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Oundle Chronicle

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Bridge weight restrictions introduce traffic chaos



The new bollards were damaged within days of installation

Tom Pilsbury

The first phase of the preparations for the work to repair Oundle's North Bridge has been completed.

Northamptonshire Highways told the Oundle Town Council in late April: "We are currently aiming for the second week of July to start works." Because the bridge is a listed structure, Highways is required to obtain listed building consent for all work.

Last year, an inspection and further investigations revealed that much of the bridge's structure had become weakened and refurbishment work was needed.

To protect the structure while repair work is carried out, a three-tonne weight restriction has been placed on the bridge. Bollards for vehicle width restrictions were also installed.

The works for the width
Continued on page 2

Fletton Field campaign soldiers on

When the Oundle Recreation and Green Spaces Group started the campaign to purchase Fletton Field in April 2018, Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) had informed them via their agent, Connells, that they wished a swift sale, and that a decision on the successful bid would be made by August 2018.

The group submitted a bid and organised a crowdfunding appeal with 31 December 2018 as the closing date.

It was discovered, however, that NCC had not submitted a section 77 application which would allow them to dispose of a former school playing field. An application was belatedly submitted, and despite two previous consultations having already been completed, a third consultation was announced with a deadline of 18 April 2019.

The campaign raised £229,460 towards a target bid of £280,357, but had to allow the crowdfunding appeal to expire on 31st December.

Andy Jeavons, Chair of ORGCG said: "We are massively grateful for the support from the town. The people we have met at markets and fairs have shown a huge amount of support."

The group's bid to purchase the field remains on the table, with the significant financial support offered from Oundle Town Council and Oundle School. If the bid is ultimately successful, a charity will be established for the management of the field in perpetuity by a trust. In response to a letter from MP Tom Purslove, NCC has indicated its intention to seek planning permission for building on the site, but has given no indication of a revised timescale.

Festival fun begins at the Vintage Fair

Erica Pascoe

Oundle will be hosting a bold new event this month, the Oundle Vintage Funfair on Saturday 18th May from 10am-4pm in the Market Place.

The action-packed day will include a vintage market and antique fair, church tower and clock tours, a display of classic vehicles, tower abseiling, a bike rally, and a performance stage. For children there will be a teddy bear parachute jump and a vintage fun fair with rides and traditional games.

The Vintage Market and Antique Fair will be the centrepiece of the festival with 60 stalls, including vintage and antique fashion, homeware, vinyl, jewellery, posters, maps, furniture and much more. Live music on the performance stage will provide entertainment from 11am-6pm, with an array of musicians and performers. Vans and stalls with street food, alongside the usual shops and eateries will provide plenty to eat.

To kick off the weekend, on Friday 17 May there will also be a 1950s inspired dance in the church, with a full bar, ice cream sodas, 'rock & roll food', and live music and dancing from 7.30pm. Vintage 1950s dress is optional, however there are prizes for best dressed.

Booked tours beginning at 9.00am will offer the chance to climb the winding staircase into the bell ringing chamber where the clock mechanism can be viewed. Continuing on through the tower, the tour will take visitors to the viewing platform at the top of the church where there is access down a wooden staircase to the hidden 'Room in the Spire'. (If the peregrine falcon has laid eggs in a nest on the tower by then, the tours will unfortunately have to be cancelled.)

For motoring enthusiasts, a classic vehicle display will be parked along West Street and New Street showing off a range of cars such as Aston Martins, Ferraris, Mercedes, Jaguars and Lamborghinis. For

two-wheel excitement the annual Oundle Classic Bike Rally will follow two different routes at 9am and 10am.

The entire event hopes to raise more than £14,000 to repair the clock and bells of St Peter's Church.

The idea to raise money for the town clock and church bells was born during an Oundle Business Association meeting when the town clock repair was discussed. Chairman of the organising committee, Philip Amps said: "A number of us who were born and bred in Oundle recognised that our town clock and church bells were rather special to us and we should do something about helping to raise the money required for the repair."

Much of the community has got involved in the cause, including the many businesses on the committee. Philip Amps said: "Even those businesses who are not on the committee are helping out with sponsorship or providing support by supplying services."

The Clock of St Peter's

Erica Pascoe

The clock in St Peter's tower is believed to date to the 19th century. It is a flat bed, three train clock which is weight driven with a pendulum along with a six foot cast-iron skeleton dial backed with copper. The left section refers to a gravity drop hammer that strikes the hours on the tenor bell and the right section links to various treble bells chiming the Westminster chimes.

In 1974 the clock was converted to automatic winding, leaving the clock still driven by weights, but the weights were wound by motors rather than by hand. This required the installation of bulky chains and frames to harness the winding mechanism, which was powered by electricity.

Because the mains had no back

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The Chronicle Team



THE TEAM

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Bridge continued from page 1

restrictions to Oundle North Bridge started on 25th March and took approximately six days. The A605 and Barnwell Road junction signals were operational in mid March.

The early phase of the road works caused significant traffic disruption on the A605 with long delays while the new traffic lights were installed. One commuter said: "It took me two hours to get from Clopton to Oundle."

To avoid this traffic, motorists used short cuts to avoid the heavy traffic. Many cars took a "rat run" diversion through Pilton, travelling at great speed over a small humped back bridge and along the narrow country roads, through Stoke Doyle, causing chaos along the single lane through the village.

The width restrictions on the bridge have caused further aggravation, with some drivers complaining about the slow speed at which some vehicles inch through the bollards, which were damaged by collisions from cars within days of being installed.

Heavy goods vehicles must now enter town via Oundle's South Bridge, which underwent a lengthy repair programme and was strengthened in 2016.

Northamptonshire County Council confirmed that it had received £6.7m from the government for road maintenance. Of the amount handed to the county council, £1.3m will be used to repair and strengthen the North Bridge.

Clock continued from page 1

up, there have been problems during power cuts and the yearly seasonal clock changes.

Ian Goldsmith, the Chairman of St Peter's Tower Group said the clock had become unreliable, with health and safety issues with the old winding unit. Damage had also been caused to the hammers during bell ringing activities.

Clockmakers and restorers, Smith of Derby were enlisted to assess and carry out the work. Their solution was to replace the automatic winding system with a modern version, resulting in the return of the clock to its original operating method. This new system operates at a lower voltage, resolving safety issues. The support of a rechargeable battery back allows continuous operation during all normal power failures. The bell hammers were also repaired with a new controller installed to pull off hammers for bell ringing, with lights which indicate when these are operational.

It was also found that the clock dial was suffering from some corrosion and the paint was in a poor condition, which means taking the

County council resumes responsibility for road gritting

Patrick Boyle

Conservative leader Cllr Matt Golby announced that Northamptonshire County Council will reverse its precautionary gritting policy.

Last October, the NCC decided to reduce the total length of roads gritted from 1954km to 1543km (a reduction of 21%) in order to save £475,000. The gritting fleet was reduced from 26 to 19 vehicles, and the NCC placed greater responsibility on individual parish councils to resolve their own gritting-related problems.

However, adverse winter weather in January exposed the deficiencies of the policy and resulted in car accidents on roads that had not been gritted.

According to Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment Cllr Ian Morris, "Our (NCC's) increasingly stabilised financial position alongside the

invaluable assistance of our partner Northampton Borough Council means we are able to put extra money into the service to make improvements."

In addition, a new 'intermediate' gritting network will be implemented within the current financial year in order to maximise coverage.

The grit is a combination of grit salt and molasses which gives a higher resistance to being washed away by rain or blown away by the wind. Salt dissolves into the water and lowers its freezing point so it will remain liquid at temperatures below 0°C.

The NCC's response was partially a consequence of 3,200 signatures to a petition founded by Jo Mumford. MP Tom Pursglove also stepped in and wrote a letter to the county council's leader Matt Golby and contacted the council's chief executive Theresa Grant about his concerns.

dial down to be shot-blast, repainted and gilded. Although it would have been more cost effective to link this work in at the same time as the internal works, restoration of the clock dial was delayed due to the pair of peregrine falcons on the church spire. If the falcons start to nest, workmen will not be permitted to disturb them, and the restoration will need to be postponed until August.

The cost of the repair and restoration is £12,250 plus VAT. The work started in February, with costs underwritten by the Friends of St Peter's Church, allowing internal repair work on the clock to go ahead promptly.

St Peter's is one of the few

churches in the area with eight bells. Some work was previously carried out to treat death watch beetle in part of the bell chamber, but other repairs were also required to the wheels, frames and clappers. Short and longer term works required were more than £6,700.

Now that the repairs have been carried out, Mr Goldsmith said: "We therefore need to undertake substantial fundraising to re-pay back the monies that were advanced for the clock work."

It is hoped that the Vintage Fair in May will go some way to meeting the costs. Mr Goldsmith said: "I am indebted to the Oundle Business Association for their help with this project."



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A narrow win returns a Conservative councillor to troubled NCC

Joseph Meisner

In the by-election for the Oundle ward of Northamptonshire County Council held on 21 February, the Conservative candidate Annabel de Capell Brooke emerged victorious.

However, the Conservatives received a smaller percentage of the vote than they had in the 2017 general election, when they picked up 65% of the vote.

In a voter turnout of 37%, there was a swing towards the Liberal Democrats, who fielded popular local candidate Marc Folgate. Mr Folgate picked up 1276 votes, compared to Ms de Capell Brooke's share of 51%, with 1864 votes. The Labour and UKIP candidates lagged behind, with 403 and 89 votes respectively.

The by-election was called following the resignation of former Councillor Heather Smith, who left her post after the council became embroiled in financial difficulties, which may have contributed to voter's disaffection.

When asked if the council's financial troubles had contributed to the swing away from the Conservatives, Ms de Capell Brooke said she was unsure.

"A lot of people are aware of the financial problems that NCC has faced historically, but what I feel quite strongly about is that we have pretty much been able to have a balanced budget for 2019-2020, which is amazing."

She went on to say that when talking to voters during the campaign, Brexit was a key subject on



Newly elected NCC Councillor Annabel de Capell Brooke brings district council experience and wide local knowledge to her new position

the doorstep.

One campaign volunteer agreed: "Despite it being just a local election, the tide was swinging away from the Tories. On over half of the doorsteps there was disillusionment with the handling of the Brexit process."

When asked what she thought it was that won the election for her, Ms de Capell Brooke thought her campaign played a large part: "If people can meet the candidate or a representative, they can discuss the issues that matter to them. It also shows the deep care that they have for Oundle and its neighbouring villages."

She thought that her experience on the East Northamptonshire Council for the Prebendal Ward had given people confidence in her

ability, because she understands how council business works. She has lived in this area for over 15 years and has three children who attend local schools, all of whom helped out during her campaign.

In February, there were reports that Ms de Capell Brooke had not attended two-thirds of the ENC meetings. She explained that it was very hard to attend all the meet-

ings, and that she had prioritised.

She was confident of her record on the council, where she represented her own village's interests, and also worked to prevent the closure of the Oundle library, and to protect Fineshade Woods from development.

At the NCC she intends to make sure that the interests of Oundle and the surrounding villages are heard.

"Oundle can sometimes be overlooked, as it is located far from the council. Wellingborough and Rushden get more attention."

One particular issue that might compromise her position is the sale of Fletton Field. The cash strapped NCC is determined to sell the field for development to the highest bidder, over the objections of Oundle residents.

But she pledged her support to maintain the field as a green space, acknowledging that it was a very important part of the town.

Ms de Capell Brooke intends to stand in the 2020 elections for the new unitary council, where she hopes to carry on representing Oundle's interests.

Northants councils on track to reform as a unitary authority

Giovanni Bernardi

In February the East Northamptonshire Council agreed on several of the details of the Structural Change Order (SCO) for the future plans for governance of the county, following Inspector Max Caller's recommendations for eight existing councils to be replaced with two new unitary authorities from April 2020.

The new North Northamptonshire Council will be a district council with county powers comprising 78 councillors; three councillors per existing NCC division.

The North Northamptonshire shadow executive will comprise 15 councillors and will have executive governance with an overview and scrutiny committee to make sure no mistakes are made which could harm the council and its financial

status.

First elections for representatives will take place in May 2020.

Steven North, Leader of East Northamptonshire Council said: "We also feel that the numbers of councillors proposed for the new authority and the equal spread from each current authority means that residents are fairly represented."

The Secretary of State worked with council leaders to refine the final SCO to be put forward to Parliament for approval. Once the SCO is put forward, other orders will follow. The Shadow Authority must be formed within 14 days of the approval of the SCO by Parliament.

It is anticipated that the Government will present the SCO to Parliament in the coming weeks.



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The future is electric

Giovanni Bernardi

The future for motor vehicle transport is electric, but this idea is not as new and innovative as is popularly assumed.

Electric and steam powered cars had a period of popularity in the late 19th and early 20th century when they were first developed. But this period was cut short by the growth of the oil industry and the increased production of gas powered motor vehicles at the beginning of the 1920s which had a speed and range advantage over electric cars.

However, with environment and clean air issues a real concern, the shift today seems to be once more towards using electric powered cars.



Electric cars on Oundle streets are still rare, but Peterborough has seen a steep increase in electric car purchases.

In the UK, the Government released a strategy in July 2018 named 'Road to Zero', that aims to see at least half of all new cars be ultra-low emission by 2030, and all new cars and vans to be zero-emission by 2040.

Norway is leading the way in encouraging the adoption of electric car technology. Norway's policies incentivise people to buy electric cars. They offer free parking, access to a high-occupancy vehicle lane, tax deductions, and reduced up-front costs, with no taxes imposed on the companies selling them.

Why are other countries not offering similar incentives for electric car ownership to their own citizens? The answer is that it is very hard to break away from the fossil fuel business. Norway still regularly exports petrol to make money for their electric business.

The best-selling electric cars according to Car Magazine UK are made by Nissan, Hyundai, BMW and Tesla. These companies are

complying with the UK's regulations and producing cheaper, better and more reliable electric cars than ever before. This is due to a significant improvement in the technology of electric motors. In contrast, internal combustion engine motors have not seen any major technological advances in the past two decades.

Peterborough has the highest percentage of electric vehicles in the country. The latest Department of Transport statistics show that the number of registered electric vehicles increased by 21% last year, one of the biggest jumps in the country. There are currently 10,022 electric cars registered, up from just 49 in 2013. This shows the incredible progress the electric car industry has

made in such a short time.

Charging points in and around Peterborough have also increased: there are now 28 in a seven mile radius around the city centre.

For Oundle drivers the closest charging station is more than six miles away at the A1 services. Residents who have converted early still have to run a cable from their house for the time being.

Peterborough's 10,022 electric cars only make up about 4.5% of the total cars in the city, showing that the UK still has a lot of progress to make to fulfil their 'Road to Zero' aims.

It is almost certain that electric cars are the future. However, the electricity that powers them is still derived mostly from fossil fuels. The real challenge will be a move away from oil entirely. For now, though, countries, including the UK, have many policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, which offer promise for a safer, cleaner world.

Legislation review considers how to do more to discourage pavement parking



Pavement parking on Blackpot Lane frequently blocks access for pedestrians

of 1835 that prohibits driving on paths meant for foot passengers. The law prohibits "wilfully" riding or driving on the footway, "even though the driving may last only for a few seconds", which implies the prohibition of parking.

A 3 Fixed Penalty Notice can be served instead of prosecution. Although not all police forces take active steps to enforce this law, many more are now doing so in order to prevent parking on the pavement. London has a longstanding 40-years ban of pavement parking.

Jerry Li

Parking on pavements is a problem that many local authorities have been unable to address. Cars parked on narrow streets need to allow for the passage of traffic, but pedestrians also need unimpeded access to the pavement.

Two roads in Oundle where pedestrians have reported problems with pavement parking are Cotterstock Road during school drop-off and pick-up times, and Blackpot Lane, a narrow one-way road where cars park on pavement, blocking pedestrians.

For the physically handicapped, parents with pushchairs and the elderly, this can lead to great inconvenience and poses safety risks if pedestrians with mobility limitations are pushed into the road.

In recent years, however, there have been attempts to update the legislation from the Highways Act

A bill in 2015 from Conservative MP Simon Hoare sought to address the issue. He proposed that "a person who parks a motor vehicle wholly or partly on the verge of an urban road, or on a footway comprised of an urban road, is guilty of a civil offence."

The bill didn't make it past a second reading in the House of Commons after doubts were raised over where residents of narrow streets could park if there are no off-street spaces available.

In late 2018 transport minister Jesse Norman announced another review into the rules with a response expected later this year.

He said: "The department is now undertaking a broader piece of work to gather evidence on the issue of pavement parking. We expect to be able to draw conclusions later this year."

Residents say: Please "Fix My Street"

Alfie Peterson

Northamptonshire is the latest council to adopt FixMyStreet as their official street reporting system. If you come across something amiss on the streets of Oundle, you can file a report on the council website, or do it on the nationwide site FixMyStreet.com and it will be routed to the council. The council formerly used a bespoke site called Street Doctor.

Residents can report faults linked to amenities that are broken or dirty, damaged or dumped, or need fixing, cleaning or clearing such as: drain covers, kerbs, safety bollards, potholes.

In early May, there were eight reported problems in Oundle, including a broken barrier on West Street, potholes on Rockingham Hills and New Street, pavement issues on St Peter's Road and complaints about the bollards on North Bridge.

Other issues such as dog fouling, anti-social behaviour, missing wheelie bins, and fire/smoke and smell pollution should be reported to the district council.

After a complaint is submitted, the county council is automatically notified and updates about the progress of the complaint will be made via email.

Police Beat

Giorgio Capuzzello

There was a burglary of a property in South Road during the night between the 15 and 16 of December whilst occupants were asleep. Car keys were stolen and the vehicle, a Skoda Octavia parked on the driveway, was also taken. Some items inside the car were discarded at various points.

Police officers patrolling in Oundle on January 6 engaged with a group of teenagers suspected of smoking or dealing cannabis and found them in possession of drugs.

There was a break-in of a shed at a property in Glapthorn Road between 10pm on January 13 and January 18. An item was stolen from within. With the use of some tools from the shed, an attempt was made to enter the house via the living room window without success. Tools from the shed were found discarded in some bushes.

During the night between January 22 and January 23 there was a burglary at Hochanda Ltd at the Nene Valley Business Park. A person turned up to the company and walked around the premises. The offender rammed the side door and gained entry. An iPhone was taken from within, and drawers and cupboards were searched. Everything was captured on CCTV.

A fire was reported at a house on January 31. It was extinguished by the occupier before the arrival of the fire department. A female was taken to hospital after suffering from smoke inhalation, caused by a carelessly discarded cigarette.

On the same day there was a chimney fire on Glapthorn Road.

Police arrested a drunk driver in the early hours of February 2 in Oundle.

Some children found themselves accidentally locked in a property on February 4. They managed to break out before the fire department arrived.

In nearby villages, there were seven cases of shed break-ins in Cotterstock and Glapthorn, and a garage door was forced open on

February 11.

There was an attempted burglary in Wakerley Close on February 12.

A false fire alarm was called on February 19 in Oundle. It was caused by cooking fumes.

Oundle retailers have reported fake £50 notes in circulation. Northants Police urges shop owners to be wary.

The theft of a motor vehicle by means unknown from the driveway of a property in Springfield Road was reported on February 27. All the car keys were accounted for.

Entry was gained to an unlocked car parked in Springfield Road during the night between 13 and 14 March. There was evidence of a search but nothing appeared to have been taken.

During that same night in Glapthorn Road, entry was gained to a parked car. Various items were taken, including the keys to another vehicle parked on the same road. Nothing was taken from the second one.

There have been several thefts from motor vehicles in the area around Oundle, including removal of number plates.

On March 23 in three places around Oundle - Oak Close, Creed Road and Walcot Close - entry was gained into secured motor vehicles, and messy searches were conducted. In the first two cases nothing was taken. In the third case, items were stolen from the victim's two cars. No signs of forced entry were found.

During the night of April 6, unknown offenders damaged a bird hide in Barnwell Country Park.

There was a burglary overnight between April 18 and April 19 in Mill Lane. The culprits entered through a rear patio door.

During the week of April 15, money was stolen from a shop in the Market Place just after closing. The owner was distracted by a man asking for directions, while his accomplice stole the day's takings packed for deposit.

county line, which is shared with Kettering, East Northants has four, Wellingborough has two and Kettering has sixteen.

Northamptonshire gangs, found predominantly in areas near Wellingborough, Peterborough, Northampton and Kettering, present themselves on social media living lives of luxury, giving the false impression that crime does pay.

Not only are these gangs pushing illegal products, but there is

Alarm is raised at increase in knife crime

Giovanni Bernardi

Due to widespread concern about the rise in knife crime, Northamptonshire police departments have been carrying out decisive action. In March, police officers took part in Operation Sceptre, a nationwide crackdown on serious and organised crime which aims to reduce the number of knives which are used to commit crimes.

As part of the operation, 10 knife-related arrests were made, and 147 knives were surrendered in Northamptonshire between March 11-17.

Inspector Sara-Louise Parrott, who led the Operation Sceptre work, said: "Carrying a knife increases your risk of being the victim of a knife attack, and it is extremely pleasing to have removed so many potentially deadly weap-

ons from our streets during Operation Sceptre."

While headlines about knife crime in London dominate the news, problems persist in rural counties and are growing. According to Northamptonshire Police the number of people convicted for carrying a knife has jumped by 78 per cent in five years. In 2013 Northamptonshire saw 186 people convicted for carrying a knife, but in 2018 that number leapt to 323.

In December 2018, Northamptonshire Police said they would give more officers Taser guns in response to increasing knife crime. Chief Constable Nick Adderley said the decision made "complete sense" because of an overall national increase in knife crime. He said that Tasers would help to respond to incidents quickly and effectively.



During Operation Sceptre this oversized knife was handed in to Oundle police

evidence that child sexual exploitation is becoming a staple of the County Line community. Northamptonshire police have been issuing warnings about the dangers of "cuckooing". Cuckooing involves a drug dealer befriending an individual who lives alone so that their residence can be used as a drugs den. Victims are often vulnerable and isolated people.

New reports show that short-term lets and guest houses are also increasingly being used as temporary dens to store drugs and cash.

Recent arrests across the county include the sentencing of two men at Northampton Crown Court for their part in a gang-related shooting in Wellingborough. In October, police arrested eighteen people and seized more than £5,000 in Northamptonshire. In January, fifteen further people with links to county lines drug gangs were arrested by

officers in Northamptonshire.

In February, the National Crime Agency's report on the county lines crisis showed that the number of supply lines nationally has increased in the last year from 750 to 2,000. Children aged between 15 and 17 make up the bulk of vulnerable people involved in county lines, with both girls and boys are being groomed and exploited.

Detective Chief Inspector Tony Hopkins from Northamptonshire Police, said: "Tackling gangs, including those involved in the supply of drugs is one of our top priorities and one which we are taking a robust approach to".

The Chronicle's requests to the police for local crime statistics relating to county lines and knife crime under the Freedom of Information Act was unfulfilled due to "resourcing and an increased volume".

Northants sees steepest rise in county line crime

Patrick Boyle

The expansion of drug-smuggling networks, known as County Lines, from urban areas to rural counties has targeted Northamptonshire, now one of the worst affected regions in the country. A Home Office inspection last year found that the Northamptonshire Police "require improvement" when dealing with organised crime.

In April, the Corby Borough Council learned that Corby has one

Lilford Hall is listed on At Risk Register

Alfie Peterson

One of the county's greatest private houses, Lilford Hall has been listed on Historic England's At Risk Register.

"The roof covering is in poor condition leading to water ingress and distress to the upper storeys. The front bays require structural attention. A schedule of urgent repairs has been identified but not implemented, and no long-term solution has been agreed."

Originally built in 1635, the house has undergone many additions and alterations over the centuries. Located near Pilton, south of Oundle, The grade 1 listed stately home has over one hundred rooms of historical relevance and impressive architecture and sits in 350 acres of parkland. The estate's website has had extensive plans for restoration projects for a number of years. The website's photo gallery shows images of inhabited stately rooms, as well as rooms and corridors in advanced stages of decay.

Locally, Barnwell Castle is also listed on the At Risk Register.

If Historic England has concerns about the state of a listed building, it can send a letter to an owner requesting a site visit for inspec-

tion by relevant professionals. If a proposed schedule of urgent work is not carried out, under section 54 of the Listed Buildings Act, the Secretary of State can give Historic England the authority to carry out the works, and the local authority may require the owner to pay the costs.

East Northamptonshire Council said they had not served any notices under section 54 in the last ten years.

Lyveden Manor expands visitor attractions

Alfie Peterson

Lyveden Manor, near Oundle, is set to become a visitor attraction after it has undergone extensive renovation to restore its most important rooms. The manor, built by the Tresham family in 1570, was owned privately until 2013, when it was purchased by the National Trust.

New visitor facilities will include a shop and cafe at the manor, as well as parking, in order to protect the upper gardens and Lyveden New Bield.

The Trust plans to renovate

the house and provide visitors with an opportunity to experience Sir Thomas Tresham's garden landscape in the sequence that he intended, with mown paths leading up to Lyveden New Bield.

Ian Cooper, who was speaking for the National Trust at a council planning meeting in January said:



"Lyveden has a rare and important Elizabethan garden created by Thomas Tresham as an expression of his tastes and Catholicism. It gives visitors today a unique experience."

"Our proposals are informed by extensive research into the manor. We will reinstate the great chamber on the first floor and we have worked hard to design a new

scheme. We believe our proposal will result in significant visitor growth."

The main attraction at Lyveden is Lyveden New Bield, which was originally planned to be an Elizabethan summer house designed to reflect his Catholic faith. When Tresham died in 1605, the building

work stopped, and was abandoned after his son was involved in the Gunpowder Plot. The manor remained in the Tresham family until 1649.

More than 34,000 people visit Lyveden New Bield annually. The National Trust has a fundraising project to raise £1 million for enhancements and improvements.

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Fotheringhay church restored to glory

Lily Wolfson

This summer you may want to head to Fotheringhay. There's a good pub at the Falcon Inn for food and drink, wonderful walks down to the river, a castle site from where Shakespeare's most evil, but most seductive English monarch, King Richard III, ruled the land, and now a fully renovated, historic church, which has been unveiled after a five year, £1.7million restoration project.

necessary skills to bring the church back from the brink.

To celebrate the completion of the project, on 25th May there will be a concert of early English music with James Parsons on organ, introduced by the famous historian David Starkey.

In Fotheringhay, a great mediaeval King of England was born, and Mary Queen of Scots, a beautiful and dangerous Queen, was executed.



The structure and fabric of the Church of Saint Mary and All Saints had been threatened by devastating damage from long-term decay and neglect.

But an appeal led by Lady Victoria Leatham gathered generous donations big and small, and with persuasion, community activism and drive she put together the

Enjoy the village, church, countryside and castle site and think back across centuries to the stories these stones have seen. When it is so easy to see disappointment and disarray all around, how wonderful to be able to marvel at this successful modern story of renovation and renewal.

Barnwell village community group rallies to save shop and post office services

Amid plans for the sale of their village shop, Barnwell residents have formed the Barnwell Village Shop Community Group to investigate the feasibility of supporting, developing and sustaining a community facility providing goods and services for the people of Barnwell and neighbouring villages.

The Barnwell Village Store and Post Office has been listed for sale at £500,000. Established for over 50 years, it offers groceries, post office services, and is licenced to sell alcohol.

Although the shop is currently open for limited hours, it records a turnover of £200K, alongside a post office salary of £5K.

The current owners plan to remain in the village, living in the private quarters above the shop. If they do not find a buyer, they may close the post office and open the shop for half days.

It may also be possible for them

to convert the premises to residential use.

At a parish council meeting last year, ENC Councillor Geoff Shacklock said: "It is sad that the Post Office may close after a two-and-a-half year successful fight to keep it open."

He had spoken to MP Tom Pursglove who said that the owners would need to give six months' notice to The Post Office of their intention to close.

The community group plan to continue to support the owners and explore opportunities for the continued operation of the village shop.

They are meeting with a representative from East Northamptonshire Council on funding opportunities, and researching other rural community sustainable projects that successfully provide services to the community.



Foxtail Lily on South Road will be hosting a Creatives Spring Market on Sunday 12 May, 11am-4pm. Featuring artists showcasing their work, there will also be lunches, cake, coffee, live music, and of course, flowers and plants.

Oundle Post Office reopens in Market Place



The Post Office is now located at the Oundle Pharmacy in the Market Place

Erica Pascoe

The Post Office officially moved to its new location at the Oundle Pharmacy in the Market Place on 8 May. The premises underwent complete refurbishment, transforming the space to accommodate the new post office business.

The new branch has a wide door and threshold strip at the entrance, an internal hearing loop and space for wheelchair users. There is also time-restricted roadside parking available.

Kam and Mick Patel had run the former post office and shop with their father Rashik since 1987. Kam will be staying on to work behind the counter at the new post office with a new member of staff, and the owner of the Pharmacy will serve as postmaster.

The move was part of a major programme across the Post Office network to modernise branches and make it easier for customers to do business. With over 11,500 branches, the Post Office network is the biggest retail network in the UK. It has more branches than all

the banks and building societies combined. Ninety-seven percent of Post Office branches are run with retail partners on an agency or franchise basis.

As well as a new retail environment, longer opening hours are a new strategy for this programme. The new Post Office opening hours are Monday to Friday 9am-6pm and Saturday 9am-1pm. The extra eleven and a half hours a week, which now include Wednesday afternoons, allow more flexibility and convenience for customers.

The Post Office services are provided from two counters and the same range of products and services are still available. Services include bill payment, cash withdrawals and foreign currency, postage, home shopping collections and returns, and customers of main UK banks can still access accounts.

The Patel family said they have enjoyed looking after people in Oundle, and will retain the existing shop on New Street for the foreseeable future.

Inspiring music and theatre at International Festival

Johnny Capstick-Dale

The Oundle International Festival returns for its 35th year this July with a diverse programme.

The festival opens on the 4th of July with a Scottish reeling event jointly hosted by the Oundle Festival Fringe who will be running free events throughout the ten day festival. For folk lovers Kathryn Tickell and her band The Darkening deliver some Northumbrian songs as well as more contemporary music, while Ronnie Scotts' All Stars are returning for a jazz evening after their sell out concert two years ago.

Classical music fans can look forward to Alec Hone and Quentin Thomas duelling it out on two grand pianos. Jamie McVinnie launches his Big Bach Project, aiming to play all Bach's pieces for keyboards over five years. The Bach Walk always sells out early. It features two concerts, broken by supper and a gentle walk through the Oundle countryside.

Five lunchtime recitals will feature exciting new talent, including Oundle's 2018 Young Musician of the Year, George Garnett, and former Oundle pupil Bethany Peck, currently Principle Trombone for the City of Cardiff Championship Brass Band. Musicians from the



Royal Academy of Music, Bo Lyu, Yoanna Prodanova and Mihai Ritivoiu will perform on piano and cello.

Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* is performed by The Handlebards, a touring company who will arrive with all props and costumes on bicycles and deliver their performance in front of the Elizabethan Lyveden New Field.

David Walliams' bestseller *Gangsta Granny* is adapted by Heartbreak Productions in another outdoor theatre experience, this time in Barnwell Park. Barnwell will also

be hosting their sixth Music in the Park, featuring brass bands. The Oundle Peace Games on Sunday will recreate the celebrations of 1919 on the Cricket Grounds.

The Party at the Wharf rounds off the festival supported by local bands Likuid Lemon and Acoustic Supper Club. Funk Soul Brother promise iconic songs from James Brown, Stevie Wonder and Aretha Franklin, followed by the headline act ABBAMANIA. Food and drink stalls will make it a merry occasion.

Tickets are on sale at the Oundle Box Office, on New Street.

Food Festival on 22 June

The annual Oundle Food Festival will yet again be offering its vibrant street market stalls and entertainment on Saturday 22 June from 9am to 4pm.

One of the most popular dates in the festival diary, over 75 of the region's finest independent food and drink producers will gather in the town centre, with additional events and offers from local businesses.

Alongside the food stalls will be family entertainment, including circus skills performers, music and dance.

A Park & Ride service provided by Oundle School will ferry people from the Oundle Wharf, home of Festival Sponsors AGA Oundle and Hambleton Bakery.



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WWI centenary commemorations celebrate the peace with day of fun and games

Tom Pilsbury

After five years of commemorations honouring the memory of those who died in the First World War 100 years ago, Oundle will be reviving a celebration of peace.

One hundred years ago, Britain observed the end of the Great War in which six million British men were mobilized and 700,000 men killed. The entire nation had been invested in the war, including those residents of Oundle who fought for

Water polo, tugs-of-war and crocodile races which had been arranged for the afternoon were abandoned as a result of the rain.

A house fancy dress procession was organized, as well as sing-songs and dances. In the evening, school employees were able to dance inside the Great Hall instead of the drenched field.

The fireworks display on the fields started at 10.15pm and was described as “really excellent” and



An original poster for the 1919 Peace Celebrations

their country.

To celebrate the signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Oundle observed two celebration days, one organized by Oundle School and the other by the town.

In May 1919, Oundle School organized a Peace Day along Milton Road for employees and pupils. An account from The Laxtonian describes a festive occasion, considerably dampened by very bad weather. A service of thanksgiving was held in the Market Place, followed by a procession. The town was decorated with bunting and flags, as was the entrance to the activity field along Milton Road.

The cricket match started just after noon, but had to be abandoned late in the afternoon due to very heavy rain. The London Fire Brigade Band provided entertainment.

“thoroughly enjoyed”, despite the rainfall.

“Sincerest thanks” were sent to the headmaster for his “kindness” in providing a very enjoyable and successful program. The band was also thanked for their resilience in continuing to play throughout the day “under extremely adverse weather conditions”.

The Oundle Peace Celebrations organised by the town were held on Saturday 19th July 1919 on the cricket ground. There are no written records about the actual day, but the advertised program of sport, entertainment and games was extensive, and included a fancy dress parade, a leap-frog race, climbing the greased pole, a driving competition and musical chairs on cycles. Other activities included; a decorated cycle parade, a flat race,

Local pubs change hands

Giorgio Capuzzello

According to the latest industry figures, 18 pubs a week are closing in Britain. This hit close to home when two of the area’s most popular local pubs closed unexpectedly earlier this year.

Pub patrons were surprised and disappointed to learn that the King’s Head in Wadenhoe and the Chequered Skipper in Ashton both closed within weeks of each other.

The Chequered Skipper was a favourite local pub, with high quality food, welcoming staff, and a great atmosphere. The previous licensee, Kay Hague told the Chronicle in February: “Sadly, the summer was not as profitable as we had hoped. We had an unfortunate situation with the green, which was closed for a while whilst benches were being made safe, and that lost the business a bit of momentum at a critical time.

“We do believe it can be a successful business in the future and wish any future owners every success and encourage the local community to support this wonderful pub.”

The good news for pub patrons is that the Chequered Skipper quickly found new owners and opened in early May. Paul Andreff and April McCully, two entrepreneurs who have been living in the village for more than eleven years, are excited about reviving an

important hub for the community. With new benches for the green, a new menu to include bespoke picnics, tapas, fine dining, catering for functions and beer festivals, the pub will once again live up to its popular reputation.

The King’s Head in Wadenhoe dates to the seventeenth century and enjoys a sprawling garden that rolls down to the river, with tables overlooking the boats as they pass by. The setting is so beautiful that it has been described as the best situated pub in England. It had collected over 100 five star reviews on Facebook, making it one of the best pubs in the area.

After the journalist Simon Hoggart attended the Oundle Festival of Literature in 2007, he wrote about his visit to the pub in his Guardian column: “We sat in the sun in what must be one of the most idyllic settings in the country. It was another reminder that there are still some gorgeous, unspoilt places left here.”

The owners of the pub, the Wadenhoe Trust could not offer any information about the closure. They have instructed King West to advertise for a new tenant.

The Wadenhoe Parish Council reported: “The Kings Arms pub has ceased to trade and the Trust hope to locate a new tenant to run it. As long as it runs satisfactorily the Trust will keep the pub open.”



The Chequered Skipper in Ashton has reopened with new owners, to the relief of its many loyal patrons in the community

a skipping rope race, a tug of war, a sack race, egg and spoon race, bobbing for oranges and a victory race.

To commemorate the historic celebrations, there will be a recreation of these Peace Games on Sunday 7 July at 11:00am.

The Peace Games will feature egg and spoon, sack races, musical chairs on bicycles and many other

races and events recreating the celebrations from 1919. The events will also include music from Yarwell and Nassington Brass Band and Oundle Fringe, alongside food and drink stalls.

As plans for the event continue to grow and evolve, people are encouraged to check the Festival website for updates.

Countryside litter pick bags tons of refuse

Johnny Capstick-Dale

The country engaged in a mass litter pick between 22 March and 23 April, collecting over 600,000 bags of litter as part of the Keep Britain Tidy campaign.

East Northamptonshire towns

A total of 64 bags of rubbish and recyclables was collected, as well as 8 tyres, 7 hubcaps, a car seat, parts of a sofa, a couple of roadwork signs and a significant amount of building rubbish.

Unusual items included a pair



The litter pick in Tansor found heaps of debris that was spoiling the countryside

and villages did their bit, with over 20 litter picks and tidy-ups arranged by local communities, supported by East Northamptonshire District Council who supplied equipment and took away what was collected.

As part of the campaign, many Tansor volunteers of all ages were equipped with kit, split into groups and allocated stretches of road and footpath around the village and beside the A605.

of tights, a stash of pornography found under a hedge, part of a truck's suspension and a stolen wallet which was returned to its Oundle owner.

Wet wipes (which, contrary to popular belief, do not biodegrade) and food packaging continue to be the main sources of litter.

Additionally regular litter pickers from the village estimate they have collected over 300 empty red wine bottles since the beginning

of this year, thrown into roadside hedges.

"Litter is an emotive subject – it is difficult to understand why people toss it so thoughtlessly and it is a shame we have to arrange litter picks to tidy up their mess," said Camilla Sherwin, one of the organisers of the Tansor litter pick.

"Litter is a demonstration of a bigger issue - a lack of regard for the environment as well as recyclable materials and resources which mankind is using up much more quickly than they are being replaced."

Transition Oundle introduces OWL, a "Waste Less" initiative

Lily Wolfson

Climate change activism has never been so dominant in the media. Protesters gluing themselves to the Parliament viewing platform during a Common's Debate was just one example of Climate Action happening across the globe.

From Greta Thurnberg, the 16-year-old Swedish Activist, to Extinction Rebellion bringing London to a halt, climate change is drawing attention like never before. And for good reason.

In the words of Greta Thurnberg, "Our house is on fire" – climate change is real. But what can be done against these impending threats? Lots. People are turning up in droves to fight it. Oundle is too.

The UK currently consumes resources at three times the rate with which they are being regenerated or replaced. So rather than looking across the globe, let us start where we can make a difference.

A vast amount of change can be and is being achieved on a national level and at a local level too. Transition Oundle is a local voluntary organisation planning to make a difference through its project, OWL – Oundle Waste Less.

Their policies centre around the mantra: reduce, reuse, recycle. Under their OWL project, Transition Oundle will work with the Town Council, local businesses, schools, and homeowners in and around Oundle to endorse a wiser use of resources and extend the life of products via repair and reuse.

Multiple Repair Cafes are in the diary, the first being on the 13 July at Fletton House. This project aims to help local businesses to increase resourcefulness and reduce waste.

Changemakers offers adventure opportunities for young urban pupils

Grace Maund

Changemakers, a new summer holiday programme for urban children will offer a fun summer experience in an exciting weeklong programme of outdoor activities in the Peak District, where they will stay at the Outward Bound Trust Ullswater Centre.

Twelve Oundle School pupils and four teachers from Oundle and Peterborough School will take twenty-four children to the Lake District this summer. The children will do activities such as caving, water sports, expeditions, climbing, sailing and hill walking at Ullswater.

Everyone involved is committed to raising £300 to £400 each to help fund the project. Students at Oundle School did a sponsored walk at Grafham Water to raise £3000 for the programme. Other events included a charity football tournament, a film night at the Stahl Theatre and a club night.

The biggest initiative was a fashion show in March. Pupils modelled clothes from a variety of brands, from La Lhama to Brora, and were accompanied by musical acts. It was a huge success, and raised £7500.

The children who have been invited to attend the holiday are from diverse backgrounds, with many from families who come from countries where English is not their first language. Some have special educational needs, and they are all eligible for free school meals. The Head of Year 5 at Gladstone Primary School, a former Oundle School pupil, has chosen a group of children for the holiday who would otherwise not have such an opportunity.

Oundle School was chosen by the Outward Bound Trust for this project to initiate a partnership model between a public school and a local primary school. The model will be replicated by other independent schools to offer a range of opportunities for young, under-privileged children.



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Peregrine falcon retains perch



Richard Chandler

St Peter's peregrine falcon has attracted male companions to join her on the spire, but it remains unclear whether she will lay eggs and nest

Erica Pascoe

The peregrine falcon, now identified as a mature female, has continued to hold its territory on the spire of St Peter's since it was first spotted in November. Plumage details such as a streaked throat and upper breast show that the bird is a female.

Richard Chandler, a resident in Oundle, has climbed the church tower to retrieve the bird's half-eaten prey and has found a diverse range of different bird species. Originally thought to just be pigeons, there were actually common teals, lapwings, woodcocks, black-headed gulls, white feral pigeons, fieldfares, a golden plover, a common snipe, and a potential blackbird.

He said: "The female has been seen on most days since the initial sighting. It appears to catch a prey item approximately on alternate days, most often early in the morning. It uses the small platforms on the top point of the four lowest windows on the spire on which to pluck and eat its prey. It also leaves items on these platforms to which it sometimes returns to continue feeding. After feeding it usually moves to a perch towards the top of the spire where it sits for extended periods, preening periodically."

The most popular prey turned out to be a redwing. Noah Wood said: "This suggests it is hunting down by the river mainly, and quite probably, in the dark or half-light. Birds like woodcock are nocturnal, flying down to the river to feed at dusk and returning to woodland at dawn. She certainly seems to be feeding mainly first thing in the morning and then roosts for most of the day thereafter."

A second bird, presumed to be a male from its un-streaked throat and upper breast was occasionally seen until the start of April with the female bird perched side-by-side. He was smaller and darker than the female and had a ring on his leg.

At the beginning of April, a second male with no rings on either leg appeared almost daily. There was interaction between the female, including calling, and potential mating was seen on two or three occasions. "He knows she is here, but it is a matter of whether he decides to return and try to set up a territory/mate with her; this is anyone's guess and may well not happen," said Mr Chandler.

Breeding usually occurs in late March, with eggs laid in May depending on the weather. It is uncertain whether the male bird will

Government agrees it is past time to ditch plastic

Lily Hunter

The issue of packaging waste remains an ongoing concern. In fact, the urgent need for a solution has increased just over the last few years.

A 5p levy on plastic bags distributed at large retailers was introduced in 2015, and the Government is now looking at extending this to all retailers, and increasing the charge to 10p.

Sandwich packaging will also be hit with a levy. This particular packaging is one of the least recyclable as it includes bonded materials and the combination of cardboard glued to plastic makes it impossible to recycle.

The new tax, which is predicted to add 15p to the cost of a pack, is necessary to reduce use of bonded materials, and also aims to have online retailers and home delivery services such as Deliveroo and Amazon pay the cost of dealing with packaging. According to research by British Sandwich and Food to Go Association, around four billion sandwiches are sold every year.

Newspapers are also reviewing their packaging. The Guardian is the first national newspaper to stop using polythene wrappers for its weekend paper, and has introduced a compostable wrapper made from potato starch, even though this will increase its production costs.

Other newspapers are following by example. A spokesman for the Mail on Sunday said: "We are actively investigating an alternative

to polythene bags, in particular using a form of paper packaging."

Locally, in Oundle, the taxes apply to shops such as Tesco, The Co-op and Waitrose, which has also entirely eliminated disposable cups. Beans Coffee Stop has been aware of the issues surrounding packaging for a while and has been using fully recyclable cups for over a year.

A recent study has shown the plastics levy to be effective. There was a thirty percent drop in the number of plastic bags found on the ocean floor after the levy was first introduced for single-use plastic shopping bags. Another study shows that the actual use of plastic bags has been reduced by nearly ninety percent.

Retailers may choose how to use the funds collected from each bag and many donate those funds to environmental causes. Over the next ten years, an estimated £730 million will be raised for good causes, with £60 million saved in litter clean-up costs. The UK economy will gain an overall benefit of over £780 million.

The UK's target for 2020 is for at least fifty percent of household waste to be recycled. The current recycling rate for England is forty-five percent.

While changes are being made by major companies to make recycling easier, individuals must also make an effort to put the environment, not convenience, first.

return; hatching females are larger and stronger in birds of prey and usually more dominant.

The peregrine falcons usually breed on a shallow scrape when on a cliff or quarry, but on a building, they tend to lay their eggs on a flat surface about the size of a tray with raised edges to protect them. Some buildings use nest-trays to encourage breeding. There are some flat sites on the top of the castellated corners of the parapet on St Peter's spire which could be useful.

Because of concerns that the falcon might breed and nest on the spire, the work on the clock dial has been postponed. Peregrines are a Schedule 1 listed species of The Wildlife and Countryside Act and cannot be disturbed once they lay eggs.

For some churches, falcons have threatened costly delays in urgently required restoration work. At St Botolph's Church in Boston, Lincolnshire, a pair of peregrine falcons had been nesting in the tower since 2014. They were encouraged to move home to enable the start of a renovation project to preserve the 15th century steeple.

Oundle retains status as Fair Trade town

Grace Maund

Oundle's status as a Fairtrade Town was renewed for a further two years by the Fairtrade Foundation after a successful bid by the Oundle Fairtrade Town Steering Group.

Many shops, community organisations and businesses now sell or use Fairtrade products, and the annual Fairtrade and Eco Market held each November in St Peter's Church is very popular.

The support of Fairtrade means that more farmers in the developing world can receive a fair deal and start to earn their way out of poverty.

Fairtrade Fortnight ran this year from 25th February to 10th March. The theme was Ready, Steady, Cocoa, with a focus on cocoa farmers in West Africa who struggle to earn a living income.

The campaign sought to highlight concerns that UK trade with developing countries puts poverty reduction first and delivers living incomes for all, especially women.

Summer swimming warnings about river bourne Weil's disease

Tom Pilsbury

As warm weather approaches, swimmers and rowers are being warned to take precautions before they enter local rivers to avoid being infected.



contact with infected animal urine, mainly from rodents, cattle or pigs, generally in contaminated water. It typically enters the body through cuts or scrapes, or the lining of the nose, mouth, throat or eyes. Only a very few patients experience the severe, life-threatening illness known as Weil's disease, thought to kill two or three people a year in Britain.

In most cases of leptospirosis, symptoms will be relatively mild, and may include: fever, chills, muscle aches, headaches, cough, nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite. In extreme cases, symptoms can include; yellow skin and eyes (jaundice), swollen ankles, chest pain, shortness of breath and coughing up blood.

If you know you may come into contact with untreated water such as flood waters, canals, ponds and rivers you can reduce the risk of infection by covering any open wounds such as cuts and scratches with waterproof plasters, wash thoroughly and as soon as possible after leaving the water.

Weil's disease is only one of a number of water borne diseases found along the River Nene and the River Cam; Cryptosporidiosis, Escherichia coli and swimmer's ear are other infections and parasites that can have deadly side effects.

Last summer, Prince William School reported that one of their pupils who regularly swam in "The Bowl" was suspected of having contracted Weil's disease. The Bowl is an area of the River Nene located across the fields from Riverside Close.

While outdoor swimming has its obvious dangers, some of the most severe lie in the unseen bacteria - Leptospira, which can lead to Leptospirosis, otherwise known in its severe form as Weil's disease.

The infection is caught through

The German government offers reparations to survivors of Kindertransport

Jerry Li

After years of negotiating with a US-based compensation lobbying group, the German government has agreed to make a one-off payment to Jewish survivors who were evacuated on the Kindertransport train to Britain.



application for reparation.

The announcement of the compensation marked the 80th anniversary of the evacuation in December 1938. Prior to the beginning of the Second World War, many in this country had sensed the ominous fate of the Jewish population in central Europe. The Kindertransport project was initiated in order to bring Jewish children to Britain to save them from further persecution.

Nearly 10,000 children left Nazi Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland on special trains and successfully reached Britain where they were placed in British foster homes, hostels, schools and farms. Although they escaped the atrocities of the Holocaust, many of their families who were left behind perished.

Mrs Ursula Walker arrived in England in 1938 at the age of eight, leaving her father and grandparents behind in Berlin. She and her sister were housed with different families in Cheshire and educated

Oundle resident Ursula Walker is a survivor of the Kindertransport, and was featured in the Oundle Chronicle in 2018. The Chronicle assisted her in making an

Setting out poisoned pest control is lethal

Erica Pascoe

As warm weather starts to bring pests from rats to slugs into gardens, residents are urgently being advised to be cautious about setting out poisons. Huge problems occur when household pets such as cats and dogs eat a dead animal that has been infected with poison.

One resident in Aldwinkle reported finding several dead mice and wild birds due to poisoning, and raised concerns about the danger to domestic pets. "This type of incorrect and irresponsible use of poison, baiting food, is a reportable offence in breach of the Animal Welfare Act. This is because the poison used has crossed to kill another species feeding on the poisoned bait, namely wild birds. In addition, it threatens the health of other species, such as dogs and the cats," he said.

It is important to note that pest control is best carried out by licensed and trained professionals. The Barn Owl Trust states that "sustainable control can only be achieved by reducing the rodent carrying capacity of the environment". This includes removing food and cleaning areas where rats might build nests, or using natural barriers to deter slugs. They advise that "poisons should only be used as a very last resort".

The Pet Health Network has also flagged the dangers of poisons to dogs and cats. A type of mouse poison commonly used often affects a dog's ability to clot properly. Symptoms can include lethargy and vomiting.

The government warns that residents can be fined or imprisoned if they cause unnecessary harm to any animal. Local councils do not have enforcement responsibilities, but residents can call the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme if there is a suspicion that an animal has been poisoned.

Assistance for pet owners who suspect their pet has been poisoned can be found from Oundle & Thrapston Veterinary Surgery.

at a grammar school. She decided to stay in England when her father, who had survived three concentration camps during the war, took her sister with him to America. She never saw her grandparents again. Mrs Walker went on to marry, train as a nurse, and has remained in England until this day.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, a New York-based group pushing for increased compensation for victims of the Nazis, has been engaging the German government to reclaim

Letterbox design and placement under review

Patrick Boyle

Amidst a political climate mired in division and conflict, the plight of the postmen and women of this country has emerged from the caverns of parliamentary debate.

The issue regards the adoption of an EU building standard which requires new letterboxes to be installed at a height between 70cm (2ft 3.5ins) and 170cm (5ft 7ins).

The Communication Workers Union (CWU) who represent postmen and women in the UK has been campaigning for change in the letterbox laws since 1958, citing not only the health risks of consistent over-stretching to low level letterboxes, but also to the risk of being bitten by dogs if letterboxes are too low down. The CWU have often cited the success of the Irish Government's implementation of this EU building standard. The Irish letterbox regulations took effect from January 2001 and only applied to new houses.

Conservative MP Nicky Morgan has been the main political advocate for the adoption of this legislation and has said that it is a "key issue". The Royal Mail reported 16,800 health-related absences due to dog back-injuries last year.

The Oundle Chronicle is delivered to nearly 3000 homes across Oundle, and its deliverers report that the placement of letterboxes, as well as certain designs, do make the delivery of items difficult.

This legislative proposal could be viewed as a clear example of the EU over-reaching, quite literally, into our homes, and might raise criticism from staunch Brexiteers.

However, with over 30 million postal addresses that receive daily deliveries, and with a government commitment for the further expansion of house-building, it does not seem unreasonable to ensure that developers pay more attention to the design and location of letterboxes.

Jewish property, and demanding reparations.

The mission of the organisation is to do justice to the Holocaust victims and to afford them care. Since 1952, the liaison with the German government had yielded more than \$70 billion to more than 800,000 victims.

They negotiate for justice, "knowing that no amount of money will give them back their youth, their health or those family members who were murdered by the Nazis".

New Oxfam Music and Book shop

Grace Maund

Oxfam's new Books and Music shop was opened on Thursday, April 18 by Oxfam Oundle's longest serving volunteer of 35 years, Sheila Mills, who cut the ribbon at the opening ceremony.

The new shop is located along-

Amazon. Specialist or antiquarian books are also listed on Oxfam's online shop.

Ms Robinson has already recruited more than 20 volunteers for the new shop, but there are still plenty of volunteer role vacancies



Stephanie Robinson is the new manager of Oxfam's book shop

side the existing Oxfam Fashion and Homeware shop in West Street.

Shop manager Stephanie Robinson has been working with volunteers to organise the stock. Brightly painted in Oxfam's zesty green, the shop is lined with shelves of high quality books, vinyl and music CDs. Stock is rotated every four weeks to refresh the selection, and is priced to be cheaper than

to apply for.

Since the books have moved out of the original Oxfam shop, manager Kay Waddell has taken advantage of the extra space to reorganise the merchandise. She has increased display for homewares and created new areas for men's clothes, linens and a children's section. And customers have noticed. "Takings are up £500 a week," she said.

Oundle News business changes hands



Chris Cant was a big supporter of the Oundle Chronicle, helping to promote and distribute the paper (photographed here for the Chronicle back page in 2010)

Lily Hunter and Hannah Wakeford

After 18 years at the helm of Oundle News, in March, Chris Cant passed on the business to new owner, Mr Niranjanan from Letchworth.

Oundle News is a core business in the Market Place, selling not only a huge range of magazines and newspapers, but also a variety of goods from gifts and cards to bread and confectionary.

North Shoes is named top ladies independent retailer

Patrick Boyle

North Shoes, a local fifth-generation shoe retailer, was named ladies independent footwear retailer of the Year at the 2019 Footwear Industry Awards at Birmingham's National Conference Centre in February.

Managing director James North is the fifth generation at the head of the company, first established in Bourne in 1876.

He said: "It's so good to win the ladies independent retailer award. We won it in 2013 and it means

such a lot to be voted the best by your industry peers and suppliers.

"I didn't think we'd win because we've had so much success in the eight years of the awards and I didn't think it possible that we'd do it again – but I'm delighted that our passion for a good fitting service and customer care has been recognised in this way.

In addition to their store in Oundle, North Shoes also has branches in Bourne, Stamford, Cambridge and Lincoln.



James North (centre) displays the award for ladies independent retailer of the year

Behind the scenes, it makes more than 6750 paper deliveries per week to Oundle and local villages such as Elton, Warmington and Polebrook.

The shop has 15 employees: seven staff work in the shop and eight backroom packers and delivery drivers. On top of this, 20 boys and girls help with the deliveries.

The changing retail landscape of market towns and high streets has at times presented challenges to news agents.

When Waitrose opened on the edge of town in 2014, its loyalty scheme offered a free newspaper to shoppers who spent more than £10, raising objections from newsagents across the country who worried about how the free offer would impact their own sales.

For Oundle News, having Tesco in the Market Place has helped maintain footfall in the centre of town and the business has been able to continue to offer an essential service for the residents of Oundle and surrounding villages.

Mr Cant and co-owner Debbie Cant plan to remain in Oundle, but after years of beginning the work day at 4am, Mr Cant is looking forward to retirement.

"I plan to put a sledgehammer through the alarm clock, take more than four days off in a row, and see more of the world".

Tennis Club welcomes new players and members at open day

Archie Parkinson

On Sunday 19 May from 10am-3.00pm the Oundle Tennis Club is hosting a free open day when experienced or aspiring players can find out about the club, meet some current members and find out about the benefits of membership.

The Oundle Tennis Club is located on Occupation Road next to the Bowls and Rugby clubs, and boasts five floodlit hard courts and excellent facilities.

The weekly schedule includes regular club sessions, a strong coaching programme for players of all ages and abilities, junior and senior club competitions, as well as team competitions in local leagues.

There are opportunities to play throughout the year. Members can also book courts to play in their own time and are welcome to invite guests to join them for a small fee.

"As well as being great exercise, tennis is an enjoyable sport which is accessible to all," said Jason Atkinson, Club Chairman.

"The Open Day is an easy way to find out about the club and meet some current members. If you can't make it, contact us to arrange a trial session."

The Greedy Piglet hits the spot

Hannah Wakeford and Lily Hunter

The Greedy Piglet at the top of North Street is Oundle's newest café, distinctive with its adorable sign inspired by the owner's young daughter.

acquired the café by "being in the right place at the right time". Oundle's Greedy Piglet is a sweeter recreation of that first café for her loyal customers.

Ms Dixon is a "businesswoman



Owner Naomi Dixon and manager Rica Neale

Many of Naomi Dixon's customers are already regular patrons of her Greedy Pig cafe in Corby. They were the ones who encouraged her to set up in Oundle closer to where they work, and they promised to follow her. She

at heart" and originally got into the catering business after acquiring a friend's cafe. She was surprised by how she fell in love with the business of serving food; being a very approachable and social person, she enjoys both the business and

personal side. She also runs two tattoo parlours in Corby and Towcester, and a car garage which does MOTs.

The café is her first venture in Oundle, where she cuts a distinctive look, and has already proved to be a popular destination. "Business has been manic," said Ms Dixon, "and surprisingly busy right from the start."

The café has been refurbished in a relaxed and trendy style. New comfy booths offer privacy, and the exposed beam and brick walls are artfully hung with BMX bikes in tribute to her husband who used to race bikes. Outside tables are perfectly positioned for catching the sun right through the afternoon

The Greedy Piglet's menu is reassuringly familiar, featuring a range of choices at very reasonable prices. Starting at 7.00am, the café's all-day breakfast is very popular.

For lunch they serve quiches, jacket potatoes, salads, sandwiches, breakfast subs and burgers. The emphasis is on good food. There is also complementary tea or coffee with breakfast. Naturally this attracts builders, who enjoy the hearty helpings before or after work.

They will also soon start to host events such as gin, ale and music nights, as well as open mic nights.

Ways to help tackle loneliness

Lily Wolfson

Being lonely is not the same as being alone. You can feel lonely in a room full of people. You can live in a house packed with family but still feel lonely. It is a feeling, described by sufferers as "a wave of emotions separating you from the rest of the world".

In our world, someone who is "lonely" is often depicted as someone physically isolated from the world, staring out into space, cut off from society. But what if that same lonely person was your neighbour? And what if you could do something to help? The best and easiest way to help someone who is lonely is to talk to them.

So that's why I invite you all to get involved in the #HelloNeighbour Challenge. The initiative was launched by the Nextdoor neighbourhood watch website, but you do not need to subscribe to the app or follow a hashtag to embrace its purpose.

Taking on this challenge involves a commitment to spend one hour a week until the end of the year helping a neighbour. Whether this involves inviting them over for a cup of tea, or accompanying them for a turn around Oundle. A simple conversation with someone could make the difference between a good and a bad day.

In Oundle we are fortunate to have a welcoming community hub at No. 1 St Osyth's Lane. They hold multiple drop in groups during the week, all aimed at helping the community and reducing isolation for local residents. Some fixed dates for the diary are the monthly men's breakfast (second Saturday of each month) or dads and tots (first Saturday of each month), the fortnightly StitChat, or weekly Tuesday Toddlers and Thursday market day Drop In. There is no charge for any of these activities.

I invite you all to take part in the #HelloNeighbour Challenge. All you need to do is go and say hi!

Community Impact Award for Air Ambulance

Grace Maund

In December the Oundle branch of the Air Ambulance Charity Shop received the Community Impact Award 2018 from the Air Ambulance Service for its work in the community.

There are 28 charity shops in the five county region served by the Air Ambulance. The Oundle shop has been open since July 2015 and has hosted events such as the Oundle Charity Rock Concert, the 2017 Air Ambulance Christmas Fayre and the Maltings Christmas Fair.

The award's citation said that the shop was "constantly engaging with the community resulting in the valuable generation of clothing and monetary donations, and embracing new opportunities within the community".

One way the air ambulance service has increased their shops' revenue is by also selling their items via their eBay store, allowing them to reach those who are unable to visit the shops in person. The shop has a wide variety of products, ranging from clothes and jewellery to educational books for children.

Manager of the shop, Faith Ross, said: "The award is due to the fabulous team that has been interacting with the community and doing fundraising themselves. Much of that fundraising doesn't come through the shop itself, but comes from community fundraising, so is an example of community supportiveness."

On 3 April the Golf Club hosted a fashion show organised by Diversity Boutique. With generous donations from local businesses, the raffle raised £300 for the Air Ambulance.



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Oundle's jewel in the crown of shops offers treasured gems for life-long pleasure



Nigel Hill developed his love of gems and jewellery from his father, who owned a family business and encouraged his interest

Hannah Wakeford

It is hard not to stop in your tracks when passing by Harpur's window on West Street with its changing display of glittering gems.

Harpur's has provided Oundle with great quality jewellery since 2002. The shop is run by Nigel Hill on the premises where, coincidentally, his father originally had another business, 'The Old Curiosity Shop', which also sold jewellery and antiques.

Harpur's was established in

1950 by Nigel's father, Peter, and his brother Ron. The first shop was in Bedford and they expanded in 1974, setting up another shop in Aspley Guise. Nigel took over the business in 1988, and came to Oundle in 2002.

From the age of eight Nigel was brought into the family business and learned about gems, jewellery and antiques. "I remember being a kid and staring at a black opal and I couldn't understand how this happened. It's so beautiful, having

millions of colours in it, and it being millions of years old, and I had it in my hand. How? That fascinated me. I love it and I've never lost that."

His father had a friend who was the chairman of the National Association of Goldsmiths who put him in touch with the top people at Hatton Gardens to learn the jewellery trade.

"As a kid I was taken to Hatton Gardens, which is the world centre for jewellery, so I became very familiar early on with jewellery," he said. These connections helped him to train properly as a jeweller and gemologist.

At the same time, Nigel was taught to play the drums by another friend of his father's. When he left school he went into music as a professional drummer in rock bands and as a session player, while at the same time maintaining an active role in the jewellery business.

He kept both careers going side-by-side, working with his father when not on tour, which worked well, and he loved both equally. But Nigel said the touring was exhausting, especially as he was a "heavy-duty drummer".

"The music business is a young man's game. I don't think I'd want to go on tour now as it's gruelling", he said.

Nigel no longer tours with his

music, but he still manages bands and performs the odd gig, mostly for charity. Jewellery remains his passion,

"I love what I do. My particular love is stones. I love to match stones, I enjoy that process. I have collections of stones that will make your eyes pop."

Although he works with traditional pieces such as pearl strings and diamond settings, he takes pride in his independent streak.

"I cater for those who want to be a little bit different. What is fun for me is being able to recreate jewellery for people into something they love," he said.

"If you wanted to sum me up - if everybody comes out of a door and turns one way, even as a young kid, I would always go the other way. That's just me, I've always been a rebel. So, I appeal to people who have a little bit of that in them, too.

"In fact one magazine called me the most eccentric jeweller in the Midlands. I was a bit disappointed with that, because it's far, far wider."

Harpur's stocks a dazzling collection of jewellery by a variety of independent designers. Nigel also does valuations, repairs and takes private design commissions. Harpur's is a proper treasure trove for gifts and indulgences that give life-long pleasure. It may just be that jewel in the crown of Oundle.

Animals and their owners are all welcome at Leo's Pet Shop

Hannah Wakeford and Lily Hunter

This year is the 20th anniversary of Leo's Pet Shop in Oundle, making it one of the longest running businesses in town. The shop was opened by Maria Earl and has been run by her ever since. "They just can't get rid of me!"

A pet shop was always a natural path for Mrs Earl, as she had grown up with animals. Her parents bred dogs and she had an equestrian background. Her first job involved collecting and selling second-hand equestrian items, which led to her to open the Oundle shop in 1999 to sell horse related merchandise.

Since then the shop has moved on from equestrian supplies, and now sells a huge range of pet supplies across two floors for cats, dogs, all small animals and even chickens.

For Maria the best part of her work is talking about people's pets and being able to help her customers with advice about care,

especially those who may have not had pets before.

"I always have tissues behind the counter for the worried pet owners."

She also loves to meet her customers' pets. "All animals are welcome. We even had a cat in the other day!"

Her own dog usually provides faithful company in the shop throughout the long day, a five-year-old rescue greyhound named Katie.

Raising funds for charity is an important sideline in the shop and over the years Mrs Earl has raised £8000 for Cancer Research via the shop.

To celebrate the shop's 20th anniversary Maria has organised a charity dog walk on Sunday 12th May in partnership with Support Dogs UK. Starting at the recreation ground at 10am, it will follow a four mile trail to nearby villages. Entry and sponsorship forms are available in the shop for £5, to be



Maria Earl runs Leo's Pet Shop alongside her rescue greyhound, Katie

donated to the charity.

"Support Dogs UK take dogs out of rescue centres and train them to help children with autism, and anyone with epilepsy or disabilities."

Mrs Earl will be sponsoring Minta, a support dog that works with a young boy in Peterborough with severe autism, making his life much safer.

Special offers during the month will help support the charity, as well as a tombola table at the

Vintage Fair.

Mrs Earl's family has been behind her throughout her career, and she is very appreciative of her daughter Kara's support.

Kara is immensely proud of her mother's success, and convinced her of the need to mark her shop's anniversary milestone. "How many other people have been in town for 20 years and run a business single handedly?"

Travel that dreams are made of

Stella Simpson and Amelia Milne

For anyone wanting to make their dream holiday destination a reality, Oundle Travel is able to recommend personalised holidays for your perfect escape. This year, they are suggesting the Seychelles, in the Indian Ocean.

An inherently remote destination, the Seychelles are a unique cluster of unspoilt tropical islands that offers perfect temperatures during the summer months. It is a true castaway experience, from a barefoot stroll along a beach, to snorkelling with rare ocean wildlife, and even trekking through the Morne Seychelles National Park.

Mahe is the largest of the 155 islands and is home to the capital Victoria. A leisurely drive around this former British colony will take just over two hours, leaving enough time to explore the art galleries which the island is renowned for.

These islands also boast a distinctive landscape and unmistakable Creole heritage as well as some of the world's best beaches and cerulean seas. Undulating terrain, pristine lagoons and untouched beaches are home to some of the world's rarest species.

There are plenty of opportu-

nities to explore, from the granite islands where the rock formations meet powder white sands and clear seas, to the coral islands famed for their natural jungle interior and stunning reefs.

A trip to Curieuse Island National Park is the perfect place to meet incredible giant tortoises as they roam freely. The island is distinctive for its dense mangrove forest and giant granite cliffs.

For foodies, the Creole cuisine is renowned for its use of the finest local ingredients, including fresh coconut milk for curries, grilled fish and fresh tropical fruits.

Flights direct from Heathrow are twelve hours, but the time difference is only four hours, and no visas are required.

The Director of Oundle Travel, Paula Cockroft recommends an Island Hopping Experience package which includes three centres over nine nights with mixed board arrangements from just £2,689.00 per person.

Families would enjoy the five star Constance Lemuria on Praslin for seven nights. It has tennis courts, mountain bike hire and an 18 hole Championship Golf Course from £2499.00 per person.

Community Speed Watch out on patrol



This year's first Community Speed Watch patrol went to Benefield Road to monitor vehicle speed. While the team cannot issue penalties, they can report cars that exceed 35 mph to the police, who then send a warning letter to the speeding drivers.

The Speed Watch team find that most drivers do slow down when they see the team's high vis vests. They emphasise that the Speed Watch team are not enforcers; their

primary purpose is to remind people about speed limits. "It's really a gentle way to encourage people to slow down, and to remind drivers that there is a huge difference on the lethal impact of an accident between 30 and 35 mph." The police report that most speeders are actually Oundle residents.

There are currently 10 volunteers on the team. Anyone interested in joining the scheme can contact the council for details.



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Barnwell park run gains momentum

Archie Parkinson

Oundle has joined the international trend for park runs. Independent of the well-known Parkrun organisation, an informal weekly run takes place every Sunday at 10am around Barnwell Country Park.

Set up by Ian Gow, who has occasionally run half marathons, the runs began in November with just 10 runners. However, by February the group had grown to 65 runners, including children and mothers with pushchairs, running as many or as few laps as they like around the 1.25km loop.

Local runner, Laetitia Brighton said: "It is an incredibly supportive and inclusive group, and this explains the success of it."

The initiative has become so successful that Mr Gow was contacted about the Barnwell run becoming an official Parkrun, but he declined the offer. "That wasn't what we were looking to do as we want to keep it more casual to attract every type of runner, jogger and walker."

For those less keen on early starts on Sunday mornings, there is now also a Thursday run at 7pm in the park. On Tuesdays a 5k run starts at the Co-op car park at 7pm. The routes change every three to

four weeks.

Organiser Ian Gow encourages everyone to try the run. "If you would like to join us for the first time you will be made very welcome and will be encouraged and supported to help achieve your goal. I promise you will love it."

A regular participant expressed appreciation for the event in a social media post: "Five laps today including a little run. My own achievement. Thank you Ian for arranging these runs. Gives me the opportunity to build up my strength."



Sunday morning run in Barnwell Park

Runners find Oundle on the marathon map

Archie Parkinson

On a blustery January morning, 472 runners gathered on Cotterstock Road at the start line of the Oundle New Year 10k. The race was organised by Nice Work, a specialist race management company that organises races for runners at all levels to give all runners the same support no matter their pace or ability.

Nice Work came to Oundle when Darryl Coulter, a Nice Work regular, moved here two years ago and noticed that there was a lack of races in the town.

Darryl Coulter takes his running seriously. Despite only starting to run in 2011, he has completed nearly 100 races of marathon distance or longer, including most recently the Ultra-Trail du Mont Blanc in the Alps. He has also completed all six world marathon majors.

When Nice Work came to look around after Coulter's suggestion, they decided there was potential for the area as a race venue.

Marketing Manager Rachael Wood said: "We went up and had a look and saw the potential of how picturesque the area is and decided to launch the Oundle 20 Mile race in 2017 and were amazed with how well the first event was received, despite being postponed by the Beast from the East! We then launched the Oundle New Year 10k, which sold out, with the 20 mile following suit in March."

After the first race, each event has shown an increase on the last in participation numbers, and looks set to continue to do so: "We aim

to make the races bigger and better in 2020 with the addition of more events."

The 10K race started at Oundle CE Primary School, which, as the host, benefits directly from each one, and followed a loop from Oundle to Cotterstock, Glapthorn and then back into Oundle. Although the route might not seem arduous, the runners enjoyed the challenge. One competitor wrote on Twitter: "Amazing how a run that starts and finishes in the same place can be 90% up hill, and 95% against the wind. Or maybe that's just how it felt."

Nice Work aims to attract runners of all abilities from the fast elite level and experienced runners to beginners and those new to running. They do not have cut off times on any of their events and give all runners the same support no matter their pace or ability.

The majority of the runners have come from the Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire areas, but there have been runners from London and even from the continent.

Mr Coulter will join the 100 Marathon Club in June after completing the Thames Path. He will then shift his focus: "I plan to run fewer marathons and to try instead to improve my time at the half marathon distance, ideally going under 80 minutes."

Oundle will now be part of his running schedule. He has been impressed by the turn out for the local races. "There is clearly an appetite for more races, so stay tuned for more to come."

For Sunday cyclists Oundle is a key destination on their long-haul circuits

Lily Wolfson

Bikes and bright jerseys have become a familiar sight at weekends, especially outside those twin hubs of Oundle's social life, Beans and The Coffee Tavern, where cyclists socialise and refuel with calories, caffeine and chat.

On a Sunday morning at Beans, we met cyclists who regularly fit Oundle – and cake and coffee – into their route. Sam, 16, has been cycling for two years. He lives in Yaxley and will cover 35 miles on a good day, usually with friends.

Firmly established in his love of the sport he now has three bikes, is a serious circuit racer in London, and regularly trains on indoor stationary bikes – his top tip for adding in practice miles to a busy lifestyle.

We went on to meet Steve and Rich from Market Deeping and Newborough who have been cycling for 20 years. These two happily cover up to 80 miles in a day and each has five bikes for different terrains. Steve and Rich stress how social riding can be, often setting out in mixed groups of

20 to 30 riders.

Constant innovation in cycle design means you can buy specific bikes for particular types of cycling or landscapes, but recently the famous names in the industry have started bringing in bikes in the cross-over category which can be used for roads, for off-road, or just to go down to the shops. These sound a good place to start for a new entrant to the field on a limited budget.

The cyclists we met recommend Gorilla Firm Cycling in Oundle, and Terry Wright Cycles in Peterborough for good quality bikes.

Then there are those who like to mix their cycling with other sports. Adrian and Dan said they cycle a couple of times a week from Alconbury, can cover 60 miles on a Sunday, and mix cycling with running and swimming.

Those cyclists pausing for a well-earned break represent a global lifestyle industry worth \$45 billion a year and with 70 million participants. It's great for gender equality

too, with men and women taking up life on two wheels in almost even numbers.

More than a hobby, more than a means of getting about, once you begin cycling, you enter a world of kit to buy, health and fitness targets to hit, adventures to have, and for many cyclists a boost to their social life too.

The health benefits span increased mobility, improved cardiovascular fitness, better posture, healthier weight, and increased lung health. While research proves that anything done socially helps lighten dark moods and chases away wintery depressions.

For all ages, for all levels of seriousness, and for those who want to be alone or those who like to share their fun with others, cycling is on the up and available to you. Here in Oundle there are particularly good roads for this sport, and when you need a break, excellent cafes or pubs to stop at and recharge. As spring arrives – what's to stop you taking a bike for a spin?



Sam often refuels with cake and coffee at Beans along his 35 mile circuit

Former musician and Oundle ENC councillor David Bateman dies at 87

Joseph Meisner

The musician and teacher, David Bateman died at Polebrook Nursing Home in December, aged 87, after a long illness.

Mr Bateman came to Oundle in 1981 as Head of Strings at Oundle School, a position that he held for ten years.

One colleague said: "David embodied the axiom that a teacher teaches not only his subject but himself."

Mr Bateman was a free thinker at a school with a conventional outlook, and his search for truth led him in many directions. At Oundle School he was well known for planning to be in many places at the same time. That he was dubbed 'disorganised' was a fact that he took with good humour.

His spontaneity frequently inspired pupils to achieve the quasi-impossible, with the Chamber Orchestra reaching unprecedented levels.

Helen Smith, a former student, maintained a lifelong friendship. She described him as a very inspi-

rationally man. He was "non-judgmental. He took people as they were and taught the whole person".

His warmth and empathy made new students instantly feel at home in a strange environment. "Vulnerable pupils often found comfort and strength through his friendship and understanding."

At home, he was a keen gardener, with a garden so diverse that it was compared to the Amazonian rainforest.

After he retired from Oundle School, he played in chamber music ensembles, particularly with Jenny Firth, and was elected twice as a Conservative to the East Northamptonshire Council in 2007 and 2011, where he worked hard to represent Oundle's interests. High on his list of priorities were environmental issues and transport.

When he left Oundle, the valet in the school magazine read, in tribute to him: "People who knew David will look on him, as truly life-enhancing: wherever he goes, with our warmest wishes, he will remain close to our hearts."



Representing the over 75s, Ioan and Alice Thomas, David Bateman and Tony Hodgson (who died in 2016) were photographed by the Oundle Chronicle in 2012 in a feature about cyclists in town

Ioan Thomas made headlines as an inspirational teacher

Joseph Meisner

For decades Ioan Thomas was a familiar figure riding his bicycle on busy errands through Oundle's streets. Following a few years of declining mobility, he died in March, aged 90.

Ioan was born in Newcastle, where his father was head of Newcastle Royal Grammar School. During the war his father evacuated the whole school to Penrith, where pupils shared facilities with



In 2016 Ioan Thomas returned to the classroom to talk about the war years

local schools and were housed with other families. His father bought an old house to live in without electricity or water, and which the family still own. During this time, Ioan enjoyed incredible freedom to walk and cycle in the Lake District and nurture his passion and skills for observing nature.

After completing a degree in natural sciences at Cambridge, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps and become a teacher. He joined Oundle School in 1951 on a one year contract, but stayed for 37 years.

His colleague, Nick Owens, noted that Ioan's exceptional teaching ability was innate: "In teaching, Ioan found challenges on many fronts in which his personality, sense of fun and wide-ranging skills were ideally suited."

In the classroom he drew inspiration from the teachings of Oundle's famous headmaster, Frederick Sanderson. He avoided dictating facts, and was quick to undermine unfounded assumptions, expecting pupils to make deductions from their own observations.

He looked out for struggling students and gave many extra hours for extra tuition and advice. He could also be relied on to help new members of staff adjust to work and life at a new school, and regularly volunteered for mundane jobs that others avoided.

Having been a resident tutor in School House, Ioan was appointed Housemaster of Sidney House.

Ioan often played the viola in the school orchestra, and directed many school theatre productions. He also took a keen interest in

junior boys rugby, making the game fun to even the most disinterested, who reacted with surprise that sport could be fun.

Ioan took over the role of Head of Biology in 1971, where he led many expeditions in the UK and to Africa. His knowledge was "unsurpassed among his contemporaries". During his tenure, the school's Natural History Society flourished and contributed to the documentation of the local environment. His pupils' research was published in Flora of Oundle and the Bird List, and his archive of photos and papers from 1958-1973 record the development of Barnwell County Park from gravel pits to nature reserve.

His depth of knowledge and experience was invaluable to the Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust, for which he was a regional secretary. In 1987 Ioan was made a Fellow of the Institute of Biology.

Among Ioan's many students are prominent scientists who looked back over long careers to acknowledge the debt owed to their former teacher. Among them was the late David Baker, the clinician and scientist who changed the face of medicine with key discoveries, and the scientist Richard Dawkins, author of *The Selfish Gene*, who said his first lesson with Ioan at the age of fourteen was inspirational. "I don't remember the details, but it conveyed...what I would now call 'science as the poetry of reality'".

In 1980, Ioan married Alice Stevens, who he had known for 31 years. After moving to Oundle Alice was a founding member of the Oundle Historical Society, and the author of a number of historical publications. In retirement, Ioan shared her interest in history and soon became a prominent member of the historical community.

He wrote many papers ranging from the "History of Oundle Street Names" and "Transport links in Oundle", to the "History of Short Wood" and "Sewers and Water Supply in 19th Century Oundle".

He was a founding member of the Oundle Museum and served on its management committee, as well as Transition Oundle, to which he brought a profound concern for the future of the planet.

In 2013 he was presented with an honorary award from the Northamptonshire Museum and Historic Houses Forum for the important role he played in setting up the forum. Their citation read: "His energy and enthusiasm for the heritage of the county and the forum has left a legacy of this successful organisation which the Forum felt, needed to be acknowledged."

50th anniversary issue of the Oundle Chronicle

Johnny Capstick-Dale

This issue is the 50th publication of the Oundle Chronicle. Although Oundle is a small town, the Chronicle manages to fill every issue with stories on local crime, property, business, politics, and the residents who live in the town.

The Oundle Chronicle is written by a team of Oundle School pupils who meet once a week, and is

had initially been met with some objections about concerns to the future of the Market Place. By 2014, Norman's Greengrocer closed after 65 years in the Market Place. Similarly, the building which now is the restaurant Salernos has changed hands repeatedly, having recently been '62 Love Me Do.

A copy of every issue of the Chronicle is sent to our MP in West-

Wind up Villagers". Four years later the headline was "Wind Farm Regulations Relaxed".

One obvious change the town has experienced is in its growth, and the development of new housing. Since 1991, Oundle's population had increased by 47.9%. In 2012 articles about planning developments reported that residents "felt unease and anxiety about

and communications, and also the evolving world of digital media, which did not even exist when they began writing at the Chronicle.

We caught up with a few of our former writers who once worked on the paper as pupils and brought to our readers the local news in and around the town that often has more importance to our lives than the national and international headlines.

Tim Robey, who worked on the Chronicle in the 1990s, is the deputy film critic for the Daily Telegraph. He has been reviewing since 2000 and is known for his fierce scrutiny of current films.

Former Chronicle journalists have not only influenced UK journalism, but have touched the profession across the world. Catriona Morgan has been working for science publications in Germany, while Nick Briggs who started out as a copy editor, has since gone on to set up Debtwire's Emerging News service which now covers finance across Europe.

In particular the world of motoring journalism has attracted former Chronicle journalists. Tim Pollard, an award-winning motoring journalist and digital editor, is currently editorial director for Bauer Media's motoring and specialist digital portfolio. Both Dan Strong and Piers Ward worked with Auto Express magazine. The former holds the role of Deputy Managing Editor of the Auto Express magazine, while the latter won the Sir William Lyons Award 2001 given by the Guild of Motoring Writers.

The Chronicle provided a path into broadcasting for Dotty McLeod, who is a BBC Radio presenter, currently at Radio 5 Live, while her editorial colleague, Kate Mason is currently a TV presenter for beIN Sports in Qatar, and will soon be joining Sky Sports as a football presenter. Miles Eames moved into radio as a BBC producer, followed by a stint as commissioning manager at Channel 4 before moving over to social media and digital communications.

In the world of government, Lauren Martens works in the media office managing communication of department policies and campaigns across all platforms.

In the field of arts, wordsmith Daisy Watt works in book publishing as an editor, and former Chronicle editor Shanna Martens is a film and TV script editor and developer.

Of the most recent Chronicle graduates, Francesca Coates is studying journalism at university.

Jonathan Lane, the first co-editor of the Chronicle recently wrote: "It is no understatement to say that the Chronicle was probably the single most worthwhile activity I undertook at that time."



The Oundle Chronicle is produced by a team of Oundle School pupils

supervised by two staff editors. Each issue is entirely self-funded by advertising, with any profits donated to charity.

The first issue was printed in black and white in 1991 when copy needed to be pasted manually onto pre-press sheets. Hoping to attract a wide readership, the paper reported on a crime wave of six burglaries, a ghost sighting in the Talbot Hotel, the success of a pupil from Prince William School who went to Australia for a lecture course, and the appointment of a tree warden.

Crime is always a headline-attracting story. The lead article of the 2011 winter issue was titled "Return of the Ram-Raiders", and reported on the second ATM "smash-and-grab" robbery to have occurred during the year. The Police Beat column is a regular feature.

News stories track the changing fortunes of local businesses. In 1991, a local shop was "honoured with the distinction of winning the Midlands Region Delicatessen of the Year Award", while in 2012, Hambleton Bakery, which is currently situated on the Wharf Station Road, was named Britain's Best Bakery by ITV.

In 2012, the cover story featured the arrival of Waitrose, which

minster, and once even attracted a response from the Prime Minister. In response to an article about Tony Blair and his relationship with the then Oundle School headmaster, Blair wrote: "I remember David McMurray very well - and my days at Fettes - and found your article most enlightening!"

Prominent residents and visitors to town sometimes attract a feature article. In the third issue of the Chronicle, the two editors interviewed HRH the Duchess of Gloucester Princess Alice about her birthday. In 2010, a staff writer interviewed the comedian Jo Brand, who described entertainment as "taking people away from the drudgery of their ordinary working lives".

Flooding by the River Nene is a big news story. In the spring issue of 1998, "Spring Floods hit Oundle"; 2006 saw the council having to defend its record on flooding issues; in 2012 roads were closed, and a local resident described the flooding as the "worst flooding in Oundle for twenty years".

Stories about technology and countryside developments reflect changing attitudes. On the contentious issue of wind turbines, the Chronicle wrote an article in 2005 about how "Turbines Plan Puts the

the new home development" and "overcrowded development raises concern". Since then, the Neighbourhood Plan and ENC housing plans have grabbed headlines.

The Chronicle has adapted to changes in technology, communications and distribution. While the paper used to be sold at Oundle News for 50p, since 2012 the Oundle Chronicle has been distributed free to every household in town by the team of writers.

On the digital front, its website and Twitter account can keep readers updated throughout the year.

Chronicle writers - where in the media world are they?

Lily Wolfson

Anyone who works in journalism will advise that the best first experience in the field is reporting local news. While not every writer who has contributed to the 50 issues of the Oundle Chronicle has had ambitions to work in journalism, many have found the paper to be a very good training ground for successful media careers in the world of print, television, radio,

50 issues of Oundle news from 1991 to 2019

The Oundle Chronicle has sought to report on the highs and lows of life in Oundle and nearby villages, and its legacy provides a fascinating historical record of events that shaped the town we live in today.

Johnny Capstick-Dale



1991

"With six burglaries occurring over the past month accompanied by a vast increase in violence..."



1992

"Plans for the new health centre have received an unexpected setback which has put the entire scheme in jeopardy..."



1993

"The fortunes of Oundle's oldest supermarket, after a history of nearly 100 years finally came to an end..."



1995

"Feelings are still running high over the way in which a major gas emergency on South Road was handled..."



1996

"The Warmington bypass, costing £3.6m has been completed, and cuts out the bends through the village..."



1998

"The worst flooding that Oundle has known for over fifty years struck during the Easter break..."



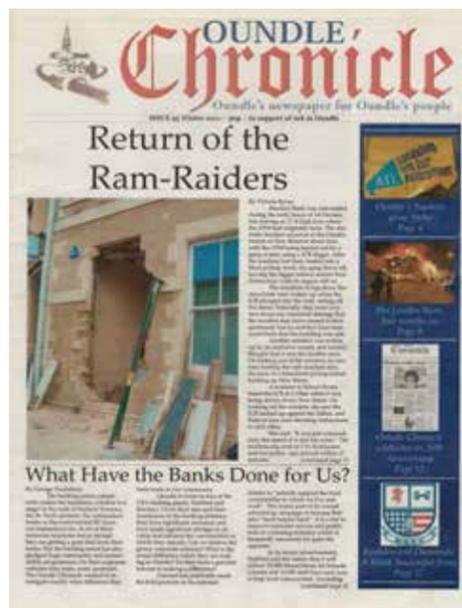
2005

"The proposal for the construction of six wind turbines has led to outrage among residents..."



2009

"The Queen Victoria Hall on West Street is soon to undergo a £500,000 renovation, planned by Mark Benns..."



2011

"Barclays Bank was ram-raided during the early hours, leaving an 11 ft high hole where the ATM had been..."



2012

"The Labour party stormed to victory by a dizzying margin of 7,791 votes, representing a 13% gain..."



2014

"In its long history, Oundle has never seen anything as exciting as the big day when cyclists took over the streets..."



2016

"Just over a month after the OTC was described as having the potential to be a beacon council, it fell apart..."