



St Peter's
Parish Church

LIMPSFIELD



PARISH NEWS

SPRING 2024

online at stpeterslimpsfield.org/parish-news



Holy Week and Easter

SUNDAY 24 MARCH
PALM SUNDAY
8am Holy Communion
10.15am Parish Eucharist*

The Palm Sunday procession
will start from The Bull, please
meet in the car park at 10am.

THURSDAY 28 MARCH
MAUNDY THURSDAY
8pm Eucharist*

*The following services will also
be live-streamed

FRIDAY 29 MARCH
GOOD FRIDAY
2pm Liturgy*

SUNDAY 31 MARCH
EASTER SUNDAY
8am Holy Communion
10am Festive Eucharist*

Everyone will be given a flower
to put in our Easter cross to
celebrate the Resurrection.



Dear Friends,

Easter is fast approaching. The commercial bandwagon has been trundling forward since just after Christmas but that is what commercialism does. It persuades everyone that the only way to celebrate something is to spend money and to join an ever-increasing secular trend.

In church, what we celebrate at Easter is far beyond monetary value and our celebrations take on a variety of emotions as we travel through Lent, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and finally that glorious Easter day.

As we come before the cross on Good Friday with hindsight we know the resurrection is only three days away. Jesus' disciples, however, didn't have that insight to the future; at the crucifixion their world fell apart. For them Jesus was dead and all hope for the future was gone. Just imagine Mary's delight when she realised that the gardener she was talking to was actually the risen Lord Jesus and then the joy of the disciples when Jesus appeared to them over the next 40 days. They suddenly had a new view on life; from deep despair they now had hope. The promises Jesus had given them during his earthly ministry were now unfolding and their excitement was plain to see.

Easter is a special time to
reflect on the love of



God for His people but what is even more wonderful is that his love is personalised, his love is for you and that is something to really get excited about. After Jesus was crucified his disciples felt lost, without a purpose in life and so many people now-days feel like that as well. Only through the resurrection power of Jesus did the disciples find hope for the future and that same resurrection power is available to us today. There are so many people, both near and far, who are living in fear and oppression without experiencing the love of another human being. Jesus, however, brings hope into lives full of despair, he renews damaged relationships and he

heals broken hearts and he usually does it through the love and obedience of people like you and me. Please remember this Easter and beyond those in our village who are in need of our support.

As the team rector I am always available to speak to and in church we will pray for you and the world that all will find love and hope in what ever situation we find ourselves in.

Wishing you peace, joy and hope,

With my love and prayers,
Rev. Helen

Front cover photo: Douglas Fisher

New Stay for an Old Bell

The number 3 bell is our oldest in the tower and was cast in a pit in the churchyard in or about 1430 AD.

During teaching new ringers the art of bell ringing its quite common for the stay to break on one of the bells. Over enthusiastic pulling will cause the stay (that prevents the bell from swinging 360 degrees) to hit the stop and break. These stays are made of ash that is pliable and resilient to damage. But it does happen.



Who's Who
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www.stpeterslimpsfield.org

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CHURCH NEWS

SUNDAY SERVICES

St Peter's has a regular pattern of Sunday morning worship: a quiet **8am Holy Communion service** and a **10am Parish Eucharist**. On the first Sunday of the month there is a shorter, more informal **All Age Family service at 10am**. Everyone is always welcome.

LIVE STREAM

The 10am service is live streamed on the St Peter's YouTube channel every Sunday except the first Sunday of the month. Visit YouTube and search 'St Peter's Limpsfield' or find details at www.stpeterslimpsfield.org.

MESSY CHURCH

On **Sunday 10 March** Messy Church will take place during the 10am service when children will go out to make gifts for Mothering Sunday. At this service posies of flowers will also be distributed to everyone who attends.

LENT LUNCHES

St Peter's will be holding three Lent Lunches on **Thursday 29 February and Thursday 14 and 28 March**. These are to be held in the Millennium Room and follow the format of a short talk followed by a light soup lunch. Arrive at 12.30pm for the talk followed by lunch at 1pm. Everyone is welcome to just turn up, no need to book.

EASTER LILIES

If you would like to contribute a lily (£2.50) in memory of a loved one to help decorate St Peter's at Easter, please put your name and contact number, and the name of the person (s) to be remembered on the list at the back of the Church, to the Parish Office - 01883 712512 or Elizabeth Stoughton-Harris - 01883 717026. These names will be on the Altar throughout Easter week.



MESSY CHURCH COME AND JOIN US

A fun afternoon of crafts, activities, stories and song, followed by tea and cake. Suitable for all ages from 2+



SPRING TERM

10 March (Mothering Sunday), 10am

Children can come and enjoy some activities during the service making gifts to take home for Mothering Sunday

14 April, 3pm (one week earlier than usual)

Theme: Promises

19 May, 3pm

Theme: Boats and Fishes



Continued from page 2

The Woodhouse Centre and their "Men In Sheds" came to the rescue to machine a piece of 3" ash to size. Hilton, the instructor at the centre was kind enough to undertake the work and the stay was fitted on the bell within a week enabling the ringers to use all six bells again.

Our thanks to Hilton, Dave and all the team at the Men in Sheds for their help with the repair.

Men In Sheds is a great place to meet, with tools and resources to work on projects of all sorts. With skill sharing and informal learning. A place of leisure to come together with like minded people to work.

Check it out. Open Monday to Friday.
thewoodhousecentre.org.uk

Douglas Fisher



CHURCH DIARY: MARCH - MAY 2024

The church is open every day during daylight hours.



Date	Services Mar-May
Sun 3 March	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am ALL AGE SERVICE with BAPTISM
Wed 6 March	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room
Sun 10 March	MOTHERING SUNDAY 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am PARISH EUCHARIST with MESSY CHURCH *
Wed 13 March	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room
Thurs 14 March	12.30pm LENT LUNCH in the Millennium Room
Sun 17 March	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (PASSION SUNDAY) 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am PARISH EUCHARIST with BAPTISM *
Wed 20 March	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am MUSICAL MEMORIES in the Millennium Room (one week earlier)
Sun 24 March	PALM SUNDAY 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am Meet in The Bull car park for the Blessing of Palms and Procession down the High Street 10.15am PARISH EUCHARIST * 5pm Tandridge Deanery CONFIRMATION SERVICE

Date	Services Mar-May
	HOLY WEEK
Tues 26 March	1.30pm LIMPSFIELD INFANT SCHOOL Easter Service
Wed 27 March	11am FUNERAL of Jamie Davies
Thurs 28 March	MAUNDY THURSDAY 12.30pm LENT LUNCH in the Millennium Room 8pm EUCHARIST with the receiving of the oils, commemoration of the Last Supper, symbolic washing of feet and keeping watch
Fri 29 March	GOOD FRIDAY 12pm Churches Together Walk of Witness in Oxted (meet at 11.50am by the Council Offices) 2pm LITURGY OF GOOD FRIDAY with an opportunity to lay a nail at the foot of the cross
Sun 31 March	EASTER DAY 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am FESTIVAL EUCHARIST * Bring a flower to put in our Easter cross
Wed 3 April	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room

Date	Services Mar-May
Sun 7 April	SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am ALL AGE SERVICE
Wed 10 April	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room
Sun 14 April	THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am PARISH EUCHARIST * 3pm MESSY CHURCH
Wed 17 April	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room
Sun 21 April	FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am PARISH EUCHARIST *
Wed 24 April	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am MUSICAL MEMORIES in the Millennium Room
Sun 28 April	FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am PARISH EUCHARIST * 11.30am ANNUAL PAROCHIAL CHURCH MEETING with ELECTIONS.
Wed 1 May	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room
Sun 5 May	ROGATION SUNDAY 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am Outdoor ALL AGE SERVICE at the Titsey Tap Room

Date	Services Mar-May
Wed 8 May	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room
Thurs 9 May	ASCENSION DAY 6am OPEN AIR EUCHARIST at St Mary's Tatsfield followed by breakfast in the Hall
Sat 11 May	10am The Big Paint in St Peter's Hall
Sun 12 May	SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am PARISH EUCHARIST *
Wed 15 May	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room
Sun 19 May	PENTECOST - celebrating the gift of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the church 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am FESTIVAL EUCHARIST * 12.30pm BAPTISM 3pm MESSY CHURCH
Wed 22 May	10.30am MORNING PRAYER 11am COFFEE MORNING in the Millennium Room
Sun 26 May	TRINITY SUNDAY 8am HOLY COMMUNION 10am PARISH EUCHARIST *

In mid September, my wife, Ann, and I set off to walk part of the pilgrim route which stretches from Canterbury to Rome, the Via Francigena. We started in Lausanne in Switzerland, by the shore of Lake Geneva, and finished around 300 miles and four weeks later in Lucca in Tuscany.

Since we both retired from full-time work, we have completed over 30 multi-day linear walks. However - thanks partly to Covid - we hadn't done a long distance walk since September 2019. So we weren't sure when we set off whether our fitness would hold up - or whether the weather would be sufficiently kind to encourage us to continue. Given these uncertainties, we booked accommodation for no more than a day or two ahead - that gave us the flexibility to tailor daily stages to how we were feeling and whether the weather was favourable. As it transpired, we were very fortunate in encountering only two days of rain, the first of which was our second full day (when we were walking alongside Lake Geneva, rather than traversing mountain paths) and the second was the day we flew home.

One of the lessons we have learned from previous long walks was to carry as little as possible. Everything we took with us had to fit into our rucksacks and to be as light as possible. This meant, among other things, that we washed clothes every evening - and (while we had some spares with us) hoped that they had dried by the morning!

On a long walk along a recognised trail you are conscious that you are following in the footsteps of countless thousands of people who have undertaken that journey in the past. You are encountering different experiences each day and you are constantly getting closer to a destination, even if (like us) you don't know until near the end what that destination will be.

One of the delights of the stretch of the Via Francigena which we completed

was the diversity of the landscapes and of the buildings which we passed. These included sophisticated Montreux, rugged mountain passes and intimate Italian towns and cities, several of which were notable for their marble churches (we passed very close to the hills from which the marble for Michelangelo's David, and for Marble Arch in London, had been quarried). We didn't feel an obligation to walk every step of the route and decided, as we were going along, to take a train to bypass around 100





miles of the route, which was through Italian rice fields and, by all accounts, was flat, dull and mosquito-infested - though I'm sure that the local tourist board would have much more positive things to say about the area!

Our favourite part of the route was climbing up to the Grand St Bernard Pass in the Alps and then down the other side. On three successive days, we ascended more than 3,000 feet. Taking into account a number of descents on those three days, this made for a total increase of altitude of some 6000 feet. In crossing the Alps

at the Grand St Bernard Pass (which is still home to some St Bernard dogs), we were following in the footsteps of Napoleon Bonaparte - though we had 40,000 fewer men with us! We then descended by a similar amount through the beautiful Aosta valley.



One of the most enjoyable features of the walk was the wildlife which we encountered, especially in the Alps. This ranged from marmots, to birds rarely seen in the UK (including nutcrackers and water pipits) and more than 30 butterfly species, some of which are seldom seen in the UK (such as clouded yellows, Queen of Spain fritillaries and graylings - all of which we saw in large numbers) and some of which are never seen in Britain (such as Swiss brassy ringlets).

For anyone else thinking of walking a long-distance path, we would thoroughly recommend it. The walks we have done have provided wonderful memories of scenery, wildlife and people we've met along



the way. We have also felt a sense of adventure in setting out somewhere new every day and sometimes encountering challenges as we go along.

You obviously need a certain level of fitness to begin a long-distance walk. However, we don't do any special training in advance, other than a few local walks when we can fit them in. We try not to do anything too taxing for the first two or three days - which is





one reason why we started by walking a fairly flat section, alongside Lake Geneva - and find that we get fitter as we go along. Carrying everything in rucksacks, while demanding at times, gives us flexibility to adapt our schedule to how we are feeling, the weather and so forth. Being in the open air, enjoying the scenery, nature and the local culture, lifts our spirits. In

short, a long walk is good for both one's mind and one's body.

Later this year, all being well, Ann and I will look to complete the final leg of the Via Francigena by walking the 250 miles or so from Lucca to Rome, taking in San Gimignano and Sienna en route.

Shaun Mundy



Skyl's the Limit

Taekwondo is a Martial Art originating in South Korea shortly after the Second World War. It has grown in popularity since then and now has over 60 million practitioners in 200 countries. It was adopted as an Olympic sport in 2000.

The 5 Tenets of Taekwondo are: Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-control, Indomitable spirit - all very evident in Limsfield resident Skyl Taylor who told us about her experience and remarkable achievements in this sport:

How my Taekwondo journey began

My love of Sport first came from gymnastics when I was four years old. My Grandma and Granddad introduced me to a club run by a family friend. But then when I was eight, I decided I wanted to try an additional sport. My dad suggested I try Martial Arts and he took me to my first training session. I absolutely loved it! So

much so, that I attended every available session and gradually gave up gymnastics. This is how my taekwondo journey began!

My proudest moment to date

There's quite a few moments but to name a few: being selected for the Great Britain development team, where I travel up to Manchester every fortnight for three days to

attend training sessions. In a few weeks, I will be travelling to Croatia as part of GB

to attend a week long training camp. Following this I will be travelling to Bulgaria to compete with the team as well. Another moment was being selected to represent Great Britain for the past two World and European Championships.

The World Championships were held in Bosnia where I placed fourth in the world but hopefully this year is the year I get a medal! Last year I won 6 international medals, and became British Champion for the third time and Dutch Open Champion too!



Skye with double Olympic medallists Bianca Cook and Jade Jones

What is a competition like?

I love travelling to different countries with my teammates and competing. We all train extremely hard, usually around six days a week. Competitions are very exciting and always have an amazing atmosphere. I always feel extremely proud when I represent my country or my club, Allen Taekwondo Academy. I've made many friends in different countries and am enjoying exploring the world!

Life Skills I have learnt from Taekwondo:

Taekwondo has taught me many values which I will use for the rest of my life, but the most important ones are respect; determination, hard work, dedication and commitment. The main person who taught me these qualities is my amazing coach, Master Richard Allen, who has looked after me since I was eight years old and is the reason I am an athlete on the Great Britain development team now. He is a marvellous coach and I am forever grateful for him!



I would also like to thank Hachem Labidi from ATA Oxted for introducing me to taekwondo and supporting me on my journey and my Auntie Zoe for her dedication and support

I am also forever grateful for my lovely family, for doing everything in their power to help me get to where I am now, for always driving me to training, travelling to competitions with me and always supporting me no matter what! I love them so much.



Skye with Master Richard Allen holding her award for Cadet Female Athlete of the Year 2023



LIZ AND ZOVITA'S 10 SECONDS OF FAME AT WIMBLEDON

Last autumn Liz Simmons and Zovita Moon of Limpsfield Tennis Club became finalists in the National Over 85s Ladies Doubles Tournament on the LAWNS OF WIMBLEDON. They had been entered by their respective daughters.

Liz writes *"We arrived at Wimbledon feeling somewhat nervous. It transpired that our opponents were old adversaries who, just the day before, had won the WORLD Championships! Needless to say we came out second best, but we had a great day. With our newfound fame we have been recognised in the street, and long standing friends in Canada have phoned to congratulate us after being sent press cuttings"* (not by them they add).

They would like to add how lucky they feel to be members of the Limpsfield Club *"where we have such excellent facilities."*

And we'd all like to send Liz and Zovita our hearty congratulations on behalf of the village.

Marianne Bell



**DISABILITY
AFRICA**
CHANGING CHILDREN'S LIVES

Disabled children in Africa generally receive a raw deal. A small charity in Guildford is determined to change that for the better. Chris and Priscilla Brewer have been involved with Disability Africa from the beginning.

The first location for Disability Africa was Gunjur in The Gambia, West Africa. Why Gambia one might ask? Back in 1974 the retired German Chancellor Willy Brandt wrote an article on the 'North South' divide - a popular theme at that time. In it he suggested there should be student exchanges between the 'Northern' richer countries and those in the poorer nations in the 'South'. A doctor in Marlborough on reading the article thought he should do something about it and over the years students from Marlborough state schools have visited Gambia and likewise Gambians have visited the UK. Gambia was chosen due to its relative closeness to UK and its historical British connections.

Ric Law, after early years in school teaching which included with some disabled children, was then for thirteen years CEO of Disability Challengers

(now just 'Challengers') in Guildford which developed Play Schemes for disabled children to get them out of their homes, enjoy mixing with other children and afford respite time for their parents. Ric then spent a short period in the charitable foundation of a large firm. During that time he met the Marlborough doctor, who had by then ceased his annual exchanges but still had good contacts in Gambia. Ric then became inspired that he might use all his experience in supporting disabled children with play schemes by taking the idea to Africa.





Disability Africa (DA) began in 2011 and Ric went out on a scouting visit to Gunjur in Gambia and to make useful contacts given to him by the Marlborough doctor. He soon found people who might partner Disability Africa in an endeavour to establish Play Schemes for the many disabled children who, as is common in Africa, were kept isolated and hidden away as they were considered a 'disgrace' to the family. But Gambia is a relatively poor nation and it was decided early on that purpose made facilities would be needed for the scheme to work. The authorities were helpful in finding over an acre of land

close to Gunjur town which is in the south of this small commonwealth country and it was donated by the community to DA in order to establish a centre to promote the welfare and inclusion of disabled young people. A plan was then drawn up for the new 'Gunjur Inclusion Centre' and The Toy Industry Charitable Trust generously agreed to donate enough funds to build the Centre. In the meanwhile limited alternative accommodation was found to start growing Play Schemes in the Gunjur area.

Ric's idea was that the Gunjur Inclusion Centre should be a template which in time could be replicated in other parts of Africa but not necessarily with the need for a new building; rather just using existing infrastructure and based on the inclusive principles and practices developed at Gunjur.

Office accommodation was found in Guildford and Ric took on two young people (Mike and Tom) fresh from University. They worked at applying for grants needed to finance the growing project, e.g. carers for playing with and safeguarding the children, play equipment and food for lunches etc. and as it grew they kept regular contact by WhatsApp with those running the Gunjur project in Africa.

They soon found the culture and practices involved in running this kind of project in Africa was in many ways different from in the UK. But the purpose was the same: to give children with any kind of impairment, often not easily apparent, the opportunity to enjoy playing with other children, some non-disabled, to develop their physical, social and communication skills, to have fun and to prepare them for taking a more confident part when the time came to move up to mainstream schooling.

As mentioned already, in Africa disabled children tend to be isolated in the family, away from the local community so there was some resistance when encouraging the parents to bring their child to participate in the play scheme. Instead of an adult going to visit the families the idea of sending one of the children who had already started, to explain it and encourage them really worked. For a family they will have many inhibitions such as access, poverty, folklore and sometimes the guidance of a witch doctor. A few when they arrive have wounds which because of isolation had been left to fester, so a Medical Support Officer, a local person with good medical knowledge is appointed to treat the child with dressings and general First Aid and to support the parents to seek appropriate medical help.

completed nearly five years ago and the children moved in with great excitement. But when the rain season started, the heavy rain came seeping through the roof, stylishly made of bricks but not weatherproof enough. Eventually an engineer was found who could promise a steel roof construction that would withstand the African weather. And the new Centre had its Grand Opening in late November 2023 with us from the UK, local chiefs, carers, parents and children attending and also the now feted Dutch engineer/designer of the new roof.

The Centre consists of a half circle of rooms with an area of grass in the

The new building for the Gunjur Inclusion Centre was

middle and an extra acre of space behind which could perhaps be used for outside games in the future. But on the day of the official opening the children had found what is likely to be their favourite space: the soft play room. The large soft blocks of different shapes and colours build up into an ideal play area for children with almost any impairment and can be enjoyed while playing together with no danger and little supervision. This is probably one of the first soft play schemes in this middle part of Africa and was brought all the way from Sunderland. Next door is a general play area where wheeled toys can be ridden and then next to that a room for arts and crafts. Another room will be for a physiotherapist who will be there for the children but can also be booked for people outside the centre which will help it to be seen as part of the

community.

It is increasingly recognised that disability has been, and remains, a neglected issue in international development. This applies particularly to children and young people in low and middle income countries (LMIC) such as The Gambia. This is partly because interventions are often expensive and it is difficult to show results for the money expended. But Ric Law, having had many years working with disabled children and their parents at Challengers in Guildford is convinced that the relatively inexpensive provision of play schemes can be brought to many LMICs in Africa and in time perhaps other Continents. The challenges faced by disabled children who are often isolated at home, and the barriers to their inclusion are formidable; challenges

that also apply to the parents who have to live on so little. Traditional misconceptions linked to disability such as the belief that disabled children are part animal are also a hindrance to these families, but overcoming the stigma and bringing a disabled child to where they can play with other children in a safe place can help them so much physically, socially and in building their confidence to join the mainstream in education later on.

Disability Africa now has seven play schemes: this one in The Gambia, four in a region called Malanga in Kenya, one in Kawama in Zambia and one in Makeni in Sierra Leone. Grants need to be found to pay for the costs of operating these schemes. In the last year over all the schemes: 561 children were supported, 25,000 lunches were provided, 60 staff, mainly

playworkers, were employed, 18,600 child visits were made, and 1,600 medical support and physio sessions were held. One of the Marlborough students, George Cooper, who went to Gambia on the 'exchange' years ago had now become a qualified GP and he generously provides Ric any help he can give on medical issues both spending time in Gambia and on line from the U.K.

The original idea was to think of the Gambia scheme as a template for planning future schemes. Through a contact in another charity Kenya became the next choice. But quite different from Gambia there are no costs of a purpose-built Centre and the four schemes are run in schools throughout a region called Malanga, inland from Kilifi on the coast. In these four locations, the schools were delighted to provide space to run the play schemes so the disabled children have their play in the space which may eventually be part of their school. So the idea of the 'template' is more in the practices and vision of play schemes as a means to promote and facilitate inclusion, rather than the material means



of delivery which can be quite different depending on local circumstances. Already people in more places in Africa are showing interest in developing the template themselves. Ric sees then that Disability Africa will pass on to them the ideas, practices and experiences they have progressed so far and then it will be up to them to find suitable locations and apply for grants to run the schemes but contact with Disability Africa for help and advice will continue.

A Dutch financier from the largest Hedge fund in the USA visited DA and was asked by Ric why such a huge organisation should take an interest in a small charity like his. The answer he gave was, *"You must not think you are small; the idea is enormous"*.

Chris Brewer

Find out more at <https://www.disability-africa.org/>





A little charity with big ideas

The One World Group Oxted is a tiny charity in a world of big spenders. But it has grown from two peoples' vision over 40 years ago into a charity that everyone should take notice of. It has virtually no running costs, because it is staffed entirely by volunteers, but has now collected, and given away, nearly £1,000,000 to deserving cases around the world.

In 1980 the Brandt report on world poverty, which divided the world into North and South, based per capita, gave impetus to debates about development and overseas aid around the world. In Oxted there were reverberations, which all those years later still seem extraordinary. That the debate rumbled on is shown that three years later Mary, my wife, and I were watching a TV programme about the issues raised in the report. No doubt there were statistics about children in poverty, unjust trade policies, family struggles, lack of water, crop failures, and so on, all of which I have now forgotten. That's largely because one small item on the programme stays with me because of

what it has led to locally. This was the story of a poor farmer whose tractor was not working for want of a small part which would cost no more than £2 or £3. We might have got up for a drink, or switched channels, or waited to see what was on next, or opened out books. But we didn't. Mary said: *"Can't we do something about this?"*

Some form of fund-raising seemed a good idea but somehow we wanted to be more ambitious, although I am not sure that then we really knew how. But we could not let a good intention just sit there so we contacted half a dozen sympathetic friends, and at a meeting we discussed what we might do and

how it might be done. A first step was to visit local charities - COAT (Caterham), SMOAT (Reigate) and others - whom we had discovered were doing what we thought we wanted to do.

But whatever ambitions we had, they were beyond our handful of interested friends, so we decided to recruit others. The obvious way to do this was to contact local churches to send representatives - churches were easily contactable, likely to be sympathetic, and their congregations were a fair representation of the local (Oxted, Hurst Green, Tandridge, Limpsfield) population in terms of age and gender. We now had a committee, of which I became the first of seven chairs. It was decided to form the Third World Group, as the One World Group Oxted was then called.

Now we needed a project for which to raise money. I contacted Iliffe Simey, son of a friend, Margaret Simey, doyenne of Liverpool politics. An award-winning architect, Iliffe had gone to live in Lesotho, landlocked by then apartheid South African, hoping to promote a vernacular architecture. However, he had thrown much of his energies into working with children, whose fathers had crossed the border to work, with their mothers following them. Iliffe told us that £150 would pay for a much-needed

maternity bed in the local clinic.

I am not sure how we raised that money but we did without too much trouble, a fact that encouraged us to look for more projects and undertake more fund-raising. Because we saw how useful Iliffe had been and because we wanted those who gave to feel a connection, we decided that the source of projects would be personal - like those with contacts abroad, who had visited projects, and young people on Voluntary Service Overseas known to us. To ensure that all monies went to the projects, we created a TWG membership to fund our modest outgoings.

In those early days we had no silent auctions, open gardens, or quizzes, but apart from donations - generous even in those early days - there was a Mother's Day Cake Sale; churches' Harvest Festival giving; coffee morning; rich man-poor man lunches; a sponsored walk from Brighton to Old Oxted (one participant alone raised £500); street collections; antique fayres, and collecting tins with a prize for the most money collected. We also collected books from schools for the Ranfurly Trust (now Book Aid). There were two packed public meetings, addressed by Glenys Kinnock, then

chair of War on Want, and Shirley Williams, out of Parliament and working for the Organisation for Economic and Cultural Development.

Charitable status, Gift Aid, new ways of raising money came later. But none of us could envisage the range of places here the reach of the OWGO has now not been felt. In 39 countries nearly £1 million has been spent drilling wells, erecting toilet blocks, building schools, providing vehicles for medical help in remote areas, and supporting farmers and women's organisations.

The OWGO will not solve the world's problems but there are communities, families, and individuals – men, women

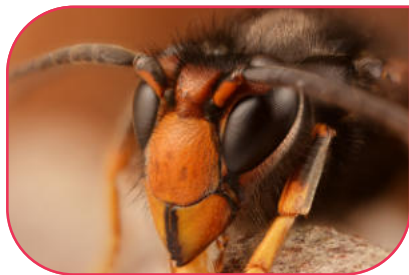
and children – whose lives have been enhanced by the work of 40 years. How well the OWGO proves the truth of William Morris's words: "*He who would do good to another must do it in minute particulars.*" That first "minute particular" has seen that £150 acorn grown into a sturdy, mature oak.

Terry Philpot

You can join the One World Oxted Group very simply, and the membership is only £10 a year. Send your £10 to One World Group Oxted, Account No: 00002250, Sort Code: 40-52-40, and write a note to Anna Burrage (annaburrage@googlemail.com) telling her you are joining.

Bee Aware

Sorry Asian Hornets, but we really don't want you here! For those not familiar with *Vespa velutina*, it has been an unwelcome visitor for some time. It originated in Southeast Asia - particularly northern India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bhutan, China and Taiwan - but arrived in France in 2004 in boxes of Chinese pottery. From there it has gradually spread throughout Europe and has now come disturbingly close to home. 60 sightings of them were made in the UK in 2023, with two nests destroyed near Gordon's Way in Oxted last November after a hornet was spotted by eagle-eyed Robbie, the technician at The Wasp Guys (see p49).



Asian hornets are very bad for bees. They sit outside apiaries capturing worker bees going in and out. They then chop them up and feed them to their young. They are considered a significant risk to bee populations should they become established in the UK. With bees already in significant decline they could really do without the aggravation.

How to recognise an Asian hornet?

The Asian hornet is smaller than our native hornet, with adult workers measuring from 25mm in length and queens measuring 30mm. The abdomen is mostly black except for the fourth abdominal segment which has a yellow band. It has characteristically yellow legs which accounts for why it is also often called the "yellow legged hornet" and its face is orange with two brownish red compound eyes.

When to look for it?

You can start to see it from now on! Here is its lifecycle:

- ✿ **Jan-March:** Emergence of founder queens from hibernation
- ✿ **April-May:** First nest made by queen. First brood of worker hornets emerges

- ✿ **May-Sept:** Nest construction and colony growth
- ✿ **Sept-October:** Mature active nest (several thousand individuals)
- ✿ **July-November:** Emergence of sexual adults
- ✿ **Sept-November:** Mating leading to numerous queens - each able to found their own colony
- ✿ **November-December:** Death of colony - mated queens enter hibernation

What do their nests look like?

Pear-shaped, with entrance hole halfway up the nest, up to 60 cm wide x 80 cm tall. Usually found in trees, may also be in buildings and hedges.



What if I spot one?

Report it immediately by downloading the "Asian Hornet Watch" app to your phone or emailing alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk or at <https://nonnativespecies.org/asianhornet>.

With many thanks to reader Lucy Stuart Lee for the suggestion and research.

Friends of Limpsfield Common



Maintaining the legacy for all of us

A MOST GENEROUS DONATION

FROM THE AUTHORS OF
'LIMPSFIELD CHART IN HISTORY'

This fabulous book, by Chris Pendred and Nick Withers has proved extremely popular! The photograph below shows Chris Pendred handing over a cheque for £1,100 to the Friends of Limpsfield Common Treasurer, Yves Le Hur. As you can see from the photo (right) they are enjoying a wonderful lunch with fellow members of the Task Force!

All the funds go directly to the Friends of Limpsfield Common to support work and care of the Commons. Thank you very much indeed!

WALKING ON THE CHART

Our very popular Family Activity Trail and Easy Access Trail are proving very popular. Look out for the signage for each walk from the High Chart Car Park or go to: <https://limpsfield.org/friends-of-limpsfield-common-family-activity-trail/>



A FAMOUS RESIDENT OF LIMPSFIELD COMMON: MR BERT HARDY

Announcing the launch of a new photographic exhibition "photojournalism in war and peace" using the work of Mr Bert Hardy. Long time residents of Limpsfield Chart may well recall Mr Bert Hardy, (1913 - 1995) who lived on the Chart for many years with his wife, Sheila Hardy (who died in 2022). Bert was a well regarded photographer, his photographs used to demonstrate the horrors of war as well as daily life.

The family of Mr Hardy have been working on Bert's archive. This has resulted in a new exhibition of Bert's work which will be launched at The Photographers Gallery in Spring 2024. This exhibition will enable you to discover key moments in Bert's unparalleled career. The exhibition launched on 23rd February 2024. For more information follow this link:

<https://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/whats-on/bert-hardy-photojournalism-war-and-peace>

A CALL TO HELP?

Our local community is blessed with many local people who help to look after and care for the Commons. Our local National Trust Ranger, Conor, has the help of the Task Force and we have a strong team of Guardians who litter pick across

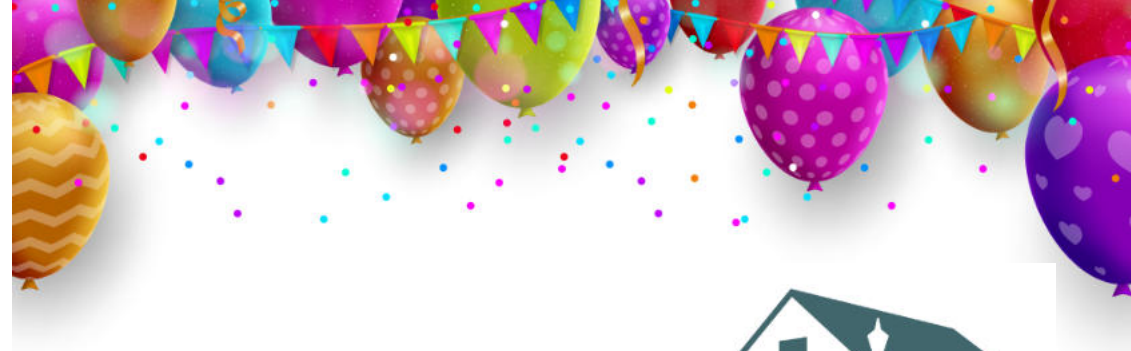
the Common too! The Limpsfield Common Local Committee assists the National Trust by representing local views and supporting the management of the Common with a team of local volunteers. It also runs the Friends of Limpsfield Common, which exists to ensure that Limpsfield Common stays a special place that can be enjoyed by everyone.

The Committee of the Friends of Limpsfield Common is on the look out for new blood, new skills and lively minds! Would YOU be interested in finding out more about getting actively involved? We are seeking people who

can offer administration and archive skills, social media users, photographers, story tellers, and flexible people who can 'lend a hand' at various events.

If you are a 'can do' person then please contact: Tony Pearson or Maggie Morgan:
tony2.pearson@btinternet.com
maggiemorganclit@gmail.com

THANK YOU FOR BEING A MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS OF LIMPSFIELD COMMON. YOUR SUPPORT IS REALLY APPRECIATED.



25th Anniversary Celebration

This year, on the 25th May, between 10am and noon, the staff and volunteers of Limpsfield Memorial Stores would like to invite the local community to come along and celebrate with us on the occasion of our 25th anniversary - and we would like to do so in style!

Join us in congratulating everyone involved with our local shop & Post Office; from our loyal customers to those tireless individuals who were there from its humble beginnings and to the ever growing number of volunteers who regularly put themselves forward to help out in this vital community hub.

This important milestone could not have been reached without this unwavering support but also of course, from the generosity of local businesses - we are grateful to you all. But it is with particular thanks that we pay tribute to the generosity of Ian Caswell of Blaze Painting & Decorating who has kindly undertaken the face-lift that now adorns the interior of our shop free of charge and to Brewers for the donation of the paint.

We will be celebrating by hosting a get together outside the shop where we invite you to enjoy a glass of Bucks Fizz or a non-alcoholic drink and a slice of cake.

Bridget Glynne-Jones



Oxsted & Limpsfield
Music Society

www.olms.org.uk

2023/24
Season



17 FEB 2024
Castalian String Quartet



13 APR 2024
Paul Lewis piano

Four great concerts - Booking open now

Haydn, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, Schubert, Dvorak, and Smetana and more



11 MAY 2024
Leonore Piano Trio



8 JUNE 2024
Charlotte Spruit, violin

BAWTREE HALL, HAZELWOOD SCHOOL RH8 0QU
TICKETS £30 / FREE FOR UNDER-25 S/ SEASON TICKETS AVAILABLE
BUY VIA WEBSITE OR ON THE DOOR - CONCERTS START AT 7.30 PM



Don't stray off the path!

Why it's so important to stick to the paths and keep your dog on the lead in the countryside this spring

As a nation of dog lovers, many of us enjoy walking our pets around the local fields, heathland and woodland. However, while we love our pets, we also need to be responsible and mindful of how they can affect the local livestock and wildlife, and why they need to be on the lead in certain areas, particularly in the springtime...

1. Spring breeding and nesting season

Local farmers say that the reduction of farmland birds in recent years, particularly ground nesting birds like lapwings (also known as pee-wits), is largely down to the general public and dog walkers who stray off footpaths and let their dogs run all over nesting areas. Dogs running all over fields also affects crops and other plant and insect life on the land.

According to Forestry England, this is also a key reason for the demise of other ground nesting birds such as nightjars, willow warblers, meadow

pipits, pheasants, partridges and often even garden birds such as dunnocks and blackbirds.



Equally, ponds, such as Yalden Spring on Limpsfield Chart, are now full of frogs and toads, newts frog spawn,

tadpoles as well as ducklings, coot and moorhen chicks. Please don't let your animals loose in or around these ponds at this very sensitive time of year.

Woodland, such as Ridlands Grove, Staffhurst Wood, Limpsfield Common and High Chart are all areas that have ground nesting birds and also other wildlife such as deer, who often leave their young in "safe places" when they go off for food. The National Trust and other landowners have created footpaths around these areas, so please try stick to the designated footpaths and resist the temptation to go off-piste and trample through the middle of woodland.

2. Your safety and that of your pet

If you have a dog, it's always best to keep it on a lead around cows and sheep.

Sadly sheep worrying has been an issue recently in Tandridge, so please keep your dogs on leads in any area where there is livestock, even if you don't think your dog would chase them...All dogs have it in them to an extent! Farmers are well within their rights to take serious action if they see a dog chasing their livestock, so it will give you peace of mind that you're doing the best thing for your pet as well as the farm animals.



TIPS:

- ✿ Young cattle and cows with calves can also be quite aggressive around dogs.
- ✿ Try not to pass between and separate adult sheep or cows from their young. They may act aggressively to protect their lambs or calves.
- ✿ If you feel threatened by animals protecting their territory or young, don't panic or run. Move to the edge of the field and, if possible, find another way round. If you are threatened by cattle or adult sheep, release the lead immediately so you can both get to safety separately.

3. Disease

Did you know that dog poo can spread deadly disease to farm animals as well as other wildlife? It's important to clean up after your dog wherever you are – just bag it and bin it. We have dog poo bins all over the parish in most car parks and on major footpaths, but any public waste bin will do. Despite the bins, the area up near high chart car park is terrible at the moment. Don't be one of those people who bags it and then tosses it in the bushes...

4. It's the Law

The law* states that you must keep your dog on a lead no more than 2 metres long on open access land



(areas like Limpsfield Common and Limpsfield Chart) unless on a public right of way:

- ✿ between 1 March and 31 July - to protect ground-nesting birds
- ✿ at all times around livestock

There may be other local or seasonal restrictions, but please remember that on farmland and other privately owned land, such as the Glebe Fields and other areas of the Titsey Estate, you must only walk on the designated, marked public footpaths and not across any other parts of the land.

So please, this spring, if you are on our local fields, in woodland and on heathland, keep your dogs under control at all times and preferably on the lead, and please, even if you are not with a dog, stick to the designated footpaths. It's the responsible thing to do.

***<https://www.gov.uk/right-of-way-open-access-land/use-your-right-to-roam>**

Sophie Martin



We're very lucky in Limpsfield to have some great little spaces where local groups and landowners are doing their best to promote Biodiversity in green spaces - including Padbrook Pond, Moat Pond, the Glebe and Brook Fields, Eden Brook (down by the bridge on Bluehouse Lane - Titsey Road end), Ridlands Grove, the Community Orchard at Grub Street and the Chart Orchard on Stoneleigh Road, amongst others. Now we have another one to add to the list - Detillens Biodiversity Corner.

This fab little spot at the end of Detillens Lane has always been a feature of Limpsfield in Bloom (LIB), lovingly tended to by the residents of Detillens Cottages and the LIB team. It is owned by The Limpsfield Club who have generously allowed permissive access to the Limpsfield in Bloomers and cottage residents who pot, plant and compost there, ensuring there is an annual display of beautiful plants and flowers for all to enjoy.

Working alongside The Limpsfield Club, the National Trust ranger and Limpsfield Parish Council, the local

keepers of this corner are ramping up their efforts to help biodiversity thrive and share their ideas with the local community.

They hope this will provide inspiration and ideas for local residents and businesses to adopt in their own gardens and small spaces, all of which will help to contribute to Nature Corridors through the Limpsfield parish and beyond.

Nature Corridors can act as bridges to connect habitats and allow wildlife to travel in search of food and breeding



opportunities. They help wildlife move through the landscape, dispersing pollen and seeds, and can act as stepping stones for migratory birds.

Each month, the keepers of Biodiversity Corner will make suggestions for what you can do to encourage nature to thrive. Follow the QR code to the Limpsfield Website, www.limpsfieldsurrey.com and on our Facebook / Instagram, where there will be helpful links to more information and ideas, and the opportunity for you to share your thoughts and successes.



Thank you, Naomi, Claire and Ross - the keepers of Biodiversity Corner!

Sophie Martin

Please Help!



LINK is an independent charity founded in 1974. It can provide transport for RH8 residents to take them to hospital, GP, dental, and other such appointments.

It would not be able to provide this invaluable service without the support of volunteers who are generous with their time and with the use of their own vehicles. Volunteers can talk about preferred length of journeys they want to undertake – i.e. to Oxted Health centre only or also to East Surrey Hospital and other routes.

LINK is in urgent need of more volunteers and if you are interested in becoming a volunteer driver and want to find out more about this please call Paula Myers on **01883 713379**.

Terry Davies

LIMPSFIELD VILLAGE

SUMMER FETE

Saturday 29 June 2024
12 Noon to 4pm
Glebe Meadow, Limpsfield
 (off Limpsfield High Street)

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN US FOR LOTS OF FUN!

Selection of Stalls • Children's Activities
 Barbeque • Cafe • Sweet Tombola • Hamper Raffle
 Summer Crafts • Pimms Bar • Beer Tent
 Punch & Judy • Dog Show • Dance Show
 Hook A Duck and much more!

The Arts Society Limpsfield



March/April/May + Study Day & Lunch

Our end of November lecture: Water, Shade & Light - the Persian Garden was one of our most popular ever and we had a full hall with people enjoying mulled wine and mince pies.

Thursday 21 March 2024 - Visit to the Queen's Gallery (Victoria) for the Holbein Exhibition

27th March 2024 Lecture 2.15pm start The Culture of Ukraine by Rosamund Bartlett

Learn Ukraine's story through the shared culture of its proud people. Its multi-ethnic history includes a rich folk culture and had an influence on modern painting and haute-couture

12th April - Spring Lunch with a talk by local resident Graham Dixon on Frederick Delius - the Limpsfield connection and the French connection. Always popular and good value.

9th and 25th April Walks - Belgravia and Pimlico with Andrew Davies

24th April Lecture, 7.30pm start London's Country Houses

The entertaining story of the many country villas which were swallowed by the greater London and what became of them.

8th May Visit: Ham House and Gardens

29th May 7.30pm start Sorolla: The Master of Light

He captured the bright light and colours of the Mediterranean painting vividly and capturing the moments. Learn about his life and art.

See our website <https://theartsocietylimpsfield.org.uk/> for details. Members have priority in booking events. Half-year membership is just £22.50.

The Barn Theatre



Thurs 14th - Sat 16th March 2:30pm (Sat) & 7:30pm	Private Peaceful - Young Oxted Players <i>Re-living the life of a young First World War soldier</i>	Tickets: £13.00 from www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk
Wed 27th March 7.30pm	Matt Rendell's Inside Stories of the Tour de France - Radio Days Events <i>ITV Tour de France commentator and acclaimed author Matt Rendell shares revealing and entertaining stories from his 25 years' in cycling</i>	Tickets: £15.00 from www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk
Tue 23rd April 7.30pm	Madagascar JNR The Musical - LCA Stage Academy Juniors <i>LCA Junior performers hit the stage to perform Madagascar JNR! A fun-filled musical adventure not to be missed!</i>	Tickets: £18.00 from www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk
Thur 25th April 7.30pm	Anything Goes Youth Edition - LCA Stage Academy Seniors <i>LCA Senior performers jump aboard the stage to perform Anything Goes youth edition, showcasing their many talents in this wonderful musical</i>	Tickets: £18.00 from www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk
Friday 26th April 9pm to 1:30am	Ghosthunters <i>Are you brave enough to join a professionally organised full-blown ghost hunt at the theatre to find out about the strange and unexplained happenings reported</i>	Tickets: Tickets www.ghosthunterstours.co.uk
Sun 26th May 2:00pm & 6:30pm	All-England Theatre Festival Eastern Area Final <i>Enjoy some of the best one-act plays in the south east of England this year</i>	Tickets: £12.00 for one session or £20.00 for both sessions from www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk

Information pertaining to all the above shows can be obtained from:

www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk or 15a High Street, Westerham, Kent. TN16 1RA. 01959 561811

Alex's Books:

Birnam Wood by Eleanor Catton

This is one of those books that surprises you because where you end is very different to where you start. Set in New Zealand, the novel focuses on an eco-activist group called Birnam Wood. Led by Mira, they are a dedicated cause and secretly plant trees where no-one will notice, but Mira has far higher ambitions for them.

We also meet Shelley who seems to be a reluctant deputy to Mira and keen to leave the group, but not sure how to break it to Mira. When their world collides with local business man Owen Darvish and an enigmatic, mysterious man named Robert Lemoine, the novel takes a dramatic turn and morphs into a pacy thriller with an unexpected ending.

There is wonderful characterization throughout this novel and it builds gradually, sucking you in. Shelley and Mira's relationship provides the backdrop and at first appearance Mira is dominant and over-bearing, while Shelley silently harbours grudges against her. There is a tension between them and both keep secrets from each other. As the plot unfolds, we find there is light and shade to each of them and your allegiances continually switch between the two throughout. There is perhaps some patience required of the reader as Catton does not rush what



Eleanor Catton by Murdo MacLeod

she wants you to know and learn about them, but this adds to the dramatic tension later on.

Lemoine is a lingering threat throughout. A brilliant character, he seems intrigued by Mira and the group but how does he know so much about them, and how well-meaning is he? As all these individuals weave around each other, the direction of travel is irrevocably changed and this brings one of the novel's central questions into play. To what extent has each party just wandered into a world that is beyond their control, or are they actively to blame for the eventual outcome? Birnam wood will be recognized by some as featuring in Macbeth, and these themes of ambition, acts and consequence are also central to Shakespeare's play.

There are other key characters bringing extra dynamics to the novel. Tony Gallo, is an ex-boyfriend of Mira's who gets dragged into numerous conflicts: the rivalry between Shelley and Mira,

the competing aims of Birnam Wood, and Mira's relationship with Lemoine. Meanwhile, Owen Darvish and his wife Jill initially bring a welcome comedic element to the book, with a pitch perfect depiction of their ambition and inability to keep quiet about their wealth, but they also have critically important parts to play in the plot.

The novel of course has its roots in activism and politics and there are some philosophical debates on these themes. Yet it also deals with how money, power, corruption and manipulation can infiltrate some of those seemingly admirable causes. It is a hard novel to classify as the first part is so different from the last. It is perhaps not quite a thriller so much as a really engrossing piece of character fiction, but there is no doubt that the ending is tension-filled and you will be holding your breath all the way to the final pages. Some readers have loved the ending, some not so much, but I can guarantee you won't be able to predict it!

Alex Wilkinson

Wassail....wassail....

Although my wife, Rosemary and I have only recently returned to the area, we had followed the growth of the Limpsfield Community Orchard from afar. It was a real delight to find the Orchard so well developed, and so much appreciated as a community asset. Great credit is due to its founders and all volunteers associated with it.

The Wassail event on 14 January was a new experience for us. After dark, an excited crowd of about 200 people, mostly families, formed a torch-lit procession led by the North Down Drummers from the Limpsfield British Legion premises. It wended its way through the lantern-hung wood towards the welcoming, roaring bonfire at the edge of the Orchard. The ceremony itself took place at the splendid king tree, a fine Bramley cooking apple, festooned with bunting and coloured lights.

Wassail is a curious tradition that is intended to banish evil spirits and ensure a fruitful harvest in the coming autumn season. And it is certainly conducted with

great heart in the Limpsfield Community Orchard. Our two local Wassail Masters, Stephen Rappaport and James Reeves, clad in finest Lincoln green, led the proceedings, placing toast, salt and cider in the boughs, and bade the trees bear well. With the aid of some vigorous drumming, a suitably raucous din was created by the assembled company on whistles, saucepans and sticks to frighten away any lurking spirits.

When hearty cheers had been given, mulled cider and apple juice were provided for all the visitors, young and old alike, while the Drummers continued their rousing entertainment.

Many thanks are due to the organisers and volunteers on the day, including Titsey Rotary members.



*North Downs Drummers
photo credit: Bob Matthews*

If you haven't been to the Orchard, it is best accessed on the signed footpath winding through the ancient woodland off Grub Street. You will find the fruit trees clearly labelled with really interesting information about each separate variety.

Limpsfield Community Orchard's funding comes mainly from the annual £10 donation given by the Friends of the Orchard. It is run entirely by volunteers and more are always welcome – visit <http://orchardlimpsfield.blogspot.co.uk>. The season's cycle includes the glorious blossom viewing in the spring, as well as a public tasting session in the autumn.

Robin Masefield



*Bonfire at the Wassail
photo credit: Bob Matthews*

NORTH **NDCO** DOWNS COMMUNITY ORCHESTRA

On Sunday, 26 November 2023, The North Downs Community Orchestra held a concert in the Bawtree Hall at Hazelwood School, titled 'Christmas Capriccio'. We were lucky enough to receive two reviews from our audience members:

"The North Downs Community Orchestra delivered a captivating Christmas performance at Hazelwood school, showcasing their exceptional musicianship and interpretative skills in an eclectic program that ranged from the likes of Mamma Mia to the classics including Tchaikovsky and Strauss. The conductor, Sara Young, guided the ensemble with precision and passion, bringing out the nuances of each composition and not to mention a beautifully sparkling jacket! Standout moments included a gorgeous and enigmatic vocal rendition of Habanera by Laura Carew Gibbs, leaving the audience in awe. The orchestra's collective sound was powerful, creating a simply captivating atmosphere which resonated with the audience. The Polar Express and Frozen were perfectly executed and brought some Christmas

cheer to us all at this concert which was so perfectly placed to brighten the winter months. This was a wonderful evening spanning both classical and modern music, which would appeal to just about anyone. This once again highlighted the orchestra's community spirit and left a lasting impression on the concert goers."

Romy Ellis-Doyle

We'll leave the last word to one of our younger audience members:

"I thought the concert was really great! The orchestra is amazing. I think it must be fun to be a conductor and hold the stick and tell people when to play. It looks a bit like a magical wand from Harry Potter. My favourite part of the concert was the Christmas songs and watching my nan play the trumpet and the lady that sung to everyone."

Samuel, Age 10

Our next concert will be on **Sunday 26 May 2024** at Woldingham School (see the inside back cover for our poster). Go to **www.thefunorchestra.co.uk** for more details and to register your interest!



The Marriage of Figaro — The New Aquarian Opera Company

Following on from the enjoyable "A Concert for a New King" during the spring, Andrew Claringbull, John Tolley, Doug and Nancy Fisher, took part in Mozart's grand opera "The Marriage of Figaro" at the Barn Theatre in November 2023. As ever community minded, Rev Helen generously allowed the company to use the church as rehearsal space for which Aquarian Opera are extremely grateful. The opera was very well received by audiences and we are pleased to publish below one of a number of reviews reproduced by kind permission of Limpsfield resident Philip Mills.

Audiences at the Barn Theatre were royally treated to some high end professional young soloists in New Aquarian Opera Company's production of The Marriage of Figaro in November. It was thrilling to see the Company returning to its roots of nurturing and showcasing superb young operatic talent.

It was an excellent choice to use the clever translation by Amanda Holden (no - not that one, another one...). Deftly witty, it superbly

accentuates the many humorous moments in the opera.

Alex Riddell, fresh from graduating from The Royal Northern College of Music only earlier this year, gave us a young, startled Figaro which worked well as a foil to his sassy fiancée. Musically astute, his lovely voice was particularly dulcet in the upper register and a little more maturity will give him more power on some of the lower notes.

Tall Irish baritone George Rice looked and sounded the part as a suitably aristocratic Count Almaviva, ultimately humbled by his wife and servant girl at the denouement; this contrasted nicely with his earlier aloof handling of everyone other than his desired Susanna in whose hands he was permanent putty.

Mozart is not generous to the tenors in this opera and I'd have loved to heard more of Richard Milnes's lyrical voice which we enjoyed in his brief dual roles of Don Basilio and Don Curzio. There were lovely contributions from young singers Jacqueline Turner (as a mellifluous Barbarina) and bass-baritone Adam Gammie (definitely giving us some Worzel/ Bill&Ben vibes as the comic gardner Antonio). George Coates (Dr Bartolo) and Charlotte Collier (Marcellina) both provided assured performances rounding off a super cast.

Three singers in particular wowed the audience with their vocal skills and stage presence. Anna Goodhew who sang the role of Countess Almaviva, the long-suffering wife of the wayward Count, brought genuine pathos to her arias which drew richly deserved, thunderous applause during the opera. It was pure joy to watch and listen to Victoria Hodges as the hormone-overdosing adolescent Cherubino. Her exceptional facial expressions (deserving of some kind of award in themselves), a lovely contralto voice, excellent comedic timing and her empathetic display of the confusion of a young man in love with every girl he

meets, made her/him (them?) the most convincing Cherubino I've seen.

The Marriage of Susanna would be a better title to Mozart's masterpiece, given this is the largest role for a soprano in the entire opera repertoire - with the character rarely leaving the stage. Soprano Isolde Roxby was simply outstanding as the clever, charming, scheming, but impeccably faithful bride to be. Hers was a perfectly poised performance. Her energy and commitment, her beautiful voice with a rock solid technique, as well as her superb acting throughout was as good as anything I've seen at Glyndebourne.

The chorus provided the right level of 'business' to bring further life and fun to the production and it was great to see the likes of John Tolley, Chairman Andrew Claringbull and new-comer Jane Gould-Smith (amongst others) thoroughly enjoying themselves during their scenes: and who wouldn't when surrounded by this array of talent?

The Barn's small size always makes the orchestration challenging, but the string quintet, together with the piano (covering the wind parts) worked remarkably well. The balance was good throughout, under the direction of Guy Middlemiss who had a busy night as continuo and conductor, doing an excellent job of driving the performance forwards with energy and panache.

Congratulations to Melanie Vinall and her team on an excellent production with all

the right ingredients. Encore!

The next Aquarian Opera production will be In June at the Barn Theatre, "A night at the Proms" featuring Puccini's "Gianni Schicchi" and in November, Puccini's "La Boheme".

Do come and support us or join Aquarian and sing with us. We now have a Tandridge Lottery page; visit www.TandridgeLottery.co.uk and search New Aquarian Opera.

Andrew Claringbull

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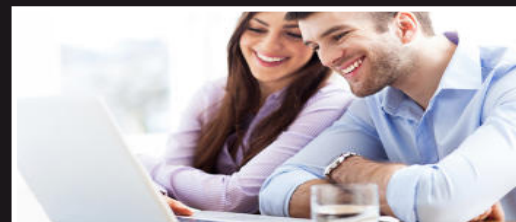


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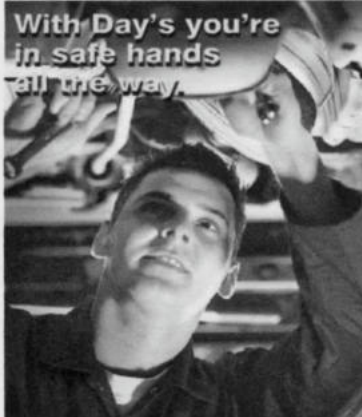
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