

# The Gossip

HORNTON

ISSUE 137

2025 EDITION TWO

## HORNTON SCHOOL *Young Voices*



On Thursday 16th January, the Hornton School children went to the glamorous Resorts World Arena in Birmingham to take part in 'Young Voices'. This annual event gives primary school children the opportunity to sing with the 'biggest choir in the world'. You can see for yourself what an experience this was by visiting the 'Young Voices' clips on YouTube.

### *A report from the Year 6 children*

When we arrived in the Arena we settled into our seats and waited for rehearsals to start. We couldn't believe how big the Arena was. The conductor arrived, we practiced all our songs and dance moves with a live band. We were all so excited for it to start. We had our dinner and the main show began.

The lights went out, and a wave of little lights filled the darkness; that's when we felt the happiest. We all crouched into our first song, Try Everything by Shakira and blue, yellow and pink lights covered us. It was the biggest and loudest thing we had ever experienced. We went into the next song, and professional dancers appeared on the stage. Their impressive moves were filled with glory and joy. We all desperately looked for our parents bopping along to the tunes.

There were 3 fantastic guest singers. When they sang we were speechless.

The dancers came on and performed a brilliant performance that made our mouths drop. They had made a special mix of songs for the parents, and we all cheered them on. When we sang the Pop medley we were so excited to sing with other children that we all sang very loudly.

We loved the music and atmosphere, and our entire choir loved it. We will treasure the experience forever. Thank you for helping us to go.







Mr Harris salutes the Haggis

## Burns Night at the Dun Cow

On their final weekend at the Dun Cow, Steve and Rebecca, supported by their family and helpers, held a traditional Burns Night on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January.

Rebecca served a delicious five course meal with haggis as the main course. As usual there was the *Address to a Haggis*, by Robbie Burns, and this year it was an 'audience participation' event followed by a Scottish Quiz. The meal was enhanced by the provision of free drinks included in the price - thanks Steve. A capacity group of thirty one people attended the

night and I am sure everyone there would agree it was a most enjoyable event.

Rebecca was congratulated for the meal and all those attending thanked the Yates family for their contribution to village life over the past six years and wished them well for their future life.

Steve and Rebecca were presented with a substantial

gift of National Garden Vouchers, donated by their friends from the village, to help with the enhancement of their new home.

*Ian Harris*

Locals gathered again for the final time on the Sunday evening to wish Steve, Rebecca and family all the very best for their new adventure.

## Sweet Treats



Pudding Perfection in the Pavilion was a great success on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February. Organised by Jo Langton and Sarah Walther, 40 lucky people took their pick from the 13 donated scrummy puddings and then voted for their favourites. The voting was very close, but the final winners were 1st, Katie Walther with her chocolate torte, 2nd was Lynne Miles's Cheesecake and a close 3rd was Ann Hemmings's Pavlova.



Isabelle Harris and Ann Hemmings ran the traditional Hornton Raffle and all together the evening raised a much needed £366 for Katherine House Hospice. Jo told The Gossip "Everyone enjoyed the evening and there were very few left overs! I would like to thank everyone who came along, particularly those clever cooks who brought puddings and those who donated raffle prizes."



## Save the Dates...

**Hornton Open Gardens 2025**  
Hornton will host Open Gardens on Sunday 29 June, 2 - 6pm, in aid of Katharine House Hospice and village causes.

**3H's Flower & Produce Show**  
Saturday 9 August 2025  
in Hornton Pavilion

**Hornton Progressive Dinner**  
Saturday 18 October 2025

*Make a note of the dates now!*



# Meet the new Landlords



**Early in March, I had the pleasure of meeting the new landlord of the Dun Cow, Tony De Lacey, and his partner, Rochelle Chard.**

Tony told The Gossip "I used to manage a Pub/Restaurant in a village near Wantage and before that I worked in a Fish Restaurant in Devon. Recently I've been living and working in Fulham where I met Rochelle, and we have both decided that the time is right to leave the city and fulfil our ambition, to own a pub in this beautiful part of the world. We looked at a lot of Pubs in the Oxfordshire/Wiltshire area and when we came here we knew at once that the Dun Cow was perfect. In fact, Rochelle fell in love with it, and was adamant that this was it!"

Rochelle's background is quite different. Born in South Africa, her family emigrated to New Zealand when she was a child due mainly to the security situation. Rochelle became a hospital orderly and then qualified as a dental nurse, before deciding to move to London where she met Tony.

While the Pub has been closed the couple have been working hard re-decorating and setting some of their plans in motion. They will both be behind the bar, and have been interviewing local young people and taken on five members of staff. They have established new suppliers and want to create an interesting and welcoming atmosphere,

particularly in the restaurant area where they will be showcasing their shared love of art. "We want to make that a beautiful space," said Rochelle. "We'll be keeping the furniture, but that's about it, the decor and lighting will be changed and there will be table linen and candles. We will definitely be offering a Sunday roast, but generally the food will be good, traditional pub grub. We will be keeping the menu limited and we want to hear from people what they would like to see on our menu. We will listen and make changes accordingly. The bar area will remain exactly the same, but the snug is going to be a chill out area, with comfortable seating, somewhere quiet and peaceful where people can relax."

I asked if they intended to make any radical changes. "We've heard that there are a lot of clubs in the village," said Rochelle, "In fact we've already met members of the domino team who were pleased to hear that we want everything that usually happens in the pub, all the clubs and groups and, of course every Pub has to have a Pub Quiz, to continue. We're also keep the tepee, at least for the time being, it's a bit sad and worn out so we will be making some changes in the garden but not for the time being. We found the 'Aunt Sally' kit, don't know what it is, but we're sure someone will show us!"

They will continue to stay closed on Mondays and

Tuesdays and will be open from 12 until 3 and 6 until last orders at 10.30 Wednesday to Friday, all day Saturday and 12 until 5 on Sundays. The Pub will still be dog and child friendly. Asked about events, Tony said "We are both keen wine buffs, and will be stocking some unusual wines that are unique to the Dun Cow. We intend to run some wine tasting events hosted by a good friend of ours who works for Majestic. We have also sourced our very own exclusive Dun Cow Pilsner Beer! We will be arranging for a range of Visiting Food Trucks, all sorts of different cuisines, and would love to host visiting musicians for live music events." Rochelle told The Gossip that they will have much more of an online presence; she is working on updating the website, and will be using Facebook and Instagram to spread the word about the Dun Cow, all of which will soon be live.

I asked about their first impressions of the village. They said that they have been delighted with their reception. "People have been amazing," said Rochelle. "We have had so much help and support, which has made us feel as though people really care. It's so obvious that the Dun Cow is thought of as a vital part of the community. We are determined to keep the Pub safe for the future."

See you there!  
Anne Joyner



*The re-opening of The Dun Cow went with a swing on Sunday 23rd March. The new decor was much admired and the young staff did their very best to keep up with the demand from a capacity crowd, with everyone very happy to celebrate the return of the Dun Cow.*

## MEET Gareth Brain

The new Postman for Hornton. There are a few bits of paperwork to be completed but his appointment should be confirmed just as *The Gossip* goes to print.





# That's The Spirit!

You wait 88 years for a new version of Snow White, then two come along at once!

The first – by the multi-national Disney Corporation – cost \$250m to produce and has been panned by the critics as a one-star disaster. The second – the latest production by the Hornton Allsorts – cost about £250 to produce and was a five-star triumph!

White Spirit was billed as “definitely not a panto” but it did include plenty of familiar pantomime characters.

Nick Atkinson was a revelation in the starring role of Prince Charming. Guy Heathcote and Sarah Walther brought the house down as Arsey and Lumpy, the two dwarfs. That's two more than the Disney version, by the way - their dwarfs are computer generated.

They were ably assisted by the rest of the ten-strong cast, who were clearly enjoying themselves as much as the audience and were marshalled with great aplomb by Pete Lemon in his directorial debut.

And the cast gave Pete a very special present at the end of Saturday's sell-out performance: a frame from Disney's original 1937 Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.

Hornton can't wait for the Allsorts sequel!

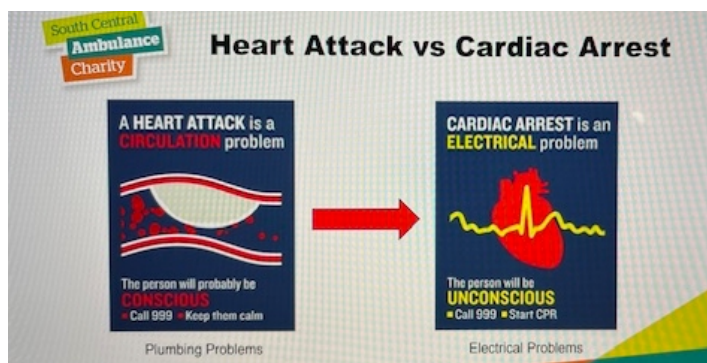
Roger Corke



# Staying Alive

Our Parish Council arranged for CPR Training to be held in the Pavilion on 20th February. Al Mills told *The Gossip* “We had 18 attendees and just about everyone commented on how good the session had been. We had three trainers from the South Central Ambulance Service - who were also all local voluntary first responders. The session was lead by Andrew McEwan from Shutford. The training was a mixture of presentation and hands-on practice. We all took turns performing CPR on 'Annie' dummies, to the rhythm of 'Staying Alive' by the Bee Gees, and also had a go at operating (training/dummy) defibrillators.”

For those of us who were unable to attend the session there is a very detailed pdf copy of the presentation available online - go to: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s5LirAghEJQrd60n8617QlmJx53iAXFQ/view?usp=sharing>



# Village Litter Pick



You may remember this time last year the litter-pickers on the Horley road stretch found a large number of cider bottles thrown into the hedge - well the regular 'driver with a problem' seems to have upgraded and this year a large stash of identical wine bottles were found instead. Hopefully none of us will encounter this apparently drunk driver on the top road any time!

Grateful thanks to Jane and Kevin Wain for organising this year's pick, and of course to all of the volunteers.

## A Big Thank you...

- **Paul Burden** for your work refurbishing the benches on the Green which were badly in need of some TLC after this horrible winter. And thank you to Ni and Alice for financing the repairs via your May Day clothes stall.
- The Pavilion Committee would like to thank **Isabelle Harris** for her many years of dealing with the Pavilion Bookings. They have now arranged for a new online system which is accessed by going to the address on the poster. If you prefer to book on the telephone just ring Phil Holt who will be happy to help.

## Hornton Pavilion Bookings

Online Calendar now available:

<https://hallbookingonline.com/hornton/>

or call Phil Holt on 07932 366397







## School Chairs

The Banbury Guardian ran a story about the community helping to replace the chairs in Hornton School, which were damaged in the flood, accompanied by this photo of the pupils, chairs and some of the donors. Wendy Whitehouse told the Gossip "It was lovely to thank the village for its support. The chairs have now been purchased, and as you can see from the picture, they are bright blue to match our uniform."

Mrs Bowes has ordered special stickers with the name of each donor printed on them and they will be attached to the chairs."

## HISTORY GROUP

### *Plenty of Action at the History Group*

In the Pavilion in February we learnt about Graham Vint's farming family in Jersey before, during and after the occupation. Later that month in the Church John McCormick, a volunteer guide at Chastleton House, gave an illustrated talk on the history and decline of that much loved house.

There is an exciting programme of events to come at the History Group.

- Our 'away weekend' this year will be to Salisbury with a full two-day programme in place for the sixteen members booked to go; a full report in the next *Gossip*.
- For those who would like to join - membership is flourishing - then now is the time to enrol before we take part in the village May Day celebrations with a WWII display in the Chapel, with much of the material provided by villagers.
- In June we are planning an afternoon tea plus a talk by Melanie King on "How the English fell in love with tea".
- Members will be invited to our Annual Garden Party in July, and in August an exploratory walk along the Ironstone Railway.
- The Autumn programme starts with a private visit to Ragley Hall and then an October talk by Lady Deborah Hayter on the lost villages of Oxfordshire, which will be open to non-members.
- We will be submitting an entry to the November film night, and then ending 2025 with a Christmas Supper Party.
- If you fancy joining our friendly group please contact Laurie Furneaux on 01295 670896.

Bob Langton

## Wild Oxfordshire

### *April News - Curlew*

The Curlew's wonderful 'bubbling' call is one of the most evocative sounds of springtime in meadows and pastures across Oxfordshire. Something we cherish, but which is sadly under threat. The Curlew is arguably the most pressing bird conservation priority in the UK, where nearly half the breeding population has been lost over the last 25 years and where range contraction has seen Curlews disappear from many traditional sites.

Watch our 'Curlew River' film which explores the work of farmers and volunteers to help our wonderful Curlews as well as highlighting the fabulous ancient meadows and wet grassland habitats they inhabit in our area: [www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/projects/curlew](http://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/projects/curlew). Explore the website to find out about the many ways you can support Wild Oxfordshire.

Come and join us at

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# Hornton May Day

## Bank Holiday Monday

### May 5<sup>th</sup>



At the Pavilion

So much to see and do

#### Stalls galore...

White Elephant  
Garden Plants  
Delicious Cakes  
Ice Cream Van  
Candy floss  
Toys  
Books

#### School stalls:

Famous tombola  
Adopt a soft toy  
Games emporium  
Fresh lemonade

Women's and  
Gentlemen's  
clothing

**BARKS**  
Charity stall

#### Famous Hornton BBQ

##### Start Time

**1pm**

##### May Parade

**1:45pm**

##### Crowning the May King and Queen

**2pm**

**followed by**  
**Maypole Dancing**  
**Morris Dancing**

#### Fun and games

Teacups Ride  
Trampolines  
Skittles  
Hook a duck  
Wheel of Fortune  
Loo-Roll Lob!  
Lucky squares  
Wine or Water?  
Key Challenge  
Fitness Challenge

The  
**Grand Raffle**  
returns!

In aid of ...  
Many village causes

#### Refreshments

1940's themed  
Tea, coffee and cakes  
at the Chapel

A warm welcome at  
**The Dun Cow** from  
Tony and Rochelle



# HORNTON MAY DAY

*Monday 5 May*

Can you believe that planning for May Day 2025 is already well underway! We're looking forward to bringing the village to life with our traditional May Day celebration and we hope you will support the village causes by joining in the fun.

## *Where to take your May Day donations:*

- **The Grand MayDay Raffle** - to Andrew Overton, Trinity Cottage, Church Lane.
- **Inexpensive bottles of wine for the 'Wine or Water?' Stall** - The Corkes, The Cottage, Church Lane (no empty bottles needed this year).
- **White Elephants** - the week before, to The Garages opposite the maypole on the Green.
- **Cakes** - on the day, to Julie Stanley in the Chapel.
- **Ladies Designer & Good-as-New** - Alice Protheroe, The Glen, Millers Lane. Items clean and, if possible, on hangers.
- **Menswear & Accessories** - Agata Smolak, Cornerstones, Bell Street, next to the Pavilion drive.

*And gentlemen...*

*please make way for some new clothes!*

Agata Smolak is busy fundraising for the Midwife Led Unit in Banbury, and has kindly agreed to run the Gentlemen's Outfitters Stall on May Day to help with her fundraising with, of course, a donation to village funds.

Now is the ideal opportunity for chaps of all ages to go through their wardrobes and see what can be passed on to make room for some lovely new summer clothes.

Items must be clean and in nearly-new, saleable condition. As well as suits, coats, shirts, sportswear and knitwear, accessories like belts, hats and ties are also welcome.

Please deliver your donations to Agata's house, Cornerstones, Bell Street, which is on the right-hand side of the Pavilion drive, facing downhill.



# Kit & Kaboodle

A new concept in Art for Hornton

What exactly is it? It's place to come and have a go at something new, whatever level or skill you have, without needing to buy materials and with a tutor on hand to offer guidance. You would explore new techniques in a safe, creative environment with like minded people, with the added bonus of not having to clear up afterwards!

Each session lasts from 2- 3 hours and is self-led and help with inspiration; getting started and help, if needed, is on hand. Come with a plan, or see where the mood takes you; choose a craft you know you love, or be brave enough to be bad (or amazing!) at something new.

You would choose what interests you from **The Menu** and will then receive **The Kit** - a box filled with everything you need for the project that you've chosen. **The Menu** is flexible and includes things like:

Lino or Dry Point printing; Still Life Painting; Gelli printing; Making a small book; Embossing; An introduction to Paper Mache; Metal work; Simple Embroidery.

Perhaps there's something else you've always fancied trying - just ask! Each time you come along you could try another skill.

The cost is £30 per person for up to three hours studio time plus a cuppa or a glass of wine. Paper, pens and brushes etc are all available to use. You won't need to bring anything with you, and after enjoying a chat and laughter with your new crafty



friends you'll leave with a little bit of creativity in your bag!

Sign up either via Instagram or email [fiona@visionfields.plus.com](mailto:fiona@visionfields.plus.com)

Or follow instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/kitandkaboodlecrafts?igsh=MWVmanN3a2JpanMyYw==>

Booking is limited to 6 - 8 people per session.

- Book your spot (or book a bundle) - dates will be announced in advance - come solo, with a friend, or bring several.
- Hen do's or birthday treats welcome (message me)
- Place your order from the creative menu
- Your box will arrive with all the tools, materials and instructions you need
- Get stuck in!

Fiona Bridgeland

Juniper Art Studio, Millers Lane, Hornton



# FAMILY FOCUS

Here is some information that might be of interest for children and young people.  
If you have any more info to share, please let *The Gossip* know and we'll gladly include it.

## *Fairytale Farm, Southcombe, OX75QH*

Fairytale Farm, near Chipping Norton, is a "Sensory and Learning Wonderland" featuring a petting farm, interactive sensory games, disabled facilities and rides, a cafe and an adventure playground. Go to [fairytalefarm.co.uk](http://fairytalefarm.co.uk) for more information and booking.



## *Upton House*

*Easter Egg Trail - Saturday 5 - Sunday 27 April*

Make your way along the trail and find activities for the whole family inspired by nature and creativity. The trail takes place between 5 - 27 April 2025, from 10am-4pm, with last entry at 3.30pm, so come along and explore the beautiful property of Upton House and Gardens. Prices are £3.50 per trail which includes an Easter trail sheet, bunny ears and dairy or vegan and Free From\* chocolate egg. \*Suitable for people with milk, egg, gluten, peanut and tree nut allergies. In the event of high winds, we may have to close the Woodland Walk where the trail is located. To avoid disappointment, please check the website on the day of your visit to see if the trail is running.

## *Compton Verney, Warwickshire CV35 9HZ*

*Welly Walk - Dates*

'Welly Walk' through the grounds of beautiful Compton Verney, following a trail map and spotting the 'Welly Creations' along the way. You can bring your dog on a lead and there is a cafe featuring delicious home-made cakes and meals with tables outside. £3.50 per trail plus an adult day admission.

## *National Herb Centre, Warmington*

Not just a Garden Centre, there are three nature walks with lovely views across the valley, ranging from 25 minutes to an hour. The walks are dog friendly and there is an adventure playground and cafe.

## *Hadsham Farm*

Unfortunately Hadsham Farm will no longer be offering its annual lambing event.

## **St Etheldreda's Church**

with support from

**The Michael Hardinge Trust**

## **'Stay and Play' Group**

for babies and pre-schoolers in Horley  
and the surrounding villages

**Horley Old School Hall OX15 6BJ**

**Thursday mornings**

Check [thehorleyviews.com](http://thehorleyviews.com) for dates  
and more information

**10.30am - 12pm**

**[babygroup@ironstonebenefice.org](mailto:babygroup@ironstonebenefice.org)**

No booking required

Children must be accompanied by  
a parent or guardian at all times

The Michael Hardinge Trust  
Is a registered charity (no. 309585)

## **FAQs**

### *Where is the school hall?*

The hall is behind St Etheldreda's church in Horley.  
From the road, follow the path through the churchyard and out of the gate - the hall is on your left.

### *Can I arrive late?*

Yes, you're welcome any time!

### *Do I need to book?*

No need to book, but please contact [babygroup@ironstonebenefice.org](mailto:babygroup@ironstonebenefice.org)  
if you would like to let us know you're coming or to ask any questions.

### *What does it involve?*

This is an informal social group for children and parents, with a range of books and toys for independent and collaborative play. As the group grows, we may introduce more structured activities.

### *Are there baby changing facilities?*

Yes, there are toilets and baby changing facilities in the hall.

### *Is any food and drink provided?*

There will be tea, coffee, squash and biscuits.

### *Do I need to accompany my child?*

Yes - but if you would like another suitable adult to accompany them (such as a grandparent or nanny), please just let us know in advance.

### *Do I need to pay?*

Attendance is free of charge, but we would welcome a £2 donation to help run the group.

### *Where can I park?*

There is on-street parking on Church Lane



## Baby & Child First Aid Class

An essential training session for parents and carers!

Covering first aid for infants (0-1 year) and children (1-18 years)

**Date:** Sunday, 11th May

**Time:** 10 AM – 12 PM

**Location:** Hornton Sports Pavilion

**Cost:** Approx. £35 (depending on numbers)

This award-winning, 5-star-rated course

will equip you with life-saving skills and confidence to handle emergencies.

It covers:

**CPR & Choking**

**Bumps, Burns & Breaks**

**Bleeding & Febrile Seizures**

**Meningitis & Sepsis Awareness**

Taught by **Mini First Aid**, in partnership with leading medical organisations, this class is suitable for anyone caring for children.

About Mini First Aid:

In 2021, BBC Dragon's Den star Sara Davies saw the huge potential in Mini First Aid and joined as an investor and adviser. Since then, the company has grown into a multi-award-winning organisation with nearly 70 franchises nationwide, delivering high-quality first aid training to families and professionals.

Spaces are limited—book now!

For more information, contact Agata on 07513584985 or email [agatasmolak@yahoo.com](mailto:agatasmolak@yahoo.com).

We'd love to see you there!

# Walking for Change

## Supporting Banbury Midwife-Led Unit

Every woman deserves to feel safe, supported, and empowered during childbirth. For many, Midwife-Led Units (MLUs) provide a home-like environment where compassionate midwives offer expert care, making a real difference to mothers and babies. However, Banbury MLU lacks the funding it truly deserves, and I want to help change that.

Having recently welcomed my daughter Hania into the world, I was incredibly lucky to experience the exceptional care of a Midwife-Led Unit. The support, reassurance, and calm environment made such a positive difference to my birth experience. Inspired by this, I want to help ensure that more women have access to the same level of care.

To support this cause, I've launched a series of charity walks to raise funds and awareness for Banbury MLU. The initiative includes 10 local walks, all leading up to a final challenge to complete Cotswolds Way (102 miles), with the goal of supporting the dedicated midwives who provide this invaluable service.

## How You Can Get Involved:

### Join a Walk

My walks take place on Thursdays, offering a chance to enjoy beautiful local countryside, meet great people, and support an important cause. You can bring your dog and walks will be of varying lengths, ranging from three to ten miles. If you can't access Facebook for details please ring me on: 07513 584985. A £5 donation per adult goes directly to Banbury MLU.

### Donate

If you can't walk with us, you can still support the cause by contributing via our JustGiving page. Every donation makes a difference.

### Spread the Word

Sharing this initiative with friends, family, and your network helps raise awareness and brings more support to Banbury MLU.

To find all the details on upcoming walks, follow my Facebook page: **Hornton Walking Mama**. Together, we can ensure more women have access to calm, home-like, and empowering birth care. Whether by walking, donating, or sharing - every step counts.

Agata Smolak, Bell Street



**Hornton Walking Mama**  
JustGiving page



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Warks. CV36 4PE.  
Tel: 01608 682001

OPEN:

Mon-Thur: 9.30am - 4pm

Fri: 9.30am - 2pm

1st Sat of the month: 10am - 2pm



Historically we have always been extremely lucky here in hidden Hornton, lying as we do in a valley with no main road running past us. Up until recently our few and far brushes with trouble have been easily dealt with and we have not needed to bother the local police. This may have made us a little complacent, and unfortunately this winter it seem that we've been discovered.

On the 11th December, a house was broken in to, car keys taken from the hall and two cars were stolen. A new Range Rover and an electric Golf were followed by police for a while during the night because the number plates had been removed which aroused suspicion. The Police did not stop the cars. The electric car was found later as it had run out of battery. The Police issued a crime number and closed the case. The same night a quad bike, trailers and farm equipment were stolen from a barn at White's Farm opposite Upton House. Burglars cut their way through the barn walls with an angle grinder without disturbing dogs or alarms. On the 20th December some residents who own a barn in a paddock in the village discovered that it had been broken into either during the night or early in the morning. The resident had recently lost his mother, and some of her items had been temporarily stored in the barn. "Items from my late mother were stolen," he said. "If you have any CCTV or doorbell cameras, please can you let us know. It has been reported to the police. Also, some ewes who were in lamb in the barn have been spooked and the vet will be attending. One of the ewes later died having being attacked by a dog or dogs and she aborted triplets." The sheep were later reported to be out on the road, and it was discovered that the robbers had also taken the battery from the electric fence.

23rd December - A resident reported that a red Honda civic with four burly men in was parked by Manor Farm. It was reported to 101 who said a patrol car would drive past. This happened, and the Police knocked on the resident's door later to confirm that the suspicious car had disappeared. However another resident tells us "Then at 4am this morning, we were woken up by the sound of a car engine on the green. One person was in what looked like an old VW Golf with the engine running and interior light on, maybe waiting for his mate. We approached the car, and it immediately drove off and went down West End. We called the police and they arrived in 15 minutes."

A resident who lives at the top of Millers Lane, spotted an intruder on his doorbell camera on the 14th January at 3.17a.m trying and failing to get into his car. During the late evening of the same day another resident almost caught someone red-handed trying to steal his motorbike. "I had a break-in on the garage at the back of Perkins Close at 22.12hrs on Tuesday 14th Jan," he says. "They attempted to steal my motorbike, but



## CRIME WAVE

fortunately failed. I went out to check and discovered the bike half-way out of the garage. The other bike chained to the front wheel had fallen over and impeded their activity.

I imagine the noise of the bike falling and perhaps me subsequently appearing with a torch, caused them to leave/hide. After securing the bikes again, they returned at around 23.30hrs but must have realised I was there and drove off in a white van. The lights were off so I could not see the registration. I subsequently discovered they had taken two 3.5 tonne trolley jacks and two LED work lamps. I reported to the police that evening, and received a message with a crime reference number, but alas the message said 'we have not been able to identify the suspect responsible for this crime and therefore our investigation is now complete'. I anticipate a re-visit from the crooks at some stage, so will remain vigilant!"

Jools, our former postman, has been in touch to say that our unwanted visitor - spotted in the early hours of this morning in Millers Lane - has also been spotted in Kington, Bishops Itchington, Northend and Fenny Compton, and he's sent a picture taken by the Kington doorcam.

On 4th February a cottage on Millers Lane was broken into at approximately 2.00am. Thieves jumped over the wall into the back garden, broke in via the kitchen window and stole a handbag. They took keys from the bag and left it on the pavement outside and stole the resident's Mercedes car. The car was fitted with a tracker, which was disabled at 2.14 am at the junction of Quarry Road and the Stratford Road. The police were very quick to react and arrived within 10/15 mins of being called. The first group went off to look for the car where the tracker said it was but unfortunately didn't find it. The Detective Pc and CSI were also very good and respond quickly to emails.

Unfortunately, one thing that all of these incidents have in common, is a perception of very little on-going action by the Police. So what is the situation with our village regarding the Police?

Within the Thames Valley Police Force we come under the auspices of Banbury Rural. This large area encompasses all of the villages surrounding Banbury Town within the Oxfordshire county boundary, so Hornton is close to the boundary, for instance Edge Hill is outside, in Warwickshire. It includes Deddington, Chacombe and Hook Norton on the other boundaries. Although the website refers to 'rural area' this does in fact cover Banbury town as well. Sergeant Sarah Nash oversees seven police constables and 4 PCSOs - Police Community Support Officers. According to the Thames Valley Police website the PCSOs duties are: "the face of the Police in local communities, they play an integral part in delivering effective neighbourhood policing, providing a highly visible policing presence and building relationships with the local community as well as working to problem solve long-term neighbourhood issues." Sadly this is just more official word salad, as here in Hornton we have no idea who our "highly visible" Community Policeperson is and no-one from the Police has built a relationship with this neighbourhood. Cllr Woodcock tells us that the Parish Council are talking to Thames Valley Police who say that they are working together with Warwickshire police as they recognise that this is a local issue. The Parish Council have asked Thames Valley Police to come and talk to the village on Sunday 16th March at 3.00pm in the Pavilion.

### *Police/Community Meeting*

Cllr Al Mills chaired the meeting on Sunday 16th March. PC Tom Freeman came accompanied by Police Community Support Officers Jayne Langford and Harry Roberts. The meeting was very well attended. Jayne Langford outlined the way information is filtered through the system and the duties of PCSO's. The Police team were happy to answer the many questions the residents had for them.

Jayne Langford said that the local team covered Banbury town and twenty seven villages. (It can be assumed from this that that not all of the team are full time, and assuming only half are on duty at a time they are pretty thin on the ground). She said that she patrolled the area by car up until midnight, nothing was said about patrols later during the night. A resident asked about inter-force communication as we are placed on a boundary between Northampton, Warwickshire and Oxfordshire, and PC Freeman said that improving the issue of inter-force communication was one which had been recognised and was being worked on at the moment, but that when necessary they did co-ordinate action.

PC Freeman assured us that there is an ongoing investigation re the local car-thefts with one arrest having been made; he was obviously unable to divulge any more information. Our local Police are concentrating on these crimes and working



with the forces in neighbouring counties. He reassured us that in their experience events like that experienced by local villages 'spiked' and then moved on, and that this had probably been a professional team stealing 'to order'. He was asked whether allotments and sheds were also being targeted and replied that this was not the case at the moment. A resident asked what was happening re the MX track, where recent usage was in fact a criminal act. PC Freeman replied that action is happening, this had been reported to the local Wildlife Officer and that the Police were liaising with the Parish Council on the matter.

Jayne Langford was asked if it was possible for her, as our village support officer, to be contacted directly if a resident had any information that they felt they should pass on. She replied that she could not be contacted directly since that could understandably lead to a situation where she might be overwhelmed with trivial messages. There is, however, a webform on the Thames Valley Police website, where messages can be left. Residents can also sign up to Thames Valley Alerts - email [alert@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk](mailto:alert@neighbourhoodalert.co.uk) where the local team regularly post local information. You can reply or send messages and although they won't be responded to PC Freeman assured us that the box is monitored and each message is read. The Police are also in regular contact with the Parish Council, so any concerns can be shared with the PC who will pass them on to the Police. Jayne Langford also reiterated that residents should not hesitate to contact 101 and report any incidents or concerns. She also said that local forums and meet-the-community events were being held regularly in the various villages.

The team then moved on to prevention. They reassured residents that criminals will nearly always take the easiest option and that there are several things homeowners can do to deter crime. These are: instal obvious CCTV and a camera doorbell; install security lighting; lock and alarm sheds and garages; use concealed air-tags; register all new tools on-line; use ultra violet identification marks on items; use a crook-lock or a pedal lock on vehicles; put keyless car keys in a faraday box; have a Neighbourhood Watch group. They had brought some leaflets about security systems, which are covered elsewhere in this article.

Cllr Mills thanked the team very much for coming and for answering the questions.

## Helping Ourselves...

### Keep them peeled

Us old folk used to watch a tv programme called Police Five which was a forerunner of Crimewatch and which ended with the presenter saying 'keep them peeled'. In light of this winter's car thefts and break-ins it would seem timely to follow this advice and resurrect our neighbourhood watch, which, sadly, has not yet found a successor to Martin

Jones. Martin co-ordinated information if anyone saw anything or anyone suspicious in the village and forwarded it to villagers.

As technology has advanced it is time for an updated Neighbourhood Watch and we thought that, if we could recruit some willing volunteers from each end of the village, it would be useful to set up a chain of communication to alert people if emergency help is needed or if someone sees something that worries them. I was the Hornton NW co-ordinator for ten years and will be happy to explain how it works on a practical level. To this end I will be hosting a meeting in order to share ideas and organise volunteers. Ideally we need someone at each of the perimeters of the village. Please watch out for Roger's e-mail with details.

Hornton also seems to feature more and more on the tourist trail and we have several Air B&B's in the village hosting folk experiencing village life. As summer approaches we'll no doubt meet more and more people wandering around - hopefully a cheery greeting will sort the friends from the foes!

Despite our recent experiences we do live in a safe environment and if we keep looking out for one another it will remain that way.

Jenny Bowes

.....

## Get Help:

**If you're in danger, call 999** and try to speak to the operator if you can, even by whispering. You may also be asked to cough or tap the keys on your phone to answer questions.

**If you're unable to speak:**

**From a mobile:** Call 999, press 55 or tap your phone when prompted and your call will be transferred to the Police as an emergency. The Police will be able to find your location. If you do not press 55 or tap, the call may be ended.

**From a landline:** Call 999 and if you don't speak or answer questions and the operator can only hear background noise, they will transfer your call to the Police. If the handset is replaced it will remain connected for 45 seconds in case it's picked up again.

**Report it:** If you're suspicious but not in immediate danger you can report it by calling 101. You can also report incidents online at [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk)

**Alarm it:** Consider a battery-operated shed alarm. They look low key but they respond to movement or door contact with a light and an extremely loud siren. Amazon have a large range to suit most budgets. A locksmith belonging to the [Master Locksmiths Association](http://Master Locksmiths Association) can advise you on the most secure shed and garage door security. They can also help you install it. Most also provide full home security surveys. The Master Locksmith website ([www.locksmiths.co.uk](http://www.locksmiths.co.uk)) can also steer you towards secure local locksmiths; choosing, installing, removing or disposal of a safe; choosing and installing a

burglar alarm, van lock or shed security; lost or snapped car keys.

**Secure it:** Fix your bike or large equipment to the ground or a lockable stand within a locked shed or garage. Visit [Sold Secure](#) to search for ground anchors and other locks designed to fix to floors and walls.

**Identify it:** Property mark your items and take photographs to identify them. Some tools can be painted with your name or postcode and forensic marking is also an option. You can also register any item that has a serial number with [Immobolise](#). For information on police approved marking products, visit the [Secured by Design website](#). Make your valuables less attractive to thieves by using a property or police approved forensic marking solution only visible under Ultraviolet (UV) light. This can take the form of a special marker using ink or paint. Mark or etch your property with your postcode, house or flat number or the first three letters of your address.

A major problem for the Police is that in order to charge criminals there must be sufficient concrete evidence. Even if stolen goods are found and identified visually by their owner that is not evidence. However, if the item is marked and the mark recorded in a way that can be produced, then the item can provide enough concrete evidence to lead to a charge. Register new tools online and indelibly mark them - the Police once found an entire container full of tools, thousands of them, but could only return a few hundred because none had been marked. For smaller items, like jewellery, this may simply be a photograph of some identifying feature or engraving, but for things like a bike, trailer or horsebox then you might consider : [cesarscheme.org](http://cesarscheme.org)

CESAR uses State of the Art Datatag ID technology, with both visible and covert markings, making it a real first line deterrent. There is a secure and dedicated 24/7 UK secure Contact Centre and strong links with the Police, ensuring that details of stolen machinery can be circulated quickly, improving the chances of recovery. There are no annual fees for CESAR, just a one-off investment in marking and registering your equipment for life. Designed for agricultural machinery, once registered and lodged on the database, the item is marked with a Cesar sticker, which is in itself a deterrent, and then several micro transmitters as small as grains of rice are hidden throughout the chassis. Like the 'chip' in your dog's neck, this can be read by Police via a handset.

All of these measures help police identify stolen goods, making it harder for thieves to sell them on. Identification also means that if the Police do seize property on suspicion the fact that the item is marked provides them with concrete evidence, plus of course the ability to return the stolen items.

**We live in a caring community, let's stay safe by looking out for one another.**



# 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF *Churches Together in Hornton*



**On Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup> 1995 a covenant to work together as Christians together in Hornton between St. John the Baptist Church and Hornton Methodist Church was celebrated with a special service.**

It began at the Methodist Chapel and finished at the Church where covenant documents were signed by The Bishop of Dorchester, Chairman of the District – Rev. Lacey, Vicar – Rev. A. Lancashire, Methodist Minister – Rev. J. Smith, Church Wardens – Mr. Harold Hart and Mr. Eric Turner, and Methodist Stewards – Mr. Arthur Miles and Mr. Harry Brooks. A copy of the covenant was given to Rev. Norman Le Fort of Oxfordshire Ecumenical Council.

Mrs. Jean Puddle provided organ music for both short services. Also taking part was the United Sunday school who sang two songs accompanied by Mr. Mike Webber on the vibes.

Over the past 30 years we have continued to work and worship together. Every Sunday there is a service either in the Church or Chapel. Every Friday there is a coffee morning in the Chapel and a monthly lunch. We work together not only to maintain our buildings but to help the community and provide welcome places for people to meet.



## *Comings & Goings*

### Welcome to Hornton...

- The new owners of Hornton Grounds, James (aka Monty) Montgomery, his wife Hetty, their daughters Phoebe and Amelia, and dog Echo. We hope you will be very happy in your new home.
- Oliver Foster and his dachshund to The Yews in Church Lane, we hope you'll be very happy in your new home.
- To Dinny and Richard Jones, the new owners of Malahide Cottage, all the very best in your new home.
- Margot and Nathan, who have just moved into Pudlicote in West End, we hope you too will be very happy in your new home.
- Fabio and Erika, with their dog, Dionysus, and cat, Soya, have moved into Holloway Cottages.
- And Alex and Rebecca Thompson who will soon be moving in to The Berries in West End.

### Farewell to...

- Carole and Graham Campbell who have moved on after many happy years in Hornton. They've only gone as far as Banbury, so we'll still be seeing plenty of them!

## *And farewell from Calum and Ivan...*

Well, Hornton - we were going to try and slip out without anyone noticing, as we very much intend on staying part of the Hornton family: once a Horntonian, always a Horntonian (we hope!)... but, alas - the move out starts today (Thursday 27 March) and we finally leave on Friday.

I just wanted to say thank you for welcoming Ivan and me to this very special village with open arms back in 2020- we've made so many lifelong friends here and it will always have the most special place in our hearts. We both wanted to say a huge thank you for the kindness and thank you so much for the many laughs! Thanks, too, for holding space for Ivan's quirkiness and geekiness and putting up with his exciting shrieks in the pub. Ivan wanted to remind you to always look up and behold the beauty of Hornton's architectural ball finials on the apexes of many of the roof tops!

There really is no place like Hornton and it will always be very special to us both.

Calum is only moving down the road to South Newington, so he'll be sure to come back to the DC regularly. Oh, and some short time ago, he volunteered to do the White Elephant - apparently this commitment is lifelong and remains even after leaving for pastures new: so Calum will see you all for May Day 2025! Ivan is taking a much needed sabbatical in Italy.

We hope the new custodians of The Berries will be as happy as we were here and we wish them the best of times; we're sure you'll make them most welcome.

Catch you all very soon!

Stay fabulous ♥  
*Calum and Ivan xx*





# **HORNTON** **RETRO SPORTS DAY**

**1PM, 1ST JUNE 2025**

**JOIN US FOR AN AFTERNOON OF GAMES,  
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**Bar opens 1pm, Races start at 2pm**

**Categories: Over 50 / Adult / U16 / U11 / U7**

**Prizes for: Winners, Best Dressed Team & Most Enthusiastic Team**

**10 field events:** including the slowest bike race (don't forget your bike!)  
& running races for each age group

**£5 (cash) team entry - payment includes results card required for the day's events**  
**| Pay bar (cash only) | Raffle & Fund Raising | Track & Trace**





**As a school boy my automotive fantasies involved Porsches, Ferraris, Aston Martins and even a Lancia Stratos, one of those would surely be my first car wouldn't they?**

Having left school early to pursue an ambition of being a racing driver I suppose it was inevitable that in 1983 that first car turned out to be a racing car. But not from my previous dreams, oh no, my first car was a white Renault 5TS bought from under the arches off the Fulham Palace Road in London near to where I was working at the time for a Porsche garage. Encouraged by my boss, Charles Ivey, I had taken out a bank loan and having handed over my £1500 to the vendor, proudly drove the road registered machine back to the garage workshops no more than a mile away for all my colleagues to look over. That was the last time "Renault" and I shared the public highway and many have suggested both at the time and since that it was probably just as well for the safety of the other road users.

I was quickly persuaded by the garage sales manager, Colin, to share "Renault" racing duties in return for him buying a trailer to transport it around the country, logic being that if I was to have an on track accident, how was I going to return to London if the wheels were hanging off the thing? The man was obviously clairvoyant! Shortly after my eighteenth birthday our little team went on our first adventure, off to Cadwell Park in Lincolnshire to join the BRSCC Renault 5TS Challenge where I was going to show the world just what Renault and I could do. How hard could it be after all, hadn't I successfully graduated race school? Way harder than youthful enthusiasm imagined! Race day was grey and after an uncomfortable and cold night spent nervously fretting in my tent I remember being nothing but a bag of shaking nerves as the realisation dawned I had not had any practice in Renault, not driven a front wheel drive car on the limit and... had never even seen the race track before. It only took a few qualifying laps before the inevitable happened and I managed to stick my bright and shiny

# My First Car

*Andre Marot*

pride and joy in the wall to the delight of my brother, Guy, and his camera (always happy to entertain!). There we are, Colin was right (and he carried on being right for two more years)! The damage wasn't event ending and I was happy to not be slowest and the race went off without further damage and I remember a great competition with two others.

As it turned out, Colin wasn't much better at this race driving thing than I. Recently repaired and repainted in the bright red of my sponsor The Atlantis Oil Company, off to Oulton Park he went for a day's practice and promptly crashed "Renault" following that great racing

tradition of a fellow competitor offering the advice that such-and-such corner "...is flat out". The lessons one learns the hard way...

Renault was repaired and despite further abuse – hitting the barrier at Mallory Park and a gentle roll at Snetterton – had been developed and performances were improving until a fateful day in the late summer. Colin and Renault took off for a test day along with our bank manager (remember those?) who was showing great interest in joining the fun for the following year. My Renault returned to London a ball of scrap while our bank manager was kept overnight in hospital!

A sad end to My First Car story? Yes, but in the great tradition of an addictive sport, "Renault 2" was bought and that's a story for another time.




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# Home Sweet Home



The early morning bird orchestra is beginning to warm up as the temperature rises and will soon be in full throat. You may be thinking of installing one of the many types of nestboxes on the market. There's a vast range available, from solar powered camera boxes ([green-feathers.so.uk](http://green-feathers.so.uk)) to easy kits for children to make and decorate ([bakerross.co.uk](http://bakerross.co.uk)) as well as the tried and tested models from the National Trust or RSPB.

There are good practical reasons for putting up birdboxes, not least the pleasure of watching your feathered friends. Bird habitats are constantly under threat as land is cleared for building, old buildings and barns are converted or renovated, hedges and scrub are tidied. Modern house designs don't accommodate house martins or swifts, smart walls and fences don't have scruffy holes for nests. The RSPB have noted that domestic gardens are increasingly becoming essential havens for nesting birds. Boxes also offer protection against the many predators; magpies, cats, squirrels, rats, mice, stoats, weasels, woodpeckers owls and crows - it's a wonder smaller birds manage to breed at all!

Choose your nestbox carefully. Robins and blackbirds prefer an open fronted style, finches and tits choose a hole just big enough for them to squeeze through. It must be well ventilated and waterproof. Don't be tempted to make the inside comfortable, straw or hay will harbour mould and most birds will eject anything in favour of their own nesting material. If you use topical flea or tic products on your dog don't leave their grooming fur in the garden as this will be poisonous to chicks, otherwise do leave fur out as material. Owls, swifts and swallows all need specialised designs, readily available from the National Trust or RSPB websites.

Choose the site carefully. A site between North and East provides protection from strong sunlight, wind and rain. Tilt the house slightly forward so that rain runs off easily with a height from the ground of two to three metres. Avoid a site too close to a feeding station as the activity will be disturbing and the area will already have attracted predators. There's no need for a perch at the entrance, but plenty of surrounding foliage and shelter is necessary. A nearby birdbath makes things a little more convenient for parent birds, and don't use sprays, pesticides or slug pellets in the area. Parent birds will eat all the caterpillars, slugs and plant pests available! Please keep your cat indoors during dawn and dusk when ground feeding birds are at their most active - a dead parent during the spring is a dead nestful of chicks.

Add protection in the form of a metal plate around the entrance of the box to prevent predators enlarging it; instal solar sonic cat deterrents in the area; spray squirrel deterrent on the outside of the box. Spiky, thorny vegetation like holly, rose and gorse make things harder for predators like cats.

Chicks are their most vulnerable when they first leave the nest as fledglings and haven't mastered flight. Their natural defence mechanism is to freeze; don't be tempted to move a fledgling, it's parent will be around and will help it to safety.

Happy watching!

*Birdbrain*

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# Rhubarb & Custard Cake

*The rhubarb season is upon us and you can use stewed or roasted rhubarb for this recipe which will make a large cake - just as well because people will enjoy it!*



## INGREDIENTS:

- 400g rhubarb cooked with some caster sugar - do not overcook the rhubarb, it should still retain its shape
- 250g butter, softened, plus extra for greasing the tin
- 150g ready-made custard
- 250g self-raising flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- 4 large eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 250g golden caster sugar
- icing sugar to dust the cake

## METHOD:

- Prepare the rhubarb first, carefully draining off the juices before you let it cool. Butter and line a 23cm loose-bottomed or springform cake tin. Heat oven to 180°C / fan 160°C / gas 4.

- Reserve 3 tbsp of the custard in a bowl. Beat the rest of the custard together with the butter, flour, baking powder, eggs, vanilla and sugar until creamy and smooth. Spoon one-third of the mix into the tin, add some of the rhubarb, then dot with one-third more cake mix and spread it out as well as you can. Top with some more rhubarb, then spoon over the remaining cake mix, leaving it in rough mounds and dips rather than being too neat about it. Scatter the rest of the rhubarb over the batter, then dot the remaining custard over.
- Bake for 40 mins until risen and golden, then cover with foil and bake for 15-20 mins more. It's ready when a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Cool in the tin, then dredge with icing sugar when cool.

Slice and enjoy!

Lynn Corke

## POETRY CORNER

### *The Passionate Shepherd to His Love*

*by Christopher Marlowe*

Come live with me and be my love,  
And we will all the pleasures prove,  
That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,  
Woods, or steepy mountain yields.

And we will sit upon the Rocks,  
Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,  
By shallow Rivers to whose falls  
Melodious birds sing Madrigals.

And I will make thee beds of Roses  
And a thousand fragrant posies,  
A cap of flowers, and a kirtle  
Embroidered all with leaves of Myrtle;

A gown made of the finest wool  
Which from our pretty Lambs we pull;  
Fair lined slippers for the cold,  
With buckles of the purest gold;

A belt of straw and Ivy buds,  
With Coral clasps and Amber studs:  
And if these pleasures may thee move,  
Come live with me, and be my love.

The Shepherds' Swains shall dance and sing  
For thy delight each May-morning;  
If these delights thy mind may move,  
Then live with me, and be my love.

## *The Gossip*

**The copy deadline for the next issue of  
*The Gossip* is Friday 1 August 2025.**

Please send your ideas or submissions to Anne Joyner at [thehorntongossip@aol.com](mailto:thehorntongossip@aol.com). To advertise in the next issue, please contact Ni Marot.

Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information printed in this newsletter, the editorial team cannot accept responsibility for the consequences of any errors that might occur, particularly in respect of advertisers not meeting customer expectations. The opinions published in this paper are not necessarily those of the team.

### **A word from the Editorial Team:**

Don't forget - *The Gossip* welcomes your letters if there's anything you would like to say to 'The Village' via these pages. The only rule is - no anonymous letters will be printed.



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