

VillageView

WATERMEAD'S FREE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Winter 2023 Vol.30 Issue 4



Christmas Fair

Saturday 2nd December
Village Hall

Christmas Carol Concert

Saturday 9th December
The Piazza



News from Watermead Parish Council & more!
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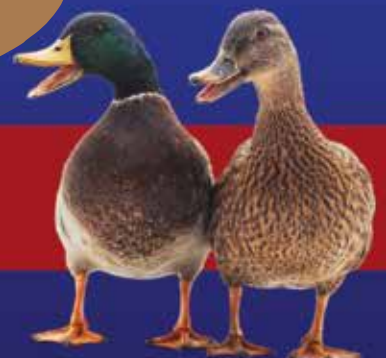


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Parish Chairman's News

Welcome to the latest edition of Village View. We have much to look forward to in the next few months including, unbelievably, Christmas which seems to arrive more often than every twelve months!

Halloween is increasingly marked in Watermead by fabulous outdoor displays with plenty of cobwebs, huge spiders and other scary things. Thanks to all the houses taking part; it makes the day special for the children who seem to be laden with sweets and treats in their containers, but their costumes and 'trick or treat' question are all part of the fun.

November sees the season of **Remembrance** and our usual silence and wreath laying will take place at the Memorial Garden at 11am on 11th November. There is usually a good turnout and we are fortunate to welcome Mr Stevie Stevens, our own D-Day veteran and Freeman of Watermead, along with his fellow Freeman, Dave Lang. Next year marks the eightieth anniversary of D-Day on 6th June and a national chain of beacons is planned and Mr Stevens is, we hope, going to join the Berkhamsted commemoration and light

the beacon which will be part of the national chain of beacons.

We hope that as many homes as possible will join in this December by decorating their front gardens or balconies for everyone to enjoy. Every year the lights get better and it's heartening that people join in and make Watermead just that little bit magical for the children. We all look forward to our annual walk round the lights to choose the worthy winners. In recent years it's become impossible to choose an outright winner, and we award bottles of "fizz" to the best displays.

Our annual **Craft Fair**, fully booked since July, will take place on Saturday 2nd December in the Village Hall. Do come and see the many craft items, books, puzzles, toys and enjoy the many yummy treats on offer alongside Dot Toler's toasties and hot dogs. Mary will again be running a name the bear competition – get your thinking caps on early! Whoever guesses the name correctly will win the bear.

On Saturday 9th December we will be holding our annual **Carol Concert** in the Piazza starting at 6pm. This year Revd Canon Tim Harper will be joining us. Tim is honorary Chaplain to Christ Church

Cathedral, Oxford. We will need to do our best singing! Father Christmas has also kindly confirmed that he will land in Watermead en route to Lapland so we look forward to his arrival and distribution of small gifts to the children. For adults there will be the usual mulled wine, sausage rolls and mince pies to sustain us and keep out the cold.

Over the course of this year our **neighbourhood plan** steering group has worked diligently with the first draft plan nearing completion for consultation. We are most grateful for everyone's input and views in the questionnaire and at the consultant events we've held. We hope that the first draft will reflect the community's views. In terms of planning, it's important that the Plan is adopted as soon as possible to give it legal weight, and to help us see off speculative and unsuitable planning applications. This year the planning permission for the flats in the Piazza car park has been refused and the application for an industrial estate on the garden centre land was withdrawn. We remain vigilant and the parish council is determined to do all it can to ensure Watermead retains its unique character and



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Front cover image courtesy of Dot & Phil Toler

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improvements are made which are beneficial to the parish.

Important information

The seasonal flooding of the dip by Robin's bench on the large lake walkway has been the subject of much speculation on social media. I wanted to set the record straight, once more: The Parish Council was unable to find a way to provide a bridge or walkway over the dip as the Environment Agency (EA) would not approve our plans due to the construction being close to the River Thame. This, in turn, meant that we could not obtain grant funding (a condition of which is to have planning permission).

Having researched alternative means we enlisted the help of a specialist company who provide complete structures to cross over water. The company is Maydencroft. Their advice is that it can be done, but we need to apply to the EA for approval. To gain approval we need to pay an application fee providing technical drawings as well as other information. Total cost of this application is about £5,000. The process will take several months and Maydencroft's experience in other places has been that permission is frequently refused, despite best

efforts to submit best design. If permission were to be refused, we would need to re-apply at the cost of another £5,000 since fresh designs would be required.

Throughout the process of attempting to solve this problem the Parish Council has been in touch with the EA to seek their advice and to request a site visit. To date we have been sent their guidance on activities and permits only. Maydencroft confirm that it is highly unlikely that the EA will attend site. The process is very similar to that of the Local Planning Authority who only become involved once an application is made.

Our initial plans, produced by Focuss Group Construction's engineers were submitted for consent and we were advised that this area would be subject to an application and permit. We continue to request the EA to make a site visit.

If permission is given, we should be able to gain grant funding to carry out the work. However, the Parish Council does not feel it should risk these costs without consulting parishioners. We would also like to know whether residents would be prepared to pay an increased precept solely to cover these costs next year. The specific

cost would be an additional £10, dependent on council tax band, to the parish precept for 2024/25. Please tell us what you think by answering the **poll on our website at www.watermead-pc.gov.uk**. We have advertised this in the last edition of Village View. We are aware of many comments and we wanted to take this final opportunity of presenting the facts, once again, and asking for your views. So far only 21 people have responded.

We want to know if you believe the Parish Council should commit up to £10,000 for plans and permission for a crossing over the dip to give year-round access, at a cost of £10 (average) per household next year, collected via your parish precept. Please take part, without your views we cannot go ahead.

We were delighted to hear that **Smiles is planning to hold a Regatta in Watermead** next summer and the parish council is very happy to support this event, about which more information will follow in the new year. We're looking forward to seeing the expert paddle boarders and canoeists competing, and we're promised a race for more amateur teams which may prove challenging for them! Smiles is

a wonderful local charity and we know that residents will support and enjoy the event.

Thank you to those who have worked in the community to make it special, particularly the Larks by the Lake team, Dave Lang for his continued litter picking and care for our land and Marcia Lang and her team who organised a wonderful celebration tea for Mr Stevens's 99th birthday; Florence Nightingale for their fun run, the local neighbourhood Policing team, and especially to our dedicated office team and contractors who contribute much work and energy to keep us safe and looking our best.

I would particularly like to thank Cllrs Diana Blamires and Ashley Bond for their support and help in connection with services from Buckinghamshire Council. We are promised, very shortly, replacement lighting columns (not before time), some replacement bollards and hopefully a repaired MVAS once spares have been tracked down.

From all of us at the Parish Council, please accept our warmest good wishes for the festive season and new year to you all.

Cllr Sue Severn, Chairman

Larks by the Lake 2024

We are already planning Larks by the lake 2024 which is due to be held on Sunday 26th May.

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.

More information to follow soon.

Karen Collett (Watermead Events Committee)

Watermead Pub Lunch Club

Our lunch club continues to thrive at the Watermead Inn. The new manager, Adi, provides us with a varied menu with a choice of three main courses including one vegetarian, and a choice of delicious desserts, or you can have a tea or coffee. The 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 call 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.

Miya Japanese Grill and Bar opens new branch in Princes Risborough



Two Watermead residents and their families are about to embark on a new venture. After the success of Miya Japanese Grill and Bar in Aylesbury that opened in 2019, Kelvin Wong is now opening another branch of the restaurant named after his 12-year-old daughter. Miya, Princes Risborough will be co-owned by Dave Turbeville and, as a real family venture, his son Anthony will be managing the establishment.

The restaurant will be the perfect place to drink and dine in the centre of the High Street, something very new and exciting for the town, with an extensive drinks menu and delicious, fresh Japanese cuisine. The team at Miya have also listened to the residents of Risborough who have been commenting that there is nowhere to enjoy a Sunday Roast. They will, therefore, be providing this to meet the needs of the town in contrast to the Japanese buffet that is offered at Miya, Aylesbury on Sundays.

Kelvin and his wife Nikki have two daughters with Jasie, their youngest, having a Korean BBQ restaurant named after her located

within Miya, Aylesbury.

Kelvin says: "We are very much looking forward to the restaurant being open and welcoming everyone in Princes Risborough and surrounding area. We thought that it was the perfect place to open the new branch and are delighted to be a part of such a wonderful and historical town. We very much hope that we can be a great enhancement to the High Street and community."

Kelvin is an experienced restaurateur and pub landlord. As well as Miya and Jasie restaurants, he also already manages the Guttman Centre, Stoke Mandeville and owns the Watermead Inn. Also coming soon - The Grapes, Aylesbury.

The restaurant is aiming to be open sometime in November. Look out for more information and don't forget to give it a try. All are welcome!

Karen Collett



Watermead Workshop

We set up WatermeadWorkshop earlier this year to raise money for Florence Nightingale Hospice by mending household items. We are keen to keep repairable goods out of landfill and to give them an extended life if at all possible. Examples of things that may be fixable include electrical equipment, toys, soft furnishings, garden equipment and many others. Once each successful repair is completed we ask for a donation of your choice to Florence Nightingale.

So far we have raised £150 this includes:

- Re glueing joints on 4 dining chairs
- Adding a metal brace to a chair seat
- Rewiring a sewing machine foot pedal and adjusting belt, speed and tension on another.
- Restoring a radio controlled lifeboat.
- Sourcing and replacing parts on a broken vacuum cleaner
- Another cleaner is waiting for a part. (parts are charged at cost)



To discuss your repair call Peter on 07974 933967 or email Sally sallyastocker@gmail.com

Sally Stocker and Peter Allen

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Crime on the Home Front in Two World Wars

On 1st Oct 1914, the Metropolitan police ordered a blackout in London because the Germans had started bombing from the air. German airships made 51 bombing raids on Britain and there were 52 instances of bombing from aeroplanes. About 1,500 civilians lost their lives as a result. Early in 1915 the Germans started a campaign of strategic bombing in Britain which, together with unrestricted submarine warfare by the Germans, caused great misery for the civilian population. We are used to civilians suffering in wars, but before the First World War civilians in Britain would usually not see their enemies, except perhaps prisoners of war, although they would suffer in other ways, of course.

Restrictions and enemy strategies suffered by civilians during both World Wars allowed crime to flourish. People were attacked in the blackout, murderers tried hiding bodies of victims in bombed out buildings, the 'Black Market' caught up even some normally honest people in crime as they got involved with Black-marketeers while trying to feed their families.

Road and other types of accidents increased in the blackout as well as the number of murders. In the Second World War, the number of reported crimes increased from 303,711 to 478,394.

Civilians had to cope with their homes being bombed and looted, all sorts of government rules and regulations, their relatives being killed, being separated from children who had been evacuated and an increase in crime. Despite this most people continued helping the war effort; many, however, only wanted to help themselves.

Rationing did not begin in Britain until late in World War I after people complained that they were having to spend hours queuing for food and some were starving – in some cases finding that richer or fitter people got more than their share. In World War II black-

marketeering was rife as "spivs" and even ordinary people found ways of getting hold of goods that were difficult to come by for most people eg food, nylon stockings and other scarce commodities including clothes.

The rationing of food meant that a person was permitted 4 ounces of bacon and ham, 2 ounces of butter, 2 ounces of cheese, 2 ounces of tea, 1 fresh egg and some dried egg a week and 12 ounces of sweets every four weeks. People had ration books which had to be given up in shops and coupons cancelled to try to keep a check on what they were buying. Of course, some people produced their own food as the government ran the 'Dig for Victory' campaign, following the sinking of so many merchant ships that would have brought goods to Britain. (A relative of mine had two ships torpedoed from under him during the War. He survived and died a few years ago aged over 90.) Unfortunately for growers their vegetables and fruit were often stolen. One example was reported in Blyth News, Northumberland on 11 November 1939 that many gardens in their area had been the subject of food theft.

Clothes were rationed, too. Police Officer, Bill Biggs, spotted three men breaking into a clothing shop to steal suits and dressing gowns. To buy a suit would take many coupons, so they would have yielded quite a profit had he not stopped them.

On 5th January 1940 the Bucks Advertiser and Aylesbury News ran a story about Robert Lawrence who, during the blackout had broken into a garage at Gerrards Cross, and stole 316 spark plugs worth £90. He was sentenced to three year's penal servitude.

On 27th September 1939 labourer John Cotter was caught trying to break and enter a shop. A Police Constable caught him with a shoe in his left hand and his right hand in the broken window.

The Scotsmen Newspaper reported on 2nd October 1939 on the recent increase of cases dealt with by the Edinburgh Burgh Court - smash and grab raiders had stolen bicycles, jewellery, tinned food and other items.

Looting was a common occurrence after air raids. Often it was people who had been bombed out themselves trying to get something they had lost or to make some money. In Leeds, two men gave up well paid jobs because they could make more money by looting. On 9th November 1939 ten cases of looting were tried at the Old Bailey. The accused were members of the Auxiliary Fire Service. The Lord Mayor of London warned that looting could be punishable by death, though courts remained lenient.

So bad was looting that Scotland Yard set up a special unit to deal with it. Between the first week in November and the end of 1940, 400 cases of looting had been reported in London. No doubt where houses had no survivors, there were times when looting wasn't reported. After the Cafe de Paris in London was bombed on 8th March 1941 looters stole from the dead and injured who were lying in the ruins. They must have got some rich pickings. Teenage blackout gangs were also involved in looting. As soon as the bombing was over they would appear at the bombed buildings, loot them and disappear.

In 1939, 17 year old James Harvey was beaten to death by members of a teenage gang at the Elephant and Castle. The murderers were given sentences of only 3 years, 18 months and 12 months. It caused a public outcry.

Billeting was another aspect of wartime Britain that some people sought to profit unfairly from through fraud. If you billeted an evacuated child, you received 10 shillings and 6 pence per week and a further 8 shillings and 6 pence for a second child. Some claimed the money after the child had returned home or gone elsewhere whilst others stole blank billeting forms to claim money for non-existent children.

In 1940 the Government agreed to pay compensation to those bombed out but local National Assistance Officers did not have



Saturday 2nd December 2023
Village Hall, The Piazza 11am - 5pm

An arrangement of traditional and quirky gifts -
there's a unique Christmas gift for everyone!
Plus 'Name the Bear'

Refreshments available too!

and don't forget:

WATERMEAD CAROL CONCERT

Saturday 9th December from 6pm

the time to check all claims. In 1941 more staff were brought in and prosecutions for false claims began. Walter Hardy was sent to prison for three years after he had claimed he had been bombed out nineteen times in five months!

Of course, the most heinous crime committed was murder. The war helped some murderers cover up their crimes, but not all.

One murderer not motivated by war was George Joseph Smith. His motivation seemed to have been money or it could have been that he got a thrill from killing people. He married 8 women, some bigamously, killed them and stole their money and possessions and disappeared using several aliases.

In January 1915, a Detective Inspector Neil of Liverpool received a letter from a boarding house owner, Joseph Crossley. His letter to Neil contained newspaper cuttings, one about the death of a Margaret Lloyd who died in her bath in a boarding house in Highgate, London. Her husband, John Lloyd had found her.

The other cutting was about the death of Alice Smith, who had also died in her bath. She, too, had been found by her husband, George Smith. Smith had taken out life insurance on Margaret for £500, about £53,000 in today's money. Alice had worked hard to save money and George got the lot. On reading these stories, Crossley, his wife and a friend thought these deaths suspicious and asked the police to investigate.

Margaret Lloyd's body was exhumed and a Home Office pathologist assisted police in determining the cause of death. There were no signs of disease but on seeing small marks on the body he said death had been sudden.

In Blackpool, a year before Alice's death, a Henry Williams had rented a bath tub for himself and his wife, Bessie, for use at their lodgings. He took his wife to a local doctor after she complained of headaches, although Williams said she had had an epileptic fit. On 12th July, Williams woke the doctor saying she had had another seizure. The next morning the doctor was summoned to the lodgings where Bessie was dead in the bath. Henry Williams was the beneficiary of her Will worth £300,000 today.

Home Office Pathologist Spilsbury gave much thought to these deaths. He measured the baths and took into account the height of the women. He concluded that the husband had seized the wife's feet and pulled her under. The rush of water into her nose and lungs caused her to thrash about resulting in small injuries. If she had drowned why those injuries? Detective Inspector Neil tested the theory on an experienced diver. He unexpectedly grabbed her feet while she was in a bath of water and pulled her under. Unfortunately, she very nearly drowned but a doctor revived her and she was able to describe what had happened. It matched Spilsbury's theory. George Joseph Smith was arrested on 15th February 1915. On 1st July he was found guilty and sentenced to death.

Another infamous murderer was John George Haigh dubbed by the Press as The Acid Bath Killer. He had been freed from prison in 1943 after serving a sentence for other crimes. He had previously been an accountant in an engineering firm; he bumped into his former employer, William McSwann, in a pub in Kensington. McSwann was employed by his parents to collect rents from their London houses. On 6th September 1944 McSwann disappeared. Haigh had murdered him in a basement in Gloucester Road and put his body into a drum of acid. When the body had mostly dissolved, he poured the mixture down a manhole.

Haigh began living in McSwann's flat and took over collecting the rents. He told the parents of William McSwann that their son had gone to Scotland to escape military service. On 2nd July 1945 he told them that their son had come back on a surprise visit and took them to Gloucester Road to see him. There he killed them, disposed of their bodies and sold their property for around £8,000.

He then moved into the Onslow Court Hotel where he met his last victim. In the meantime, he had gambled away most of the McSwann's money and looked for another couple to rob and kill. He feigned interest in buying the house of a couple called Archibald and Rose Henderson. He was invited to play the piano at a party at their house. While there, he stole Henderson's revolver.

Haigh then rented a workshop at 2, Leopold Gardens, Crawley, Sussex and moved his acid drums in there. He lured Archibald there on the pretext of showing him a new invention. He shot him and then told Rose her husband had been taken ill. When she arrived he shot her and put their bodies in the acid. He then sold their possessions for a further £8,000 but kept their car and dog.

After the war ended his last victim was Olive Durand-Deacon from the Onslow Court Hotel. He got her to go to the workshop by telling her he was an engineer and had an idea for making false fingernails. On 18th February 1949 he shot her dead and stole her Persian lamb coat and other valuables and put her body in the acid. Two days later, a friend of Olive reported her missing. After the discovery of Haigh's thefts and frauds, detectives searched his workshop. They found a dry cleaner's receipt for the lamb coat and other papers referring to the McSwanns and Hendersons. Home Office pathologist, Keith Simpson, found evidence of human body parts behind the workshop; there was also a human foot, human gallstones and part of a denture which proved to belong to Olive. Haigh confessed to the murders and to that of 3 others. He was tried at Lewes Assizes and hanged by executioner, Albert Pierrepoint on 10th August 1949.

John Reginald Halliday Christie killed at least 8 people including his wife Ethel during the 1940s and 50s. He strangled them at his flat at 10 Rillington Place, Notting Hill, London. Soon after he moved out of the flat, three of his victims were found in a wallpaper covered kitchen. Two more bodies were discovered in the garden and Ethel's body under the sitting room floorboards.

He was also responsible for the wrongful execution of Timothy Evans who was found guilty of the murders of his wife and baby. They had actually been victims of Reginald Christie. Christie was hanged at Pentonville on 15th July 1953 and Rillington Place demolished in 2016.

At first in some areas crime had lessened at the beginning of the wars, but perhaps as people got into the routine of trying to deal with war, criminals grabbed every chance they could. After all, who knew if the next bomb or V2 rocket might have your name on it?

Val Edwards

Aylesbury Lunchtime Music

**Live classical chamber music every
Thursday in the heart of Aylesbury
Old Town.**

30th November - Katherine Clarke & Constance Chow
Katherine is a talented viola player who specialises in performing works for singing violist. She performs with accompanist Constance Chow.

7th December - Joanna Gutowska & Anna Szałucka
Two thirds of the Bukoliko Piano Trio return for a cello recital to wrap up the year!"

Time: 12:45 – 13:45 every Thursday (doors open at 12:15)
Venue: St Mary's Church, Aylesbury

Admission: £7 adults (under 18s free), card or cash accepted on the door

www.aylesburylunchtimemusic.co.uk

WATERMEAD'S SPOOKY HOMES



It was pleasing to see that lots of people decorated the fronts of their houses for Halloween. Here are just a few of them, some quite scary and certainly spooky! It was a pleasant evening on the 31st October and many parents were doing the rounds of 'trick or treating' with their children.



Lindengate: Winter Open Garden and Christmas Wreath Workshops



In September Lindengate celebrated its 10th birthday by opening a new Apothecary Garden. An apothecary's garden is known for having healing herbs and plants with restorative properties for people's wellbeing and health so is a perfect addition to the gardens. Countess Howe, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, officially opened our new Apothecary Garden during the evening celebrations.

In the new year the Crafty Herbalist will be running Herbal Home Education and Junior Herbalist classes in the gardens. Both classes aim to reignite the connection between children and the natural world around them. For more information, please visit their website at www.thecraftyherbalist.org.uk

The gardens are open to visitors throughout the winter months as follows:

- Wednesdays-Fridays 11am-3pm
- Saturdays 1-3pm

Entry to the gardens is free but donations are welcomed. More details www.lindengate.org.uk/open-gardens

Join us this festive season for one of our wreath making workshops

Guided by our two very talented florists, you will learn how to create a stunning wreath layered with beautiful seasonal foliage to form the base. Onto this base you will attach your decoration and colour scheme, chosen from a wonderful selection of ribbons, dried fruits, fir cones, baubles, berries, cinnamon sticks. Places cost £60 per person.

To book www.thelittleboxoffice.com/lindengate/book/event/184928

Dates available between Friday 1st and Friday 8th December from 10am to 1pm and Saturday 9th December from 2 to 5pm.

Each workshop includes a glass of Prosecco on arrival, Tea, coffee and mince pies throughout the workshop.

Your wreath will be unique for you to hang on your front door this Christmas.



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What's on

...around Watermead

November

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 11th Remembrance Day Service | Memorial Garden, 10.45am |
| 15th Watermead Pub Lunch | The Watermead Inn, 12.30pm |
| 15th Allotment AGM | Village Hall, 7:30pm |
| 16th Watermead Parish Council Meeting | Village Hall, 7:30pm |

December

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2nd Watermead Annual Christmas Fair | Village Hall, 11am-5pm |
| 9th Watermead Carol Concert | The Piazza, 6pm |
| 20th Watermead Pub Lunch | The Watermead Inn, 12.30pm |

January

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 17th Watermead Pub Lunch | The Watermead Inn, 12:30pm |
| 18th Watermead Parish Council Meeting | Village Hall, 7:30pm |

February

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 14th Valentines Day | Village Hall, 7:30pm |
| 15th Watermead Parish Council Meeting | The Watermead Inn, 12:30pm |
| 21st Watermead Pub Lunch | |

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
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PUBLICATION DATES
2024

SPRING
9th March

SUMMER
8th June

AUTUMN
7th September

WINTER
23rd November

View from Westminster



With the nights drawing in and Christmas fast approaching, it's again time to reflect on the year gone by and look forward to 2024. I have been proud to continue to represent Watermead in Parliament where I was privileged to attend the first King's Speech for more than 70 years.

In a centuries-old tradition, amid much pomp and pageantry, Charles III set out

the Government's legislative plans for the coming year.

Behind all the jewels and splendour, the King's Speech lays out the priorities for the government in the months ahead.

First and foremost is a focus on increasing economic growth and driving down inflation to help with the cost of living. I know that locally there are concerns about the tenure of leaseholders, not least with spiralling service charges. So I was pleased that the King's Speech outlined reforms to support both renters and leaseholders.

Over the past 12 months traffic congestion has caused massive disruption to everyone trying to go to work, school or shop in our local area. Much of this has been caused by HS2; I have been working hard to secure some of the savings from the scrapped Phase 2 of the railway for projects that will benefit Bucks residents. I have also been pushing utility companies to ensure that works are carefully managed to bring the minimum of delays.

As well as speaking in debates and talking to ministers, I remain a member of the Armed Forces Parliamentary Scheme, visiting

members of our armed forces here in Britain and overseas. Many of them will be on duty throughout Christmas, and I know we are all profoundly grateful for their service at this time of year.

As always, I will continue to provide a strong voice for my constituents both in Buckinghamshire and in Parliament. If you need any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office by email at rob.butler.mp@parliament.uk.

All that is left for me to do is wish you and your families a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

Robert Butler MP

**"The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other."
– Burton Hills**

Tea Break Quiz



1. What year was tinsel invented – 1610, 1710, 1810?
2. What must-have item for the Christmas table was invented by Tom Smith in the 1850's?
3. What is the "Buche de Noel" better known as?
4. What is the name of a male turkey?
5. What drink is typically left out for Santa?
6. Which sauce is traditionally served with Christmas Pudding?
7. In which tin of chocolates would you find the "Green Triangle"?
8. In which country did eggnog originate?
9. What beverage company has been using Santa Claus in its advertising since 1931?
10. Which one of Santa's reindeer has the same name as a female fox?
11. In what year was the Queen's Speech first televised – 1952, 1955 or 1957?
12. Which popular alcoholic Christmas drink is best served hot?
13. In which country did Christmas carolling originate?
14. Which traditional Christmas plant was originally used to ward off demons?
15. What did a lit candle in a window at Christmas represent?
16. How many ghosts show up in "A Christmas Carol"?
17. What is the UK's most popular Christmas Song?
18. Which animated film features the song "Walking in the Air"?
19. Which film features Dani Devito trying to get his Christmas lights seen from space?
20. According to the song, what did my true love give to me on the ninth day of Christmas?

Answers on page 22



Join us in remembering and honouring those we have lost this Christmas

Join our community commemoration event at Roman Park Hall on Sunday 10th December from 5pm till 7pm, led by our chaplain and bereavement service team, where you will hear from our Hospice and charity staff plus uplifting songs and music and a moment of reflection.

For more information, please visit our website

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Watermead Piscatorials



First of all, I must apologise for the wrong information on the last issue of Village View regarding the pictures. The bottom picture is actually of Steve (our bailiff) with his 30lb Common Carp (see repeated below), however I don't know who was in the top picture with the Pike.

We have installed a couple of "disabled swims" for easier access and safer fishing for anyone in a wheelchair. These are situated, one opposite the outdoor gym and the other next to the small bridge, as shown in the pictures. Yes, there's still a little bit more work to do to make them fully accessible, but this has been delayed by the high water levels.



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On the subject of future works, we're currently investigating what will be required for the following:

- dredging the lake,
- removal of fallen trees
- swim repairs
- building new raised swims (step free) along the side of the footpath (opposite the children's nursery) in the same materials as the new disabled swims, provided these new swims fare well over this winter.

The Facebook page has been updated by Lewis, one of our members helped with this, however we may well end up making a new one!

Guest tickets are available for fishing the lake but the guest needs to be accompanied by a member. Please Contact Steve (Bailiff) on 07843 787918 or our new assistant bailiff, David Brown, on 07939 323225 - please contact him for any problems as well.

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

Martin Mynott (Chairman)



A CHILD WAITING FOR SANTA

A squeak on the stairs.
Could Santa be here?
Better pull my blankets
Up to my ears.

Better keep still,
Can't make a peep.
He doesn't leave toys,
Unless you're asleep.

He comes down the chimney,
That's how he gets in.
Santa uses magic
To make himself thin.

My door just opened.
Someone's by my bed.
It wasn't Santa after all,
'Cause Mom just kissed my head.

Ready, steady, grit! Bucks gritters prep for coming winter

It's snow joke, there may be no ice or snow in the weather forecast but you may see Buckinghamshire's gritters already out and about. Every year, at this time, drivers take the gritters out for a test run of their usual routes to help re-familiarise themselves with both the machines and regular gritting routes.

The annual event, known as the winter parade, also provides an opportunity to test for safety along each of the routes. If the drivers come across a hazard, such as an overhanging tree branch, this can be noted and addressed before the gritters start to make their regular runs.

From mid-October through to mid-April, Buckinghamshire's team of gritter drivers are on call around the clock, ready to jump into action as and when needed. When forecasts show temperatures are set to plummet, the crews travel the length and breadth of the county, treating over 870 miles of the county's most used roads and priority routes, helping to keep roads safer and traffic moving.

As part of the move to Buckinghamshire Highways in April, this year the drivers will be in charge of 25 new vehicles, five of which have new names selected through recent online polls: Rockhopper, Sid, Snow Shark, Hydroblade and Puffin. The contract will also have access to additional gritters to provide resilience during the winter period, should this be required.

Steven Broadbent, Cabinet Member for Transport, said: "Residents love giving our gritters fun names and enjoy spotting them when out and about, but we mustn't forget they carry out an extremely important job in helping to keep our roads safe over the winter. Our expert team of drivers will be out in all weathers and at all times of day and night throughout the next six months and I would like to thank them in advance for their efforts."

Steven added: "Winter driving can be hazardous at times and even when roads are well gritted, road users should drive according to the road conditions and the weather, taking extra care where necessary."

For regular gritting updates, follow @bucks_highways on X (formerly Twitter) or @BucksHighways on Facebook. To find out more about how the council decides when to grit roads and the routes the gritters follow, visit: www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/gritting

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CHRISTMAS IS COMING

'Twas the night before Christmas
The sky was dark and black
A little boy was watching
From his window around the back

Suddenly, the sky was filled with
moonlight
A flash of red flew by
"It's Father Christmas" he called out
Come quick, come quick, I'll try

To see that Rudolph flying
With his nose all shiny red
Oh, I'm really so excited
I can't go back to bed!

Carole Hogg, Aylesbury Vale u3a



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Rev Canon Tim Harper

**O Come all ye Faithful,
Joy to the World,
We Three Kings of
Orient Are**

**Children to gather at the
front near the band.**

**Children sing:
Away in a Manger**

**Great Horwood Silver Band
will play a tune to welcome
Father Christmas who will
distribute presents to
children.**

**It came upon the Midnight
Clear,
O Little Town of Bethlehem,
Good King Wenceslas,
In the Bleak Mid Winter,
Silent Night**

**Sue Severn:
thanks and finale.**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

**Mulled wine and a mince pie or sausage roll.
Donations to Tiggiwinkles Wildlife Hospital.**

**WISHING YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HEALTHY AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O come all ye faithful, joyful and
triumphant,
Come ye, oh come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold Him, born the King
of Angels

*O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him
Christ the Lord!*

God of God, Light of Light
Lo! He abhors not the Virgin's womb;
Very God, begotten, not created
O come, let us adore Him,...

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above
Glory to God in the highest
O come, let us adore Him,...

JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the World, the Lord has come;
Let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare
Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heaven and heaven and
nature sing.

Joy to the World! The Saviour reigns;
Let us our songs employ;
While fields and floods, rocks,
hills and plains
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His Love,
And wonders of His Love,
And wonders and wonders of
His Love.

WE THREE KINGS

We three kings of Orient are,
Bearing gifts we travel afar,
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,
Following yonder star:

*O star of wonder, star of night,
Star with royal beauty bright,
Westward leading, still proceeding,
Guide us to thy perfect light.*

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,
Gold I bring to crown Him again:
King for ever, ceasing never,
Over us all to reign.
O star of wonder...

Frankincense to offer have I;
Incense owns a Deity nigh:
Prayer and praising, all are raising,
Worship Him, God most high.
O star of wonder...

Myrrh is mine: its bitter perfume
Breathes a life of gathering gloom;
Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying,
Sealed in the stone-cold tomb.
O star of wonder...

Glorious now, behold Him arise,
King and God and sacrifice.
Heaven sings, 'Alleluja!'
'Alleluja!' the earth replies.
O star of wonder...

AWAY IN A MANGER

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed
The little Lord Jesus laid down
His sweet head
The stars in the bright sky looked down
where He lay
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the Baby awakes,
But little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes,
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from
the sky
And stay by my side until morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me for ever, and love me, I pray
Bless all the dear children in Thy
tender care
And fit us for heaven to live with
Thee there.

IT CAME UPON THE MIDNIGHT CLEAR

It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth,
To touch their harps of gold;
'Peace on earth, goodwill to men,
From heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing.

Still through the cloven skies they come,
With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heavenly music floats
O'er all the weary world;
Above its sad and lonely plains
They bend on heavenly wing,
And ever o'er its Babel sounds
The blessed angels sing.

Yet, with the woes of sin and strife,
The world has suffered long;
Beneath the angels' strain have rolled
Two thousand years of wrong;
And man, at war with man, hears not
The love-song which they bring:
Oh, hush the noise, ye men of strife,
And hear the angels sing.

For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet bards foretold,
When, with the ever circling years,
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendours fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing!

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the King
And peace to all on earth.
For Christ is born of Mary;
And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.

How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is given!
So God imparts to human hearts

The blessings of His heaven.
No ear may hear His coming
But in this world of sin
Where meek souls will receive Him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O Holy Child of Bethlehem
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell:
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Emmanuel.

GOOD KING WENCESLAS

Good King Wenceslas looked
out
On the feast of Stephen
When the snow lay round about
Deep and crisp and even;
Brightly shone the moon that
night
Though the frost was cruel,
When a poor man came in sight
Gathering winter fuel.

'Hither, page, and stand by me
If thou know'st it telling,
Yonder peasant, who is he?
Where and what his dwelling?
'Sire, he lives a good league
hence,
Underneath the mountain,
Right against the forest fence
By St Agnes' fountain'.

'Bring me flesh and bring me
wine
Bring me pine logs hither;
Thou and I will see him dine
When we bear them thither.'
Page and monarch, forth they
went
Forth they went together
Through the rude wind's wild
lament
And the bitter weather.

'Sire, the night is darker now
And the wind blows stronger
Fails my heart, I know not how;
I can go no longer.'
'Mark my footsteps, good my
page,
Tread thou in them boldly
Thou shalt find the winter's rage
Freeze thy blood less coldly.'

In his master's steps he trod
Where the snow lay dinted
Heat was in the very sod
Which the saint had printed.
Therefore, Christians all, be sure,
Wealth or rank possessing,
Ye who now will bless the poor
Shall yourselves find blessing.

IN THE BLEAK MID WINTER

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

Our God, Heaven cannot hold
Him
Nor earth sustain;
Heaven and earth shall flee away

When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter
A stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty,
Jesus Christ.

Angels and archangels
May have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air,
But only His mother
In her maiden bliss,
Worshipped the Beloved
With a kiss.

What can I give Him,
Poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd
I would bring a lamb,
If I were a wise man
I would do my part,
Yet what I can I give Him,
Give my heart.

SILENT NIGHT

Silent night, holy night.
All is calm, all is bright
Round the Virgin mother and Child;
Holy infant, so tender and mild,
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent night, holy night.
Shepherds quail at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia:
Christ, the Saviour is born,
Christ, the Saviour is born.

Silent night, holy night,
Son of God, Love's pure Light
Radiant beams from Thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace:
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth,
Jesus, Lord at Thy birth.

HARK! THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the newborn King!
Peace on earth and mercy mild
God and sinners reconciled.
Joyful, all ye nations, rise
Join the triumph of the skies;
With the angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem
Hark! The herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

Christ, by highest heaven adored
Christ, the everlasting Lord
Late in time behold Him come
Offspring of a Virgin's womb!
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see!
Hail, the Incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel!
Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

Hail, the Heaven-born Prince of Peace!
Hail, the Son of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings
Risen with healing in His wings.
Mild, he lays His glory by
Born that we no more may die
Born to raise the sons of earth
Born to give them second birth.
Hark, the herald angels sing
Glory to the new-born King.

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Book review

Thomas Tryon: Crowned Heads

Crowned Heads, which dates from the 1970s, was one of the major inspirations for my own Hollywood novels Soap Stud & Blue-Movie Girl (published this year under my other pen-name David Godolphin). Re-reading Crowned Heads after forty-plus years, it's still one of the great Tinseltown tales, if perhaps not as exquisite as I remembered it.

Fedora, the first of four linked novella-length stories, is the best and was memorably filmed by Billy Wilder (his last movie in 1978). Fedora is a Garboesque Hollywood legend who comes back from a period of seclusion more beautiful – and a better actress – than before. The explanation, narrated to an interviewer like one of Anne Rice's vampire sagas, is a bit too slow.

Lorna is Lorna Doone (that name is unforgivable!) is a burnt-out star whose life falls into a haze of booze and sex on holiday in a second-rate hotel in a third-rate resort in Mexico. Lots of candidates for the inspiration here whom it would be ungentlemanly to name – she may be an “amalgam”. This too takes a long time to reach its gloomy climax.

Bobbitt is the former child-star forever trapped in the role he outgrew. Mickey Rooney and even Shirley Temple could be sources here. Repetition spoils this one.

Willie (another unfortunate name to an English ear) is Willie Marsh, an elderly movie legend, clearly inspired by Ramon Novarro, whose home, a shrine to his dead but still dominating mother, is invaded by a trio of creepy hippies. This takes Thomas

Tryon back into the horror territory where he first made his mark as actor-turned-writer. The invasion scene is far too protracted and its inevitable conclusion goes way over the top.

Four distinct tales, richly original and yet echoing true events in the life of Movieland. They constitute four ‘obituaries’ from Hollywood’s Golden Era. The writing is a long way from the brisk blunt prose of Jackie Collins and becomes over-ripe in parts, but this is quintessential Tinseltown: art imitating life imitating art. A must-read for La-La Land buffs if you’ve missed it. It’s on Kindle but the print edition is only available second-hand.

David Gee



“Ramon Novarro, Hollywood’s ‘Latin Lover’ from the 1930s, who was murdered by two hustlers in 1968, the inspiration for one of the darker stories in CROWNED HEADS”



The Village View would like to congratulate one of our advertisers ‘Adroit Services’ (below), who supply and fit bathrooms, by recently winning “Excellence in Customer Service Category” in the Buckinghamshire Business Awards.

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Vale Countryside Volunteers visit Watermead



We were once again very lucky to have the Vale Countryside Volunteers (VCV) come to work on the land around the large lake on two occasions in September and October this year. Their task was part of an annual cut and clear of three areas on the north side of the

lake to further encourage the spread of wildflowers already present eg purple loosestrife and meadowsweet, and to cut back invasive scrub which would eventually take over the sites if not managed.

The work is physical but you do not need to be super fit to join in. No experience

is required – just enthusiasm and a willingness to have a go. Visit their website, www.vcv.org.uk for further information about the group. If you would like to join them contact VCVmanager@gmail.com.

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working with **GK PLUMBING**



Since our doors reopened in September, Footsteps Watermead has been buzzing with excitement and activity, as we welcomed numerous new children and their loved ones into our Footsteps family.

The children have not only settled in beautifully but have also forged fantastic new friendships, making this Autumn season one filled with camaraderie, fun and exploration.

Our learning journey began with an exploration of the theme “This is Me”. The children delved into understanding their own bodies, their unique features, the five senses that connect them to the world, and the special individuals they share their homes with. Through this fascinating journey of self-discovery, they also crafted intricate self-portraits that showcased their creativity and individuality.

Autumn has played a significant role in our activities with the children closely observing the seasonal transformations occurring in the world around them. Invigorating walks and Forest School activities have provided the perfect opportunity to marvel at the changing colours of the leaves (as well as how much fun it is to jump in them) and the crispness in the air, fostering a deeper connection to nature.

Venturing outdoors, our young explorers engaged in activities that encouraged them to collect an assortment of items, before sorting them based on various criteria such as colour, shape and size. This hands-on learning approach not only nurtured their cognitive abilities but also ignited their curiosity about language and numbers.

October has been busy with crafting and baking some spooktacular masterpieces that have been anything but ghastly. With a whole host of other calendar favourites fast approaching, Footsteps has a series of exciting events planned:

Spooktacular Halloween Stay and Play: A Halloween-themed event featuring the annual cake sale and raffle to support MacMillan Cancer Support; and we raised £100. A fun and spooky way to contribute to a vital cause.

World Nursery Rhyme Week: A celebration of the magic of nursery rhymes, designed to engage and entertain the children while promoting literacy skills.

Road Safety Week: An educational week focusing on road safety, ensuring that the children are aware of the importance of being safe on the roads.

Children in Need: Footsteps Watermead is excited to participate in Children in Need, a nationwide charity event aimed at improving the lives of children in the UK.

At Footsteps Watermead, each day brings new opportunities for children to learn, explore and contribute to their community. The setting is a place of growth, friendship and giving, making it an essential part of the local tapestry.

Footsteps Watermead is honoured to be a designated collection point for Bucks Radio’s Toy Appeal 2023, a heartwarming initiative aimed at spreading joy to disadvantaged children across Buckinghamshire this Christmas. We are ready to receive donations of brand new toys, games and gifts; these contributions will be distributed by Bucks Radio to local charities supporting children and their families throughout Buckinghamshire.

As we look forward to the upcoming events and the holiday season, Footsteps Watermead remains committed to nurturing the hearts, skills and minds of the children it serves, whilst making a positive impact in our local community.

For more information on starting your child’s journey with us or to get involved in the Bucks Toy Appeal, please contact Footsteps Watermead on 07865 945297 or Email: Watermead@footsteps-nursery.co.uk

Karen Braithwaite



Festive recipes

HOT TODDY FRUITCAKE

It's worth making this fruitcake early so that you can feed it with a fresh swig of hot toddy every week; it will last for a month, well-wrapped in an airtight container and stored in a cool, dry place.

Ingredients:

200ml hot, strong black tea (try Chai tea)
3 tbsp whisky,
3 tbsp good-quality orange marmalade, thin or medium shred,
700g mixed dried fruit (I use a combination of raisins, sultanas, apricots, dates and crystallised ginger),
100g mixed peel,
100g natural dye glacé cherries,
225g butter,
225g golden caster sugar,
4 eggs, beaten,
225g plain flour,
1 tsp ground mixed spice,
1 tsp ground cinnamon,
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon,

To feed the cake:

2 tsp caster sugar,
50ml hot black tea,
1 tbsp whisky

Method:

- Mix the hot tea, whisky and marmalade in a large bowl until the marmalade melts, Stir in all of the dried fruit, peel and cherries, then cover and leave to soak overnight.
- Next day, heat the oven to 160C / fan 140C gas 3 and grease and double-line a 20cm round deep cake tin with non-stick baking paper.
- Using electric beaters, cream together the butter & sugar until fluffy. Add the eggs a little at a time, beating well after each addition, then fold in the flour and spices, followed by the lemon zest and soaked fruit. Add any liquid that hasn't been absorbed by the fruit as well.
- Spoon into the prepared tin, level the top, then bake for 1 ½ hours. Turn the oven down to 140C / fan 120C / gas 1 and bake for another 1 ½ hours or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack in the tin.
- While the cake is still warm,



- use the skewer to pepper the cake with holes, poking it all the way down. Dissolve the sugar in the tea, add the whisky or orange juice, then spoon over the surface.
- The cake can later be decorated with marzipan and icing, or with mixed nuts and then brushed with melted apricot jam.

Thanks to Good Food Magazine, circa 1990 for this recipe – I've been making it every year since then!

OTTOLENGHI'S BRUNSLI CHOCOLATE COOKIES

This is Yotam Ottolenghi's take on the traditional Swiss biscuit.

Ingredients:

270g ground almonds,
250g granulated sugar, plus 10g extra to sprinkle,
40g icing sugar, sifted,
40g Dutch processed cocoa powder,
1 orange: finely grate the zest to get 1 tsp,
1½ tsp Chinese 5-spice,
¼ tsp salt,
2 large egg whites,
1 tsp vanilla extract

Method:

- Preheat oven to gas mark 5. Preheat the oven to 170°C fan. Place the almonds, granulated sugar, icing sugar, cocoa powder, orange zest, Chinese 5-spice and salt in the bowl of a free-standing mixer, with the dough hook in place. Mix on a medium speed, until combined. With the mixer still

working, add the egg whites and vanilla and continue to mix for 1–2 minutes, until the dough comes together into a ball.

- Tip the dough out on a clean surface, shape into a flat disc about 3cm thick and wrap in cling film. Place in the fridge for about an hour, to rest.
- Cut out two pieces of parchment paper, 40 x 40cm. Unwrap the dough from its cling film, place in the middle of the two sheets of paper and roll out to form a circle about 22cm wide and 1½cm thick. Using a 7cm wide star-shaped pastry cutter (or whichever pastry cutter you are using), cut out the stars and place on a large parchment-lined baking tray. Press together the scraps of dough and roll out again, cutting out more stars as before. Continue until all the dough has been used, then sprinkle with the 10g of granulated sugar.
- Bake for 12 minutes, until the bottoms are slightly crisp and the middles are soft and gooey. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

These keep for 5 days in a sealed container. The dough can also be frozen (either when shaped into a ball or cut into cookie shapes) for up to a month. If you bake from frozen, just add another minute or two to the cooking time.

VEGGIE SAUSAGE ROLLS

Ingredients:

Puff pastry (pre-rolled Jus-rol pastry is fine),
4 veggie sausages - remove skins if they have them,
½ onion, diced,
½ -1 tsp English mustard, (depending on how mustardy you like it),
½ tsp grated or finely chopped, garlic (or garlic powder),
½ tsp sage,
½ tsp smoked paprika,
½ tsp turmeric,
Pinch of pepper,
½ tsp salt,
Glazing (eg coconut oil, beaten egg) - optional

Method:

- Mix all the ingredients (other than the pastry and glaze!) in a bowl making sure the sausages are mashed up. This is easiest done with your fingers – gloves recommended.
- Roll the pastry until it is around 2mm thick and cut into rectangles of the size you want (but the shortest side should be around 8cm).
- Spoon a line of sausage filling into the top or bottom half of the rectangle and the other half of the pastry over, and seal it.
- Score the top a few times with a knife.
- Brush with glaze if used.
- Bake in oven at 180C for 20 to 25 minutes until pastry is golden.

NB. You can freeze after point 4. For baking from frozen, 180C for 40 mins, or 170C for 25 mins in an air fryer.

Michelle Toler

Answers to Quiz on page 11

- 1610, 2. Christmas Crackers, 3. Yule log, 4. A Tom or a Gobbler, 5. Milk, 6. Brandy sauce, 7. Quality Street, 8. Britain, 9. Coca Cola, 10. Vixen, 11. 1957, 12. Mulled wine, 13. Austria, 14. Mistletoe, 15. Remembering lost loved ones, 16. 4, 17. Do They Know It's Christmas, 18. The Snowman, 19. Deck the Halls, 20. Nine ladies dancing.



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A Trip to Porto

Almost 40 years ago, we headed to the Algarve for a week's holiday. A nasty infection picked up in the swimming pool sadly made it a holiday to forget, and it was nearly thirty years until we went back to Portugal, this time to Lisbon. We couldn't understand why we had stayed away so long, and soon afterwards we went to Porto for a long weekend. Porto, or Oporto, as it's sometimes known, was granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 1996. It lies on the north side of the river Douro, with its sister town Vila Nova de Gaia, famous for its history with the port wine industry, on the other. After a short flight from Luton we arrived late afternoon at our hotel just back from the riverbank. Sounds chic but it wasn't – the building was so narrow that the bed turned out to be a mezzanine affair... not great at midnight after a couple of beers! However the location was great. It was comfortable and clean; the staff were lovely and served freshly cooked scrambled eggs or omelettes and great coffee for breakfast every morning.

We spent our first evening exploring the bars and restaurants along the river front – the atmosphere was lively and happy with lots of people sitting outside despite the fact that it was the beginning of November. We had an excellent meal – Portuguese food is simple, fresh and delicious, with a strong emphasis on seafood. Porto has a speciality known as a Francesinha, a thick sandwich filled with layers of steak, sausage and ham, topped with melted cheese, tomato sauce and a fried egg. Way too many calories for us.

The next day we headed inland to explore the city centre. We planned to visit Livrario Lello, one of the most beautiful bookshops

in the world dating back to 1906 and said to be the inspiration for JK Rowling's Harry Potter series – she lived in Porto for 10 years working as an English Teacher. Sadly when we arrived the queues to get in were around the block so we gave it a miss. At lunchtime we joined the locals at the Mercado de Bolhão, the city centre market selling fresh meat, fish, produce and flowers. There are a couple of small restaurants selling fresh home-made meals, and a few rudimentary bars where you can sit with a beer and soak up the atmosphere. We spent the rest of the day wandering around the narrow, cobbled streets of the atmospheric old town centre, marvelling at the beautiful architecture and Azulejos (glazed decorative tiles), enjoying the Miradouros (view points) and the occasional beer in quiet leafy squares.

On Sunday we took the Metro out to Praia de Matosinhos and joined the throngs of Tripeiros enjoying a promenade along the seafront followed by exuberant and noisy lunches. Incidentally, Tripeiros, the collective name for people from Porto, refers to "Tripas à Moda do Porto" - their love of tripe in the style of Porto! We passed on the tripe and enjoyed a splendid late lunch of grilled sardines with a glass of cold local wine on the beach as the sun was setting over the Atlantic. If you don't feel like going as far as Matosinhos, the old fashioned wooden trams rattle along the banks of the Douro to Foz on the coast at the mouth of the river, with lots of interesting stops along the way.

Our last day was Monday and we decided to visit Vila Nova de Gaia on the opposite bank of the river. We took the funicular to the top level of the Dom Luis Bridge over the Douro and wandered slowly across the top deck, enjoying the amazing views

as we did so. On the other side we took the cable car to drop back down, giving more lovely views across Vila Nova de Gaia, and then walked up the hill to a Port Wine Lodge with a lovely restaurant attached for lunch in their garden, enjoying the last of the sunshine before we returned home to a cold and wet November in Aylesbury.

Don't Miss... The beautiful Azulejos in São Bento Train Station. Espaço Porto Cruz on the river bank in Vila Nova de Gaia for fabulous panoramic views and a wonderful Cruz White cocktail, made with white port, rosemary, ginger and tonic. Pastel de Nata, the delicious Portuguese custard puff pastry tarts.

Watch Out For... Hills! Porto has some steep climbs so pack sensible footwear and be prepared to return with your calf muscles having had a thorough workout!

Practical Points... Porto Airport is only about 10 miles away from the city centre; the purple line Emetro runs about every 30 minutes into the city centre and takes about 26 minutes. The cost is just a couple of Euro and can be used for onward travel within one hour 15 minutes, but if you plan to travel around on your first day it makes sense to buy the Andante 24 hour ticket at €6.90. This gives unlimited travel on metros, buses and trams for 24 hours and makes for good value for money. However the city centre is fairly compact, and getting around on foot is easy.

Porto is a great destination for a weekend break – flights go from Luton and it only takes 2 ½ hours. With lots to see, great weather, good food and bottles of ice cold Superbock under €2, what's not to love?

Stuart Mackay



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Above left: Bar Headed Goose taken on Eric Rose's front lawn.

Above right: I watched a female Sparrow Hawk devouring a small bird on my fence in Puffin Way - so have not been a great fan of them since. However, I realise that is nature! Gordon Rennie.

Sandpiper on Sandpiper has been visiting our front garden most days for the last few weeks but it usually flies off as soon as its spotted. This was a grab shot through a closed window. Taken by Eric Rose in September.

Who doesn't love a real Christmas tree!

Avocet Christmas Trees are run by Andy and Ruth Dale who are Watermead residents and this winter is their 4th year selling Christmas trees from Nobby's Farm Shop & Baa T-Room, Leighton Road, Leighton Buzzard LU7 9BL.

The trees will be of the highest grade available which have been sourced from an established grower on the east coast of Scotland. Their Premium Nordmann Fir non-drop trees will have lush dense foliage and maintain an attractive cone shape and will be sold at a very competitive price of £42 for a 5-8ft tree.

The environmentally conscious couple have carefully selected "oxo-biodegradable" netting that you'll take your tree home in, which is more environmentally friendly than the cheaper "degradable" netting.

They are offering free delivery of trees to Watermead residents, if your vehicle isn't large enough! Visit them, select your tree and they'll deliver it to you that evening.

Opening date will be Friday 24th November, 6 days per week until they've sold out!

Monday: Closed
 Tuesday & Wednesday: 9:30am – 4:30pm
 Thursday: 9:30am – 5:00pm
 Friday: 9:30am – 7:00pm
 Saturday: 9:30am – 5:00pm
 Sunday: 10:00am – 3:30pm

Feel free to contact Ruth 07810 805940 if you have any questions. Follow them on social media 'Avocet Christmas Trees'.

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Sally's Blog



It's nearly Christmas and I hear we haven't done a thing about it! Never mind, each year I try to get involved - I help by tearing paper, moving decorations and generally joining in. Apparently my doggie friends are similar and none of us is properly appreciated.

I am very excited to report that a new resident has arrived in Watermead. His name is Teddy (you can see why), and he is the new manager of Avanti Hairdressing. Apparently his humans didn't realise this but, of course, when I met him he was ten weeks old and already lying in front of the door checking out the clients and making sure they admired his immaculate fur.

I'm not sure that Avanti is equipped for doggie hairdressing but if not I'm sure that Teddy's humans will know someone.

I did help Maria very much by teaching Teddy to bark! Until he met me and I had a chat with him apparently he had never barked – they'll enjoy that, I'm sure.

I'm proud to be wearing my poppy again this year. It's important and I would also like to remember the horses, dogs and other animals who have suffered or died in conflicts. Ronnie also has one but he wouldn't keep still to have his photograph taken. He was sleeping later so we took a picture of him fast asleep instead.

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and remember dogs, pigs in blankets, stuffing, turkey, gravy, mince pies, Christmas pudding etc, may look

ok but they do make you feel terrible afterwards ... leave them to the humans!

Love from Sally!



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Watermead Garden Society

Hello again. Well, the weather has been fairly good, apart from the rain, but it has been known to be colder at this time of year. We are lucky to have had extra sun in October as it has helped extend growing time. It has also given us the opportunity to have a few maintenance days. A huge thank you goes out to Tina, Dianne, Daphne, Jane, Kyle and Ron for their help in tidying the triangle area and other areas of the allotments. Also thanks to Tina, and Daphne for putting up posts with chains and to Daphne for painting the posts; this was done so that we could put chains across to prevent cars entering the wet and boggy areas and causing damage to both the site and their cars. We are also very grateful to Daphne for repainting the flower beds at the entrance and to Paul for painting the gate as I believe I missed this off in the last edition.

We had more competitions this year – the best Sunflowers, biggest pumpkins, most improved plot, chairman's award and of course the best allotment and runner up. The judges had very tough decisions to make for all these competitions this year as so much has been achieved. In end the results were:

Charlotte and Daphne plot 4 for their beautiful variations of huge sunflowers of different colours - pinks, oranges, yellows, rusts. Simply amazing!

The pumpkin winner was John at plot 15 for his huge pumpkins - not just one, but oodles of them.

The most improved plot belongs to Lucia and Paul on plot 30A. We thought they had

made a huge effort last year (but didn't have this as a competition) but this year they have excelled and their plot has been completely transformed. It is a shame the deer and foxes have also taken a liking to their plot

The best allotment went to Maria Christina Nunes and Dianne Lee, plot 45 and 46. They are regular winners due to their hard work and relentless tidying and planting not to mention their delicious breakfast barbecues many of us have attended.

Last but not least, the Chairman's award went to Carmel and Rik, plot 55, for their amazing transformation of an overgrown plot. The funny characters made from flowerpots and the funky wooden spoons with funny vegetable faces painted on them makes me smile every time I go past.

I am so looking forward to seeing what next year brings. It really is good to see how everyone has made such a huge effort to tidy and improve their plots.

As we move into the winter months, plots are being 'put to bed' and fleeces are being laid over plants nurturing them while they grow through the colder months. I think they will need it, judging by the weather forecast of a bitter cold winter.

It would be good if we could all keep an eye out for any animals who may suffer if it does get too cold. Remember 'Tiggywinkles' is just down the road if you need to rescue any wildlife and, let's face it, we are all on their turf after all. We need our wildlife even if they do munch on our crops.

On a positive note, we still have time to

plant now as follows:

- **Garlic** – when planted in autumn they will grow roots before winter which gets them off to a good start.
- **Autumn onion sets.**
- **Broad Beans** – by sowing in November you can bring your harvest forward by a few weeks.
- **Overwintering peas** – such as Douce Provence or Meteor.
- **Spring Cabbage.**
- **Hellebores can be sown in November.**
- **Daffodil bulbs** – can be sown in November..... to mention a few.

A few of us will be at the Christmas Fair on 2nd December in the Village Hall, some with crafts they have made and some with produce they have grown. We hope to see you all there.

If anyone knows anyone who can deliver free bark or free manure to the site, it would be appreciated if you could contact the Chairperson on 07496 11776 or alison.may3263@gmail.com

Alison May





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Their menus consist of generously filled baguettes, delicious starters mains and desserts. There are both a children's menu and Sunday menu at very reasonable prices. Their Christmas menu is also online at £30 per head:
www.thelionsofbledlow.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Christmas-23-.pdf

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Dinton rallied around to save The Seven Stars by purchasing the freehold and the local people have entrusted Steph and David to run this fine pub. There is a large garden, a snug, main bar and dining area. With a selection of vegetarian, fish and meat dishes and a specials board to choose from you will be spoilt for choice and that's not including the dessert list! Where possible our produce is locally sourced and is always cooked fresh to order. We are happy to cater for any allergies or dietary requirements. We offer an express service for business lunches or walking groups where we ensure your order is waiting for you on arrival. Please note we do accept dogs inside.

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Food waste – don't bin it – recycle it!

Buckinghamshire Council is asking residents to think twice before throwing food waste in the bin and to recycle it instead. Buckinghamshire Council is asking residents to think twice before throwing food waste in the bin and to recycle it instead.

Currently around a third of the waste thrown in the regular rubbish bin in Buckinghamshire is food waste. This equates to around 28,000 tonnes of food every year, an average of 2kg per household per week. It is enough to fill Big Ben more than one and a half times each year. Not only does this cost local taxpayers more than £600,000 a year in disposal costs, disposing of food waste in this way also damages the environment as it produces double the amount of carbon emissions compared to recycling food waste.

As part of a renewed drive to encourage more people to recycle their food waste, over the next few weeks the council will be delivering leaflets, putting stickers on rubbish bins, and letting people know about the many benefits of food recycling. Attention is particularly being focused on areas where there is more scope to increase food recycling rates.

Gareth Williams, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, said: "We know lots of people already recycle their food waste and we appreciate their efforts, but we want to encourage more people to do it. Recycling your food waste is much better for everyone and it really couldn't be easier. With our weekly food waste collection service, all you need to do is put your food waste in your dedicated food recycling bin rather than your regular bin. Leave it out for collection on your usual weekly bin day and we will empty it."

Even residents who are keen recyclers might not know they can recycle some food waste. Many people don't realise they can recycle mouldy bread or out of date food – once the packaging has been removed of course. Even tea bags and coffee grounds,

which you might not think of as food waste, can be recycled.

Home composting is another way of recycling some food waste which can be transformed into soil improver for gardens. Cooked food waste is not suitable for composting however and should instead be put into the kerbside food recycling bin for collection.

Gareth continued: "By recycling any food that can't be eaten instead of throwing it in the bin, you will be helping to save money which could be spent on other essential council services. The food that is collected for recycling across Buckinghamshire is delivered to facilities near Aylesbury and turned into energy to power our homes. It also produces a high-quality fertiliser for use on agricultural land. Did you know,

recycling just six tea bags will generate enough energy to boil a kettle to make another cuppa?"

The recycling process for food is called anaerobic digestion. It uses micro-organisms to break down food waste in the absence of oxygen, inside an enclosed system. As it breaks down it gives off methane, which is collected and converted into biogas and used to generate electricity. It also creates a nutrient-rich digestate that can be used as a fertiliser for agriculture and in land regeneration. 16,000 tonnes of food is recycled from Buckinghamshire homes each year.

You can find more information on recycling food at home and also tips on how to reduce your food waste on:
www.recycleforbuckinghamshire.co.uk





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Remembrance

Our Remembrance observance couldn't be held at the Memorial Garden this year due to high water levels on the lake. We met at 11am on Saturday 11th November close to the bandstand on the small lake. We were pleased that our local MP, Rob Butler, could join us and lay his wreath, alongside Buckinghamshire Councillors Ashley Bond and

Diana Blamires and Sue Severn, on behalf of Watermead Parish Council. We were also joined by an ex serviceman, who lives in Watermead, along with others from our local community.

Sue Severn, Councillor



Best Christmas

DECORATED HOUSE 2023

Join in Watermead's Christmas Lights display for a chance to win a bottle of Champagne to toast in the New Year!

For over a hundred years it has been the tradition to decorate our homes at Christmas time and this has extended to decorating the exteriors too. This includes gardens which some people fill with Christmassy and wintry scenes. It is wonderful to walk around the streets at Christmastime and to see the variety of decorations and objects that people place in their gardens.

Some people say that our Carol Concert in the Piazza (this year on Saturday 9th December) marks the beginning of Christmas for them. As Christmas approaches we hope that Watermead residents will join us to spread the message of hope, peace and joy through Christmas lights.

Every home within Watermead will be eligible. The judges will be walking all the streets of Watermead to ensure that everyone is included. However, if you wish to nominate yourself or a neighbour please send an email to the Editor, Mary Singleton at mary.singleton@watermead-pc.gov.uk. Judging will take place between Christmas and New Year. The winner will be announced on the Parish notice boards and on our website on New Year's Day.

Prize: Bottle of Champagne.

A photo of the winner's decorated house and those of the runners up (subject to their permission) will be published in the Spring edition of the Village View along with their tips for success (if they have any!).

