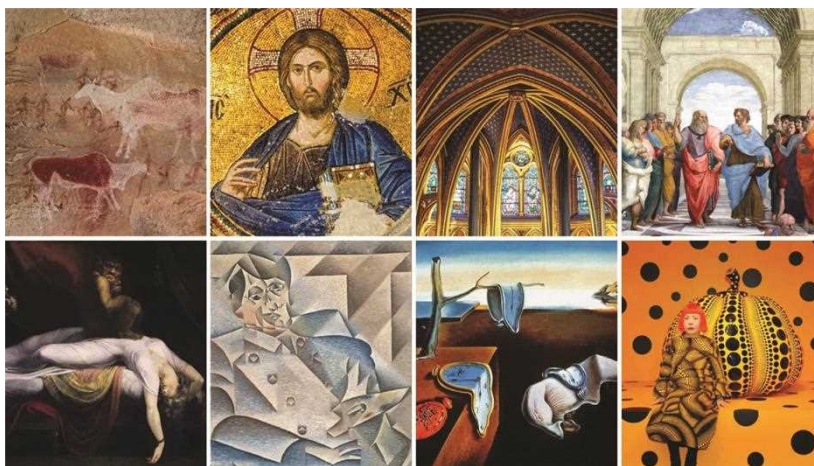
Each month the members of the group choose a subject for the next meeting and although it is not an academic group the format is that all or most members give a short presentation about a piece of art related to the chosen topic. People do not have to present each time, but they almost always choose to. People often talk about the chosen piece of art by putting it in its historical and cultural context. Conversations also touch on the aesthetics of the art presented. Putting the subject of the meeting in its historical context is particularly important but other interesting facts are discussed, such as what influences led to the artwork being created.

When discussing art movements, the focus is often on how they developed and what influence they had on other works of art. Biographical details about the artist or artists open up conversations about the psychological impact of the artist's life on his/her art and its quality and value. The aim is to have a conversation which will stimulate all the members of the group and lead to a better understanding of art both in general and in particular and its historical and cultural context.

The conversation usually develops into a wider discussion about art and how the group members respond to it. Each member of the group is obviously interested both in art and its history. The group has found it interesting that even though people have their likes and dislikes, very often it is the work or type of art that individuals don't really like which provokes the biggest discussion and the greatest pleasure in the conversation. Nearly always the presentations and discussion will reveal all sorts of aspects that most of the members were previously unaware of – and that group-driven learning is one of the key strengths of the group.

In addition to the individual responses to the works of art, there is an attempt to bring out the social, cultural, psychological, philosophical, religious and historical elements that have helped create the work of art. As a result of the success of the group it is full and a new group is being launched which uses the same or similar format but has chosen a different name: Art Appreciation. As with the initial group, the real objective is to enjoy art while learning about art history and to have a stimulating discussion that will help people understand and appreciate a wide range of art styles and genres. To learn more, contact Liora Myers. lioramyers@gmail.com

Paul Davies



Escaped prisoners at large in Aldworth

The 2nd Goring & Streatley Scout Group held their Annual Group Camp at Bower Farm, Aldworth in June. This year's camp was the 'father, son and daughter camp', when fathers join in with the Scout Patrols under the leadership of a Scout Patrol Leader for daytime activities and sleep in the patrol ridge tents. Everything was run on traditional Scout camping lines: cooking on open fires, early morning exercises, Scout skills training and of course, a camp fire at the end of the weekend camp.

During the camp there were several competitions and challenges that fathers, Scouts and older Wolf Cubs took part in.

One, a 'wide game' competition, saw the Scouts and Wolf Cubs acting as prisoners who had just escaped from the local prison, scattered around the Bower Farm and the village of Aldworth area and being pursued by the fathers who were the arresting 'police officers'. All were dressed in appropriate gear for the activity, even down to handcuffs. After some time finally all the prisoners were captured and returned to prison, so well done to our gallant father 'police officers' and what great fun all of them had.

The 2nd Goring & Streatley Scout Group has vacancies and invites new members to start after the summer school holiday in September. Make initial enquiries by telephoning Skip (David Cooksley).

David Cooksley

Group Scout Master: [07789 938291](tel:07789938291)





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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

A lady who likes to lunch?

Dear Editor—As a resident of Goring for the past 34 years, and after a busy career in the City, working in funicular engineering design, on my retirement my wife Maureen suggested that I find a hobby! As a young boy I had enjoyed fishing with my Grandad Murray, and this is how I came to be a member of Goring Fishing Club.

One of my favourite pegs on the stretch is a couple of hundred metres downstream from Goring weir. I first started seeing 'Wren', a beautiful female otter, a couple of years ago, often with a roach or dace in her mouth, scurrying off. It felt such a privilege to be able to enjoy the majesty of this wonderful creature and to share the same environment. As time went by, Wren began to come closer, but you can imagine my surprise when, one day in early summer, Wren came as close as my feet, clearly taking an interest in the potted meat sandwich I had been eating. Wren stared longingly as if asking for a morsel to be thrown her way. I remained as still as I could so as not to scare her. There was then a little rustle in the reeds and out peered three sets of small eyes. Wren had become a mum, her cubs could only have been a few weeks old. They were her spitting image. As I struggled to try and get my mobile phone from the arm of my chair, I laid my sandwich down on the other chair arm. After retrieving my phone, I turned to see Wren running back towards the water with my potted meat sandwich in her mouth! Had she been using her cubs as a decoy? Was this a 'team effort'? Whatever the planning behind it, or lack thereof, I was a sandwich down!

Of course, I hold no ill will at all towards Wren for snatching my sandwich. She has visited since but I have ensured that my sandwich is out of otter range. I thought your readers and my fellow residents would enjoy a chuckle at this incident that happened to me. I wonder how many other fisherman's lunches Wren and her family have made off with over the last summer?

M D Eastell

Red Kite attempts dog-napping in Goring!

Dear Editor—During a recent visit to my cousin in Streatley, a dog-walk in Goring nearly turned dramatic when a red kite swooped suspiciously close to my small dog ('Vegas') while walking by the river. Fortunately for us, my little companion's enthusiasm for treats finally paid off – he was simply too fat for lift-off.

The bird circled overhead before apparently deciding the effort wasn't worth it, leaving my dog entirely unbothered and still searching for discarded titbits.

While the story ended humorously, it is a useful reminder that owners of very small or lightweight dogs should stay alert when walking in open areas where red kites and other birds of prey are common. Keeping pets close and supervised could prevent a more serious encounter.

In our case, extra biscuits may just have saved the day!

Paul Fielding
Leeds

Defibrillators

Dear Editor—A Goring resident drew my attention to a letter in a back issue of *Goring Gap News* about a member of the public finding that there was no defibrillator in the box at the Goring Pavilion. To seek more information about defibrillators, I approached South Central Ambulance Service's David Hamer (Divisional Community Engagement Manager – Thames Valley).

Public defibrillators are not owned by the ambulance service, but instead by, for example, parish councils, schools, businesses, sports clubs and shops. Each one has up to two volunteer guardians who inspect it regularly. Each device is registered on a national network called The Circuit, run by the British Heart Foundation, with data available on the screens of 999 call-handlers.

When a 999 call comes in and the call-handler identifies it as a cardiac arrest, they ask the caller to immediately start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (chest compressions). Only if there is a second person available on scene, they can be sent to get a defibrillator. The system will show a list of the nearest 8 to 12 defibrillators to the call-handler so that they can provide directions and the access code. Once a defibrillator code has been attached to a job on the computer, it will automatically be taken off the list of those available.

After a call-out, the paramedics take the defibrillator to the ambulance station, and from there it will be returned to its home location. The system automatically alerts the guardian who must then inspect it so that any appropriate maintenance can be done (for example, replacing the battery or pads). Once the defibrillator is deemed usable again, the guardian changes its status on the system from 'Unavailable' to 'Emergency ready'.

There are over 8,000 registered defibrillators in the South Central Ambulance Service area.

If you are the only person on the scene with a patient, do not leave them to fetch a defibrillator. Call 999 and give immediate, uninterrupted chest compressions to keep their blood pumping to their brain and other organs. This is the best thing you can do for them.

Marina Bang

Public Governor, Oxfordshire South Central Ambulance Service

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Father and son volunteer together in Malawi

In June I travelled to Malawi with my son James and we spent a week at the Bhubesi Pride Foundation community centre, which as an architect I had helped design. For James this trip was the culmination of more than a decade of involvement with the Foundation, as he first started fundraising for it in 2014 when he was 13. Passionate about rugby, he saw an article in the press during the Six Nations about the charity and bringing education through rugby to Africa. I later became involved and I am now good friends with the founder, Richard Bennet. When Richard decided in 2018 to create a permanent centre in Malawi, he asked me to use my skills to help him develop a proposal initially for funding and then for delivery. The week James and I spent in Malawi offered us both an opportunity to see first-hand the difference that charitable support can make within a local community.

The Bhubesi Pride Foundation is a UK charity that supports children and young people in Malawi through education, sport and community programmes. James has undertaken a number of fundraising challenges for the charity over the years, including walking the Thames Path Challenge, virtual cycle challenges, from Land's End to John o' Groats and the length of Malawi and more recently, on road cycling from Twickenham to Paris before the Rugby World Cup. In 2023 he travelled independently to Malawi to volunteer at the charity's community centre, a decision

supported and encouraged by his mother despite her own illness and her being cared for at the Duchess of Kent Hospice at the time. (Kate's obituary was in GGN in November 2023, pages 29 and 31.)

For me, the trip held a different significance. To finally stand inside a building that I had only ever known through drawings and photographs, and to see it being used every day by local children and families, was both humbling and rewarding.

During our time in Malawi, we worked alongside local staff delivering activities in schools and supporting programmes for disabled and disadvantaged children. We helped run training sessions, sports activities and community events, sharing some of our own experiences whilst learning far more than we expected in return.

The highlight of the week was a Festival of Sport held at the centre,

bringing together more than 250 children for a day of football, rugby, netball and games. What neither of us will forget is the enthusiasm, kindness and positivity shown by the children throughout the week. Despite facing challenges that many of us in the UK can scarcely imagine, they approached every activity with energy, gratitude and enormous smiles.

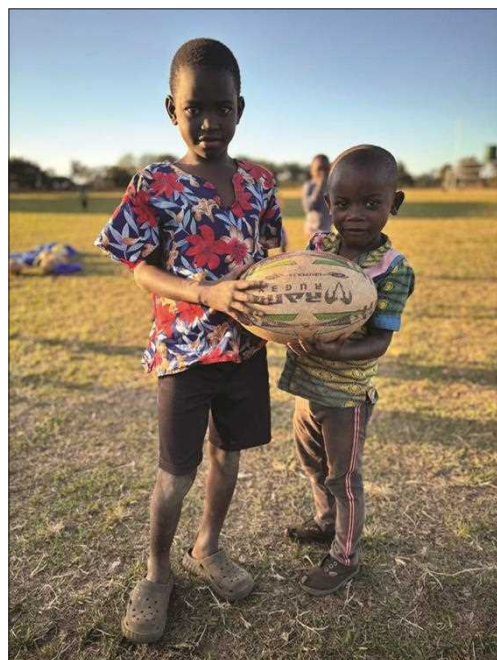
The experience reminded us that volunteering is as much about listening and learning as it is about giving something back. We returned home with a renewed appreciation for community, resilience and the power of sport and education to bring people together.

Whilst the charity continues to develop its facilities and programmes, the lasting memory for us will be the people we met and the friendships we made. It was a privilege to spend time with such an inspiring community and to witness the impact that dedicated local staff and volunteers are having every day.

For more information about the charity and to donate see: <https://bpf africa.org/>



James and Stephen outside the centre



Young rugby enthusiasts



The sport festival in Malawi

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Goring CE Primary – school trip adventures

Exploring the wonders of Kew Gardens

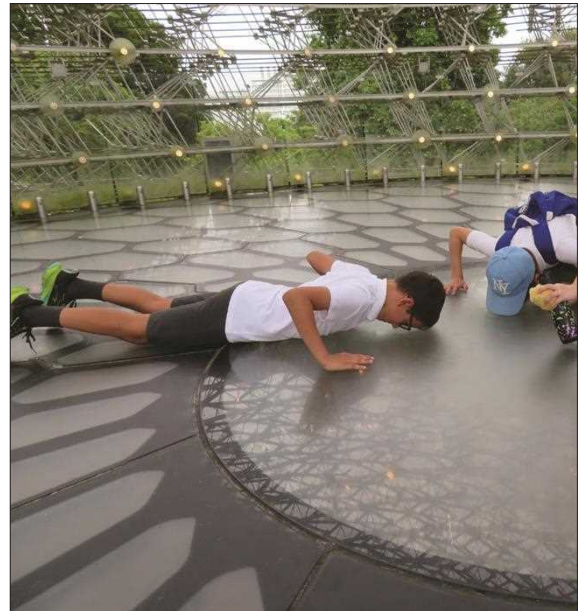
Year 5 pupils from Nightingale Class enjoyed an unforgettable educational visit in June to Kew Gardens, where they explored the beauty of the natural world while bringing their science learning to life.

The children began their adventure by walking along the impressive Tree Top Walkway, taking in spectacular views across the gardens and learning about the importance of trees in supporting wildlife and tackling climate change. They also visited the Palm House, where they discovered an incredible collection of tropical plants, before experiencing The Hive, an immersive installation that highlights the vital role bees play in our ecosystem. As they explored the gardens, the pupils encountered a wide range of plants, flowers and habitats, inspiring curiosity and encouraging them to think about biodiversity and conservation.

One of the highlights of the day was a hands-on workshop focusing on pollinators. The children learned how bees transfer pollen between flowers and the important role pollinators play in food production. They identified the different parts of a flower using real plants before becoming pollinators themselves by carefully transferring pollen with small paintbrushes.

One Year 5 pupil said, 'My favourite part was the Tree Top Walkway, I like how it moved and also being as tall as the trees.' Another pupil added, 'I really enjoyed looking for different species of bees during the workshop – I didn't know there were so many species.'

The visit was a memorable and enriching experience, leaving the children with a lasting deeper appreciation of the natural world.



Kew Gardens - Look through the bee hive

Photo : Mrs Mitchell

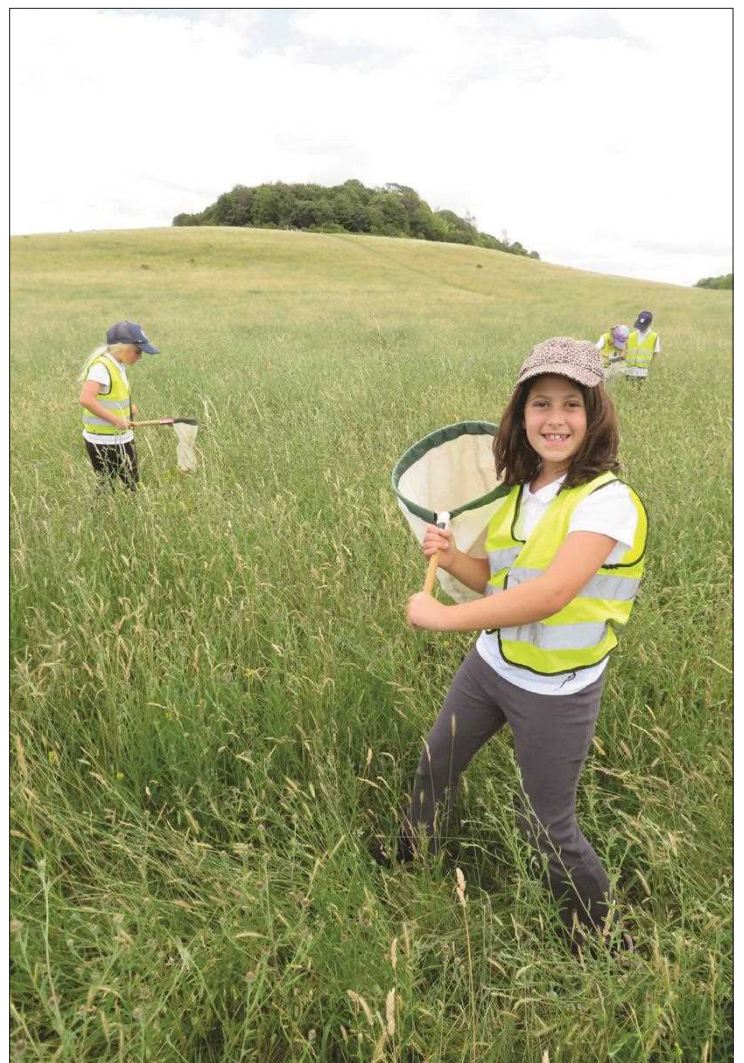
Robin and Ibis – ancient skills at Wittenham Clumps

On Tuesday 30 June, children from Robin and Ibis Classes (Years 2, 3 and 4) enjoyed an exciting trip to the Earth Trust at Wittenham Clumps, where they took part in a fascinating Ancient History Workshop. The adventure began with a journey on a double-decker bus, which brought smiles and excitement before the day had even started!

Throughout the workshop, the children discovered what life was like thousands of years ago through a range of hands-on activities. One of the most popular challenges was learning how to make fire using traditional methods. One Year 3 pupil said, 'I really enjoyed lighting the fires. I was surprised how difficult it was, but we kept trying. We used cotton wool to help make it. I had never made a fire before!'

Other comments: 'It was probably my favourite school trip so far. I loved making fire and building the round house.' 'I really, really enjoyed building the round house because it made me think about how people lived a long time ago.' 'It was fun and I loved the meadow sweeping.' 'I really liked the mini-beast hunt where I caught a green grasshopper!'

The trip was full of discovery, teamwork and outdoor learning. From travelling on a double-decker bus to making fire, building a round house and exploring the meadows, the children experienced history and nature in a memorable and exciting way. Everyone returned to school with new knowledge about ancient history, wonderful memories and lots of stories to tell. It was a fantastic day, and we are very grateful to everyone who helped organise the trip and supported the children throughout the day.



Bug hunting at the Earth Trust

Photo : Mrs Parkinson



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Goring filmmakers sparkle at Reading glitzy film awards

On Sunday 21 June, Evolve Film Festival welcomed over 220 people to Vue Cinema Reading, for a glitzy awards ceremony to celebrate local young filmmakers. The event was the culmination of a series of free workshops that many of the young participants had taken part in,. Formerly part of The GAP Festival, Evolve launched as a stand-alone event in 2025.



Winner of the Best Film in the 12-15 age category Juliet Asselin-Miller

also from Goring, won Best Director for her film, *Project Valhalla*. Maya received a day inside a Dolby Atmos studio with a professional sound engineer (courtesy of Pip Studios) worth £2,000. It was an incredible experience for the young finalists, to walk and dazzle on the red carpet and watch their own films on the big screen with their friends, families and teachers. Their films sounded and looked amazing in the Cinema!

Goring resident, Lexy Smith, parent of an U12 finalist, said: 'My sister regularly attends film festivals and she said the quality of these films was way above the standard of many adult made films she's seen.' All finalists went home with at least festival merchandise and swag bags kindly donated by Shadowbox Studios Shinfield. All finalist films also received comprehensive judges' feedback after the event to aid their

future filmmaking. Judges came from across the film and tv industries, as well as youth judges like Max Varvill, an 18-year-old filmmaker from Berkshire, who said: 'I previously entered and won an award and got invited back to judge the U16 films in 2026. As someone who wants to work in the film industry, I found the experience really interesting, working with a panel of film professionals to understand what they look for when assessing. It was a great opportunity.' To see all the winning films, go to Evolve Film Festival on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@EvolveFilmFestival>

To be the first to know about our programme of events for 2027 join the Evolve Film Festival newsletter, email 'SUBSCRIBE' to: support@evolvefilmfestival.org or follow Evolve Film Festival on social media.

Gary McDonagh



Amelia Friedmann, prizewinner in the U12 category



Jed Beaumont's film *I'm Not Fine*, won awards

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council

Battle Road – proposed Quiet Lane

Quiet Lanes are roads where motor traffic on minor roads and lanes is restricted. Modal filters (for example bollards, planters or gates) are used to make conditions safer and more comfortable for people travelling on foot, by cycle or on horseback, reducing through traffic while still maintaining essential access for residents, landowners and emergency services

Several Quiet Lanes already exist in Oxfordshire. The new approach is an enhancement to existing Department for Transport policy, going beyond signage-based lanes to achieve the safest outcomes. There is substantial national backing from organisations such as the British Horse Society and the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Goring Parish Council has proposed Battle Road (beyond Elvendon Road) as a potential Quiet Lane and Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) have acknowledged this. There is a £250,000 OCC capital allocation already in place to support Quiet Lanes – Goring Parish Council (GPC) would pay nothing towards the cost. GPC are actively seeking your feedback on the proposal so after reading below, please write to the Deputy Clerk with your view: deputyclerk@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk

The steps to establish a Quiet Lane

GPC has started the process by voting to express an interest in Battle Road being designated a Quiet Lane. OCC will now assess the viability of the proposal according to set criteria. This will involve the collection and evaluation of additional data (for example traffic flow/speed surveys). OCC will then draft an initial proposal outlining the type of interventions that are recommended. Following this GPC will organise a local engagement exercise based on the initial OCC proposal – with a focus on understanding local preferences, concerns and needs. The results of the public engagement will be used by OCC in drafting the formal proposal, with a detailed list of interventions and plans as appropriate.

The formal plan will be presented at a public Delegated Decisions meeting, where the Cabinet Member for Transport Management decides to approve or reject the scheme and agrees the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) implementation route. After implementation, OCC will run a statutory public consultation choosing between an experimental TRO for between six and 18 months, or a permanent TRO.

Throughout the process, key data is collected at regular intervals (including pre-implementation) to evaluate effects according to set criteria, and to enable decisions on whether measures either proposed or introduced on a temporary basis are either made permanent or reversed.

Help shape safer streets in Goring

Goring-on-Thames Parish Council is exploring a range of pedestrian enhancements and traffic calming measures to make our village safer, more accessible and more enjoyable for everyone who walks, wheels or cycles. Working with highway engineering consultants and Oxfordshire County Council, we have identified five potential projects that could make a real difference across the village. While we would like to deliver them all, funding and resources mean we must prioritise where to start. That's where we need your help!

Have your say on Goring's next pedestrian safety improvements

We want to know what residents think. Are we focusing on the right projects? Which improvements would have the greatest impact on your daily life? Which should be delivered first? Please take a few minutes to review the text and professional CGI representations of what the projects would look like below and tell us your preferred order of priority. Your feedback will help shape future investment in pedestrian safety across Goring.

Three ways you can respond:

1. Vote directly here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RHMBBHF>

2. Access the link via our website: <https://goringparishcouncil.gov.uk/pedestrian-safety-improvement-projects/>

3. Directly email the Deputy Clerk at: deputyclerk@goringparishcouncil.gov.uk

The five projects:

1. A build out at the Manor Road/High Street junction

We are proposing a build out of the Rectory Gardens entrance parquet brickwork to tighten the turn into Manor Road. This would create more pedestrian space, reduce parking on the corner whilst still allowing flexible access to Manor Road from the High Street. It would reduce the distance pedestrians would need to cross to reach the High Street, and would look attractive as the current brickwork pavement would be extended outwards. Potentially this could create the space for another bench and bike rack.



See the top of next column for an enlarged view of the build out.



2.Improving the current courtesy crossing on the High Street

We currently have a pedestrian courtesy crossing ,a traffic-slowing hump, on the High Street, but we could make it more visible. Painting the top red would indicate the change of surface and the need for vehicles to slow down. Cobbles on the sides of the raised table would further slow traffic , whilst enhancing the rural aspects of the village.



3. A traffic priority filter and a pedestrian priority lane on Reading Road

The footpath from the end of Farm Lane path has steps down to a dangerous section of the Reading Road. At this point there is nowhere safe for pedestrians to go. A single modal filter on Reading Road would slow traffic and highlight the need to consider other road users on this fast stretch of road. A pedestrian priority lane could be painted as has been successfully trialled on Station Road. The filter would be similar to the traffic calming filter on the A329 as you leave Streatley heading towards Moultsford.



4. A courtesy crossing at the Boathouse Arcade

We want to make the area in the village closest to the river safer for pedestrians. A courtesy pedestrian crossing at the Boathouse Arcade would link with the dropped kerb and steps on the bank opposite and allow safer crossing for all. Many people struggle with the uneven path towards Thames Road. The goal would also be to possibly reduce the number of unrestricted parking spaces outside the arcade, replacing them with disabled spaces and/or on road bike parking.



5. A new courtesy crossing on the Upper High Street

We know that many people struggle crossing the High Street closer to the bridge, especially those heading to the surgery. The road can be challenging here for walkers, especially as the pavement runs out. A raised table here would ensure safer pedestrian access to our key health provider in the village.



Do you agree with our priorities?

Please review the projects and let us know what you think. Every response helps us understand what matters most to residents and will help inform future decisions on pedestrian safety improvements in Goring. Thank you for taking part.



Festival picnic at the concert finale

Photo: David Gristwood

The GAP Festival brought ten unforgettable days of creativity, curiosity and community spirit to Goring and Streatley from 12-21 June, with this year's *Journey of Discovery* theme inspiring a vibrant programme enjoyed in glorious summer weather. More than 3,300 tickets were booked across the Festival's 70+ events, with hundreds more joining the many free activities that filled the villages with colour, conversation and creativity.

Audiences embraced an impressively diverse programme spanning music, theatre, science, literature, art, wellbeing and family activities. Highlights included the sell-out three-night run of *Opera at Streatley Farmhouse*, the hugely popular *Wonders of the Natural World Family Day* (which welcomed around 600 visitors for a packed day of wildlife, science and hands-on discovery) and the much-loved return of Open Gardens.

GAP Festival 2026: the



Artistic Director, Ginny Avery, serving



Storytime ,with Ginny Avery, at Family Fun Day

Photo: Julia Jones



Family Day Science Live

Photo: Rachel

Thousands enjoy a ten-day Journey of Discovery



the scones

Photo: Ron Bridle



David Caswell

Photo: David Gristwood

Daily wellbeing sessions, art workshops, concerts, talks, plays and exhibitions ensured there was something for everyone, from quiet moments of reflection to lively communal celebrations.

The atmosphere throughout the festival was one of joy and togetherness. As one attendee put it: 'There was such a fun atmosphere in the village during the Festival (doubtless the weather helped!) and the events I attended were super. All the volunteers were so friendly and enthusiastic.' Another added: 'The Festival is a wonderful event with an impressive range of activities.' These reflections capture the spirit that has made the GAP Festival such a cherished part of the local calendar.

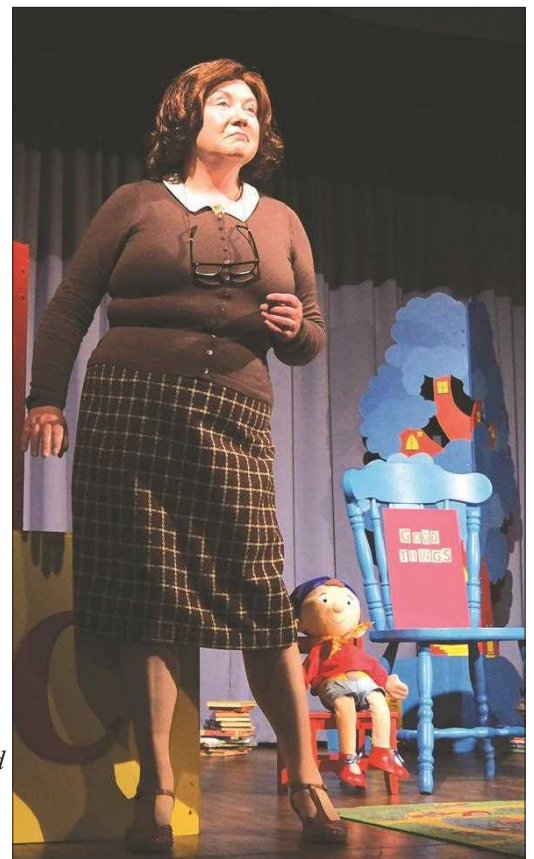
Behind the scenes, the Festival was powered by an extraordinary team of volunteers. In the months leading up to June, more than 40 committee members and volunteers dedicated countless hours to planning events, coordinating marketing, managing ticketing, updating the website and organising the many logistical details required for a festival of this scale. During the ten days themselves, a further 50 volunteers kept everything running smoothly; stewarding events, supporting workshop leaders, setting up venues, running bars, operating sound and lighting, and capturing the Festival in photos and video. Their commitment ensured the programme flowed seamlessly from the opening event to the closing performance.

Outgoing Artistic Director, Ginny Avery, reflected on her final festival in the role: 'It's been a privilege to serve as Artistic Director since 2020, and I couldn't be prouder that my final festival celebrated everything the GAP Festival stands for – creativity, curiosity and community.' As Ginny steps down, the Festival is now seeking a new Artistic Director to help shape the 2028 programme. If you have a passion for arts, culture and community and would like to take on his role for our next Festival please do get in touch at help@gapfestival.org

The GAP Festival extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed: volunteers, sponsors, performers, hosts, supporters and audiences. Your enthusiasm and generosity make this remarkable celebration possible.

Watch our wrap up video and share your feedback for a chance to win two tickets for 2028 at www.thegapfestival.org

Katie Gristwood



Enid Blyton Secret Life Photo: D Gristwood

Outstanding opera brings the comedy and heartbreak of *La Bohème* to Streatley

I have often driven past Streatley Farmhouse, but had never guessed that behind it lies such a delightful backdrop for an evening of opera. Its gardens provide the perfect spot for a pre-performance picnic, making the occasion feel like a hidden gem. What a privilege to have a company of GAP Festival Opera's quality on our doorstep and this year's production showed what can be achieved in such an intimate and tranquil setting.

For one weekend in June, the opera barn was transformed into the streets and garrets of 19th century Paris as GAP Festival Opera presented Puccini's *La Bohème*. It proved to be an evening of warmth, humour and poignancy, showing that outstanding opera does not depend on a large theatre or full symphony orchestra.

My first impression was of a performance that made imaginative use of its surroundings. Set and Costume Designer

Ilka Weiss and the team created a convincing artist's garret, drawing the audience into the world of the young Bohemians. Bruce Williams's atmospheric lighting enhanced the mood, making the most of the space and subtly supporting the drama. Stagehands in appropriate costume transformed the set when required.

Martin Lamb's English translation deserves particular praise. Translating an opera as familiar as *La Bohème* is no easy task, yet his text remained faithful to the characters and Puccini's intentions while sounding fresh, natural and drawing out the wit of the original libretto.

Musically, the production was in safe hands, and it was a treat to watch the instrumentalists alongside the stage. Musical Director Katrine Reimers directed from the keyboard, leading Alison Holford's sensitive arrangement for six musicians. The reduced forces retained the richness and emotional sweep of Puccini's score, while suiting the barn's acoustics. The ensemble provided colour and depth without overwhelming the singers.

The cast embraced both the comedy and heartbreak of the opera. Stephanie Bodsworth was a touching Mimì, Anthony Flaum's Rodolfo combined youthful ardour with genuine warmth, Matthew Siveter was an engaging Marcello, Katherine Manley brought sparkle to Musetta, Nicholas Morris made an energetic Schaunard, Martin Lamb played both Alcindoro and Benoit with perfect comic timing and William Stevens's thoughtful Colline provided one of the evening's most moving moments.

Altogether it was an evening that was artistically ambitious and wonderfully welcoming. GAP Festival Opera's return in 2028 will be eagerly anticipated and judging by this year's enthusiastic audiences, early booking is likely to be essential.

Karen Braden



Photo: David Gristwood

A whizz-pop-bang family day of magical experiences

Another great year for the festival's Family Day, *Wonders of the Natural World*, curated by Chris Jones and attended by almost everyone in Goring and Streatley with young children!

Joey (6) kicked off the day at 'Discover Robotics & Coding', building a moving bug through the magic of Lego and an iPad. Meanwhile Cassie (2) and I set up camp at the main stage for a fascinating talk by photographer Simon Booker on owls, kingfishers and his favourite local creature, the otter. One young audience member was quick to answer every question...turns out he'd been to a previous Simon Booker talk!

The photography competition slideshow was a biased personal highlight as Joey won the overall prize! He jumped for joy when he found out and got to pose for pictures with Simon, who we bumped into later that day whilst looking at the exhibition.

Dr Jacob Gardner from University of Reading told us we've had dinosaurs all wrong and that the humble chicken is in fact a direct descendant! He fielded a tough Q&A from various 6 and 7-year-olds grilling him on the *exact* discovery dates of a range of exotic sounding dinosaurs, before finally being allowed to leave the stage. Beale Park explored the challenges wildlife face and The Living Rainforest shared how many of the foods we love begin life in rainforests.

Photo right, Joey meets the snakes Photo: Anna Povey



Sadly, we missed the space talks: Dr James O'Donoghue on the Artemis moon programme, David Gomes Otero's from the European Space Agency's interactive mission-to-the-moon session and Paul Fisher's talk on satellites and climate. That last one was my husband's favourite, high praise, given he was MCing the stage and saw every talk from the front row!

Elsewhere, we painted pebbles at the arts and craft tent, chose books thanks to Awesome Books at the story corner (where a friend's dad told a cracking tale about a lost robin) and much to my dismay Joey became obsessed with the live snakes in the nature tent. See photo for his delight at being wrapped in one! Thank goodness we'd already caught the Science Live! Show at midday, or he'd have missed it entirely to touch just one more snake...

Ted Hill from The Royal Institution delivered a solid 45 minutes of laughter and entertainment as he set bubbles on fire, created hydrogen with items from under the kitchen sink (!), redefined the acceptable size of an orange, squirted 'toilet water' over the crowd, and finished with a rocket launch overhead. A proper whizz-pop-bang experience, with a host who told us not to try this at home whilst absolutely inspiring us to do so!

We only scratched the surface of another brilliant family day – already looking forward to 2028. A gigantic thank you to everyone who made it happen. We're so lucky to live in a village where people give up their free time to create such magic for our children!

The GAP Festival Family Day was kindly supported by SODC Councillor Community Grant Scheme, The Arts Society Goring and artist Sarah Pye.

Anna Povey and family

The buzz of creativity in a plethora of art workshops

Being part of GAP Festival 2026 as Arts Coordinator has been a truly rewarding experience. My role involved bringing together a series of creative workshops, working with a fantastic group of local artists to offer something for everyone. In total, we ran nine workshops, including screen printing, acrylic painting, willow weaving, collage, and pen and wash. It was a real joy to see such a variety of artistic skills and styles shared so generously. Across the nine events, we welcomed nearly 100 participants, which was fantastic to see.

Behind the scenes, I worked closely with the Festival team on venues, marketing and ticketing, which really highlighted how much coordination goes into making an event like this happen. During the festival itself, I managed six of the sessions, with two other wonderful volunteers supporting the remaining workshops. Having that support made all the difference and created a welcoming, friendly atmosphere for everyone attending.

What stood out most was the feedback from participants. People really valued the opportunity to try something new, often stepping outside their comfort zone, while also meeting local artists and connecting with others in the community. There was a real buzz in each session, whether someone was picking up a paintbrush for the first time or refining an existing skill.

For me, being part of a festival like this brings home how important community events are. They create space for people to come together, learn from each other and enjoy something a little different from everyday life. I feel very grateful to have played a part.

Sarah White Pen and wash workshop.



Wonders of the natural world

Photo: Charles Smith



Photo: Peter Willison

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Curiosity and fresh perspectives from our young photographers

As a wildlife photographer, I spend much of my time waiting for those fleeting moments when nature reveals something unexpected. At this year's GAP Festival Family Day, I had the privilege of seeing those moments captured not by seasoned professionals, but by young photographers whose instinctive curiosity and fresh perspectives were genuinely inspiring.

The Children's Nature Photography Competition invited entrants to explore *The Wonders of the Natural World*, and it was clear from the very first submissions that they had embraced the theme wholeheartedly. What impressed me most was not just the technical ability on display, but the way each child approached the world with openness and patience. Judging the competition was far from easy. Every shortlisted photograph had something unique to offer; a story, a moment, a feeling.

In the Little Explorers category, Joey Povey's winning image, *Get Me Out of Here*, captured a lively cluster of ducklings clambering out of the water. The timing was perfect, freezing a burst of movement and character that made us all smile.

In the Wild Wonders category, Zalika Nsamba's photograph, *Community Gardening*, offered a beautifully observed close-up. Her attention to texture and subtle colour transformed an everyday natural detail into something quietly striking.

For the older age group, *Nature Through My Lens*, Gabriel Eapen's *The Pollen Journey* stood out for its remarkable timing. He managed to capture a bee mid-flight as it approached a flower. This is a moment that even experienced photographers can spend hours trying to achieve.

Selecting an overall Young Photographer of the Year was a challenge, but Joey's image had a charm and sense of storytelling that resonated across all age groups.

It was a joy to see so many young people engaging with nature through a lens and I'm very much looking forward to welcoming the winners to a photography workshop at Withymead Nature Reserve. If these entries are anything to go by, the next generation of wildlife photographers is already well on its way.

See photos on P39 and P44.

Simon Booker

Wellbeing achieved in many ways

This was my first year of organising the Wellbeing Events for The GAP Festival and I have thoroughly enjoyed it! Planning and creating the Wellbeing programme was right up my street and I hope all who attended will agree that this year was more varied and diverse than ever. It's hard to capture everyone's needs and wishes in just ten days, alongside all the other wonderful events the Festival had to offer, but I think we pulled it off!

For me, the most exciting part was engaging with other practitioners, 12 in total. Connecting and being part of helping to share their craft was really inspiring. In fact, we had to turn practitioners down in the end – but they are on the list for 2028! For the events I managed to attend or support, it was lovely to watch people from Goring and Streatley and many surrounding villages and towns try something new, connect with other attendees and relax.

This year I wanted to think 'outside the box' a bit and expand what Wellbeing meant to people and I saw clearly from the ticket sales that this worked. We ran 18 events, two of which were oversubscribed so we had to add another session. These were Tai Chi and Fermentation. New this year were Sing For Fun, Qi Gong, Nordic Walking, Chair Based Movement and Nav Trail Running. We didn't forget the old-time favourites from recent festivals: Progress Bootcamp, LK Pilates, SUP Life, Andy Taylor Meditation and Joyful Swim Coaching. The Festival organisers, especially myself, are so grateful to everyone who volunteers their precious time for free to make this Festival very special.

So, after managing 12 wellbeing practitioners, 18 events and over 200 punters' admin, I am ready for a break before we begin planning 2028!

Emma Horwill



Yoga

Photo: David Gristwood



Photo: Phil Rooney

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The Old Vicarage, Moulsoford is offering free membership of its pickleball club to local people who are willing to spend a little time getting to know and support its residents.



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Cathedral history brought to life

Although I have lived in this area for many years, this event was my first visit to the Festival and I could not have chosen a better occasion. The talk by Dr Jonathan Foyle, the distinguished BBC broadcaster and architectural historian, was very well attended. His warm presentation style, including light-hearted moments, really held everyone's attention as he told the story of the intricate history of Canterbury Cathedral.

Dr Foyle structured his talk around three figures whose lives intersected with the cathedral in striking ways: Thomas Becket, whose martyrdom transformed it into a place of pilgrimage; King Henry IV, who sought the legitimacy of coronation within its walls; and Cardinal John Morton, a Tudor statesman whose influence helped shape both church and kingdom and is someone I knew little about. Through their stories, the cathedral's history really came to life.

I was particularly pleased by Dr Foyle's reference to the cathedral's connection with Goring's own St Thomas of Canterbury Church – a reminder that even our small corner of Oxfordshire shares in the wider sweep of English history. It was very fitting that we could hear the church bells ringing as we listened to the presentation.

This was an illuminating and memorable evening and one I am very glad not to have missed.

Jean Salter

A joyful celebration of creativity, confidence and connection

One of the most exciting additions to this year's Goring Gap Festival was the inaugural *Discover, Create, Perform* (DCP) day: a vibrant programme of 12 free workshops across eight venues in Goring and Streatley, culminating in an uplifting afternoon showcase at Goring Fire Station.

From the outset, the ambition was simple but bold: to create an opportunity for people aged two to 100 to discover new skills, unleash their creativity and experience the joy of performing, regardless of previous experience. Thanks to the support of talented professional artists and facilitators, that vision became a reality.

Throughout the day, participants explored an extraordinary range of activities. Workshops included percussion, ukulele, craft and mime for young children, street dance, family poetry, a family physics singalong supported by the Institute of Physics and two separate magic workshops, held across venues including Goring Village Hall, the Morrell Rooms, Storton Lodge and the Canterbury Room at St Thomas' Church.

The enthusiasm was infectious. The magic workshops proved especially popular, selling out so quickly that an additional session had to be added. Across every venue there was laughter, concentration, creativity and a wonderful willingness to try something new.

One participant described DCP as 'a wonderful idea', adding that the workshop leaders were 'absurdly talented and engaging'. Reflecting on the experience, they wrote: 'I really felt that anyone who wasn't there had no idea how much they were missing out! Fun, unique experiences we felt lucky to have been offered (and locally and for free!). Lasting memories and inspiration.'

The evening *Discover, Create, Perform Showcase* at Goring Fire Station perfectly captured the spirit of the day. The audience gathered with picnics on the grass to enjoy a wonderfully relaxed summer evening of creativity and community spirit. It was an energetic programme of dance, music, singing and poetry, including standout performances from the street dance crew, the Hendred Ukuleles and the family singing group.

What made DCP so special was not just the talent on display, but the sense of community it created. It was a joyful celebration of creativity, confidence and connection, and a wonderful example of what can happen when people come together to discover, create and perform.

With thanks to Goring Parish Council, The Arts Society Goring, SODC Performing Arts and Everyone Active grants for supporting this day so it could be free for all.

Katie Barrett



DCP (*Discover, Create, Perform*) finale

Photo Paul Ross



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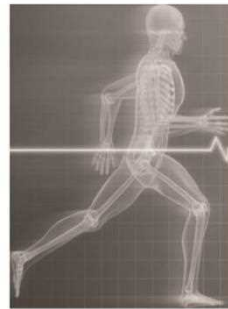
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LIVES REMEMBERED

Rosamund French 29.4.1931 – 20.5.2026

Ros French, who has died at the age of 95, lived in Goring for 63 years and was one of the last generations in the village to be moulded by World War II.

Stephanie Rosamund 'Ros' French was born in Aldershot in 1931. She was soon moved to join her parents in India and then Burma, where her father was a Lieutenant-colonel in the family regiment, the 6th Gurkha Rifles, which was by then starting to move onto a war footing.

Her parents were notable, and shared a bungalow with General Slim and his wife. Slim went on to command the allied forces in Burma and beat the Japanese in their own art of jungle warfare. Japan's defeat in Burma, preventing the invasion of India, established Slim as one of the most talented generals of the War. The Gurkhas would fight a crucial role during the campaign.



Ros arrived into the world of the Raj and its large dinner parties in the era before television. It was a time when telling humorous stories and recounting anecdotes was the social currency of the day. Much of this rubbed off onto Ros and she remained an enthusiastic raconteur throughout her life.

Even on her final day this May, when she was being taken to the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading, she recounted a story to the ambulance crew of how, as a six-year old, she was brushing her hair one morning in Rangoon, when a cobra appeared from under her dressing table and flared its hood. Her father, on hearing a shriek, walked into her room, calmly drew his revolver and shot the snake's head off.

As war broke out Ros went live with her grandparents at Lytham St Annes in Lancashire. She was sent to board at the Royal School in Bath, but its buildings soon became requisitioned by the military. Not sure what to do with the children, it was decided to move the school to the large stately home of Longleat, in Wiltshire, where Ros was fortunate to spend most of the war. She recalled her dormitory as being around 20 feet high with an ornate gilded ceiling. Staring at it every night, she developed a life-long passion for historical buildings and their artefacts.

After the war, Rosamund trained as a State Registered Nurse at St Bart's hospital in London, where she volunteered to specialise in the burns unit. At that time, it was pioneering facial reconstruction for badly burned pilots from the war, a precursor to the world of cosmetic surgery.

During this time she met her husband Ted who had served in the Fleet Air Arm, flying combat missions off carriers in aircraft such as the Fairy Swordfish and Supermarine Walrus. Ted, who was from a modest background, quickly distinguished himself in being one of the few able to understand the new radar systems. After the war he gained a scholarship to study Natural Sciences at Queen's College, Cambridge University.

Meanwhile in London Ros had joined the English-Speaking Union, a cultural club, and signed up for a one-day tour of Cambridge University where she ran into Ted. A childhood friend of Ros had married a successful architect who, as a wedding gift, gave them the design to a modern house.

Seeking a suitable plot of land, they explored villages on the commuter line to London, which brought them to Goring. The modern white house, Mulberry Cottage, Manor Road, was completed in 1963. It was where Ros brought up her three children and lived to her end. One of her greatest passions was the luxuriant garden she created and tended daily. She also joined the local flower arranging society making large pedestal arrangements for churches.

In her mid-life Ros suffered tragedy when her husband Ted died suddenly of cardiac arrest aged just 62, when they were looking forward to retirement. Later her eldest daughter Felicity succumbed to liver cirrhosis at the age of 44.

To commemorate her husband, the Chairman of the Local History Society, her son acquired, with some difficulty, a rare sarsen stone of the type found at Stonehenge. The distinctive two-ton glacial rock was deposited at the end of the house's drive and named 'Old Ted' where it remains today surrounded by plants and flowers. It is something of a landmark and is often pointed out by walking guides.

After her husband's death, and given that her children had grown up, Ros decided to take a job as a sales assistant in the Harrods lingerie department. This gave her back a taste of London life and her great joy of meeting and talking to people. She served numerous celebrities and notables, including Lady Diana. Even into her late 60s, Ros would often walk across Hyde Park to Paddington station after work, some two and a half miles, having spent all day on her feet.

Ros later took a job as duty concierge at the Thames Bank retirement property in Goring, where she worked well into her 80s. She joked that she was older than many of the people she was on-hand to help.

Ros was always busy. She was an enthusiastic member of the photography society and particularly adored her black poodles, of which she had three. For the last 15 years of her life, her daughter Fiona moved in to the family home. Until the end, Ros was able to make her own way up the stairs to her bedroom, and down for breakfast early in the morning where she could admire her garden.

Another great love was opera and particularly the works of Verdi. Ros had specified that *Libiamo* from *La Traviata* be played at her funeral service (which was sung by Goring soprano Stephanie Bodsworth) and that she be taken to White Hill, to be buried with her husband, in a cart pulled by black Dutch Friesian horses with purple plumes. A sight not seen in the village for some years. She is survived by her daughter Fiona and son Martin.

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LIVES REMEMBERED continued

Michael Philip Ward 25.6.1960 – 13.5.2026

Mike was born on 25 June 1960 and became the adopted son of Stan and Dorothy Ward, both of whom played a prominent role in village life in Goring and Streatley. He went to Goring C of E Primary School and from there in 1971 to Langtree School, Woodcote. 13+ selection then sent him to Henley Grammar. During his last (sixth form) year it became King James' College of Henley.

Education continued at the University of Bath in Management Accounting. As a part of this course, he did a six month placement at Nordic Bank. Mike returned to Goring and worked for a number of years in various roles at International Computers Ltd (ICL). For the next four years he held various finance positions at Yellow Pages in Reading where he also did a stint as Finance Manager in 1999/2000.

January 1993 to December 1994 brought the beginning of Mike's international career when he went with Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) as Financial Consultant to the City Council of Freetown, Sierra Leone. He described this time as traumatic, followed by a few less traumatic months with the Council of Churches in Freetown. In the mid to late 1990s, Mike worked for both Oxfam and Christian Aid as an overseas accountant.

The beginning of the millennium saw Mike in Pristina with UNMIK, the UN Mission promoting peace, security, stability, and respect for human rights in Kosovo. In 2004 he was back in West Africa for nearly a year with the UN Mission in Liberia. For the next three years he was Emergency Finance Manager, again with Christian Aid, which took him on frequent visits to Sri Lanka, India and Indonesia reporting on tsunami relief funds.

The following years involved work with Baptist Missionary Society World Mission in Didcot, Donor Reporting Accountant at International Planned Parenthood Federation in London then CAFOD, a return to Oxfam and Save the Children START Network.

Come 2016, following the death of his parents, Mike decided to devote his energies to something that would have been close to their hearts and set up Going Forward (For-Ward) Buses, a service that has been invaluable to local residents. For this vital involvement in the local community, Mike was awarded the Freedom of Goring a couple of years ago. In June 2018, Mike took on the responsibility of Assistant Parish Clerk for Goring-On-Thames Parish Council – a role he undertook with diligence and huge dedication to the village he loved.

If this all sounds like work, Mike had a great love for trains, spending many a happy hour riding them in different parts of the country. He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of routes and timetables. He was always the man to go to, to find the best route for the best price! He also reproduced this love in miniature with an ever-growing collection of model railway sets alongside a great collection of railway memorabilia.

Mike had an eclectic taste in music, ranging from David Bowie, T-Rex and M to all things Eurovision, hosting Eurovision gatherings in his flat and singing along to little known and long forgotten hits. Another love in Mike's life was Thunderbirds and all things Gerry Anderson, where on Stingray, 'Anything can happen in the next half hour!'

Mike found great friendship and fellowship with his spiritual family in Goring Free Church, having become a Christian while at university. He served the Church in various capacities over the many years he was a member.

There were cousins through his adopted parents, whom he visited from time to time. Also, he acquired many friends locally and internationally. Always generous, he personally supported many individuals in need, financially abroad and with the use of his flat in Elvendon Road. Mike was also known to have an amazing, often anarchic and sometimes sharply sarcastic sense of humour.

Seven years ago, Mike established contact with his birth family and was delighted to discover that he had a half-sister and two half-brothers, one of whom lived in Italy. They began to get to know each other, meeting quite often, including spending time in Italy, and realising they shared many attributes and characteristics that they all inherited from their mother, whom Mike was also able to meet, bringing a hugely moving moment for them both.

The many tributes that have flooded in from family and friends locally, nationally and all over the world are a testament to Mike's kindness, warmth and love of people.

They, along with all of us who knew him, will miss his quirky sense of humour, generosity and huge love of life.





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Goring Robins – Season Review 2025/26

The new season got underway in September with Goring Robins proudly fielding 36 boys' and girls' teams, alongside our ever-popular Under 6s, continuing to provide football opportunities for children of all ages and abilities within the local community.

This season also marked an exciting milestone as Goring Robins returned to using Gardiner Recreation Ground for the first time in many years. It was fantastic to see football being played there once again and to have another valuable facility available for our growing club.

As everyone knows, the winter was exceptionally wet, resulting in a very stop-start season. Despite the challenging weather, our pitches held up remarkably well considering the conditions, allowing as many fixtures as possible to be played and ensuring our players could continue enjoying their football.

There was plenty to celebrate on the pitch, with multiple teams enjoying successful seasons. One of the standout achievements came from our Under 16 Girls, who were crowned league champions after completing the entire campaign unbeaten – a fantastic achievement and a testament to the players' hard work, commitment and teamwork.

We rounded off another successful year with our annual End of Season Presentation Day at Sheepcot. For the second successive year, the weather unfortunately didn't play ball, but in true British fashion everyone kept calm and carried on, making it another enjoyable occasion to celebrate the achievements of all our players, coaches and volunteers.



U12 Blacks receiving their seasons trophies

As with every season, we also said goodbye to teams reaching the end of their Goring Robins journey. This year we bid farewell to our Under 18 Boys and Under 18 Girls. We thank every player for proudly wearing the Robins badge over the years and wish them every success as they move into adult football.

A special mention must go to Graham Lunt and Jane Symes, who have coached and supported the Under 18 Girls since they first came together as an Under 7s team. Their dedication, commitment and countless hours of volunteering over more than a decade have played a huge part in the development of the players both on and off the pitch, and the club is incredibly grateful for everything they have done.

Finally, the club would like to thank Warmingham, Goring Parish Council and The Oratory School for their continued support throughout the season. We are also grateful to all of our volunteers, coaches, referees, parents, sponsors and supporters whose ongoing commitment makes Goring Robins such a thriving community club.

We now look forward to another exciting season ahead and wish everyone an enjoyable summer before football returns in September.



U16 Girls with their league winners trophy

A special mention must go to Graham Lunt and Jane Symes, who have coached and supported the Under 18 Girls since they first came together as an Under 7s team. Their dedication, commitment and countless hours of volunteering over more than a decade have played a huge part in the development of the players both on and off the pitch, and the club is incredibly grateful for everything they have done.



Graham Lunt and Jane Symes with chairman Matt Trimmings on the presentation day

*Matt Trimmings
Chairman*

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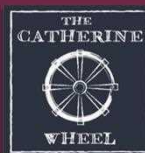
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Goring Cricket Club 150th celebrations

Goring Cricket Club's 150th anniversary is a milestone for the whole community, and this summer we're inviting everyone to be part of the sesquicentenary celebrations.

Whether you're a lifelong supporter or someone who simply enjoys a village day out, the ten-day programme of events, 22-31 August, has been designed to showcase everything that makes our club special.

Particular highlights of the celebrations include:

Sunday 23 August – 1pm – GCC vs Dave Reed Memorial XI

Monday 24 August – 5.30pm – GCC vs Woodcote T20

Wednesday 26 August – 5pm – GCC Academy Showcase

Friday 28 August – 11.30am – GCC vs Marylebone Cricket Club

Sunday 30 August – 12pm – GCC Legends Day

These events aren't just for club members – they're for everyone in Goring and Streatley. So please join in and celebrate this landmark year with us.

There will be a special 150th programme printed to commemorate the landmark year – including advertising opportunities for local businesses – if anyone is interested in including an advert in this historic programme then please contact: jonnyrussell100@outlook.com by 3 August.

Jonny Russell

Goring Social Club Golf Society

Goring Social Club has a golf society, established in 1988, who play together five times a year, go away for a three-day tour each April, and meet up for a couple of social gatherings too. The society has around 25 core members, a number of less frequent guest players, and is always happy to welcome new members and guests if you'd like to join in. The society is organised and run by a small committee of members and is £25 per year to join, with the membership fee going towards prizes and subsidised green fees.

The society play at a variety of courses within an hour of Goring, primarily around Oxfordshire and Berkshire, though recently played at Sandford Springs Gold Club in Hampshire and Marlborough Golf Club in Wiltshire. Last month they played at Badgemore Golf Club near Henley, and their next game is at Newbury and Crookham Golf Club on Thursday 10 September.

Golf Society on tour at Staverton Park



John Heslop with the Mortimer Burnett Trophy

The society recently returned from their annual tour, this year to Staverton Park near Daventry, where 24 members and guests competed in a pairs and singles competition over three days. The Creswell Pairs was won by Stuart Hunt and Max Derbyshire and The Mortimer Burnett Trophy by John Heslop. Both trophies were presented by Jim Cheshire, Chairman of the GSC Golf Society.

If you'd like more information, to join as a member, or come along to a game as a guest, please contact: dale.barram@hotmail.com



Max Derbyshire and Stuart Hunt collect the pairs trophy from Jim Cheshire

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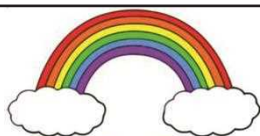
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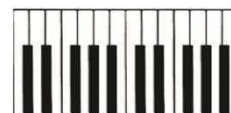
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GORING SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

From 4 July to 5 September, Goring Library will be participating in the Summer Reading Challenge 2026: *Read to the Beat*, in partnership with Universal Music Group UK. All children taking part can collect stickers and rewards as they enjoy reading library books.

There's a host of fun activities taking place in the library from noisy story times, decorating pebbles, making your own Lego music festival and a special Monster Soup Puppet Workshop run by the talented people from the Puppet Barge. Pop into the Library to collect an events schedule; some events are drop-in and some will need to be booked but they are all free! Children who finish the Challenge at an Oxfordshire library will receive a medal, a certificate and entry into a prize draw. Under 4s can take part in a mini challenge with their own special collector's folder and stickers.

Further afield

SOUTH STOKE OPEN GARDENS

Monday 31 August from 1– 5pm (last entry 3.30pm). Free parking at Recreation Ground (RG8 0JT), and disabled parking outside the Church (RG8 0JS). Not all gardens have disabled access. No dogs allowed in the gardens. There will be plants for sale. £6 adults, accompanied under 16s free. Tickets available on the day at the Recreation Ground, church lychgate and bridleway from Goring.

Further afield

AFTERNOON TEAS AT ALDWORTH ST MARY'S CHURCH

Every Wednesday in August and September, 2.30–4.30pm. Delicious homemade cakes in the company of The Aldworth Giants. For further details and to book groups contact Gill Wilding 01635 578624 or gillwilding@hotmail.com.

WALLINGFORD PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB

Even though we're on our summer break, the Wallingford Photographic Club still has a few things happening before our new season begins in September. Our open amateur photography competition is running now – the theme is *Summer Vibes*, and there's a £100 voucher for the winner, so why not take part? Details are at <https://www.wallingfordphoto.club>. You can also find us at Bunkfest, where we'll be holding our annual exhibition at St Mary-Le-More Church (just behind the Town Hall) on Saturday 5 September. Come along to browse or buy our favourite images, chat with members, and enjoy some refreshments.

Our new season starts in September, and we'd love you to join our friendly, inclusive group of photography enthusiasts as we kick off a fresh programme of talks, presentations, competitions, and hands-on sessions. We cover a wide range of topics – not only the technical side – and you're welcome to bring your own photos if you'd like feedback. We meet on Thursdays at 7.30pm at Crowmarsh Pavilion, with a few online evenings so we can hear from speakers further afield. We begin on 3 September with a welcome night for new members, a look at what we've been doing over the summer, and an overview of the upcoming programme. On the 10th, we'll host an online session on sport and action photography, followed later in the month by practical evenings at the Pavilion, including the launch of our portfolio project scheme.

NETTLEBED ART AND CRAFT SHOWS

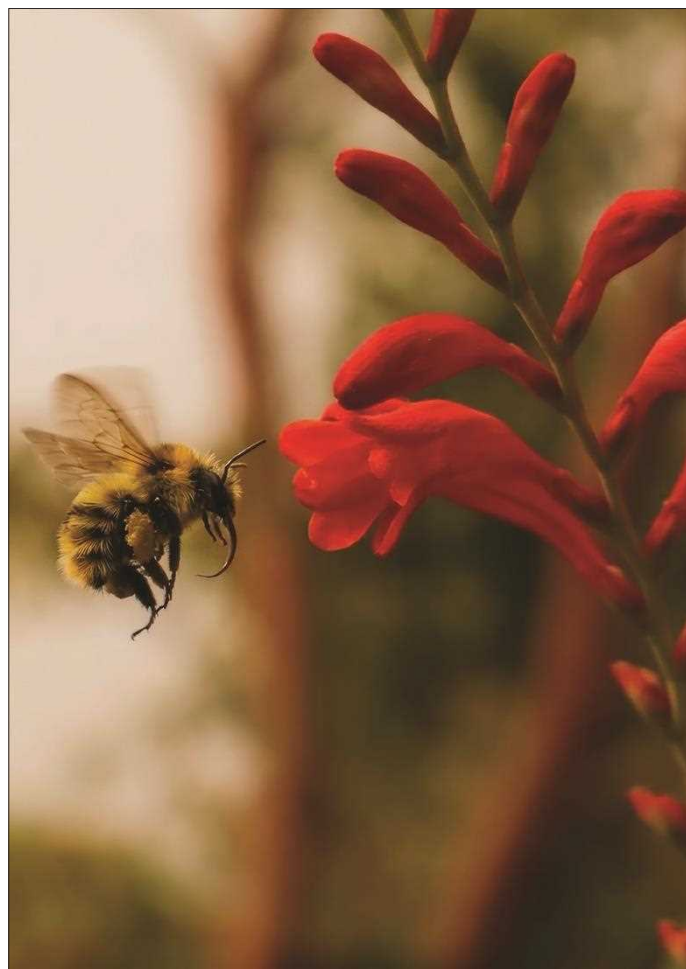
We are delighted to announce the Annual Nettlebed Art and Craft show will be taking place on Saturday 1 August (11am–6pm) and Sunday 2 August (10am–4.30pm) at Nettlebed

School – a wonderful weekend celebrating local creativity, talent, and a great slice of cake. Come along to enjoy a wide variety of artwork, handmade crafts and exhibits from local artists and makers. Refreshments will be available, and everyone is warmly welcome to browse and maybe fall in love with a painting.

We are also keen to welcome new local artists and craftspeople to exhibit their work this year. Whether you are an experienced exhibitor or showing your work for the first time, we would love to hear from you – please email Nettlebedas@gmail.com to more info and entry forms. Proceeds from the event will go towards supporting local charities and community causes. We look forward to seeing you there!

CHOLSEY VILLAGE SHOW

Saturday 22 August, 12–5pm, Cholsey Recreation Ground. An afternoon of family entertainment: falconry displays, Roger Blightly Comedy Act, Wallingford Morris, Cholsey Silver Band, stalls, fun dog show, car boot sale, children's games, vintage vehicles, plus 100's of exhibits in the marquee. Free entry and car parking. Entry from Station Road.



A bee captured in flight by Gabriel Eapen, 12Plus winner in the Gap Festival children's photography competition. See also Pages 27 and 44.

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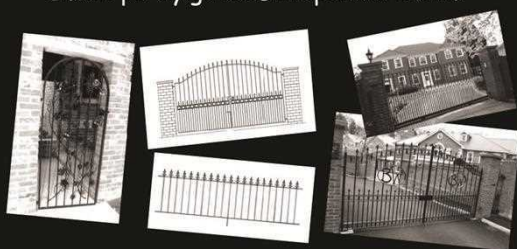
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Sunday 26 July• **Withymead, Cream Tea Sunday.**

Reserve open 10am-5pm. Cream teas served 2-5pm. No need to pre-book, just turn up and enjoy. More info at www.withymead.org

• **Quiz night.** 7.30pm, GSC.

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

Sunday 2 August

• **Withymead, Reserve open** 10am-5pm. No need to pre-book, just turn up and enjoy. More info at www.withymead.org

Monday 3 August• **Goring and Streatley Bridge Club.**

6.45pm. GVH. Held every Monday.

Tuesday 4 August

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

• **Glib Library Book Group.** 5-6pm GL. Full.

Wednesday 5 August

• **Lego Workshop** - make a festival. 10.30-11.30am. Please book [01865 815155](tel:01865815155).

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

• **Cribbage.** 7.30pm GSC.

• **Knit and natter,** 3-5pm. GSC. Drop in. Every Wednesday.

Thursday 6 August

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

Friday 7 August

• **Withymead Nature Reserve.** Now open on Fridays up to and including 28 Aug. 10am-5pm. No need to pre-book, just turn up and enjoy. More info at www.withymead.org

• **Bingo /Meat draw.** GSC. Weekly on Fridays.

Tuesday 11 August

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

• **Parkinsons Group.** 10.30-12noon. GSC.

Drop in or call James Dobson [01491 872063](tel:01491872063).

Wednesday 12 August

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

• **The Soundbar Open Mic,** The Miller of Mansfield. Sign up to play from 7.30pm. Music 8-10pm. Fancy playing? Come along or get in touch, HelloSoundbar@gmail.com

Friday 14 August• **GREADIES Library Book Group.**

10-11am. GL. Full.

Sunday 16 August

• **Goring and Cleeve WI.** 2-5pm. Goring Lock. Come and enjoy tea and cakes at the lock with entertainment from Goring and Streatley Concert Band from 3-4.45pm.

Wednesday 19 August

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

• **Jonathan** Song/Storytelling and making musical instruments. 10.30am-12. GL. Please book [01865 815155](tel:01865815155).

• **Thursday 20 August**

• **Pick a Flick.** 10.30am-2pm, CR. *Calendar Girls* (2003). The true story of the Yorkshire Women's Institute members who stripped for a charity calendar to raise funds for a local leukaemia unit where a friend's husband was treated. Please contact Sarah Fraser [01491 871838](tel:01491871838) or Jenny Boyd [01491 872109](tel:01491872109) to book and to ask for transport if required. The cost is £5.00 per event, including a light lunch.

• **Friday 21 August**

• **Live Sport on the big Screen.** 8pm. GSC. Arsenal v Coventry.

Saturday 22 August

• **Live Sport on the big Screen.** 12.30 and 5.30pm. GSC. Premier League.

Sunday 23 August

• **Live Sport on the big Screen.** 2pm and 4.30pm. GSC. Premier League.

Monday 24 August

• **Live Sport on the big Screen.** 8pm. GSC. Premier League. Fulham V Chelsea.

Tuesday 25 August

• **Play Dave at Chess.** 4.45-6.45pm. GL. Dave is and ex county player – Can you beat him? Children and adults. GL. Please book [01865 815155](tel:01865815155).

Wednesday 26 August

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

Thursday 27 August

• **Goring Gap U3a.** 10.30-12noon. GVH. Speaker: Richard Marks: *A Barber and a Surgeon – Medicine in Victorian Times*.

• **Storytime.** 10.30-11am. GL. Read to the Beat. Drop-in.

Friday 28 August

• **Live Sport on the Big Screen.** 8pm.GSC. Premier League, Crystal Palace v Man City.

Saturday 29 August

• **Live Sport on the Big Screen.** 12.30pm and 5.30pm. GSC. Premier League.

Sunday 30 August

• **Withymead, Cream Tea Sunday.** Reserve open 10am-5pm. Cream teas served 2-5pm. No need to pre-book, just turn up and enjoy. More info at www.withymead.org

• **Live Sport on the Big Screen.** 2pm and 4.30pm. GSC. Premier League.

Monday 31 August

• **South Stoke Open Gardens.** See P.39.

• **Live Sport on the Big Screen.** 8pm GSC. Premier League. Aston Villa v Arsenal.

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

The following abbreviations are used:

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

MEDICAL INFORMATION

- In an emergency dial [999](tel:999)
- **For medical advice** at all times, including surgery out-of-hours, dial [111](tel:111) or use <https://111.nhs.uk/> You will be told how to obtain any further help if needed
- **Local pharmacies** can offer advice and treatment for some conditions. Goring Pharmacy: [01491 872124](tel:01491872124)
- **Nearest First Aid Units:** Townland Hospital, Henley [01865 903755](tel:01865903755), or West Berkshire Community Hospital, Thatcham [01635 273508](tel:01635273508), or Abingdon Community Hospital [01865 903476](tel:01865903476)
- **Goring & Woodcote Medical Practice:** Monday-Friday 8am-6.30pm [01491 680686](tel:01491680686) Requests for appointments are triaged to direct patients to the correct help and should be made using the form available at www.goringwoodcotemedicalpractice.nhs.uk If you are unable to use the form, the practice can be contacted on the above number to support you.
- **Nearest Casualty Department:** Royal Berkshire Hospital, Reading [0118 322 7020](tel:01183227020)
- **Emergency Dentist** – call [111](tel:111) for advice
- **Goring medical equipment** – including, wheelchairs, toilet aids, mobility aids and more: [01491 874333](tel:01491874333) or [07966 245264](tel:07966245264)
- **Goring transport office** – 10am-12noon Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, to arrange volunteer transport to local surgeries, dentists and hospitals [01491 873565](tel:01491873565).

Hundreds gather at George Michael's former home to mark ten years since his passing

Fans from across the UK, and around the world came together for the hugely successful Outside25 charity event, held on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 June in the beautiful gardens of Mill Cottage, George Michael's former home in Goring-on-Thames.

Now firmly established as one of the most heartfelt celebrations of George's life and legacy, this year's event carried special significance as it marked ten years since his passing. Throughout the weekend, hundreds of fans laughed, danced, sang, reflected and, at times, shed tears as they celebrated the music and generosity of one of Britain's most loved artists.

The weekend's entertainment was headlined by the acclaimed *Celebrating George Michael* show, featuring vocalist Steve Mitchell alongside former Wham! bassist Dave West, performing many of George's greatest hits in the very garden where the singer once lived.

A particularly moving part of the event came through a series of exclusive video appearances from friends and colleagues of George. Andrew Ridgeley shared a heartfelt message with attendees and generously donated one of his personal George Michael 2024 Royal Mint 5oz commemorative coins, which was auctioned to raise money for charity. Fans also enjoyed a special message from Carlos Hercules, George's drummer during the legendary 25 Live Tour, while Midge Ure delighted the audience by recounting the story of how George came to sing his memorable line on the iconic 1984 Band Aid single. Early estimates suggest that Outside25 has raised more than £30,000 for a range of deserving charities and community causes, including Childline and Reading Samaritans. The remarkable total is a testament to the generosity of everyone who attended, donated, bid in the auctions and supported the event, ensuring that George's legacy of kindness and giving continues to make a real difference.

This year's commemorative theme, *Time Can Never Mend – 10 Years of Missing George*, resonated throughout the weekend, with many attendees proudly wearing specially produced memorial ribbons as a tribute to George's enduring legacy.

Outside25 is organised entirely by volunteers, led by Nicola Chessher, Stuart Rowsell, Jayne Trolley and Dave West, who spend months planning the annual event, with the support of the owner of Mill Cottage. The organisers expressed their sincere gratitude to the numerous volunteers whose dedication made the weekend possible, as well as to the local and national sponsors whose continued support enables Outside25 to grow each year.

They also paid tribute to the many generous donors who contributed auction prizes, artwork and memorabilia, helping to raise vital funds for the event's chosen charities. The auctions once again proved to be one of the highlights of the weekend, with fans bidding enthusiastically for unique George Michael memorabilia and exclusive donated items.

Speaking after the event, Dave West said: 'Every year we're amazed by the love, kindness and generosity shown by George's fans, but this year was especially emotional. To stand in George's garden ten years after we lost him and see hundreds of people united through his music, raising money for charity and celebrating the incredible person he was, was truly unforgettable. We simply couldn't do this without our amazing volunteers, sponsors, donors and everyone who travelled to be with us.'

As the final songs echoed across the gardens of Mill Cottage, one thing was abundantly clear: although ten years have passed, George Michael's music, compassion and legacy continue to bring people together from all corners of the world.

Dave West

www.outside25.com



Outside25 organisers Stuart Rowsell, Dave West, Jayne Trolley and Nicola Chessher

Film about Goring and George in production

'Who Knew' is a new independent film company exploring events and people that are less known about in the public eye. Thanks to the support of Nikki Sharman, Nikki Chessher and Dave West, we recently got the exciting opportunity to visit Goring to join in at Outside25 at Mill Cottage celebrating the life and works of George Michael. Everyone was incredibly welcoming and we really enjoyed meeting everybody and learning more about what the event was about.

Our goal was to meet the lovely community that put on the event, as well as the people that travel from far and wide to celebrate together. We hope that the short film will tell the story of how George Michael and his music bring people together, and the overall positive spirit and atmosphere that Goring and its people provide.

We are currently in post-production on the documentary and hope to have something to show soon.

You can find us on YouTube [@whoknewstudio](https://www.youtube.com/whoknewstudio)

George Michael 10th anniversary



Mill Cottage

Photo: Neil Horne



Catherine Wheel

Goring Gap Festival children's photo competition - see P27



Joey Povey - Winner 5-8 yrs and OVERALL WINNER



Zalika Nsamba - Winner 9-11 yrs