

VillageView

WATERMEAD'S FREE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Spring 2024 Vol.31 Issue 1

Annual Parish Meeting

Thursday 16 May, Village Hall, 7pm

Larks by the Lake

Sunday 26 May

Craft, vegetables & plant sale

Saturday 4th May, Village Hall, 11am



News from Watermead Parish Council & more!
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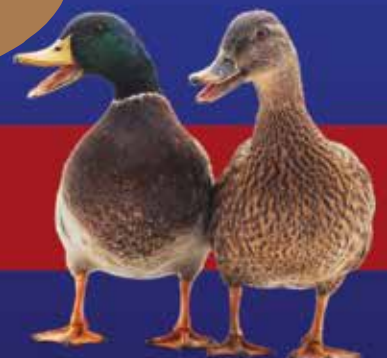
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Parish Chairman's News

Welcome to the latest edition of Village View as we look forward to spring and, hopefully, better weather and Easter.

The Christmas season was celebrated in the usual way in Watermead with really attractive Christmas lights, the **Christmas Fair and Carol Concert** being a great success. Our thanks to everyone who decorated their homes and those who attended our events.

We're looking forward to this year's events which include **Larks by the Lake on 26th May** with the usual mix of stalls, fun dog show, entertainment and a lovely day out.

Last year's outdoor **film show** was cancelled when the costs were increased by the licensing board and the events committee felt the risk of losing money was too great. Westerleigh Crematoria Management were sorry to learn about this and have, this year, given us a large donation to cover the cost which means the event can go ahead in September. Our grateful thanks to Westerleigh and the local team. This free event is very much enjoyed and we hope to raise as much money for charity as possible.

We are also looking forward to the **Regatta** being held in aid of the charity, Smiles –

something new to enjoy on Saturday 13th July.

Our **Front Gardens Competition** will run again this year. Please consider planting and features to encourage wildlife and bio-diversity. There is plenty of advice for both new and established gardens on the Bucks Berks & Oxon Wildlife Trust website www.bbwt.org.uk/action. Our winning garden will include features to encourage wildlife. It's simple and not expensive to include suitable features and habitats.

This year is the **80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings** on 6th June 1944. Our own veteran of the Landings, Mr Steve Stevens will be 100 this year. He is a Freeman of Watermead and his family will be holding a celebration in the village hall. The Parish Council is planning to formally wish him warmest congratulations on behalf of the village. We are all so proud of having him here, walking dogs and socialising daily, always smiling, and enjoying a chat with passers-by.

We were fortunate during recent periods of high wind and very high water levels throughout the area to suffer relatively little damage to trees and land. This is, in part, due to our **tree inspection regime** which identifies trees at

risk, although you can never predict precisely where damage will occur. We still await the Environment Agency's view on a possible improved crossing over "the dip" around the large lake but continue to hope that a solution can be found, and grant funded.

This is the time of year when we **set the precept (parish tax)** which is the proportion of council tax that is paid direct to parish and town councils to pay for local services. In terms of costs councillors have been determined to keep our operating costs as low as possible, while allowing us to build prudent reserves. We have taken the difficult decision not to have hanging baskets this year since, although they are attractive, they have in recent years suffered vandalism. We will be looking at alternative ways to decorate the main road. This year's precept will be £93.78 for a Band D property; an increase of £4.20 for the year or 8 pence per week. The remainder of our council tax bill is taken by Buckinghamshire Council, the Police and Fire Brigade and is likely to increase considerably this year.

Cllrs Bond and Blamires have pushed Buckinghamshire Highways and have been successful in persuading **Bucks to**



Chairman:
Cllr Sue Severn
T: 336575
sue.severn@watermead-pc.gov.uk

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Vice Chairman:
Cllr Adrian Schwab
T: 338118
adrian.schwab@watermead-pc.gov.uk



Cllr Dan Forder
T: 07565 804579
dan.forder@watermead-pc.gov.uk



Cllr Ashley Bond
T: 07976 729567
ashley.bond@watermead-pc.gov.uk



Cllr Mary Singleton & Editor of the Village View
T: 428569
mary.singleton@watermead-pc.gov.uk



Cllr Mick Morgan
T: 07821 403784
mick.morgan@watermead-pc.gov.uk



Cllr Irina Schwab
T: 338118
irinaschwablegal@gmail.com



Parish Clerk and Halls Manager:
Noreen Shardlow
T: 395211 or 792137
(Call weekdays 10am to 2pm)
noreen.shardlow@watermead-pc.gov.uk



Assistant Parish Clerk:
Michelle Jackson
T: 481554
michelle.jackson@watermead-pc.gov.uk

replace the permanent MVAS at the top of Watermead which hasn't worked for years. We will continue to lobby for the one at the entrance gates to be replaced. This is the one that was damaged by the van which crashed into the gates and posts. The streetlight by the pedestrian refuge and the refuge itself near the Watermead Inn has been replaced following an accident. There are many streetlights throughout the village which aren't working. It is very helpful if residents would report them (they are all numbered) at www.fixmystreet.com where it's simple to find the light on the map and report the problem. If you do not have access to the internet, please contact Noreen Shardlow on 01296 395211 or noreen.shardlow@watermead-pc.gov.uk and she will report on your behalf.

Our **Neighbourhood Plan** steering group is now ready to consult on the first draft plan. Open sessions are planned in the Village Hall during the week of 2 to 7 April during the school holiday for everyone to review the content and comment. Please do come and have a look, your feedback is very important.

In terms of local planning, we were appalled by the proposal to **build 42 houses on the former football club land**. This is not within the town council's boundary and we are not a statutory consultee, but we have been vociferous in our objections as a neighbouring parish which would be much affected. The planning meeting was attended by many members of the public. Committee members were advised by Buckinghamshire's legal team that they could only refuse for

sound planning reasons. The Environment Agency approved the hydrology solution offered by the applicants and the decision was devolved to officers, subject to satisfactory reports.

We understand their point of view but must point out that while they may be trying to save the cost of an appeal on this occasion the decision must be brought back to committee and held in public. Our perception, and fear, is that recent high flood water levels surrounding the site, including within Oliffe Close and the flood plain areas of Watermead, can only be exacerbated by this development. We urge the planning committee to remember that their responsibility is to existing residents and businesses and, if there is any doubt, they must refuse the application. If the applicant then appeals then the

planning Inspector can decide. The Inspectorate is already aware of flood risk having refused other applications due to local flood risk.

The Parish Council is making an **application to the Community Ownership Fund** for a grant to purchase land at the entrance to Watermead for the parish. Our first expression of interest has met with approval and we have been invited to apply. These grants were only recently made available to local councils by the government. We will report as the application process progresses.

From all of us at the Parish Council, we look forward to seeing you over the coming months when being outside and enjoying our lovely environment will be more inviting.

Cllr Sue Severn, Chairman

The Annual Parish Meeting of Watermead Parish Council will take place in the Village Hall (in the Piazza) at 7pm on Thursday 16th May

You are invited to hear reports from the Chairman and District Councillor and you will have the opportunity to ask questions and express your opinions on what the council is doing. No votes taken at this meeting are binding on the Parish Council, however they should be considered at the next meeting of the Parish Council. Only members on the electoral roll can vote on an issue. Other members of the public can attend but cannot vote.

The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will follow at 7:30pm and this is where the Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected. They may make other annual appointments and review insurance, risk management, policies, etc.

Larks by the Lake 2024

Planning for Larks by the Lake 2024 continues. It is due to be held on Sunday 26th May on the Balloon Meadow. We hope to have as much success as we did in 2023 when we were able to donate £600 to each of our five chosen charities: SMILES, Aylesbury Wombles, Wheelpower, The Florence Nightingale Hospice Trust and the Turkey and Syria Earthquake Disaster Fund.

As usual, this event couldn't take place without our sponsors. Each business donates £50 in return for their logo being advertised on our banners and posters in the run up to the event. If you would like to sponsor Larks by the Lake 2024 please send an email to the following address: watermeadevents@gmail.com

We are always looking for entertainment too so if you have something you can offer please let us know via the same email address.

Film Night 2024

Thanks to a kind and generous donation from Westerleigh Crematoria Management we are now able to go ahead with a Film Night later on this year. Plans are in motion for this to take place on the Balloon Meadow on the evening of Saturday 14 September.

Karen Collett (Watermead Events Committee)



As you will all be aware we experienced some very high winds at the beginning of January and we subsequently lost quite a few trees during that time. The most dramatic was the very large tree at the northern end of the large lake on the other side of the Thame River close to the bridge over the inlet there. This has been a popular haunt for the red kites and herons as well as many other birds and wildlife. I, for one, miss it as I round the corner when walking my dog in the early morning. Thanks to Noreen Shardlow for the photo above.

Mary Singleton

Neighbourhood Plan update

Following discussion with Sally Chapman, our retained Neighbourhood Plan Consultant, we now understand that the 'final plan' must be formally signed off and Minuted by the Parish Council prior to holding the final phase of Open Day consultations. The required documents will be sent to Sally for review and include the following:

- Amended Draft Neighbourhood Plan
- Consultation Statement and accompanying appendices including all evidence, surveys, results and engagement spreadsheet.
- Policy Maps (Allocation and Green Spaces)

We hope to be in a position to vote on this at the Feb 2024 Parish Council meeting. Sally has also recommended that when we have all of this in place we provide Buckinghamshire Council with the opportunity to complete the 'screening' process

to ensure that we are fully prepared prior to Regulation 14 confirmation.

Throughout February/March we will start making preparations for the layout of the website, preparing advertising material (a grant application has been submitted), and prepare the letters of consultation for all stakeholders.

The significant work regarding 'consultation evidence' has now been completed by Peter Dean and Noreen Shardlow which will be reviewed by Sally and then incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan. Huge thanks again to Peter and Noreen without whose hard work we simply wouldn't be where we are now!

Open Days/Consultations are now scheduled to be held during the school holidays between Tuesday 2nd April and Sunday 7th April.

Mick Morgan

Christmas Events

CRAFT FAIR

On the eve of Saturday 2nd December the Village Hall was decked in wonderful decorations in preparation for the Christmas Craft Fair. Thanks to Graham Severn with assistance from Noreen Shardlow for organizing this event. There was a good range of stalls selling home-made cards, decorations, jams, chutneys, candles, dolls clothes, jewellery and much more. Sales of the stalls raised £120.00 for charity.

There was also a "Name the Bear" competition which raised £62.00. The winning name was 'Jeremy' and the huge bear was won by a very happy little boy called Austin.

Many thanks to Dot Toler, famous for her toasted sandwiches, for managing the "pop-up" café. She raised £29.00 from the sales of teas, coffees, sandwiches and mince pies.

CAROL CONCERT

What a great evening. We were lucky to have good weather and an excellent turnout for the Carol Concert on 9th December

in the Piazza which had been decorated with lots of lights and a large Christmas

tree. We are very grateful to the Reverend Canon Tim Harper for conducting the Carol service.

We thank the Great Horwood Silver Band for providing some lovely Christmas music to accompany the carol singing. After the children came forward to sing "Away in a Manger" the Revd Canon Tim Harper read them the relevant part of the Christmas story and shared chocolates with them!

The band then played "Jingle Bells" to welcome Father Christmas who happened to be passing by. The children were very excited to see him and formed an orderly queue to speak with him and receive a modest present. Father Christmas stayed and talked to the children and stood while "selfies" were taken. Parents and the remainder of the congregation continued singing carols with gusto!

Thanks to Dot Toler for making the mulled wine and to Susan McCabe and Jim Chignell who served it along with mince pies and sausage rolls. Many thanks go to all those who made generous donations which raised £102.00.

We raised a total of £313.00 at these two events which was donated to Tiggywinkles Wildlife Hospital who are always ready to take in injured wildlife and to come to Watermead when we need them.



Austin was the lucky winner of 'Jeremy' the bear

FRONT GARDENS COMPETITION

Due to the success of our Front Gardens Competition in past years, we will be running this again in 2024. Our judges will be out and about in Watermead looking for lovely front gardens during the coming months and expect to announce a winner before the end of July. Our Parish Chairman has suggested "gardens for nature" encouraging wildlife and bio diversity ie we incorporate features and grow plants to encourage insects, bees and birds into our gardens.

If you would like to nominate a front garden, either your own or someone else's, please send an email with the number and road name of your nomination to: noreen.shardlow@watermead-pc.gov.uk who will pass them on to the judges for their consideration.

Alabama Rot: What to look out for

Alabama rot, otherwise known as Cutaneous and Renal Glomerular Vasculopathy (CRGV), is a disease that affects dogs. It damages the blood vessels in the skin and kidneys which causes visible sores on the skin and can lead to severe organ dysfunction and ultimately kidney failure. The cause of the disease is currently unknown, though research is on-going. Since December 2012, a small number of cases have been seen throughout the UK. Most reports come from pet owners who walk their dogs in the countryside, and most cases are reported during winter and spring. Generally, cases are rare in the summer months compared to the colder months.

The following are typical signs of Alabama rot:

- **Skin sores, visible swelling, red patch or skin defects not caused by a known injury. These skin lesions typically appear below the knee or elbow, and occasionally on the face or at the bottom of the chest or abdomen.**
- **Changes in appetite - reduced appetite, drinking more, vomiting and lethargy are signs of acute kidney injury.**

Remember, the majority of visible skin lesions will not be caused by Alabama rot disease, and most cases of kidney failure will be a result of another cause.

While it's extremely difficult to give advice about how to avoid Alabama rot, we recommend washing off all mud following a wet and muddy walk, especially through woodland.

If you're concerned that your dog may be suffering, we urge

that you contact your vet immediately for further advice. If it is Alabama rot, early recognition and aggressive management are likely to have the best results.

Should I be worried about my dog contracting Alabama rot?

The number of cases reported in the UK is extremely low, so there's little reason to be worried. Thousands of dogs are walked in the countryside every day and it's important to remember that only a very small number of dogs have been affected.

For further information go to www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/diseases/alabamarot



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Watermead Christmas Lights Competition 2023

We were delighted to walk around Watermead between Christmas and New Year to see all the wonderful lights and displays on houses and in front gardens while taking photos and taking on the difficult, almost impossible, task of judging who should win. After much deliberation we chose 11 Brambling for its snow (imitation) covered front garden, wonderful Father Christmas, deer, penguins, street light and tree lights etc.

If you didn't venture out in December to see the decorations, then it's a must for your agenda of activities next Christmas! Please see here a collage of some of the best decorations many of which we have seen in the past but it appears that they get added to year on year. Absolutely fabulous! Well done to all who took part in brightening up Watermead for everyone to enjoy.

Irina Schwab



**Winner
11 Brambling**



Breeze – cycle rides for women

Breeze offers fun, free, inclusive-led bike rides for women of all abilities across the UK. As part of British Cycling, the Breeze program was set up to encourage women into cycling. Rides are led by trained cycle leaders and all women are welcome whether you are an experienced rider, a new rider or want to get back to cycling after a break. Routes are risk assessed and vary in length and challenge. We have two Breeze leaders in Aylesbury, Clare and Fran.

We have a variety of start points in Aylesbury, often from the car park in Watermead so you might not have far to go to get started! Routes tend to be between 5-15 miles and are usually on a combination of quiet roads and cycle paths, sometimes along the canal and sometimes on busier roads. We ride at the pace of the group and no rider gets left behind. There is usually lots of chatter with more of an emphasis on the social side of cycling rather than the speed. We sometimes stop for coffee part way or at the end of the ride. Several Watermead residents have joined previous rides and meet regularly to cycle, chat, socialise and more! Last year several ladies from the group took on the challenge of the 100km Ride the Night cycle fundraiser so you never know where you might end up.

Every year Breeze have a Winter Challenge to encourage us out during the less appealing, slightly colder months. Our winter challenge will help you conquer the cold and beat those winter blues. There will be a prize draw every two weeks to win (currently undisclosed) prizes. Once you complete the challenge you will get a digital completion badge. The Winter challenge runs from January 7th until March 31st. All you have to do is to join FOUR Breeze rides to be in with a chance.

If you are interested, why not join our Facebook group - Breeze Cycle Aylesbury, or look for rides on www.letsride.co.uk/breeze



Tea Break Quiz



1. Mother's Day always falls on which day of the week?
2. Modern Mother's Day evolved from which Medieval British celebration?
3. Mother's Day was revived in the United Kingdom during the Victorian Era to give workers in which profession a day to go home to their mother?
4. What is the traditional flower to give on Mother's Day?
5. What is the only developed country to not require employers to give new mothers maternity leave?
6. What does it traditionally signify if a person wears a white flower on Mother's Day?
7. The earliest Mother's Day celebrations were in Ancient Greece and were dedicated to which Goddess?
8. Which country celebrates Mother's Day on their queen's birthday?
9. What kind of cake is traditionally baked on Mother's Day in the UK?
10. What is the only country in the world to offer a full year of paid time off to both new mothers and fathers?
11. Which species has the longest pregnancy in the animal kingdom?
12. What is the only species in the animal kingdom where the male gives birth to the babies?
13. Which Beatles song did Paul McCartney write as a tribute to his late mother?
14. In 1972, who had a hit with "Sylvia's Mother"?
15. Which movie musical was voted by staff at the British Film Institute as the best movie to watch with your mum on Mother's Day?
16. Who was the lead character in the TV series "Some Mother's do have 'em"?
17. According to the proverb, who was the "mother of invention"?
18. Nacre is more commonly known as what?
19. In the pantomime, who is Aladdin's mother?
20. In the children's nursery rhyme, who had no food for her dog?

Answers on page 11

Watermead Pub Lunch Club

Our monthly lunch club continues to thrive at the Watermead Inn and our Christmas lunch in December was no exception. It was well attended including some new members.

Adi and his team had decorated the restaurant and our tables beautifully and provided us with an interesting menu with a choice of four main courses including one vegetarian, and a choice of delicious desserts or a tea or coffee. We paid a bit more for this special Christmas menu. The normal cost of this lunch is £12.

The Club is aimed at anyone within our community who would like to enjoy meeting new and old friends for a bite to eat and a natter; we especially welcome anyone who may have been missing out on regular social contact. We now have a group of over 60 members and everyone enjoys the food and the company.

If you would like to join us, the Pub Lunch is held on the third Wednesday of the month at 12:30pm in the restaurant of the Watermead Inn. If you know someone who might benefit from getting out and about a bit more, then please do get in touch. All you have to do is book at least a week in advance by calling Mary Singleton on 07986 582903 or text her on that number (providing your email address if you have one) and she will provide you with all the information you need.

This is a Community Impact Bucks initiative and bookings can only be made through the local organiser whose contact details are given above.



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What's on

...around Watermead

March

20th	Watermead Pub Lunch	The Watermead Inn, 12:30pm
21st	Watermead Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall, 7:30pm
29th	Good Friday	
31st	Easter Sunday	

April

1st	Easter Monday	The Watermead Inn, 12:30pm
17th	Watermead Pub Lunch	Village Hall, 7:30pm
18th	Watermead Parish Council Meeting	

May

6th	May Bank Holiday	
4th	Craft, vegetables and plant sale	Village Hall, 11am to 4pm
15th	Watermead Pub Lunch	The Watermead Inn, 12:30pm
16th	Annual Parish Meeting	Village Hall, 7pm
16th	Watermead Annual Parish Council Meeting	Village Hall, 7:30pm
26th	Larks by the Lake	
27th	Spring Bank Holiday	

Upcoming Events

14th Sept Watermead Events Committee presents Watermead Film Night

Our regulars in the Village Hall...

Parish Council
3rd Thursday of the month
(excluding August & December)
Public meeting - 7.30pm
Council meeting - 8pm

Footsteps Pre-School
Monday - Friday 7.30am to 2pm
Closes 12.30pm Tuesdays
07743 871369
watermead@footsteps-nursery.co.uk

Crafty Chicks
Scrapbooking/card making any craft of your choice
4th Friday of the month from 6.30pm
Contact Kate 07952 477702
kate@boltweb.net

Aylesbury & District Philatelic Society
Second Wednesday of the month
7.30 - 10pm
Peter Barnes 612913

Kumon Maths
Monday & Thursday
2.30 - 6pm
Susan Jones 747469

Jo Jingles
Tuesdays - Music & Movement
1.30 - 2.15pm 18 months upwards
2.30 - 3.05pm 6 months to walking (approx 18 months)
Debbie Bird 625599

Castielli Dance School
(for children) Monday 6-7.30pm
Janet Castielli 433956
www.luv2dance.co.uk

Bring Your Own Crafts Afternoon
Every Wednesday 2.30-5.30pm
Judith Muston
Noreen 01296 395211

Inkstampshare Paper Craft Class
07952 477702
kate@boltweb.net
Inkstampshare.ink

12th Aylesbury
(1st Buckingham Park Cubs)
Tuesdays 6.30pm - 8pm (term times only)
12thaylesbury-scouts.org.uk
George Leaver
buckpark.cubs@12thaylesbury-scouts.org.uk

Are you looking for a venue? Watermead Village Hall is the ideal venue for young children's birthday parties, meetings and christenings, etc. Or are you an organisation looking for a regular venue? If so, to book the Village Hall or the Bandstand please contact Noreen Shardlow on 01296 395211 / 792137

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PUBLICATION DATES
2024/25

SUMMER
8th June

AUTUMN
7th September

Winter
23rd November

Spring
8th March

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Editor	Mary Singleton	Tel: 428569	mary.singleton@watermead-pc.gov.uk
Graphic Designer	Rachel Seago	Tel: 712545	villageviewwatermead@gmail.com
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View from Westminster

2024 will, almost definitely, be the Year of a General Election. When I first stood for election in 2019, I promised to be a strong voice for Aylesbury and in January I made my 500th spoken contribution in the House of Commons. The speeches

I've made have covered topics as diverse as resolving traffic problems caused by HS2, campaigning for infrastructure like roads, schools

and doctors' surgeries to accompany new housing development, and better funding for local children with special educational needs.

I've asked questions about everything from town centre regeneration to Aylesbury's link roads.

At all times I endeavour to represent the views of the people of the Aylesbury constituency. However it's important to remember that the job of an MP is not just to raise local issues, but to debate and make decisions on matters of

national and global significance. In the first part of the year that has included the continuing crisis in Gaza, strengthening drug laws and building a healthier and growing economy so that we can all enjoy a better standard of living.

I can only truly represent you if I know your views, so I've been spending a lot of time talking to people in and around Aylesbury, hearing what matters most to you. Unfortunately, it isn't possible to knock on every door or talk to every resident, so I am also running an online survey where you can comment on local and national issues. I'd like to hear from as many people as possible, because it's important that your priorities are my priorities, both here in Aylesbury and in Westminster. Please do take part by visiting my website: www.robbutler.org.uk.

As 2024 unfolds I am determined to continue to be a strong voice for Aylesbury both in Parliament and locally.

Robert Butler MP



Answers to Quiz on page 8

1. Sunday, 2. Mothering Sunday, 3. Servants, 4. The carnation, 5. The United States, 6. That their mother has passed away, 7. Rhea, 8. Thailand, 9. Simnel Cake, 10. South Korea, 11. Elephant, 12. Seahorses, 13. Let it be, 14. Dr Hook, 15. Mamma Mia, 16. Frank Spencer, 17. Necessity, 18. Mother of Pearl, 19. Widow Twanky, 20. Old Mother Hubbard



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Watermead Garden Society

As the new Chairperson, I would like to introduce myself and hope you all had a great Christmas and the New Year finds you all fit and well. I look forward to seeing all allotment holders, especially new plot holders, over the coming weeks and months as the weather improves. We have a great community at the Watermead Parish allotments site and our members have a vast amount of collective experience. We hold many social events which our allotment holders can just turn up and enjoy or they can become involved in organising some if they wish. This year we will be holding a plant sale to raise funds for the improvement of the allotment area and events like BBQ's, fun days, and competitions the categories for which will be:

- **Best allotment.**
- **Most improved allotment.**
- **Chairpersons award (introduced last year by the previous Chairperson, Alison May).**
- **Best sunflower and biggest pumpkin.**
- **We will also include a competition for the most unusual plant, vegetable or fruit.**

Last year was a surprisingly good year despite having very wet weather to begin with. We all had some amazing crops including the fabulous sunflowers and pumpkins which were entered in the competition.

This year has started off just as wet, if not wetter, however onions, garlic, and broad beans appear to be thriving. Some plots have even had cabbages growing all through the winter and doing well along with parsnips, celeriac and, of course, those 'like them or hate them' the good old Brussel sprout!



Above & Below: Roger and Marion - the first allotmenters on a 'blank canvas'



A note from Lucia and Paul: *'Being lucky enough to be surrounded by local countryside, Watermead*

allotment attracts an abundance of wildlife including badgers, foxes, rabbits and our residential magpies. We also have evening visits from Roe deer which freely gather in small herds to take advantage of all the crops we do not harvest. Although some people may see the deer as pests, we love to see them appear and thrive in our small patch of 'England's green and pleasant land.'

Above is a photo we managed to get of a deer, although not very clear as it was taken at night, we wanted to share it with you.

On a sadder note, we say goodbye to Roger and Marion, who were one of the first allotment holders in 2014; they have been an inspiration to all.

Finally, although Alison resigned from the Chairperson role, she remains a big part of our community and we can always rely on her for a cuppa, bacon roll, smile or just a chat.

I would also like to say a huge thank you to all the Committee Members for all their hard work behind the scenes.

Daphne Reid

**THE CRAFT,
VEGETABLES &
PLANT SALE**
Saturday 4th May
Village Hall
from 11am to 4pm



Allotments 2022

Watermead Piscatorials

Well, it's been very wet and windy but that's just the time of year! However, it hasn't put off some of our members who have been fishing for Pike mainly but with some good results, I hear, but not for me. I'm a fair-weather fisherman. We are currently waiting for the Environmental Agency to come out and do a survey on the depths over the entire small lake which they can now do remotely, and don't have to get out on a boat. This will give us some clarity on the depths below the surface and then maybe consider some silt removal, but that's a long-term plan.

In the meantime, we will be back repairing some of the damaged swims and possibly building some raised ones along the side of the path, but not until we get better weather a bit later on this year. Also there will be more cutting back of overhanging bushes and trees that tend to fall in the lake.

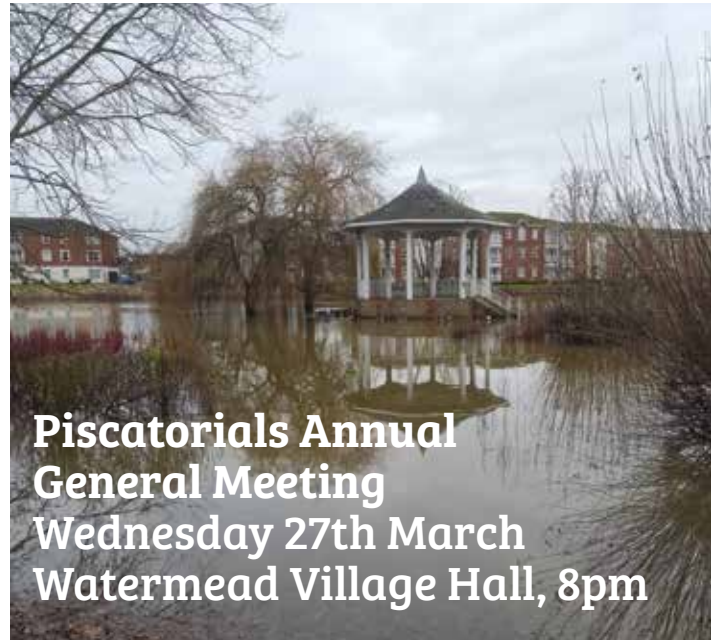
I have to say that the fishing last year was much improved, and this may well be due to removing the netting between the lakes. I actually fished it for the first time (twice) since joining in 2019! So, it's definitely a good place to fish and generally a great location on a good day.

Lastly, we suspect that there have been some poachers around the lake as our bailiff has found some broken and discarded lures, which isn't good; so if you do see anyone acting suspiciously around the lake (mainly at night), we would much appreciate it if you would please let one of our bailiffs know.

Guest tickets are available for fishing the lake. Please Contact Steve (Bailiff) on 07843 787918 or our new assistant bailiff, David Brown, on 07939 323225. Please contact him for any other problems or enquiries as well.

For any information about events, you can find us on Facebook 'Watermead Piscatorials'. For Membership contact our Secretary Don Smith don.smith33@hotmail.co.uk

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Watermead wildlife

Winter 2023 to Spring 2024



Canada & Greylag Geese piling into the unfrozen patch of water

Unfortunately, having had surgery in November, and recovering over the winter, I've not been in a position to survey our wildlife at Watermead as often as I would have liked, but that isn't to say there hasn't been plenty to see when I have been able – here's a summary of some of the highlights and interesting sightings I've had over the autumn and winter, and I can genuinely say that these little experiences with nature on our doorstep have had a positive impact on both my mental and physical health, and the speed of my recovery...

AUTUMN: The autumn was unusual to say the least, with prolonged periods of mild and even warm weather where October temperatures reached 25°C - that's more than 8°C above average for the time of year! These abnormal conditions, but worryingly increasing trend, had an impact on the behaviour of the winter visitors from the likes of Scandinavia and Eastern Europe that join us at Watermead, with migratory Songbird and Wildfowl species for instance arriving with us much later than usual, and in much lesser quantity. Despite this, Watermead continues to be a stronghold for wildlife in the suburbs of Aylesbury, and as ever, an important stop-off in Buckinghamshire for so many species on their migratory missions.

GREAT WHITE EGRET

Throughout the autumn I witnessed a few visits to Watermead by a Great White Egret – briefly perched in a tree opposite the Piazza on 24th September, and landing out of view north of the large lake on 19th and 23rd October. There have been more birds than previous years in the region, with up to three being seen fairly regularly at Wilstone Reservoir near Tring, but there is a possibility that this bird is the same much-loved individual that graced Watermead throughout much of last winter, returning for a second year. Interestingly, in the last two years sightings of Great White Egret have overtaken that of the much more common Little Egret at Watermead.

GREY HERON

One bird that has given joy to many this autumn is the majestic juvenile Grey Heron, that due to being unperturbed by the presence of its admirers, has provided some with great photo and video opportunities as it displays its amazing patience, composure and strike accuracy when hunting small fish in the margins of the small lake. The nearest heronry (breeding colony of heron species) is at Wilstone Reservoir, but judging by this individual's confidence around humans compared to most, it suggests this bird could have been born and raised in close proximity to human activity, potentially Verulam Park in St. Albans, Hertfordshire.

BAR-HEADED GEESSE

Watermead has been visited quite regularly by a group of Bar-headed Geese this autumn. These unusually marked geese are rather handsome with their grey body, black and white striped head and neck, and orange-yellow bill and legs. There are six birds known to move around the Bucks, Herts and Beds area and up to five at a time have been visiting Watermead - interestingly though the group don't always stick together, with ones and twos often turning up away from the main group. These geese are not truly wild, instead being part of the feral European population that are becoming naturalised. Bar-headed Geese are native to central and south Asia and are one of the highest flying birds on the planet, migrating across the Himalayas at an altitude of around 28,000 feet!

HYBRID POCHARD X TUFTED DUCK

On 16th October I noticed an odd diving duck far out on the large lake accompanying a small group of Common Pochards – although it superficially looked like a male Lesser Scaup, an American species quite closely related to the Tufted Duck, subtle differences in appearance gave away that it was actually a male Aythya Hybrid (a hybrid of two species in the Pochard family of diving ducks). Once the light improved and the duck drifted a bit



Great White Egret



Juvenile Grey Heron



Bar-headed Geese



Indian Runner Duck
(domestic Mallard breed)



Short-Eared Owl

closer I could ascertain that it was in fact a hybrid between a Common Pochard and a Tufted Duck – not a particularly rare hybrid but not seen very often and certainly not usually as smart looking as this bird.



INDIAN RUNNER DUCK

A recent addition to our resident ducks that has gained some attention is the single Indian Runner Duck – with its long neck and body with very upright stance it certainly looks very peculiar compared to the Mallards, both wild and domestic, that it accompanies. The Indian Runner Duck is also scientifically a Mallard too, but is a domestic breed first bred on the Indonesian islands of Lombok, Java and Bali where they were 'walked' to market – this is why they have been bred to have a stance suited to running rather than the wild Mallard's slow, clumsy waddle. Like the white Aylesbury Ducks and iridescent Black East-Indian Duck this bird has also escaped from a farm or collection nearby.

SHORT-EARED OWL

On 23rd October whilst watching for migrant winter visitors travelling south over Watermead, my attention was caught by a Carrion Crow chasing a largish bird in my peripheral vision – to my delight it was a Short-eared Owl, almost certainly a migrant from Scandinavia. The crow mobbed the owl for about 30 seconds, sending it higher and higher over the crematorium hill, until it was satisfied there was no threat. No longer under pressure the owl did a few relaxed laps of the hill, hovering for a few seconds, then dropped down to quarter the rough grass area between the hill and the River Thames, on the hunt for rodents. After a speedy glide to ground the owl was lost to view behind trees – did it catch a mammalian meal? Did it hide away to roost? Either way I didn't see the bird again over the next hour of waiting and watching, but that didn't matter because those three minutes of action were a sight to behold. This was only the second record of Short-eared Owl at Watermead, with the first being an individual I saw in the same spot on 22nd September last year.

ROCK PIPIT

On autumn mornings it is common to hear the call of many Meadow Pipits as they pass overhead moving south, the sound best described as an "ist", but on 20th October I picked-up on the "veesst" call of a Rock Pipit over the large lake. The bird, slightly larger, bulkier and darker than a Meadow Pipit, flew overhead but went behind treetops before I could get a record photo, so I've provided an image here of a Rock Pipit in its usual habitat of rocky coastline for

reference. The individual in my photo is of the British subspecies, but birds that are found inland in the autumn, such as the one at Watermead, are almost always of the subtly different Scandinavian sub-species, migrating south and west from Norway.

SMALL COPPER

This year seems to have been particularly good for the Small Copper Butterfly in Aylesbury Vale and the Chilterns and I've seen more this year than any year previously, including at Watermead. This autumn I've seen many second generation individuals of this bright orange beauty in the area around the path between the large lake and the River Thames, near the crematorium, with the mixed wildflowers and grasses partially grazed by the geese being prime habitat for these little butterflies.

CLIFDEN NONPAREIL

On 8th September I had a spectacular visitor to my lounge - the 'holy grail' of British moths for many, a Clifden Nonpareil, also known as the Blue Underwing. With a wingspan of almost 10cm and beautiful blue hues on its hindwing, this rare moth is quite stunning, and due to its size it is often mistaken for a bat in flight. This species was a resident of Kent and the Norfolk Broads in the 1930s before all but disappearing, but since 2007 migrants from Europe arriving on the south coast have started to recolonise the UK. Although still generally very rare in the UK the Clifden Nonpareil does actually breed at Watermead!

WINTER: As I'm writing this it's now the end of January, and after the unseasonable conditions of autumn, winter finally arrived, and in a rather dramatic manner – gale-force winds from multiple storms crossing the Atlantic, rainstorms, continual flooding, and finally, the big freeze - sending the small lake into its own ice-age and freezing the surface of all but the smallest patch of the large lake, kept clear only by the constant activity of our most hardy waterbirds. On one evening I recorded a temperature of -6°C outside my flat at Guillemot Way!

CANADA and GREYLAG GEESE

As per every winter at Watermead the flocks of both Canada and Greylag have grown as our resident birds are joined by other local flocks, and birds that have travelled from the north are attracted to, and find comfort in, the numbers of birds already in the local area. There are quite a few hybrid birds in these flocks, all crosses between the Canadas and Greylags, but showing much variation in appearance, as well as a few with farmyard or domestic genes – these individuals make it easy to track the flocks' movements, think of them as 'marker' birds, enabling me to confirm seeing groups of birds I see at Watermead also often visiting Wilstone Reservoir near Tring for instance. Even with the large lake only having a small patch of open water when frozen the flocks have still tried to pile in all together, making the most of the open water, sparce at that time.



WIGEON and TEAL

Two of my favourite winter ducks to look out for at Watermead are the Eurasian Wigeon and the tiny Eurasian Teal – usually in smaller numbers than the more regular Shovelers, Pochards and Tufted Ducks, these ducks make up for it in quality over quantity, the handsome males of both species looking as if they've been painted in their beautiful colours. Although neither species are rare, and are in fact the 'classic' winter ducks, they aren't a common sight at Watermead, with the vast majority of

local birds to be found at Tring Reservoirs and College lake where numbers reach the hundreds.

LAPWINGS

Once the temperature dropped flocks of Lapwings started to move south-west over Watermead, with small groups being seen every hour or so, likely totalling a few hundred per day, and joining the 4,000 strong flock at Eythrope. These black and white waders with their green iridescent sheen and wispy crest are easily identifiable even in flight, due to them having very broad, almost fan-like wings - in fact, the Latin name for Lapwing, Vanellus, means 'fan', and their English name 'Lapwing' refers to their floppy, flapping flight.

COMMON SNIPE

During the coldest snaps quite a few Common Snipe dropped into Watermead along the River Thame, where the moving water remained unfrozen. Most sightings of the Snipe were as they exploded from marginal vegetation, zig-zagging away at high speed after hiding away until the last second, relying on their cryptic camouflage to not be seen, blending in perfectly with the thin, dead foliage of reeds and grasses.

WATER RAIL

As per previous winters, Water Rail have returned to winter in the marshy areas and wet woodland surrounding the feeder-channel on the north side of the large lake, with at least 2 birds being present. Although incredibly difficult to see due to their habit and camouflage, they can be heard calling loudly at dusk, sounding much like a squealing pig from deep within the wet vegetation.

CHIFFCHAFFS

At least 3 Chiffchaffs are wintering at Watermead this year. Although we haven't been visited by their Siberian cousin (yet) this winter, at least two of the birds here seem to show the paler and more olive-grey plumage of the Scandinavian subspecies, Latin name 'abietinus' - this will require further observations to confirm as there is some cross-over in the plumage of all Chiffchaff types and the Scandinavian subspecies is rarely documented in the UK.

TREECREEPER

Another visitor that can be very difficult to see - a small group of Treecreepers have been spending the winter in the woodland north of the large lake, with at least 3 individuals present. Their brown upper plumage streaked with black is incredibly well camouflaged against the cracked bark of the Willows they prefer to feed upon. Starting from the bottom they 'creep' up the boughs and branches in search of insects, before bounding off to the base of the next tree to start again - they keep this routine with each tree they scour for food almost continually all day long.

SISKINS and REDPOLLS

As a birder, two of the sounds that give me the feeling that winter has arrived most are the slightly sad sounding 'teeluu' call of the Siskin, and the rather urgent 'chett-chett-chett' call of the Lesser Redpoll. On cold mornings these calls give away the arrival of these small finches as they excitedly bound into Watermead to feed on the banquet of Alder and Birch seeds, provided by the ideal habitat we have here for these key tree species to flourish. The two species are very similar in form but are easily separable, with the Siskins being generally olive green with yellow marking, and the Redpolls being brown with red and pink markings.

If you'd like to hear about sightings of interesting wildlife or rare species at Watermead as I see them you can follow me on Twitter (now 'X') @DanFWildlife. I also offer guided birdwatching and wildlife tours in the Chilterns, so if that's something you'd be interested in just let me know and I can tailor a nature experience day just for you, your kids, or as a gift for someone. Lastly, but most importantly, feel free to contact me if you have any wildlife or conservation related queries, or if you'd like help identifying something - I'll get back to you asap. Take care, and in the coming weeks enjoy that uplifting feeling that the sights and sounds of nature give as spring erupts into life.

Dan Forder



Lesser Redpoll



Male Siskin



Spot the Common Snipe



Water Rail



Chiffchaff (probably of the Scandinavian subspecies)




Tree Creeper



Male Teal on ice



Lapwing



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Book review

Michael Connelly: Desert Star

A new Harry Bosch crime story used to be an annual highlight. Now we have to share him with LAPD's Renée Ballard and (not every year) the Lincoln Lawyer Mickey Haller. In Desert Star Bosch and Ballard are given alternate chapters as they investigate two cold cases: a rape/murder from 1994 and the brutal killing of a whole family a year earlier whose bodies were buried in the desert.

New forensic evidence from DNA plays a crucial role but re-interviewing witnesses and suspects is the most effective way of digging slowly towards a resolution. Both cases bring Harry into deadly confrontations and you may begin to think, as I did, that Michael Connelly is getting ready to kill off his hero, our hero.

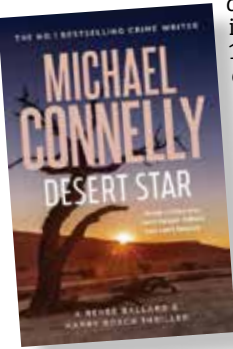
Because Ian Fleming didn't kill him off, James Bond's life and career has been placed in the hands of other writers, some as gifted as Fleming, some woefully talentless. Leslie Charteris allowed

this to happen to Simon Templar, the Saint, and Dick Francis, Clive Cussler and Wilbur Smith have gone down this road, usually regrettably. Peter O'Donnell sent Modesty Blaise and her sidekick Willie Garvin on a final, fatal mission: the best option in my view.

007 clearly perished – heroically, of course! – at the end of No Time to Die. It will be interesting to see how the writers manage to resurrect him in the next movie, after they resolve the increasingly tiresome saga of naming Daniel Craig's successor. Christopher Lee's Dracula had almost as many lives as a cat; his ashes were easily reassembled (fully dressed, every time!). James Bond is clearly hallmarked for immortality.

We must brace ourselves for the death of Harry Bosch within the next book or two. Desert Star is not one of Connelly's best tales, the pace is a bit slow and Ballard fails to come to life on the page in the way that Bosch always does, but the story has two thrilling climaxes and Harry Bosch reaffirms his status as the most believable of all investigators.

David Gee



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FOOTSTEPS WATERMEAD

Reflecting on festive joy and embracing the new term

Before Christmas, Footsteps Watermead was proud to be at the heart of the community, joining the Bucks Radio Toy Appeal as one of their collecting stations. The generosity of our community members resulted in a huge number of donations making the event a tremendous success.

As the holiday season unfolded, the spirit of Christmas echoed through our setting. Our amazing children dazzled us with their confidence in the Nativity play, embodying the magic of the season. Hopeful letter-writing to Santa, crafting festive decorations, and enthusiastic renditions of Christmas songs filled our pre-school with joy and laughter.

Now, as we embark on the new term, the children at Footsteps Watermead are eagerly anticipating all that we have coming up. This term brings an exciting lineup including a warm welcome to new staff and children starting in January.

We are starting with a special focus on the theme of space. With trips to the moon, space rockets and planets galore we are inviting our intrepid space adventurers into new frontiers of language, arithmetic and creativity.

National Storytelling Week - one of our favourites - arrives at month-end. We are looking forward to inviting parents and grandparents to join us in celebrating the magic of storytelling. Through captivating tales we aim to spark imaginations and a love of reading.

As February unfolds, we'll celebrate Lunar New Year and Valentine's Day, creating memorable moments that resonate

with cultural richness and love. Of course, as we spring into a new season we will be exploring all that our outside space, growing gardens and Forest School sessions have to offer too.

Looking ahead, Footsteps Watermead is gearing up for a celebration of families with Mother's Day and a vibrant homage to our favourite books on World Book Day as we enter a jam-packed calendar in March.

As we journey through this term, we invite everyone to share in the magic, warmth, and educational adventures that define us here at Footsteps Watermead. We are committed to fostering a sense of community and creating an environment where each child thrives. We can't wait to make this term a new chapter filled with new adventures, friendships laughter, and growth.

For more information on starting your child's journey with us please contact 07865 945297 or email us Watermead@footsteps-nursery.co.uk

Karen Braithwaite






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Serves 4

Ingredients:

3 hot smoked mackerel fillets, 150g cream cheese, 100g crème fraîche, 3 tsp freshly grated horseradish, or horseradish sauce, Lemon, to squeeze, Small handful of dill, finely chopped.

Method:

1. Skin the mackerel fillets and do a quick check for any bones. Flake three quarters into a food processor with the cheese, crème fraîche and horseradish and whizz until smooth.
2. Add a good grinding of black pepper, and lemon juice to taste, then fold through the dill and the remaining fish. Serve with crisp toast or crackers.

Recipe from the Guardian

CHICKEN WITH OLIVES AND PRESERVED LEMON

Serves 8

Ingredients:

Juice of 2 lemons, 6 tsp olive oil, 1½ tsp ground turmeric, 1½ tsp ground ginger, 1½ tbsp honey, 250ml dry white wine, 1 whole head of garlic, cloves chopped, 16 chicken thighs, bone in, skin on, 120g capers in brine, drained, 100g pitted green olives, 2 small preserved lemons, cut into pieces, pips discarded, 25g bunch of coriander, leaves chopped, Salt and black pepper.

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4

1. In a large bowl, mix the lemon juice, olive oil, turmeric, ginger, honey, wine and some salt pepper, beating well. Add the garlic and turn the chicken pieces in the mixture so that



- they are well coated.
2. Arrange the chicken thighs in a large roasting tin or baking dish into which they fit snugly, tucking the capers, olives and preserved lemon pieces in between, and pour the liquid contents of the bowl all over.
 3. Bake for an hour or until the chicken is well browned and cooked through. Sprinkle with chopped coriander, and serve with plain couscous, rice or mashed potato.

Recipe from Claudia Roden's Med

NIGEL SLATER'S NO-COOK CHOCOLATE CAKE

I wouldn't call this a cake, but I would call it irresistible. The only hard part of this recipe was holding back the husband!

Ingredients:

340g fine chocolate, 200g butter, 90g each hazelnuts, almonds, and Brazil nuts, 2 free range eggs, 75g raisins, 50g natural-dye glacé cherries, 75g digestive biscuits, roughly crumbled.

Method:

Preheat the oven to 180C/160C

1. Line a 20cm square cake tin with silicone baking parchment.
2. Melt 230g of the chocolate and all the butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan over a moderate heat.
3. Spread the nuts on a baking sheet or grill pan and toast

the chocolate and nuts with the raisins and most of the cherries. Stir in the crumbled biscuits, then spoon into the lined cake tin.

5. Leave in the fridge overnight to set.
6. When the cake is completely set, melt the remaining chocolate in a small bowl set over a pan of simmering water. Pour the chocolate over the cake, then scatter over the reserved nuts and cherries and drizzle with any remaining melted chocolate.

4. Remove the chocolate from the heat when completely melted and stir in most of the toasted nuts (reserve a few for decoration). Beat the eggs lightly with a fork and add to

NB. We apologise for the error in the Winter 2023 issue of Village View, Festive recipes, which featured the above picture of this recipe.

LM



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The Smiles Watermead Regatta

Saturday 13th July from 1pm to 4pm

A local Charity, Smiles, is running a regatta on the Watermead lake on Saturday 13th July from 1pm to 4pm. So save the date! The main event is a paddleboard cup competition between various teams and people. There will be food, stalls and live entertainment on the day.

Smiles has partnered with Supps (a water events company), Hamid Pardis (Lake owner), the Parish Council and the Watermead Inn to provide

a paddleboard racing day that will be a day to remember.

We would love to see you there and, if you feel adventurous, please get in touch to sign up to join a 6-person team to see if you can beat us at £10 per person. You can also do a single race at £10 a person. For more information contact Graeme at graemecatten@outlook.com or Mick on junedorr28@gmail.com.



A trip to Marseille

“How about going to Marseille?” suggested my wife. “It’s a dump,” I replied. “I was nearly robbed at knifepoint when I was there while in the Merchant Navy.” “That was half a century ago. I think it might have changed since then” she pointed out very reasonably. So, in September last year we arrived in Marseille for a few days as part of a train journey along the Côte d’Azur. The first challenge was the steps from the railway station, bearing in mind we had suitcases; there are 104 of them leading down from the beautiful art deco building. Thankfully we found the lift and from there it was all downhill. We had a small but charming apartment in an old building at the edge of Place General de Gaulle, perfectly situated close to the port and within walking distance of almost everything we wanted to see.

Having dropped our luggage, we walked south round the harbour to the Palais du Pharo, built by Napoléon III for his wife, for a beautiful view of the port. Marseille Port is the main trade seaport in France and the Old Port (Vieux Port) is now the social and cultural heart of the city. There is a lively, busy fish market in the mornings on the quay; Norman Foster’s Ombrière, a mirrored canopy, provides much needed shade. There are plenty of bars and restaurants around the port where fresh seafood, particularly mussels, feature heavily on the menus.

The following morning we set off the other way around the port and walked first to Fort St-Jean, the historical symbol of the city, which is linked to the Old Port by a footbridge. A further footbridge leads to the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations (MuCEM). The building itself

is stunning; it is enclosed within a concrete lattice resembling a lace mantilla. There is a lovely open bar on the top floor where we enjoyed a refreshing cold glass of wine.

We wandered away from MuCEM and up towards Le Panier, the oldest part of Marseille, pausing briefly to admire the Cathedral de la Major. Much of this part of the city was destroyed by the Nazis during the occupation of World War II but it is still an atmospheric area to explore. We visited the cultural centre now housed in the Hospice de la Vierge, a seventeenth century workhouse and one of the few buildings spared by the Nazis.

The afternoon saw us wandering around the Marché de Noailles, also known locally as the Marché du Capucins, a noisy busy market selling a mix of Provençal and African specialities, where everything looked so deliciously fresh and had my wife bemoaning the miserable selections of fresh produce available in our local supermarkets. From there we took the tram to the Palais du Longchamp, a historical monument built at the end of an aqueduct which brought fresh water to the city. It is the centrepiece to the lovely Parc Longchamp, and also houses two museums. It is a stunning monument, and we spent some time admiring it from the terrace of Comptoir Longchamp Café.

Don’t miss... a drink at Dantés Skylounge, Hotel Sofitel at sunset. Unfortunately we did miss this; we walked up to the hotel noting the huge armed police presence and closed roads on the way, only to be denied access just as a motor cavalcade of 30 or so vehicles swept in. We later found out this was the Pope! The Skylounge is famed for fabulous views over the Vieux Port so if you do go don’t miss it.

Watch out for... the Mistral, a fierce wind which can reach speeds of 66 km/h and is most common in winter and spring.

Practical points... Marseille is an accessible city and we saw a lot of it on foot. However there is more to explore further afield and it does have an efficient and cheap public transport system with a flat fee for buses, trams and the metro. There is also a ferry service which runs from the Old Port to Pointe Rouge in the south of the city for easy access to the beaches and the Calanques.

Marseille has so many museums that you could spend at least a week there and visit a different one each day, and there are just as many art galleries and cultural centres. There is a national park between Marseille and Cassis where you can visit the Calanques, beautiful rocky inlets with crystal clear waters ideal for swimming, sunbathing and snorkelling, which we sadly didn’t have time to visit. Owing to my reservations we only spent two nights in Marseille, but I wish we had spent at least three times as long. It’s a fabulous, vibrant, lively, cosmopolitan and exciting city.

Stuart Mackay



Palais du Longchamp



Norman Foster's Ombrière in the Vieux Port



The steps leading to Marseille St Charles Station



The view from Palais du Pharo

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Tai Chi and Qigong: A journey beyond movement

In the bustling heart of Aylesbury, a revolution quietly unfolds – not with noise and fanfare, but in serene movements and gentle breaths. Here, I found my calling in the ancient practices of Tai Chi and Qigong, not just as forms of physical exercise but as gateways to profound life transformations. As a tai chi and qigong instructor, I've witnessed firsthand the power these practices hold in healing the body, soul, and community.

The beauty of Tai Chi and Qigong lies in their simplicity and depth. These arts teach us to move with grace and live with mindfulness. But beyond the individual experience, they foster something equally vital – a sense of community. In a world where isolation plagues many, these practices become a beacon, drawing people together and creating bonds that transcend the classes.

In the rhythmic flow of Tai Chi and the meditative stillness of Qigong, students find common ground. Weekly classes transform into social gatherings, where shared experiences and laughter become as integral as the movements themselves. From these classes, friendships blossom, support networks form, and for some, these connections have even led to marriages. The impact extends beyond physical spaces, as each practitioner carries the spirit of these arts into their daily lives, weaving a web of community ties.



Lee Welch during an instructor course at the Deyin Taijiquan Institute (GB) with fellow instructors

My journey with these practices has been deeply personal yet universally resonant. Embracing the philosophy of the 'Inner Kingdom', I discovered that the path to true well-being lies within. This journey of self-discovery, rooted in ancient wisdom, has opened my eyes to the power of energy – an energy that dances in every cell of our bodies, an energy that connects us all.

But this journey isn't solitary. The Tai Chi Globe community, a vision born from my experiences, aims to extend this exploration to a wider audience. It's more than a platform for learning; it's a virtual gathering place, a global village where practitioners from all walks of life can converge, share, and grow together. Here, the wisdom of Tai Chi and Qigong merges with modern-day understanding, creating a holistic approach to wellness.

In Aylesbury and beyond, the challenge of isolation calls for innovative solutions. Tai Chi and Qigong, through the Tai Chi Globe community, offer an answer. By engaging in these practices, individuals step into a world where movement is a language, a language that speaks of unity, strength, and compassion. It's a space where each person's journey enriches the tapestry of the whole, creating a vibrant, supportive, and interconnected community.

The essence of these ancient arts – balance, harmony, and flow – mirrors the ideals of a healthy community. As we practice, we not only improve our own well-being but contribute to the health and vibrancy of our community. Each movement, each breath, becomes a silent pledge to support and uplift one another.

In conclusion, Tai Chi and Qigong are much more than physical disciplines. They are mediums for connection – to oneself, to others, and to the world at large. In these times of isolation and disconnection, they offer a path back to community, to shared joy, and to collective well-being. As we embrace these practices, we embark on a journey that heals not just the individual, but the heart of the community.

An advertisement for Tai Chi Globe. It features a central image of a globe surrounded by a complex network of lines and dots, with a Tai Chi figure in a crouching pose in the foreground. The text reads: "DISCOVER BALANCE & HARMONY WITH EXPERT TAI CHI & QIGONG INSTRUCTION". Below the image, it says "Visit taichiglobe.com for a FREE taster class!". There is also a circular logo with a Tai Chi figure and the text "TAI CHI GLOBE".

By Lee Welch

Sally's Blog



Welcome to my first BLOG of 2024.

It's going to be a very exciting year. Firstly I was surprised to learn that I will be 9 in April, which is a bit of a shock. If my humans are to be believed that means I'll be 63. For humans this age seems to bring, for some, aches and pains, an inability to get out of a chair without saying 'ouch!' and other annoying things that go wrong. Fortunately for this spaniel I'm pleased to say I still dash around, have lots to say (too much, apparently) and I thoroughly enjoy life. I have had to adjust my diet and now have food delivered every three weeks which is perfect for my metabolism. I heard that it's quite expensive, but then, I'm worth it! (I heard that on television the other night).

Talking of television, since Ultra HD

came in I must say that the pictures of animals, dogs and horses in particular, are so life-like it's almost like having these friends in the room with you. Amazing. I really enjoyed the show jumping at Christmas, and Dogs Behaving Very Badly.... I use this programme to come up with new ideas for things to do.... It's absolutely marvellous for us dogs; without it we would be reduced to doing the same old things all the time. Now I have found out that some dogs not only bark but bite and I am a bit shocked, I'd never do that, but I love a good growl and bark to make my presence felt. If somebody gives me something I'm happy to share it, but I am keen on stealing paper and shredding it, even a biro recently and of course cakes and toast – woe betide anyone who thinks I will give it back. Don't even try it. Just saying!

Anyway, the next few months should make it more fun to be out and about. I love sniffing the ground and seeing who's been there before me. It takes a long time and I hear it's frustrating for the human walking me, but we get round both lakes most days (weather permitting) so I keep an eye on what's going on in Watermead.

I'm looking forward to Larks by the Lake and have already started my campaign to be allowed to take part in the dog show.



I am not sure why I can't enter but there it is. All you dogs out there had better start training your humans to take part.... Make sure they know how to walk to heel, come to you when you bark for them and so on. Plan your fancy dress costume so that the human can dress to match you and you're sure to win a rosette!

All the best for spring, I look forward to seeing you soon.

PS I owe my new friend, Bear, the manager of Avanti, an apology. I gave him the wrong name in my last BLOG – old age????

Love from Sally!

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Just in Case

I'm going to the sea for the weekend,
in a couple of days I'll be back,
so I'll just take my little brown suit and a blouse
and a beret and carry my mac.

But what if the house is a cold one,
the house where I'm going to stay,
no fires after April, no hot drinks at night
and the windows wide open all day?
I'd better take one – no two cardys
and my long tartan scarf for my head,
and my chaste new pyjamas in case they decide
to bring me my breakfast in bed.
And what about church on the Sunday?
I could wear my beret and suit,
but if it were sunny, it would be a chance
to wear my straw hat with the fruit,
so I'll just take a silk dress to go with the straw
and a silk scarf to go with the suit.
I'll just take my jeans and that jumper
in case we go out in the car,
and my Guernsey in case we go out in a boat
and d'you know where my swimming things are?

D'you think I should take that black velvet
in case they've booked seats for a play?
And is it still usual to take your own towel
When you go somewhere to stay?
I had thought of just taking slippers,
but they do look disgustingly old,
I'd better take best shoes and sandals and boots
for the church and the heat and the cold.
I daren't go without my umbrella
in case I'm dressed up and it rains;
I'm bound to need socks and my wellies
for walking down long muddy lanes.

I'd rather not take my old dressing gown,
it is such a business to pack,
but 'spose they have breakfast before they get dressed
I'd have to have mine in my mac.

I'm going to the sea for the weekend,
In a couple of days I'll be back,
so I'll just take my little brown suit and a blouse,
two cardys, my long tartan scarf,
my chaste new pyjamas,
my straw hat with the fruit,
my silk dress, my silk scarf,
my jeans, my jumper,
my Guernsey, my swimming things,
my black velvet, my towel, my
slippers (no one need see them)
my sandals, my boots, my
umbrella, my socks, my wellies,
my dressing gown, no, not
my dressing gown, OK my
dressing gown
and a beret and carry my mac.

Charlotte Mitchell.

NB I asked: What is the difference between a Guernsey and a Jersey jumper? It is essentially just the stitch pattern used on the garment. Both are knitted jumpers, however, Jersey sweaters are based on the original pattern for a Guernsey but can be differentiated by an anchor design knitted onto the chest, similar to a crest. Oh, and don't forget to take the keys for your suitcase!
Editor



Tree planting

We introduced Miya Wong's request to plant trees in Watermead in our Autumn 2023 issue of Village View.

She and her family decided to start planting trees to play their part in helping our planet have a better future. She already had permission to plant trees around St Mary's Infant School in Haddenham and at Stoke Mandeville Stadium. Watermead Parish Council granted her permission to plant trees in Watermead.

She was introduced to Roger Jefcoate CBE DL*, the Phantom tree planter, who has been assisting Miya with her tree planting programme. Several Black Poplar's have been planted in Watermead among very many other places in the country including Royal residences.

On Saturday 13 January, Kelvin Wong, Miya and her younger sister Jasie, met Roger near the jetty by the Crematorium to plant a tree that he had secured from Sandringham. Roger gave Miya lots of instructions on how to look after the tree to ensure it survives.

Mary Singleton

PS Kelvin Wong is Proprietor of the Watermead Inn and Miya Restaurants in Aylesbury (including Jasie Korean BBQ Restaurant) and Princes Risborough.

* You can read an article about Roger Jefcoate CBE DL in the Spring 2021 issue of Village View. If you haven't retained a back copy, you can find it on the website www.watermead-pc.gov.uk/ Click on 'Village View'.



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E-Scooters

Under current legislation, the riding of privately owned e-scooters is illegal on roads, pavements, cycle ways and any other public area - this is defined under the road traffic act 1988. E-scooters are also covered by the same legislation as motor vehicles and therefore subject to the same requirements of MOT, tax, licensing and specific construction regulations. It is not currently possible to get insurance to ride privately owned E-scooters in public, meaning there is currently no way it can be legal.

Privately owned e-scooters can be legally used on private land providing the

landowner has given permission.

As you are likely aware, in some areas of UK there is a trial of government owned e-scooters. These e-scooters are legal to ride on roads and cycle paths, however you do still need a full provisional licence to ride them. In the Bucks area one of the government owned E-scooter's brand is 'Zipp' and you can find them in various different places across the towns; these can be ridden legally.

If you use an e-scooter illegally:

- You could face a fine.
- You could get penalty points on your licence.

- The e-scooter could be seized.

We understand that many people are not fully aware of the legislation surrounding e-scooters, so Thames Valley Police will be looking to educate people found on private scooters used anywhere other than private land. Persistent offenders are likely to receive the same punishment as a driver of a vehicle would for no insurance, which is 6 points on licence, a fine and the scooter seized.

Please see following links for more information: Powered transporters - GOV. UK (www.gov.uk) Advice on e-scooter usage, Thames Valley Police Zipp Mobility.

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