

# From the Horse's Mouth

**The Horspath  
Magazine**

**February  
March  
2026**



**Issue  
21**

**Photography by Nicky Skeats**

## The BEST

### Christmas Market ever....

Saturday November 29<sup>th</sup> 2025 and the weather is terrible. Driving rain and wind. Surely no one will turn out for our event? And will the stallholders come?

We needn't have worried as it turned into a Whale of an event and we made more money than ever before. Of course, Father Christmas and Mrs Christmas stole the show (see picture) and we give them and their band of helpers a very big Thank you. Our other



stalls pulled in the villagers: cakes were as popular as ever, so was the Raffle and the Madagascan stall is always so colourful and interesting. Not to forget the craft stalls, the children's tombola, Rosie's handmade cards. Delicious Horspath honey and Mike with his wonderfully crafted wooden bird boxes etc. It is always a good idea to serve mulled wine with sausage rolls in addition to cakes and tea and coffee. Shelagh and Ken being the King and Queen of Christmas cheer! So very many thanks for supporting us. See you next year. PS we may not hold a market in the summer but look out for an alternative event.....

Anna

Radcliffe

#### Easter Dates for your Diary at St Giles' Church

**3rd April - Good Friday:** 9.30-11.30 Easter Craft Workshop for children. Come along and join in the fun including an Easter Egg Hunt.

**4th April - Easter Saturday:** 7.30pm Easter Fire, suitable for everyone. Toasted Marshmallows taste great!

**5th April - Easter Sunday:** 11am All Age Communion Service. Come and listen to a story and then find an egg.

## ***Letter from the Editor and Team***

**THIS ISSUE:** which you are reading for February and March is always a challenging one to fill as all the articles and information have to be with our team by the 15th January. This puts a lot of pressure on our contributors as it falls so soon in the New Year, but as you will read, they are very loyal and pull out all the stops to make this magazine the success it is. Despite the digital age we live in, and even with our magazine being on-line for anyone in the world to read, a great majority of our residents still like to thumb through a hard copy and read and re-read at their leisure.

**ONE THING:** it also includes adverts and sponsorship which our very generous local businesses pay for to support the production costs and at the same time offer their services to you. Unlike nearly every other village magazine we keep these adverts to a minimum so that you can enjoy a good read without being interrupted with numerous ads on nearly every page!

**BUT:** Despite a generous grant for the Stone Pit Charity we still need additional support through advertising and or sponsorship, so we can continue to produce a good size issue with lots of varied content.

**WE MAY NEED:** To reduce the size of the magazine if we don't receive a few more adverts from local businesses or perhaps sponsorship from anyone who wants to support us financially in some small way.

**ARE YOU:** A business who may wish to advertise, or an individual who would like to sponsor us?

We very much look forward to hearing from you if you are

**[thehorspathmagazine@gmail.com](mailto:thehorspathmagazine@gmail.com)**

**Or call me on 07825 615735 for a chat**

**Many thanks John**

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# *Horspath Parish Council*

## *Happy New Year to all!*

+ The new picnic table and benches are now in the play area. Quotations are being sought to lay concrete bases for them to sit on. Thanks to the two families who very kindly sponsored the purchase of the benches.

+ Another request to Oxford Bus Company has been made to add an additional stop to Cowley Retail Park to the Service 46 bus schedule. Oxford Bus Company has said that the service is being reviewed but they are still not able to add this stop as they are unable to accommodate the additional time that it would take to enter/exit the Retail Park due to significant delays caused by the volume of traffic.

+ An enquiry has been made to Oxfordshire County Council Highways Department for up to date traffic surveys to be carried out in the village.

+ The refurbishment of the village hall project is still on-going and a planning application has been submitted to the District Council. As soon as planning permission is approved the project can move forward. More information to follow.

+ The Council is still waiting for quotations for a brick built shelter to be built that matches the existing bus shelter at Gateley.

+ The Parish Council is looking for contractors from all trades in the village who would like to register their details with the Council for any maintenance work required in the village, who would be willing to provide a quotation for works as and when required. If you would like to register, please email your details to the Clerk:-

**clerk@horspathparishcouncil.org**

+ Any resident who is interested in joining the Horspath Village Hall Management Committee please contact the Clerk –

**clerk@horspathparishcouncil.org**

+ If any resident wishes to raise issues with Horspath village please contact Hayley Kogel, Clerk to HPC via email -

**clerk@horspathparishcouncil.org**

**Please note:-** Horspath Parish Council will not take any further action on correspondence that is sent anonymously.



## Horspath Stone Pit Charity

The next meeting of Horspath Stone Pit Charity will be held in March 2026 (date to be confirmed). The closing date for applications to be considered at the March meeting is 1 st March 2026. Trustees would like to remind all residents who are successfully awarded a grant that receipts must be provided to the value of the grant within 3 months of receipt. Failure to provide a receipt to confirm how the grant has been spent, will result in no further grants being awarded.

At the last meeting held in December 2025, the following grants were awarded:-

2 Organisation grants were successful.

1 Organisation grant was successful in principle subject to a site plan being received/approved.

1 Organisation grant is required to submit more details.

12 Individual applications were successful.

2 Individual applications were not successful as they do not meet the criteria of the Charity.

3 Individual applications were not successful as receipts for previous grants have not been provided.

1 Individual application was not granted as a grant has already been awarded in the last 12 months.

<b>Organisation Grants</b>		
Horspath Senior Residents	2026 day trips & meals	£3340.00
Horspath Village Website	Web hosting & domain fee	£103.40
Horspath Cricket Club	Scoring shed (Approved in principle)	£3413.39
<b>Individual Grants</b>		
2 x School Trips		£389.00
3 x Yenworthy Trips		£546.00
5 x Swimming Lessons		£1000.00
1 x School Transport		£200.00
1 x Meal Voucher Scheme		£6000.00
<b>Total</b>		<b>£14,991.79</b>

A total of £14,991.79 was awarded.

15th January 2026



Dear Residents of Horspath,

As we begin the New Year, I wanted to share a short update on some of the work I have been doing in and for Horspath, and to thank everyone who has been in touch with me over recent months.

I continue to hold Thames Water to account on issues affecting the village, pressing for clearer communication, proper maintenance, and long-term solutions to the problems residents have experienced. This remains a priority for me, and I will continue to raise concerns on your behalf until improvements are delivered.

I am also pleased that drain clearance works have been taking place locally. These works are important in helping to reduce the risk of flooding and to improve drainage resilience during periods of heavy rainfall, and I will continue to monitor progress with the relevant authorities.

Thank you to everyone who has already completed my Autumn/Winter survey. We are currently working through the responses we have received so far and I look forward to reporting back to you in the next edition. If you have not yet had the chance, please do take a few minutes to complete the survey – your feedback is invaluable and helps shape my work and priorities for Horspath and the wider constituency.

Thank you for everything you do to make Horspath such a strong and active community. As always, if there is something you would like me to raise or pursue on your behalf, please do get in touch.

With best wishes,

Freddie van Mierlo MP

[freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk)

## It's all aboard ....for the Polar Express

You may or may not be familiar with the book, "The Polar Express", written by Chris Van Allsburg in 1985 but you may have come across the film of the same name, released in 2007 as an animated Christmas fantasy adventure, featuring Tom



Hanks. The film was a major box office success and still is aired on TV at Christmas Time.

The book was given to my son as a Christmas present in 1987 and became a firm family favourite. It tells the tale of a small boy who lay in his bed on Christmas Eve waiting to hear the ringing bells of Santa's sleigh. Instead, he hears the sound of the hissing steam of the Polar Express which takes him and many other small children, still in their pyjamas and dressing gowns, to the North Pole. Here, they are met by thousands of elves and the man himself - Santa Claus. The boy is chosen to receive the first gift of Christmas and he selects a bell from the sleigh. Sadly, he loses the bell through a hole in his pocket! Back home the next day, he opens his Christmas presents and finds the bell in a box under the tree with a message from Santa. As he rings the bell, his parents can't hear it because only those who believe in Santa can hear the bell!

**Do you know that you can actually ride the Polar Express?** It operates as a Christmas extravaganza in several locations in the UK. This year we joined the Train Ride departing from Tunbridge Wells West on the Spa Valley Railway for a truly magical Christmas adventure. As we boarded the steam train, we stepped straight into the much-loved story and the book is brought to life by unforgettable characters including the Conductor, energetic dancing chefs, elves and Santa himself as part of an immersive theatrical journey filled with storytelling, festive fun, delicious treats and warming cups of hot chocolate. Santa presents each person with a gift, a shiny sleigh bell! An expensive treat but what wonderful memories to treasure.

Sue Rowell

## Letter from the Vicar

Dear friends

I'm writing this on the 13<sup>th</sup> January, after saying Evening Prayer in church. As I look at news headlines from the United States of America, and elsewhere, the world seems to be in turmoil. ICE agents shooting dead a young woman, attacking others, smashing car windows and spraying pepper in people's faces; recent events in Venezuela; threats to invade Greenland; protests in Iran; continuing violence in Gaza, Ukraine and Sudan ... The world seems to be a dark and dangerous place. It's easy to feel helpless, and to feel that there is little we can do to change the world. However, I believe that, when all around us seems to be in chaos; when we see evil acts going unpunished; when we feel helpless and hopeless, Christians – and people of *other* faiths, and of *no* faith – are called to pray. I'm currently re-reading a book by John Pritchard – a former Bishop of Oxford – on *The Life and Work of a Priest*. Today, I read a section on intercessory prayer. Pritchard reminds us that part of the role of a priest (and of other Christians, too) is to bear the pain of the world, and of the parish or local community, and to pray for, and keep “vigil with a damaged world until God finally puts all the world to rights in his new creation.” One of the many aspects of a Vicar's prayer is to pray for the people of the parish where he, or she is called to serve. As part of this call to pray, I say Morning and Evening Prayer in the churches of the Benefice, during the week. In St Giles' Church, I say Evening Prayer at 6pm most Thursdays; and Morning Prayer at 9:15am most Fridays. I would love you to join me in prayer; but please be assured that I am praying in and for the parish at these times. As suggested in two of my favourite R.S. Thomas poems (below), it's often difficult to believe that our prayers are answered ... but I believe that prayer **does** make a difference, and that God **does** hear, and respond to, our prayers.

### Folk Tale – by R.S. Thomas

Prayers like gravel  
flung at the sky's  
window, hoping to attract  
the loved one's  
attention. But without  
visible plaits to let  
down for the believer  
to climb up,  
to what purpose open  
that far casement?  
I would  
have refrained long since  
but that peering once  
through my locked fingers  
I thought that I detected  
the movement of a curtain.

### Kneeling – by R.S. Thomas

Moments of great calm,  
Kneeling before an altar  
Of wood in a stone church  
In summer, waiting for the God  
To speak; the air a staircase  
For silence; the sun's light  
Ringing me, as though I acted  
A great rôle. And the audiences  
Still; all that close throng  
Of spirits waiting, as I,  
For the message.  
    Prompt me, God;  
But not yet. When I speak,  
Though it be you who speak  
Through me, something is lost.  
The meaning is in the waiting.



## **Services in St Giles Church and Benefice Services February and March 2026**

### **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February**

#### **Candlemas / The Presentation**

**11.00am**

Morning Prayer

11.00am-12noon Sunday Funtime in the Hub

### **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February The Fifth Sunday of Epiphany**

11.00am Parish Communion

3.00pm Story-Time Church in the Forest Church at Ripon College

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February The Sunday before Lent**

11.00am-11.15am Family Time

### **Ash Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February**

6.00 Benefice Communion at All Saints' Cuddesdon

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February The First Sunday of Lent**

11.00am Parish Communion

### **Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March The Second Sunday of Lent**

11.00am Morning Prayer

11.00am Sunday Funtime in the Hub

### **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March The Third Sunday of Lent**

11.00am Parish Communion

3.00pm Story-Time Church in the Forest Church at Ripon College Cuddesdon

### **Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March Mothering Sunday**

11.00am-11.15am Family Time for Mothering Sunday

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March The Fifth Sunday of Lent**

11.00am Parish Communion

### **Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March Palm Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday**

10.00am Benefice Communion for Palm Sunday at St Mary's Garsington



## **The Ghostly Monk of St. Giles Church.....**

For very many years the children of Horspath – and not a few adults – were stopped in their tracks when walking by the churchyard wall at night, where they could dimly perceive the ghostly apparition of a cowled figure standing in the church porch, staring out over the gravestones. It took the form of a monk, motionless and silent, whose white pointed habit and shadowed eyes could clearly be seen after nightfall. This spiritual form soon became linked with the Abbot of Osney Abbey (whose grave slab remains in the church floor by the font), and the image soon gained fanciful credence that he remained in the porch standing there in a vigil of lonely penance following his opposition to the dissolution of Osney Abbey by Henry VIII ! But in 2012 he suddenly vanished when it was found that the council had moved the street lamp opposite in Church Road: only then it became clear that the cowled monk's figure had simply been formed by the light of the lamp on the porch, with the shadow of the arch falling on the white wall inside, and the slit for the eyes formed by a shelf, exactly in the right place beneath the cowl. Moving the lamp thus eliminated the illusion of our ghostly monk – but people can still recall him and talk of his nightly presence there as he stared out in silent vigil across the churchyard....

*Brian Lowe.*





## ***Horspath CC support hurricane-hit Jamaican overseas star***

**Generous donations from members saw Horspath Cricket Club's Jamaica Hurricane Relief Appeal raise £950 in aid of overseas star Derval Green and his family. Thanks to all those who donated, the club was able to send this sum to Derval a few days before Christmas. It provided the all-rounder and his family with a timely boost and was used to help reconstruct homes, many of which were devastated when Hurricane Melissa struck the Caribbean Island in October.**

*(Thank you for bringing this to our attention and for helping Derval in such a constructive way.) Editor*

Meanwhile, Horspath begin their build-up to the 2026 season with eight men's indoor training sessions at Oxford Academy starting on Sunday, February 1 (10am-12noon). They will continue on the following seven Sundays, February 8, 15 and 22, March 1, 8, 15 and 22. All players, old and new, welcome. Horspath will break new ground in the opening round of fixtures in the 2026 Home Counties Premier Cricket League with a trip to Thames Valley League champions Ickenham. Amin Rafiq's side, who finished in a highly-creditable fifth place on their return to Division 2 last year, will make the trip down the M40 to the Middlesex club on Saturday, May 9. The side will also take part in the HCPCL T2 Competition for the first time in five years with an away tie at Thame Town in the preliminary round, the match to be played by April 30. Promoted Horspath 2nd opened their Cherwell League Division 1 campaign at home to Aston Rowant 2nd, while Horspath 3rd, who were elevated to Division 3B following a restructure, entertained Buckingham Town 2nd. Horspath 4th started off with a trip to Hertfordshire newcomers Little Gaddesden in Division 6C. Horspath women, meanwhile, continue their Oxfordshire Indoor League campaign at the Ferry Leisure Centre, Summertown during February and March. The side, who finished third last year, are among 10 clubs in the competition this season. New players, members, umpires and scorers are welcome. For more details visit **[horspathcricket.com](https://horspathcricket.com)**



## The Horspath Wine Club Presents:

### FRIDAY 6th FEBRUARY 2026 - SOUTH AFRICA -

There is so much excitement and constant innovation happening each year in

South Africa, that I struggle to keep up! For this event, prepare to taste vintage style champagne and port style wines, gems from new regions and even varieties you wouldn't associate with the Cape!

*Edmond Wines*

### FRIDAY 20TH MARCH 2026 - AUSTRALIA - MATT & MATES

The Australian wine market is one of the world's largest wine exporters (often 5th or 6th globally) with a strong reputation for quality, driven by regions like **Barossa** and **Margaret River**, although recent years have seen market shifts due to challenges like Chinese tariffs, prompting a pivot to premiumization and new markets like the UK and US. Wine is made in every state, with South Australia, Victoria, and NSW being major players, each featuring unique terroirs. For this tasting we'll sample some of the lesser known yet highly revered wines from these and other regions.



### FRIDAY 24TH APRIL 2026 CENTRAL & EASTERN EUROPE

Central & Eastern Europe refers to countries which include Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, and the three Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Countries, such as Hungary, are well known producers of great wine, such as those produced by **Royal Tokaji**, some of which sell for £10's of thousands. Yet there are many other very interesting countries and styles to examine, from countries such as Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, and Slovenia. In this whistle-stop tour, one of the UK's







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**Horspath Hub**

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Contact: [emilylouisayoga@gmail.com](mailto:emilylouisayoga@gmail.com)

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## Morland House Surgery, Morland Close, Wheatley OX33 1DP

Surgery opening hours Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm

Saturday (except Bank Holiday weekends) 8am to 10.30am, only for **prebooked** consultations. Enhanced access offered outside these times, speak to a care navigator on 01865 872448. When surgery is closed, contact Out of Hours service on 111 MHS has a **Facebook Page** to keep patients up to date with surgery news and health issues.

Visit **Morland House Surgery Website**: ([www.morland-house.co.uk](http://www.morland-house.co.uk)) for information and guidance on managing a vast number of health conditions, symptoms, and treatments. For example:

**Pharmacy First Service (PFS)** - pharmacies can treat directly seven common health conditions: namely sinusitis, sore throat, earache, insect bites, impetigo, shingles, urinary tract infections

- **Ordering Repeat Prescriptions**
- **Vaccinations and immunisations** e.g. flu and COVID-19, RSV, chicken pox, measles, MMR
- **Medicine waste** costs NHS £300 million/year
- **Care Messages**: via NHS app to your phone about your appointments, results etc. Much quicker than waiting for a letter or phone call.
- **Stroke treatment and symptoms**
- **New NHS guide** on your GP service
- **Weight loss medication**
- **Online Resources for Clinical Help** – self-referral for a range of conditions
- **Accessing your medical records and test results**
- **Group Consultation Clinics** – menopause and hypertension
- **Breast screening** to detect most common cancer in women
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During term 4 we will be taking part in World Book Day, Red Nose Day as well as Spring, Shrove Tuesday, Easter and Mother's Day. The Chick Hatching Programme starts 20<sup>th</sup> April.



Our fundraising event for term 4 will be a Sponsored

Bike Ride. We will also be looking to collect clothes for recycling to

raise money for Horspath Nursery so please save any unwanted clothing and look out for the collection date on our Facebook page.



Easter Play Scheme will be held at Horspath Nursery from Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March until Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April inclusive for children from 1 to 11 years. If you would like to book a place for your child, please complete the application on our website:

[Easter Play Scheme 2026 Booking Form – Horspath Nursery](#)

Horspath Nursery, Blenheim Road, Horspath, Oxford, OX33 1RY

[staff@horspathnursery.org.uk](mailto:staff@horspathnursery.org.uk)

Tel: 01865 876750



## 🇬🇧 Horspath Crown a New British Champion of Cycle Speedway 🇬🇧

Horspath are celebrating a new British Champion as Rachel Lammin brought home the gold at the Women's Open Indoor Championships.

Rachel finished the main event on 15 points, which forced a run-off against Lucy Whitehead (Leicester) for the O30s title. Winning the toss, Lammin chose the more favourable inside grid and made it count—racing away over four laps to take all the glory and end the 2025 race season on a high.

2010 - First Ever Female Indoor Open Champion

2025 - First Ever Female O30 Champion

Rachel will be looking for sponsorship for the 2026 season, if you are interested or know someone that might be please put them in touch with **Rachel.Lammin@outlook.com** Many thanks

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### The 2026 Calendar

A very big thank you goes to all those people involved in the success of this year's calendar in raising just over £900! This will be shared between the Hub and Church. It would not have been possible without the generosity of the business sponsors who paid for the printing, for the many residents who sent in so many

fabulous photographs and for all those who actually bought a copy, and in some cases, many copies! I would also like to thank Minuteman Press of Oxford, who not only sponsored the calendar but for their advice and great care in its production.

John

## **Classes and Activities at the Horspath Hub**

*Below are all the classes and activities we run at the Hub, but for more information, contact emails or phone numbers for each class listed on our website at **[horspathhub.co.uk](http://horspathhub.co.uk)** or call **Sheila Frankum on 07779 672163**. You can book the Hub here too with discounted rates for Horspath residents.*

### **Mondays**

Pilates – Weekly	0915 – 1015
Babies' Group – Weekly	0900 – 1000
Making Time – <b>First</b> Monday of the month	1400 – 1600
Art Group – Weekly except the first Monday of the month	1430 – 1630

### **Tuesdays**

Table Tennis – Weekly	1000 – 1200
Seated Pilates – Weekly	1400 – 1500
Vinyasa Flow Yoga – Weekly	1900 - 2015

### **Wednesdays**

Pilates – Weekly	0815 – 0915
Senior Residents' Club – <b>First</b> Wednesday of the month	1400 – 1600
Horspath Hub Film Club – <b>Second</b> Wednesday of the month	1400 – 1600
One-to-One Yoga & Massage – Once a month by appointment	1300 – 1730

### **Thursdays**

One-to-One Yoga & Massage (as above)	0900 – 1400
Yoga Class – Weekly	1200 – 1300
Line Dancing – Weekly	1400 – 1530
Creative Writing – Flexible	1600 – 1730

### **Fridays**

Coffee Mornings – Weekly	1030 – 1200
Age Uk Information and Advice – <b>First</b> Friday of the month	1030 – 1200
Horspath Wine Club – <b>Third</b> Friday of the month	1930 – 2130

### **Sundays**

Sunday Fun Time – <b>First</b> Sunday of the month	1100 – 1200
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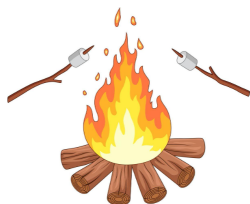
**For more information, please contact:  
Sheila at [horspathhub@gmail.com](mailto:horspathhub@gmail.com)**

*The Benefice of Garsington, Cuddesdon and Horspath  
Invites everyone to*

## **Story-time Church**

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> February '26 & Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March '26 **3pm start**

*Meet in the Forest Church area of Ripon College Cuddesdon - from the main car park, look for the wooden gate heading towards the allotments*




**All are welcome for:**

Stories and conversations round the campfire  
Campfire songs Hot Chocolate  
Marshmallows and other refreshments

\*\*\*\*\*

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## THE HORSPATH SENIOR RESIDENTS' CLUB IS SEEKING A VOLUNTEER TREASURER

The Senior Residents' Club is looking for a volunteer Treasurer to start at the end of March 2026. The present Treasurer, Judy Kent, has to leave the post after the AGM at the beginning of March. She does online banking for the Club, so it would help if the new Treasurer was computer literate.

The Club meets on the first Wednesday of the month in the Horspath Hub from 2.00pm-4.00pm. A raffle is held every month unless they are on an outing. Activities are varied and include two trips a year, two or three talks, quizzes, poetry readings, a cream tea and three lunches a year in the Queens Head and the Gurkha Palace.

The Club receives an annual grant from the Horspath Stone Pit Charity for two outings and two lunches out in the village. This has to be managed carefully because it is only eligible for Horspath residents. The Club has 14 members who live outside the village. If they go on a trip or for a meal, they have to pay for themselves, and the Stone Pit Charity has to be reimbursed.

Judy is happy to meet the new Treasurer for a handover.

If you are interested, please contact Judy Kent at [j.kent946@gmail.com](mailto:j.kent946@gmail.com)

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### The Rob Judges Photography Award

Now is the time to start thinking and taking pictures to have the chance to win the annual photography trophy. Prints of shortlisted entries will be printed up for the Horspath Flower and Produce Show, to display your artistry. So no excuse; send entries in jpeg form directly to [rob@robjudges.com](mailto:rob@robjudges.com). If you could include your name in the title of your photograph, that really helps.



## Look out for ... **Oakmoss**

Winter is a good season for seeing the bare bones of trees. It is also a great time for spotting the tiny lichens on those trees.

Lichens are miniature ecosystems, in which a fungus and some other microscopic organisms, such as an alga, team up to form a partnership. Each partner brings its own

benefits, enabling the lichen to thrive. Oakmoss is a common example, although its name is misleading: it is not a moss!

**Where to look:** on branches, tree trunks and twigs, particularly on oak trees. In the twentieth century, oakmoss was rare, since it is highly sensitive to air pollution from burning coal. But after the Clean Air Act of 1956, it has made a gradual comeback.

**What to look for:** a silver-grey-green bushy lichen. It grows in tufts (up to 10 cm long) of flattened branches with forked tips. There is often a net-like pattern of ridges on its surface.

**Did you know?** In France, Oakmoss is harvested for the perfume industry. It has a scent described as earthy and woody, with hints of musk and amber. After a lot of processing, you can dab the scent of this lovely lichen onto your skin as one of the ingredients in a sought-after, expensive perfume.

*Compiled by Shotover Wildlife, an independent community organisation, founded to research and communicate the importance of Shotover's wildlife. Illustrated by Jacqueline Wright, artist, botanist and co-founder of Shotover Wildlife. Spotted anything? Tell us! [enquiries@shotover-wildlife.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@shotover-wildlife.org.uk)*

## **Annual Christmas decoration collection in support of The Alzheimer's Society.**

I would like to send a large thank you to everyone that supported our collection for The Alzheimer's Society this year, by donating to our Christmas display collection, either at the house or via the JustGiving page. This year we managed to raise **£607**, which has now gone to the society and the local Supporter Engagement Advisor from the Alzheimer's Society, Becky, also asked me to pass on the Society's thanks.

Each year the display has 2 homes, firstly at the front of the house where it suffers all-weather's. But then it spends up to 2 weeks lounging in our conservatory, drying out, before all 48 boxes are returned to the loft. The last photo shows some of the smaller ones in the conservatory.

Since losing Phyllis, our dear Mum, Mother-in-Law and Nanny, in 2016, we have lit up our Christmas Lights display and collected for the Alzheimer's Society in her memory. Phyllis adored children, having worked in an East Oxford school for many years. She and Donald, her husband, loved seeing all the families coming to see the display each year, something we had started without collection some 12 years previously, simply for the local community and our children to enjoy. Collecting for such a worthy cause, in memory of both parents, became a perfect way to help support others in a similar position.

Donald sadly died in January 2021 while he was staying with us over Christmas and the New Year, and his last days were spent enjoying the whole experience of the display inside and outside the house.

Sadly in December 2025 we also lost a friend, Chrissie Heeley, who suffered with Alzheimer's just like Phyllis. Chrissie was a life-long friend of both Phyllis and Donald. It further brought home to us that this terrible illness strikes all too often and it accentuates how important the support for those affected continues to be.

Thank you to everyone that took the trouble to visit and/or donate.

Next year, the display will be back. We plan to hold a small competition for children under the age of 10, that can identify at least three of the new inflatables which will be present. We look forward to seeing you then.






# ALLOTMENT VACANCIES

Grow · Connect · Thrive  
Plots available now at Horspath  
Allotments!  
Contact [haahorspath@gmail.com](mailto:haahorspath@gmail.com)  
or call Fiona on 07979378184

## Why have an allotment?

 Fresh, home-grown food

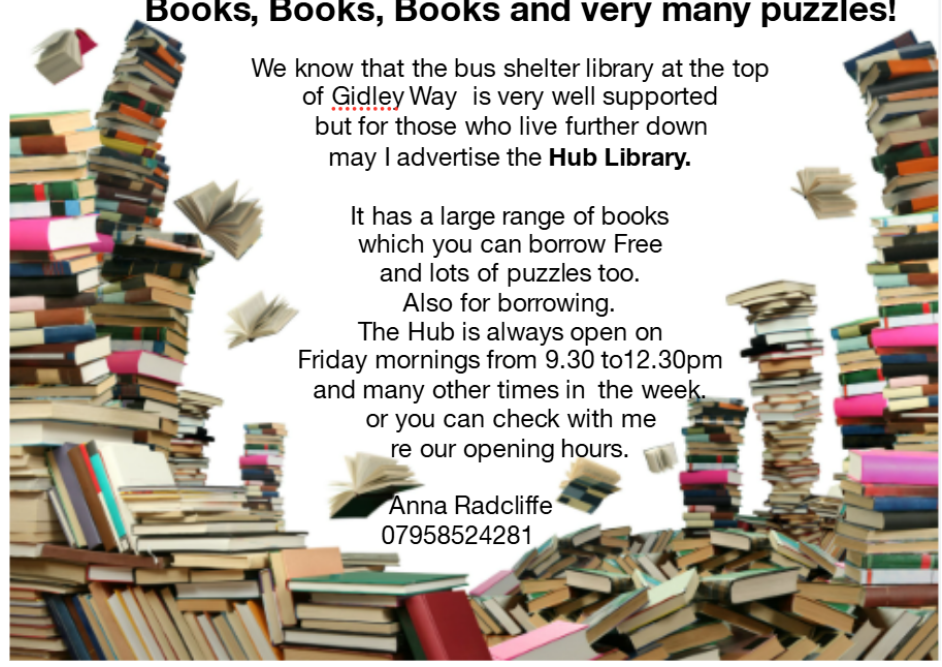
Enjoy tasty, seasonal fruit and vegetables straight from your own plot.

 Gardening is great exercise, reduces stress, and boosts mental wellbeing.

Meet friendly local people, share tips, seeds, and good company.

Grow sustainably, reduce food miles, and support nature.

## Books, Books, Books and very many puzzles!



We know that the bus shelter library at the top  
of Gidley Way is very well supported  
but for those who live further down  
may I advertise the **Hub Library**.

It has a large range of books  
which you can borrow Free  
and lots of puzzles too.

Also for borrowing.

The Hub is always open on  
Friday mornings from 9.30 to 12.30pm  
and many other times in the week.

or you can check with me  
re our opening hours.

Anna Radcliffe  
07958524281

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