

bridge

Newsletter of the Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

Issue 69 • Summer 2022



The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Issue

Sonning At Its Best

Up and down the country, towns and villages turned out to celebrate the Jubilee holiday and give thanks to Queen Elizabeth II for her 70 years of service to the nation. We were blessed with good weather for most of the time and Sonning responded joyously with teams of Sonning village volunteers, in particular the Sonning Festival Committee, putting on a spectacular programme of events over the whole week.



There are too many people to thank individually for their hard work in the planning and execution of the events but there are some organisations that contributed to making the events so successful. A special thanks goes to Reading Blue Coat School for making their facilities available for the Sonning Regatta and allowing the Elegant Picnic to take place in their grounds. Grateful thanks go to the Sonning Volunteer Fire Brigade Trust for financing the Street Party. Finally thanks to Wokingham Borough Council for helping with traffic management over the festival period without charge.

Mike Hart, Chairman of the Society



Bridge is the newsletter of the
Sonning & Sonning Eye Society

email: bridge@sonning.org.uk

web: www.sonning.org.uk

Printed on paper from responsible sources by a
company supporting the Woodland Carbon Scheme

Executive Committee & Panels

Patrick Hamblin, Planning & Traffic Panel

Meetings & Planning Applications

Monthly meetings of the Panel have continued to be held since the last edition of *Bridge*. At those meetings a total of 14 applications were discussed.

Comments were sent to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) on the following applications:

- Holme Park Sports Ground (medical consultation and physiotherapy clinic)
- 101/101A Pound Lane
- Land south of Old Bath Road (57 dwellings)
- Holme Park, Sonning Lane (floodlights)
- The Acre, Thames Street

Comments were sent to South Oxfordshire District Council relating to the following applications:

- Lydden, Sonning Eye
- Pauline's Field, Sonning Eye.

Local Plan Update

It is likely to be the end of the year or early 2023 before the draft plan is made available by WBC.

Village Gateway in Sonning Lane

The Society has been in discussion with Sonning Parish Council (SPC) regarding the replacement of the gateway at the bottom end of Sonning Lane. SPC has in turn discussed with WBC and plans are being developed by WBC for a replacement.



Traffic

The Community Speed Watch scheme is proceeding to be developed. Five locations have been approved by Thames Valley Police and appropriate equipment has been obtained.

Neighbourhood Plan

The draft plan is progressing well and Sonning residents will have the opportunity to examine it and talk to members of the working group at the Sonning Show in September.

Third Thames Crossing

No further developments to report.

Sonning Parish Council Planning Committee Meetings

The Society continues to monitor all the applications and attends the meetings, where appropriate.

Heather Kay, Social & Educational Panel

Spring Lectures

Our Spring lectures this year were given by Simon Wenham and Tony Weston. Simon explained how the Victorians and Edwardians spent their leisure time, the higher classes boating on the Thames and racing, also going on grand tours and Cook's tours. The working classes would enjoy boxing and dog fighting and visit to the local seaside as the railway became popular. The comparison, quite extreme, but equally enjoyable.

Tony Weston talked about the River Thames and how to get across, under and over. 2000 years of navigating from early boats and ferries to the building of bridges for foot, cart and horse and rail. How the river expanded trade from Oxford to London.

Visit to Fairmile Vineyard

On a beautiful June day a group of 14 enjoyed a visit to Fairmile Vineyard, Henley. Jan, the owner, explained how they developed the vineyard - planning, planting and many years later cropping. He described the different vines grown

and the processes from fermentation to bottling.



We had a tour of the vineyard, admiring the views and tasted a delicious rosé and a white sparkling wine with an option to purchase. Some of the party finished with a picnic.

The Sonning Show 2022

Will be held on the afternoon of Saturday 10th September on the school field at Sonning C of E Primary School

on Ligugé Way (off Pound Lane). As usual we will have a gazebo near the car park and we'd love to meet you there and have a chat.

Autumn Speakers & Events

Speakers for the Autumn lectures are Graham Horn, on September 23rd. He will talk about 'An Heir and Spares' and those that never came to the throne. Graham is a blue badge guide.

Sarah Somerville will tell us all about Shaw House on 28th October. Her first job was a guide at Highclere Castle. She is the Visitor Services Officer and has a wealth of knowledge covering 400 years of the history of the house. From private ownership to the occupation through the civil war and now owned by West Berkshire Heritage.

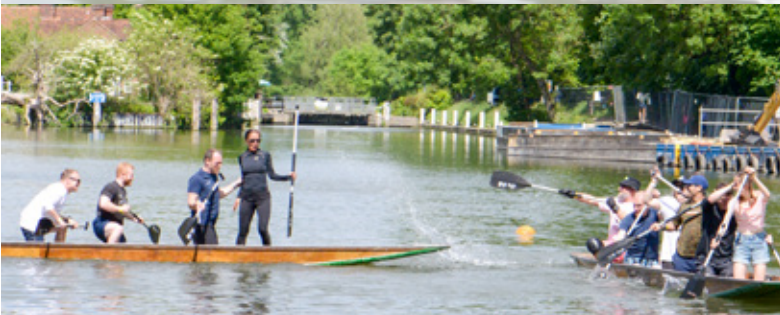
Society AGM and Supper

Is scheduled for 19th November, keep your diaries free.



Sonning Regatta Launched Proceedings

Races for big and small alike, as singles, couples or groups and fun in the sunshine for everyone



Wildlife Activities

Ali Driver Walked on the Wildside at Thames Valley Park and ran a pond dipping session at Ali's Pond

Ali's "Walk on the Wildside" took 20 local residents to the wetlands at Thames Valley Park (TVP). He started the walk by showing a range of moths caught the night before, including the remarkable dead twig mimic *buff-tip moth*. The group stopped on the way to TVP to sample aquatic life in the gravelly margins of the River Thames, but apart from a couple of freshwater mussels, the amount of invertebrates discovered was significantly less than on previous walks over the last 30 years - a worrying sign of the long term effects of diffuse agricultural pollution. Things improved markedly in the wetlands at TVP, which are rain and groundwater-fed, and a huge variety of freshwater life was evident in the sampling tray, including damselfly larvae, mayflies, caddisflies, water beetles and large quantities of microscopic plankton. Ali pointed out the shrill call of a kingfisher just in time for it to be spotted as it dashed overhead. Other bird calls were identified for the group, including Cetti's warbler, reed warbler, and blackcap. Ali trapped several species of damselfly and also a beautiful freshly emerged *four-spotted chaser dragonfly* which the group were able to see close up. The walk was liberally accompanied by various anecdotes and experiences from his 20 years as the first conservationist for the Thames in the 80s and 90s.

A few days later Ali was back in action, armed with his pond net and butterfly net once again - this time leading a pond-dipping session for primary school-aged children at Ali's Pond local nature reserve. The kids absolutely loved it. Each armed with a pond net, sampling tray and identification crib sheet, courtesy of Sonning Primary School, the enthusiastic children quickly immersed themselves in their subject, catching large numbers of greater pond snails, ramshorn snails, water boatmen, dragonfly and damselfly larvae and numerous baby smooth newts and great crested newts. The chatter and excitement reached fever pitch towards the end of the 90 minute session when one youngster even managed to catch a large adult great crested newt. All the specimens were returned unharmed to the pond, although some of the plant life in the pond margins may take longer to recover!

All in all, these were a thoroughly enjoyable pair of events for both Ali and the participants alike and they proved yet again to be a wonderful way to engage people in celebrating the wealth of wildlife on our doorstep if we just know where and how to look.



Scarecrow Trail

Thoughts from a random scarecrow

Thankfully, June 2nd and 3rd both dawned fair and the sun shone on the Scarecrow Trail in Sonning!

I can't imagine how many people wandered past me, but it must have been well in excess of three and a half thousand, each uttering words of amazement and admiration for the way I had been constructed and how wonderful I looked ... it was rewarding to think I gave pleasure to so many, perhaps fewer than four years ago, but then there was a lot going on. I'd also like to thank the army of volunteers selling trail maps, marshalling the car parks, hosting 'Open Gardens' and flipping burgers. We all agree that the Pearson Road closure worked brilliantly and ensured everyone had a safe time.

I wasn't one of the favourites chosen on the day, the honour of the Malcolm Stansfield Trophy for Best Scarecrow went to The Addams Family, with Harry Potter second and Always Time for Tea third. I have heard that the monies raised should be about £15,000, hopefully there will be lots of suggestions for how this can be used for good causes. (Proceeds from the Scarecrow Trail go towards funding local amenities, in the past they've been used to supply shirts for the junior football team, building a bus shelter and donations to the Sonning Primary School.)

But for now, I expect I shall be put back into a garage ready to be remodelled in 2 years time See you then!



Jubilee Beacon Celebration

Organised by Sonning Parish Council, Sonning Scouts and Sonning Cricket Club

A very successful evening, the weather balmy, King George V Field a perfect setting attended by about 250 people, including many families with children. The children had much fun joining in the activities, penalty shoot-out, cricket nets, bouncy castle and enjoyed the ice cream. The events were arranged and run by Cllrs Trefor Fisher and Andy Halliday with the help of Cllr Peter Morrison. The bouncy castle was managed to perfection by Joan Farnese, contending with the constant flow of eager children.

The BBQ was provided and run by the Sonning Scouts who were kept busy all evening, SCC ran the bar (equally busy)

and ice cream was provided and served by the Village Hamper. At 9.30pm prizes were presented to the deserving winners of the penalty shoot-outs and the cricket.

This was a perfect lead up to the recorded strains of the piper performing the music written specifically for the Queen's Jubilee. The highlight of the evening was the lighting of the Beacon at 9.45pm. The flames lit up the evening sky and the tired but happy children formed a circle around the beacon, an unforgettable scene which was a joy to behold. The Parish Council wishes to thank all those who attended and all those who contributed to making the evening such a memorable success.



Elegant Picnic

Held for the first time at Reading Blue Coat School, this is an event where everyone dresses up to enjoy an evening of music and merriment. We were fortunate to be behind the Buttery and the dancing went on well into the night.



Platinum Jubilee Street Parties

Pearson Hall proved to be an ideal dry and warm venue for the Sonning "street party" and the steel band gave the occasion a great atmosphere. Whilst Sonning Eye were fortunate and held their event in the sunshine the day before.



Our Next Events

More information and links to purchase tickets to all our events can be found on sonning.org.uk



TALK: An Heir and Spares

Princes and princesses who were heir but never came to the throne

Friday 23rd September, 7.30 for 7.45pm

Graham Horn, a highly regarded Blue Badge tour guide who knows an awful lot about the South of England will be speaking about the who-might-have-beens when it comes to the royal succession.

To book a place email penny.feathers@btinternet.com or book online.

Tickets as usual are £4 for members or £5 for guests.

FILM CLUB WILL RETURN IN OCTOBER



TALK: Shaw House

An insight into the long history of Shaw House, near Newbury

Friday 28th October, 7.30 for 7.45pm

Thomas Dolman built a new house on the Shaw estate in 1581 and it still stands there today. Our Speaker, Sarah Somerville, is the Visitor Services Officer there and as such will be an excellent guide to its history and treasures. If we're lucky she may add in some gems about Downton Abbey because she used to work at Highclere Castle!

To book a place email penny.feathers@btinternet.com or book online.

Tickets as usual are £4 for members or £5 for guests.

Society AGM and Supper

Saturday 19th November

7.15pm AGM followed by Supper and Speaker

Full details will be printed in the next issue of *Bridge*



The Sonning Show - 10th September

Carole Collier

The Sonning Show started in the 1960s following produce competitions held by the WI in Pearson Hall. It still maintains the same format today with a produce competition to which residents of Sonning, Charvil and Sonning Eye, as well as members of village organisations are invited to enter.

There are a variety of classes covering cookery, fruit and vegetables, flowers, flower arranging, photography, art and craft for which cups and trophies are awarded to the winners. There are cash prizes for children's classes including cookery, photography, art and craft.

From 2pm a fête takes place on the school field with many village organisations running stalls for their own fund-raising. In the arena different activities take place such as maypole dancing demonstrated by the children of Sonning School, a rugby display by Reading Rugby Club and Peg's Challenge which involves throwing water balloons to your partner!

This year the event will be on Saturday 10th September and we have a packed show ground. Full details will be available at the end of July.

Dates For Your Diaries

The events that are organised by the Society are shaded in brown, other events within the environs of Sonning and Sonning Eye have a green background.

Please note these events are what we hope will take place but they are subject to whatever Covid restrictions are in place at the time. Check our website for information and to book tickets.

Future Events



17 th August at 7.45pm	S&SES Executive Committee meeting in Pearson Hall	Members of the Society are very welcome
23 rd - 27 th August 3pm & 7.30pm	The Mill at Sonning, Waterwheel Bar: Still Life - an immersive theatrical event from the pen of Noël Coward	Tickets available from millatsonning.com
8 th Sept - 5 th November 2.15pm & 8.15pm	The Mill at Sonning: Funny Money, a classic comedy by Ray Cooney performed in the newly named Ray Cooney Auditorium	Tickets available from millatsonning.com
10 th September 2pm - 5pm	The Sonning Show at the Sonning C of E Primary School grounds on Ligugé Way off Pound Lane	See the SPC website (sonning-pc.gov.uk) for more information
23 rd September 7.30pm	S&SES Talk: An Heir and Spares, presented by Graham Horn, regarding the princes & princesses who never came to the throne	Tickets available online, members of the Society and guests are welcome
5 th October at 7.45pm	S&SES Executive Committee meeting in Pearson Hall	Members of the Society are very welcome
28 th October 7.30pm	S&SES Talk: Sarah Somerville will tell us about the 400 year history of Shaw House, north of Newbury	Tickets available online, members of the Society and guests are welcome
16 th Nov - 30 th December 2.15pm & 8.15pm	The Mill at Sonning: Top Hat, the toe-tapping hit musical is back by popular demand	Tickets available from millatsonning.com
19 th November 7.15pm	S&SES Annual General Meeting & Supper Speaker to be announced	Tickets available online, members of the Society and guests are welcome
5 th December at 7.45pm	S&SES Executive Committee meeting in Pearson Hall	Members of the Society are very welcome

>> Membership information

A warm welcome is extended to new members:

Mr & Mrs Hale

Ms S Worthington

Mr & Mrs Bailey

Welcome packs for new residents are available from Lesley Heaney, our Membership Secretary (membership@sonning.org.uk), so please mention the Society when you chat to your new neighbours. We can also be found on Facebook and at www.sonning.org.uk.

Photo Credits

We would like to thank the following for the photos used in this edition of *Bridge*:

Sonning Festival Committee

Sonning Scarecrows

Sonning Parish Council

Belinda Driver

Jeremy Gilmore

Mark Green

Andy Halliday

Nigel Levis

Annabella Marks

Rod Thomas



**Bridge is the quarterly newsletter published by the
Sonning and Sonning Eye Society**

email: bridge@sonning.org.uk web: www.sonning.org.uk

