

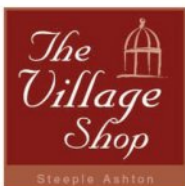
STEEPLE ASHTON
NEWSLETTER

GREAT HINTON
JUNE 2024



Keevil Airfield, the evening of June 5th 1944

Stirling Heavy Bombers line up on Keevil Airfield 80 years ago, in preparation for Operation Tonga – part of Operation Overlord. Later that night, at 23.00 hrs, the first of a total of 46 of these fully-laden aircraft – each carrying 20 Paratroopers of the British 6th Airborne Division, powered by four Bristol-made Hercules engines – was to thunder down the main runway, turn east and barely clear the hills to the south. Their destination: Normandy – and the start of D-Day.



Steeple Ashton Village Shop

Opening Hours - please see page 5 for the current shop opening hours.

Shop telephone: 01380 871 211

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Editorial

Hello everyone - It looks as if the weather will be kind to us on 2nd June for Open Gardens. Lots of very hard work has gone into the preparations for this event - thanks to all who are involved.

The next good news is that the church organ pipe restoration project is now underway - at last! We have Robert and Debra working in the church for an estimated 4 weeks. Gary has removed the pipes into some splendid racks which means not only that they are supported properly but also that we can see the progress of the cleaning and then painting and gilding. He will also clean and 'feed' the wooden case - all very exciting! Do take a look.

Again, many thanks for all your generous contributions to this newsletter. You can contribute anytime throughout the year! (Please see p15) **Helen**

Newsletter Deadlines for 2024

June 18th; July 23rd for August and September

Items for the **next** newsletter should be received by **Tuesday 18th June**. They should be sent to Mrs Helen Montague-Smith, 1A Butts Lane, Steeple Ashton or by email to **helenmontaguesmith8@gmail.com**

All published items solely express **the views of the author** and are the copyright of the author and the newsletter unless otherwise stated.

The Editor would like to remind you that it is up to you, the readers, to supply all news and copy for the newsletter. The sender's name and address need to be received before printing. Telephone 01380 871285.

Inquiries for advertisements in the newsletter should be made to **Bridget Lewis** : email: **adverts4steepleashton@gmail.com** or 01380 871279

Please send your ads by email if possible.

Please note, we do not deliver flyers for advertisers.

STEEPLE ASHTON PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

Parish Council elects new Chair for the municipal year 2024-25

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 1st May 2024 members elected Cllr Jon Tapper as the Chair for 2024-25, with Cllr Rob Leonard being elected as Vice-Chair.

Cllr Jon Tapper introduces himself below:

I became chairman of Steeple Ashton Parish Council in May.

I have lived and worked in the County all of my life, moving to the village with my wife Sharon, in November 2000.

I have worked in the public sector for over 42 years in a number of roles such as Community and Road safety which included working in partnership with other Statutory bodies such as the County Council to address local problems and issues.

I joined the Parish Council in November 2021, and I hoped the knowledge and experience gained during my working career would be of benefit to our local community.

During my time with the Parish Council, I have become involved with matters relating to Highways including footpaths, Community speed watch and liaison with the local policing team which has seen police visits recommence to our village shop and other events held within our village.

My wife and I will often be seen walking our wired haired dachshund Arthur around the village and surrounding areas exploring the beautiful countryside on our doorstep.

I would very much like to thank Robert Leonard for all his commitment and hard work as the previous Chairman of the Parish Council in particular to his focus on our Neighbourhood Plan and the repurposing of St Mary's Recreation field.

I am reassured that he will continue with his enthusiasm to support both myself and the Parish as the Vice Chairman of the Council.

Avon Valley Runners Wiltshire Half Marathon Sunday 24th November 2024

This year's AVR Wiltshire Half Marathon will be taking place on Sunday 24th November at 11am starting and finishing at Station Yard, Edington and passing through Steeple Ashton and Keevil.

Runners will start to arrive from approx. 9.30am and the last runner is expected to cross the finish line at approx. 2pm. The course will be cleared of signage by 4pm. The organisers have informed that the PC that

they appreciate that parking is quite limited in the vicinity of Station Yard but will do all they can to ensure that disruption is kept to an absolute minimum.

Signs will also be put out on the course approximately two weeks in advance of the event with details of the event and contact details.

This will be the 12th running of the hugely successful event which helps to raise much-needed funds for the Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

Planning Applications

The following planning applications were considered at recent PC meetings:

PL/2024/02211 - Raydown Farm House, Edington, Westbury, BA13 4NW - Closure of existing access's and creation of new access – No Objection

PL/2024/02820 - Midbrooks, Southbrook Lane, Steeple Ashton, Trowbridge, BA14 6HW - Demolition of existing dilapidated outbuilding, creation of new stable area and change of use to equestrian – No Objection

PL/2024/02840 - Manor Farm, The Strand, Steeple Ashton, Trowbridge, BA14 6EP - Proposed Apex and Lean-to Structures to cover existing feeding and dung storage areas to prevent the escape of dirty water, proposed apex roof structure to cover existing feeding area yard – Support

Planning Decisions

The following planning decisions have been issued by Wiltshire Council:

Application Ref PL/2023/10566 - Bullen Hill Farm, Ashton Common, Steeple Ashton, Trowbridge, BA14 6DY - Extension & Alterations to Dwelling - Decision: Approve with Conditions

Application Ref PL/2024/02403 - : The Old Dairy, 8 High Street, Steeple Ashton, BA14 6EL - Apple tree – Fell - Decision: No Objection

Application Ref PL/2024/02211 - Raydown Farm House, Edington, Westbury, BA13 4NW - Closure of existing access's and creation of new access - Decision: Approve with Conditions

Parish Council meeting dates 2024

The Parish Council will meet on the following dates, at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall:

Monday 3rd June – Planning and Approval of Year End Accounts

Monday 1st July – Full Council

Monday 5th August – Planning Only

Monday 2nd September – Full Council

Monday 7th October – Planning Only
Monday 4th November – Full Council
Monday 2nd December – Planning Only

Parish Council Contact:

The Clerk can be contacted on 01373 864127 / 07971 987806 or email clerk@steeple-ashton.co.uk. All Councillors have live @steeple-ashton.co.uk email addresses which are also posted on the website.

Find us on Social Media through the **Parish Council page**, we cover many topics of interest to our residents. There is also a **Steeple Ashton Village Discussion Group** and a group called ‘**Steeple Sells**’ for those of you that would like to buy and sell things locally – these pages are not a part of the Parish Council policies or procedures, just a natural extension of social media activities. We would love you to get involved – search for ‘Steeple Ashton’ on Facebook. If you are a village group and need help with your social media or village event promotions, please get in touch with the Parish Clerk at clerk@steeple-ashton.co.uk or 07971 987806.

Find us on the website at <https://steeple-ashton.co.uk/>
~~~ *[www.steeple-ashton.co.uk](http://www.steeple-ashton.co.uk)* ~~~

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**STEEPLE ASHTON VILLAGE SHOP**

**Normal Opening times:**

**Monday – Friday: 7.30am to 4.30pm**

**Saturday: 8.30am – 4pm**

**Sunday: 9am to 12noon**



**Steeple Ashton Village Shop AGM**

All shareholders are invited to attend.  
Drinks and nibbles from 6-30 for 7-00pm start  
Steeple Ashton Village Hall.  
Wednesday 17th July

Thank you to all volunteers who have done extra shifts to help us through the busy holiday period and a **big** thank you to all who have been tidying up the front of the shop ready for the Open Gardens.



## **June was made for Happiness!\***

A busy and fruitful time of year for gardeners, June is truly a delightful month. Do take time to sit and enjoy your garden.

### **What happened in May**

What a fabulous visit to the tranquil **Heale gardens**. Many thanks to Jennie for organising. The **Garden Fair** in the village hall was a resounding success. We raised enough money to pay for a good speaker or two at our future meetings. Watch this space!

### **What's on next:**

#### **Sun 2<sup>nd</sup> June: Steeple Ashton Open Gardens**

Not a SAGE event but a lovely celebration of village gardens that we feel sure you will want to attend! Tickets now on sale online (visit [Ticketsource.co.uk](http://Ticketsource.co.uk)) and in village shop.

**Wed 19<sup>th</sup> June: Visit to the Special Plants Garden.** *Now fully booked*

#### **Thurs 4th July: SAGE Summer Evening in a Courtyard Garden**

Join us for a glass of Pimms at Stable Cottage, Vicarage Lane. There will be a small raffle and donation pot to help cover costs. All welcome!

#### **Sunday 8th September: Picnic in the Park**

SAGE's annual post-summer event in Acreshort Park.  
Details to follow. All welcome!

### **Barney's Garden Jobs for June**

*\*Hoe borders regularly to keep down weeds \*Prune many spring flowering shrubs \*Shade greenhouses to keep them cool and prevent scorch \*Stake tall or floppy plants \*Pinch out side shoots on tomatoes*

[sagecontact851@gmail.com](mailto:sagecontact851@gmail.com)

Why not follow us on Facebook? [www.facebook.com/groups/2548517398732853](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2548517398732853)

*\*Taken from a poem by Annette Wynne 'Why was June made?'*

THE WILTSHIRE GUILD OF SPINNERS, WEAVERS & DYERS  
TEXTILE STUDIOS



# HOMEGROWN

## Textiles Exhibition: A field to fashion project

Our members have been exploring how to produce clothing using locally grown fibres and dyes.

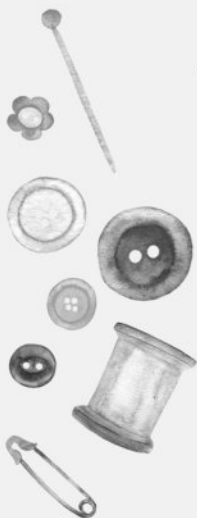
THURS 1ST AUGUST - SUN 4TH AUGUST 2024

10:30 - 16:00

FREE ENTRY

3 ST MARY'S SCHOOL BUILDINGS  
STEEPLE ASHTON, WILTSHIRE BA14 6EU

For further information please see [www.wiltshireguildswd.org](http://www.wiltshireguildswd.org)





## Steeple Ashton Village Hall

MAY 2024

**AGM 2024** - The committee was returned unchanged and is as follows:

**Chairman:** Clive Little

**Treasurer:** Francesca Buffery-King

**Secretary:** Marian Little

**Booking Sec:** Sandra Stevens

Bryan Berrett

Geoff Hyatt

Justine Grace

We would love to welcome new members on to the committee to help with the running of the Village Hall. Skills needed include: IT; DIY; Admin/Secretarial; financial, events organising, but mainly we need people who love the village, want to do positive things for our community, have positive enthusiasm and who value the Village Hall as an important part of our community. We are all working to ensure the hall is there for future generations, so if you feel you can give some time and commitment to help achieve this, please get in touch with either Clive or Marian who can give you more information.

### **EVENTS FEEDBACK:**

**Fish and Chip Quiz Night:** Saturday 23rd March 2024. A really enjoyable evening! The hall was full and there was certainly a buzz in the air, lots of chatter and we all loved the Fish & Chips, delivered to the Village Hall by Robinsons Traditional Fish & Chips in Paxcroft Mead - piping hot with crispy batter! After food and wine, we all partook in Francis Ash's superb quiz! He was an excellent quiz master, quite strict (well, he tried to be, but Steeple Ashton villagers are nothing if not disobedient after a glass of wine!), and the questions were perfectly considered - not too easy, not too hard. It began with "What is the population of Steeple Ashton?" - well, we all knew the answer didn't we??? At least we thought we did! But in the end, it turns out that the newest members of our community, on a table together as The Newbies, had been reading up on their new village and knew exactly how many people there were!!!! They then went on to win the quiz outright!! Well done to them I say and welcome to our village!!! Thanks to your support, we raised just over £400 at this event.

**"From Victorian Squire to Laser Spire":** Friday 19th April 2024. Another excellent and well attended talk by Bryan Berrett, who showed us pictures of our local houses, spoke about the Rood Ashton estate and generally told us things we didn't know about Steeple Ashton, its past inhabitants and ancient buildings. The new people in the village who came along, were really keen to learn about their homes, their street and more about the village as a whole. Following the talk, we enjoyed delicious cheeses and wine and some social time together, making for a very enjoyable evening and raising over £500 for our Kitchen and Bar fund.

**Garden Fair:** Saturday 18th May 2024. Sandie's event was held on a perfect sunny day and the hall hosted lots of stalls inside and out, with interesting garden objects and gardenalia, along with locally grown flowers and veg plants, which were snapped up by those who came. Justine and Marian from the Village Hall committee organised the teas and cakes and were helped by Lucy Jenkins, Sarah Woodward, Sally Strong, Tracy Bolton and Ali Monk - so a huge thankyou to them all for making it go so smoothly. Of course, we wouldn't have had anything to sell if it hadn't been for the generosity of all the lovely ladies who baked cakes for us! Thanks also go to Sandie for generously donating half the



raffle money and some stall sales to the village hall, the other half going to our Village Shop. We are very grateful and so the total raised in all was just over £640! Amazing!

**All funds raised at these events go into our Kitchen & Bar project fund, which has now passed the £10,000 mark. A brilliant effort on the part of the community, thank you. There is still a way to go and we hope you will continue to support us in our endeavours.**

#### **AND COMING UP.....**

**DD80:** Saturday June 8th. 2 - 4pm. Come & join us for a cup of tea, coffee, homemade cake or biscuits. There will be no charge, just enjoy a chat with friends as we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D Day Landings, where so many of our brave soldiers, sailors and airmen gave their lives for our future. We look forward to seeing you.

~~~~~

LOST PROPERTY



UMBRELLAS : WILL BE TAKEN TO CHARITY IN THE COMING WEEK.

GREEN PEEKED WOOLLEN HAT: Has been left in the hall for several weeks.

BLACK PADDED JACKET: Also left in the hall at the same time as above hat.

BOOKINGS: Sandra Stevens 07827 291945 email: steepleshtonvh@hotmail.com
TREASURER: Francesca Buffery-King email: treasurer@steepleshtonvh.org.uk
INVOICES: Justine Grace. Email: accounts@steepleshtonvh.org.uk
GEN. ENQ: Marian Little (Sec) 01380 871161 email: secretary@steepleshtonvh.org.uk
Website: www.steepleshtonvh.org.uk

Useful Information

Postal Collections:

Longs Arms - Weekdays - 4.15pm; Saturday - 10am

Newleaze - Weekdays - 9am; Saturday - 7am

Great Hinton - Weekdays - 9am; Saturday - 7am

Mobile Library Visits - Wednesdays; Longs Arms - 11.00 - 12noon;
Ashton Common Bus Stop - 3.35pm - 4.00pm
June 12th, June 26th

STEEPLE ASHTON
METHODIST CHURCH



COFFEE MORNING

SATURDAY,

22nd JUNE 2024

10.30 - 12.00

BRING & BUY



ALL WELCOME

Report from the Great Hinton Ladies Club.

Our chosen charity for this year is Freewheelers Emergency Blood Bike Service also known as Bloodbikers. Pete from the group came in September and told us about the work undertaken by this group of volunteers on behalf of the NHS. They transport blood, drugs, breast milk and other essentials between hospitals and patients and offer 24/7 cover not only on bikes but also in the office organising bikers and routes.

Sadly in October Sandra Crumpler, our chairperson left the village. We managed to arrange a surprise party for her. We enjoyed tea, cake and fizz then gave her a memory box full of small objects to remind her of her time in the village and her involvement in most village activities.

We made felt Christmas tree decorations in November and in December 26 of us dined at the Lamb on the Strand.

We had our gourmet evening in January, this time the theme was veggie food and very delicious it was too.

In February we had a Tai Chi taster session, bending, stretching, balancing with some brain gym and meditation. I think everyone enjoyed the experience.

At our AGM in March it was decided that our next charity will be supporting various jobs that need doing in the village and a small group is being set up to undertake these next year.

In June some of us will take a scenic route to Marden (near Pewsey) and have lunch at the wonderful Millstream pub.

Our fete will take place on July 6th starting at 2 30.

Susie Selwyn-Smith

Forget-me-Nots

The AGM held on 18th May was well attended, with the meeting beginning with everyone enjoying a Magnum “Euphoria “ ice cream lolly, before the Chairman welcomed members and opened the meeting.

The Treasurer and Secretary gave their reports for the past year, then the Chairman reminisced about events and meetings held during her 28 years as Captain of the Good Ship Forget-me-Nots .

Winston Drewitt was thanked for his services as Treasurer, and Jennie Drewitt for her services as Programme Organiser, whilst the Secretary was thanked for taking the minutes and organising a prize for

everyone at each raffle. The Chairman thanked members for attending, Rachel for tea making, and those who help with washing up.

Gift vouchers were presented by the Chairman to Jennie, Winston and Glynnis, in appreciation of their work for the Club, and in turn the Secretary presented a voucher to the Chairman with thanks from everyone for heroically agreeing to continue as Chairman for the coming year, Deo volente.

Jennie has organised a varied and interesting Programme for the next few months, with a musical afternoon at the next meeting on 19th June by a group of musicians known as Sloejam, and the much anticipated Summer Lunch on 17th July in the Hall. In the Autumn Sheila Kemp will show us the art of card making, there will be Bingo and Buffet Tea, and a Christmas Lunch on 18th Dec.

A very pleasant afternoon was rounded off by a quiz, which engendered a lot of head scratching, and tea and biscuits, with everyone winning a prize in the raffle

More info please phone Gloria on 01380/870593 or Glynnis on 01225/775681. Visitors always very welcome, come along to a meeting (2.30pm every third Wed, in the Village Hall. You will find a very relaxed, jovial and informal Club!

METHODIST CHURCH

When fear brings hope.

It's that time of the year when the weather seems to give us thunderstorms and usually we have some foreknowledge; however storms in life though natural are always unexpected. They appear without warning and in seconds our life can change. In the middle of the storm, when we feel scared, helpless and alone, we are tempted to forget that God is there for us. We still have faith but fear and doubt keep us paralysed, panicked and even unable to look for help. In some circumstances, we can be completely taken over by the storm, give up our hope and perish. How to deal with the unpredictable? Normally in our despair, we would say, 'I am not prepared for this; I do not know what to do!'

Away at boarding school I was always afraid when a thunderstorm approached. I would hide under the covers and wait for the storm to pass or hopefully fall asleep. The new day, fresh and clear would be such a comfort.

However, when there is no immediate solution to the storms in our lives, we can still be moved by faith and leap into the dark. Even crawling in the dark, faith will move us towards salvation!

Faith in action is the answer when we feel powerless. Faith will certainly draw us closer to our helper, our Saviour Jesus! In all times, all ages in the past, present and future, he will remain our Saviour.

Church Diary

All services are at 9.15 am unless otherwise stated. Please come along and join us. You can be assured of a warm welcome, and a time to chat, plus a cup of tea or coffee after the service. If there is anyone for whom you would like prayers to be said, please leave details in the post box at the front door, and they will be included in the Intercessory Prayers on Sunday.

JUNE

| | | | |
|-----------|----------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| SUNDAY | 2nd | 9.15 am | Izzie Smears |
| WEDNESDAY | 5th | 2.30 pm | CAMEO |
| SUNDAY | 9th | 9.15 am | Rev. Peggy Kabonde - Holy Communion |
| WEDNESDAY | 12th | 10.30 am | Reflections & Fellowship |
| THURSDAY | 13th | 2.30 pm | CAMEO |
| SUNDAY | 16th | 9.15 am | Ed Colling |
| THURSDAY | 20th | 2.30 pm | CAMEO |
| SATURDAY | 22nd | 10.30 – 12.00 | COFFEE MORNING |
| SUNDAY | 23rd | 9.15 am | Patti Harrison |
| WEDNESDAY | 26th | 10.30 am | Reflections & Fellowship |
| THURSDAY | 27th | 2.30 pm | CAMEO |
| SUNDAY | 30th | 10.30 am | SECTOR SERVICE AT WHITLEY |
| SUNDAY | July 7th | 9.15 am | Izzie Smears |

C A M E O (Come And Meet Each Other) A Warm Space

An open invitation for anyone who would like to meet others for a cuppa and a social 2.30 – 4.00 pm on a Thursday afternoon at Steeple Ashton Methodist Church – All welcome.

REFLECTIONS & FELLOWSHIP

A group who meet on the 2nd & 4th Wednesday mornings of the month, to have a cup of coffee, and look at parts of the Bible to see how it affects our lives. This is an informal group led by our own Izzie Smears. Feel free to come along, and try it. Any queries speak to Izzie on 01380 870538.

CATHOLIC NEWS

**Saint John the Baptist, Saint Bernadette & Saint Thomas More
Working in Communion for Mission**

Parish Priest: Canon Thomas Finnegan

TELEPHONE: 01225 752152

www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk

Diocese of Clifton Registered Charity No 1170168

**Please see below the usual weekly timings of our Masses:
but please check newsletter for changes.**

**St John the Baptist - Trowbridge
*Sunday & Weekday Masses:***

Saturday 6pm
Sunday 10.30pm
Monday 9am
Tuesday 6pm
Friday 9am

**St Bernadette's - Westbury.
*Mass times will be:***

Sunday 9am
Thursday 10am

**St Thomas More, Bradford-
on-Avon**

Mass times will be:

Saturday 4pm
Wednesday 9am

Live streaming:

All masses are streamed live on www.Churchservices.tv or on
You Tube 'Mass in Trowbridge'

Parish Newsletter:

This is available weekly on the Parish website

www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk

Important Diocesan News:

Canon Tom's Announcement: As we heard at all Masses last weekend, Bishop Bosco has asked Canon Tom to take over as Parish Priest in Sacred Heart Parish and St. Anthony Parish in Bristol. We wish him well in his new ministry and we look forward to meeting with his successor Fr. Richard Elson. We hope he enjoys his ministry and time with us as much as Canon Tom has.

St Mary's Church, Steeple Ashton

Services for the month of May

| | | |
|------------------|---------|---|
| Sunday 2nd June | 8am | Rev Richard Hunt, Holy Communion |
| Sunday 9th June | 8am | Rev Tony Longdon, Holy Communion |
| Sunday 9th June | 10.30am | Richard Havergal, Family service |
| Sunday 16th June | 11am | Rev Tony Longdon, Holy Communion |
| Sunday 23rd June | 8. am | Rev Tony Longdon, Holy Communion |
| Sunday 30th June | 10am | Combined Benefice service, St Nicholas North Bradley, Rev Tony Longdon |

The organ pipe restoration project is finally underway in the church. The north aisle is out of bounds during this work but services and events are not affected. You are welcome to go into the church to see the work.

Inclusion

Seaside places have lots of smells that you don't often get inland. Specifically, if it is a fishing port, the fishy smell might be very strong, and not in a pleasant way.

Jesus started his ministry in the fishing town of Capernaum beside the Sea of Galilee. In a hot climate the smell would have been even stronger, making the harbour a place to avoid. But that is where Jesus went to call his first followers. He didn't go to the temple or synagogue to recruit religious leaders. He didn't go to the Roman fort to recruit strong soldiers. He didn't go to the town centre to recruit rich merchants and business-people. They would all follow him in due course.

Instead, Jesus went where other people stayed clear and called the fishermen who worked hard for a day's living. They followed him, and as we read the stories of Jesus in the Bible, we see the great contribution they – Peter, Andrew, James and John - made to his work.

In short, Jesus included the people others might ignore. That sense of inclusion is all the stronger as we begin the Sundays of Trinity. The Trinity embraces God the Father in heaven, God the Son who came to this earth, and God the Holy Spirit binding heaven and earth. It includes everyone who listens to God's call, whether in earth's sweetest or smelliest places.

Richard Havergal

More Useful Information

St Mary's Church PCC supports the newsletter - which used to be the Parish Magazine - and there is a separate account for the newsletter

which is used to pay printing costs.

Please put the word NEWSLETTER in the box marked Reference.

LloydsBank: Sort Code 30 98 75.

Account Name: PCC of Steeple Ashton.

Account Number: 00320207

Should you wish to contribute to the Church by direct debit or donation

you can use these details and indicate where your money should go. **Ed**

Summer at St Mary's Church

Friday June 7 th:

Military Wives Choir

Proceeds to Flower Fund and Church Reordering

7:30pm

Admission £10: Wine bar

Creation Weekend

Saturday June 8 th:

Children's activities/wildlife count

Saturday Flower count and Butterfly day

(live caterpillars for children who attend

As last year)

Sunday June 9th:

Family Service 10:30am

July 19th: Bratton Silver Band

Proceed for the Band

7:30pm

Donations: refreshments.

Free tickets also via website.

Patronal Festival

September 7th-8th

Watch this space

Tower Trips

Teddies & teas at St Leonard's
Saturday 6th July, 2 - 4pm



Do you have a bear who dares?



Is your teddy brave enough to attempt the St
Leonard's church zip wire challenge?



Teas & cakes,
Raffle,

Face painting and a lot of fun!

Tower trips to view the bells



Donations for St Leonard's roof fund.

Keevil Primary School News - May 2024

This month Keevil Primary School received some brilliant news, which we are delighted to share. The school received a SSAT Educational Outcomes Award for Exceptional Pupil Attainment. The Key Stage 2 SSAT award was given to Keevil Primary School in recognition of being in the top 20% of schools nationally for pupil attainment in 2023.

Our Key Stage 2 children experienced two years of significantly disrupted education owing to two covid lockdowns that closed schools, plus long-term restrictions that were in place across the subsequent two years.

Not only did the children have to deal with the huge social impacts resulting from Covid, but at the start of term, all pupils were behind educationally. The final results underline what a fantastic job our teachers and support staff have done to help them achieve these results, and they fully deserve this special recognition.

In other news, Keevil School's free preschool Forest School began in May. The Children made clay animals, balanced on the timber trail, found fossils and dinosaur bones buried in the soil, and made outdoor music. However, jumping in our muddy puddle seemed to be the most popular activity!

We are hugely grateful to Wickes in Trowbridge for supporting the Forest School through their Community Project funding scheme. They donated many new tools and a new water butt for our pupils and pre-school children to use during their Forest School sessions.

The pre-school forest school sessions take place in our wonderful Forest School, located just behind the main School building. Please call the school office to book onto the next available dates: Wednesday 5th June, Wednesday 3rd July 2024. The sessions are completely free of charge, aimed at 3 to 4 year old children and their parents/carers, start at 1.30pm, and run for 90 minutes.



Shakespeare
LIVE
registered charity
no. 1195756

William Shakespeare's

Macbeth

1st - 6th July 2024

"Something wicked this way comes..."

*35th
Year*

*Covered tiered seating in
a scenic country garden*

www.shakespearelive.com
07780 938107

*Cleeve House, Seend,
Wiltshire, SN12 6PG*

celebrating 80th anniversary

A faded, black and white photograph of soldiers wading across a beach during a D-Day landing, with a large ship in the background.

D DAY CONCERT

featuring

The Military Wives Choir

and

Steeple Belles

(Andrews Sisters tribute)

Friday 7th June 2024

St Mary's Church

Steeple Ashton

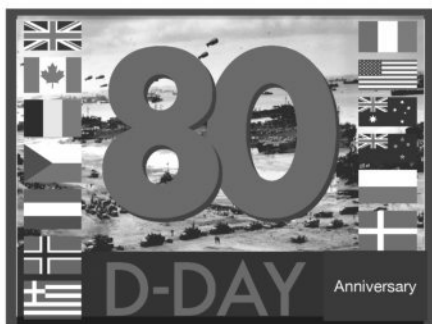
7.30pm

doors open 7.00pm

refreshments available

tickets £10 available from Steeple Ashton shop
or ring 01380 870696 for details

in aid of St Mary's Church and flower fund



Steeple Ashton Village Hall

INVITES YOU TO JOIN US

FOR

TEA, CAKE & BISCUITS

ON

SATURDAY 8th JUNE 2024

between 2pm and 4pm

FREE

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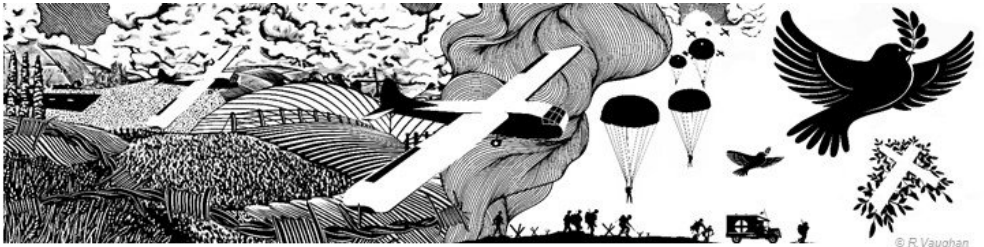
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**To mark the 80th Anniversary of the D Day landings
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D-Day 80 KEEVIL

Wednesday 5th June 3-7pm MILITARY AIRCRAFT DISPLAY - KEEVIL AIRFIELD

Entry via Steeple Ashton main gate. Open to villages local to the airfield. Military aircraft include Apache, Wildcat, Merlin, Watchkeeper RPAS plus Defence fire trucks and military vehicles. Good coffee & refreshments from the Little Pink Door trailer.

DAILY Thursday 6th - Saturday 8th June

11am-4pm KEEVIL VILLAGE ART & WARTIME MEMORABILIA EXHIBITION

In St Leonard's Church, enjoy coffee tea and cake while taking in the exhibition amongst lovely red white & blue flower displays

Thursday 6th June

11am **POETRY FOR SCHOOLS:** Keevil School join the national commemoration.

6:30pm **CHURCH BELLS RING FOR PEACE** St Leonard's Keevil & St Mary's Steeple Ashton join national commemorations.

7-11pm NIGHT at THE LOCAL

Open to all the family, no need to book - with licensed bar, singalongs around the piano, jacket 'n' beans supper (free with first bar purchase). Feel free to come in 1940s dress! Keevil village hall. 9:15pm **INTERNATIONAL TRIBUTE & LIGHTS OF PEACE**

PROCESSION: part of national commemorations - bring a torch or lamp if you're joining in!

Friday 7th June

7:30pm Vintage DANCE NIGHT & Fish 'n' Chip supper with THE HUMMINGBIRDS

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Saturday 8th June 10:30am-4pm AIRFIELD RACE & GAMES DAY

Entry via the field gate on Martin's Road Keevil. Open to villages local to the airfield. 11am: 5k & 10k runs, Noon: Children's events, 12.30pm: casual perimeter walking/cycling, 2:30pm Duathlon. Entry for all events is free. Walking or cycling to the village is advised - if you drive you **MUST** pre-register your vehicle at <https://buytickets.at/keevilvillage/1237106> Good coffee and refreshments available from the Little Pink Door trailer (field-side). Only personal hydration/snacks on airfield.

2pm WARTIME FAMILY PICNIC You can picnic on the Banfield Recreation Ground any time during the Games Day, and from 2pm the Keevil WI team will be providing a **FAMILY PICNIC** of tea, coffee and jam sandwiches (it is 'wartime' after all) for Keevil villagers - feel free to bring your own additional picnic items to enjoy...

Sunday 9th June 3.30pm SERVICE OF COMMEMORATION Followed by tea & cake in St Leonard's.

Full details of all events at keevilvillage.com/whats-on/d-day80/. Except for at the church (where donations and profits from refreshments will go to St Leonard's) there will be collections at all our DD80 events for the SSAFA (Soldiers, Sailors & Airmen Families Association). Any profits from Dance Night and donations for car-parking will help to support costs of the other village events.

Great Hinton Heritage Group

The group enjoyed an afternoon finding out more about the houses of the village, with Malcolm Burch giving us a very informative talk on Barn Cottage, it's interesting structure and the many changes it has seen over the years. Afterwards, we went out to look at a number of properties down Back Street many of which we have at present little information about. This proved a very enjoyable and informative activity and aroused several points of interest which will lead us on to further enquiries.. During our stroll, we also looked at some of the local flora. Most of the plants we discovered were typical of those you might come across in a woodland or hedgerow habitat such as herb bennet, yellow archangel, wood sedge, greater celandine and enchanter's nightshade. Hopefully with time we can build up a fuller picture of the village flora. By the way, we are still collecting information about all the houses of the village so if you have any information you would like to share please contact us at foysfoys@yahoo.co.uk We are also still gathering peoples' reminiscences of their Covid experiences which can be sent to carolburch@btinternet.com Our next meeting is on Thursday 13th June at 2.30 pm at the village hall when weather permitting we hope to view a few more of the village properties for clues to their origins. Please come along if you're interested in finding more about the hamlet with a lot of history waiting to be discovered.

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Rosemary 870119 colingwyrddrugog@gmail.com

Bryan writes...

To mark the 80th anniversary of D-Day, I have produced this revised version of an article I wrote for the June 2014 issue of the Newsletter. Much of the information has been gleaned from pages 61 to 114, Volume 2 of 'A Book of Keevil' (1998), published by The Keevil Society, with their kind permission.

After dropping the Paratroopers in Normandy during the early hours, the surviving planes – crewed by members of 38 Group made up of airmen from the RAF, RAAF, RNZAF and RCAF – returned to RAF Keevil, and their crews tried to sleep. By the evening of D-Day, the men were climbing once more into their refuelled and reserviced aircraft, and taking off again for France at 19.00 hrs. Towing Airspeed Horsa Gliders loaded with Light Infantry Troops and equipment, and maintaining an altitude of 1,000 ft, the Stirlings headed across the Channel. The first of the gliders to be released by its pilot landed west of the Caen Canal, at 21.30 hrs. It was quickly joined by others. The soldiers' task: to unload and set up six and 17-pounder anti-tank guns, to defend the Pegasus Bridge.



RAAF Pilot Officer Ron Minchin & crew in their Stirling named Whisky, towing a Horsa on a practice flight at RAF Keevil (Ron survived the war, & with his wife Shirley would make well-received return visits to the village of Keevil)

Today, in the villages of Steeple Ashton and Keevil, it is difficult to imagine the extent and impact of the infrastructure and operations which accompanied the new aerodrome here during the Second World War. Most of the original 400 or so buildings and other constructions which formed RAF Keevil have since been demolished. They were built to accommodate

and service more than 2,500 permanent staff, with several of the buildings being situated in lanes to the south and east of Steeple Ashton – areas which for years had been utilised only for farming. Before the airfield's construction, Acreshort Lane for instance, was little more than a stony track.

A wartime Location Plan of RAF Keevil shows at least 17 numbered sites, with the airfield itself as “Site No. 1”. A large Bomb Stores – “Site No. 2” – is indicated just to the south of the airfield, with numerous other sites depicted across the south of Steeple Ashton and beyond. Accommodation units were situated around the south end of Acreshort Lane, in Southbrook Lane, off Edington Road and off Drove Lane. Some were used to house displaced persons and Polish refugees after the war. A few of these still stand – having been used variously as pig sties, chicken sheds, football changing rooms, and more recently, commercial units. Nissen Huts can be seen today on the east side of Edington Road, just past the village sign. Lengths of wartime concrete track are also still in place at various locations, notably Drove Lane and Whitelawn Lane, in the area off Edington Road which lies beyond the south end of Acreshort Lane. A Nissen Hut which was once the hospital and mortuary still stands off Whitelawn Lane, and a complex of underground air-raid shelters and other brick-built buildings existed near the end of Acreshort Lane until the early 1990s.

One of our late Steeple Ashton residents to have had a good recollection of wartime life in England was lifelong village resident Mary Ashby, who passed away in 2021 aged 91. Miss Ashby was a young teenager during the early 1940s, living with her parents Victor and Winifred in the grocery shop at the entrance to Acreshort Lane. Mary could recall, in the weeks preceding D-Day, seeing Airspeed Horsa Gliders held in the fields on the south side of Hinton Lane. Also, from the time approaching the Normandy invasion, she clearly remembered a manned checkpoint – comprised of some oil drums supporting a barrier rail – being in place in the High Street, next to the Black Barn on the corner of Acreshort Lane. This blocked off the High Street to the south of her parents' shop, along with Acreshort Lane. Mary said how, in cold weather, soldiers manning the barrier would light fires at the base of the wall fronting the Black Barn – so her father Vic soon took to allowing the duty-sentry use of his shop's front porch!



D-Day, RAF Keevil

At the Keevil airbase, leisure and entertainment was limited due to official restrictions, but both the Officers' Mess and the Sergeants' Mess held the occasional dance or social evening. These would be attended by both village and WAAF girls, plus others from the local towns. The Dance Hall was used as a chicken shed after the war, and now forms part of Brian and Joyce Pearce's caravan site at Raydown Leaze on Edington Road. This old hall is amongst several original wartime buildings on the Pearce's site.

Earlier in the war, while the USAF were based at RAF Keevil, some stars and entertainers apparently visited the base. Intriguingly, it has been claimed by some that Glen Miller and his orchestra, Bing Crosby and Vera Lynn all performed there at different times. Outside of the base, the airmen tended to "swamp the Longs Arms" as one US veteran remembers, adding: "The locals treated us very well indeed." Further afield, the men used the George Hotel in Trowbridge – a fine 16th-century building in Fore Street, the site of an inn since at least 1467 (now a Clarks shoe shop; it was closed and gutted in 1981). Establishments in Devizes, Westbury and Bradford-on-Avon were also frequented.

Opened in the June of 1942, RAF Keevil was used from September to November by the US Army Air Corps (later renamed USAF). They utilised

the base as a staging destination for Dakotas en route to North Africa. In 1943 the airfield was occupied by the popular US unit the 153rd Observation Squadron – flying Boston Light Bombers, ex-RAF Spitfires, P51 Mustangs, plus Piper L-4s. Squadron members would often hand out sweets and chocolate to the children of Keevil and Steeple Ashton, and organise parties for them on the base. Some lucky youngsters were even allowed to sit in the cockpit of the Douglas Boston.

In December 1943 the US 363rd Fighter Group arrived, and spent a short time here waiting for P51 Mustangs – which they did not receive until the unit had moved on to Kent in the February of 1944.

The next phase of activity at the airfield began in March 1944, with the arrival of 196 and 299 Squadrons of 38 Group RAF, and Army Pilots of the Glider Pilot Regiment. As mentioned earlier, various British and Commonwealth aircrew flew Stirling Heavy Bombers out of Keevil on the 5th/6th June. They also took part in the Arnhem operation – codenamed Market Garden – in the September of 1944. Heavy losses and casualties of both Army and Air Force personnel were incurred during the operation, and a number of aircraft were lost. In her book ‘Our Wiltshire Village’ (1989), the late Betty Smith – another of our residents to have had vivid wartime memories – recalls walking through the farmyard of Manor Farm at the end of The Strand with her husband Ivor while he was on leave during September 1944, and being astonished to see the fields “full of wings” – Horsa Gliders ready for Operation Market Garden. “A week later” she writes, “we were gone and so were they.” After the operation, she was told how St Mary’s Church tower had looked “like Eros in the middle of Piccadilly Circus, with planes and gilders flying around instead of London buses and taxis!”



Stirlings & Horsas leave RAF Keevil for Arnhem

During this time, 196 and 299 Squadrons also flew Stirlings out of Keevil for various clandestine operations over France. Transporting members of the SAS, SOE and others, they would take off and fly by moonlight, maintaining a low-level altitude towards their secret destinations. It was vital that they reached their location at the pre-determined time, as lights and code signals would only be switched on for two minutes by the Resistance waiting below. A successful flight home to Keevil would then be dependent upon the evasion of Luftwaffe night-fighters. One veteran of 299 Squadron recalled, on more than one occasion in 1944, walking into the George in Trowbridge, and being reunited with “SAS and others” whom he had previously dropped in France. Having completed their missions, they had returned to England by reaching the south coast of France or Gibraltar, where torpedo boats from Malta had then picked them up.

From October 1944, RAF Keevil was used as a training base by No 22 Heavy Glider Conversion Unit – flying twin-engined Albemarle coupled with Waco Hadrian Gliders. By June 1945, the airfield was occupied by 61 Operation Training Unit, training newly-qualified pilots to fly Spitfires, and then later, Mustangs.

From its beginning as a fully-operational base in the summer of 1942, Keevil Airfield was used as a site to assemble Supermarine Spitfires. The aircraft were put together in the large Final Assembly Hanger, accessed through the farmyard of Manor Farm at the end of The Strand. The Griffon and Merlin engines were made by Rolls-Royce. Various other parts were manufactured locally in small workshops – such as the Barnes Steamroller works at Southwick – and then sent to the new Vickers factory in Bradley Road, Trowbridge, also built during 1942. Vickers constructed the wings, built and fitted out the fuselages, and installed Merlin engines. From Trowbridge, the fuselages and wings would be sent to Keevil for assembly, where propellers and Griffon engines were also fitted. (The Bradley Road building eventually became owned by engineering company Hattersley Heaton. It was demolished in 1996, and the area is now a retail park).

The new planes were made ready for flight at the Final Assembly Hanger, and then flight tested from the airfield. They would finally leave Keevil to be delivered to RAF squadrons around the country, with many flown out by female pilots. A total of 569 Spitfires were assembled here

during the war – all making their maiden flights just a few hundred yards from the centre of Steeple Ashton. Keevil-built Spitfires were used in Europe, the Far East, and the North-African desert – and a handful apparently survived to see combat during post-war hostilities between Israel and Egypt, with both nations' forces flying the aircraft.



Spitfire Final Assembly Hanger, RAF Keevil

When the Second World War finally came to an end, RAF Keevil soon wound down its activities – and July 1947 saw it ceasing to be a fully-staffed base. The 1950s gradually witnessed the airfield becoming a semi-abandoned, partially derelict, and quite desolate area. It was certainly used far less by the military than it is today – and access was virtually unrestricted. As children, my friends and I would use the area as a great adventure playground – riding our bicycles around the perimeter track (and later, motorcycles), roller-skating on the flat roof of the Control Tower, and exploring the many abandoned buildings. I particularly recall the excitement and apprehension of feeling our way through a series of dark, underground bunker rooms, ankle-deep in water (long-since safely sealed off!).

In 1956 and 1957, Keevil was used by RAF Hullavington Training School, for pilot training on jet-powered Provost aircraft. Instructors flew the planes over from their north-Wiltshire base, and the pupils commenced their “circuits and bumps” – at the airfield which just a few years before, had been alive with the sound of Stirlings, Spitfires and the preparation for armed operations in the largest conflict in human history.

During my research for this article, I have read various accounts of extreme acts of bravery, endeavour and endurance carried out by servicemen in wartime operations from RAF Keevil. To choose between these servicemen, and

single out one account to reproduce here, would prove almost impossible – and would perhaps do a disservice to the others. Therefore, as a tribute to all those involved at the Keevil airbase during the conflict – including the many anonymous military and civilian men and women who served there – I have decided to finish with a poem. These verses appear, undated and with no author’s name, on page 109, Volume 2 of ‘A Book of Keevil’ (1998). They were written by a post-war flying instructor from RAF Hullavington, apparently reflecting alone at Keevil Airfield whilst his pupils trained in the skies above. (“Long legged” refers to the Stirling’s extra-long undercarriage. “Hercules” was the name of the Stirling’s engines, and “Pundit” was the homing-beacon for returning aircraft.)

Bryan Berrett

Flight from an old Airfield

*Bright morning sun, a sky of cyanine,
Head pillowed on a parachute I lie.
Deep in this long neglected summer
green,
Watching white cumulus drift through
half closed eyes*

*Here once, a pale blue ensign caught the
breeze
When long legged Stirlings flew the
glory days.
The tumult of their thundering Hercules’
Rumbled across the fields and far away.*

*All’s peaceful now, those desperate years
long past
Where crumbling huts and quiet
runways lie,
An empty hanger, resting in the grass,
Deserted Nissens open to the sky.*

*The silent watch tower stares through
shattered eyes
Its signals square now rank and
overgrown.
No duty pilot scans the anxious skies,
Or friendly Pundit call the stragglers
home.*

*So many winter rains and summer suns
Since they hauled down its flag and
marched away.*

*Now long abandoned, overlooked, all
duty done,
A part of England’s history in decay.*

*Yet there are echoes on the wind that
some will hear.*

*Faint voices singing half forgotten songs.
Young laughter drifting back across the
years,
Long shadows of the old days lingering
on.*

*Soon upward soaring larks I must
outclimb*

*And, for a moment, glint in the summer
sun.*

*As dauntless Stirlings did in that bloody
time,
I’ll too head north of east and soon be
gone.*

*As my departing clamour ebbs away,
Silence will, once more wrap this quiet
place.*

*Its ghosts can live again their gallant
days
Of brave assault and resolute endeavour.*