

Village news

October 2025

Puttenham
Astrope
Long Marston
Gubblecote
Wilstone
Little Tring



Your independent village magazine - produced and delivered free to every home in Tring Rural villages entirely by local volunteers

Tea for many!

By Sue Foster
Photographs from Chris Hodges
and Karen Bunce

Tea at the Tower returned to the old tower and churchyard in Long Marston on Sunday 7th September.

This event helped raise funds for the restoration of the tower over 20 years ago and now as a group of residents work to form a trust the Tea at Tower event has been resurrected.

It has now been agreed in principle that the trust can take over the ownership and maintenance of the tower and churchyard from the church.

The sun shone, the music played, there was a chance to win on the raffle, guess the height of the tower itself and find some treasure on the ancient map the village. A display of vintage lawnmowers offered another distraction and there were also of course cakes galore served with tea!

It was indeed a chance for our community to come together, relax and chat in this ancient and tranquil place where time seems to stand still.

Funds of over £800 were raised and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who came along to support this event as well as all of those who worked hard in the background, manned the stalls and made cakes!!



For the residents of Puttenham, Astrope, Long Marston, Gubblecote, Wilstone & Little Tring.



Morris Dancing – an insider's view.

Words and picture by Steve Thompson

Long Marston's Summer Show in August proved to be a great success, and featured prominently in September's issue of Village News. Among the many attractions at the Show was New Moon Morris, who performed a number of colourful Morris dances and also encouraged the audience to join in with the dancing.

Morris dancers are a familiar sight today - these oddly-dressed people who tend to appear in the summer months (particularly around pubs!), but have you ever wondered where this rather strange bell-jingling dancing tradition comes from in the first place?

Morris dancing originated in England and actually goes back over 500 years, with the first ever recorded performance taking place in 1448. It's thought to have evolved from older European folk traditions, with the name itself referring to a 'Moorish dance' originally believed to have arrived in Europe through cultural exchange with peoples of the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa.

Over time, Morris dancing became a distinct English folk tradition, closely associated with agricultural communities and their rituals and celebrations.



I joined New Moon Morris with my partner Bee a lot more recently than this – less than 2 years ago in fact. We had seen them perform at the Tring Christmas Festival and were curious to find out more, so we went along to one of their rehearsals to see for ourselves. We were struck by the warm welcome we received from everyone, and also by their patience and support whilst we found our feet (literally!). We had no previous experience of dancing, but in just a few weeks we were taking part in our first dance-out. Not long afterwards we also found ourselves learning folk instruments, so we could join our musicians as well as taking part in the dancing.

At New Moon Morris, we describe ourselves as a 'joyful tribe', and we like to share our love of dance and music with the people who come to see us. In today's increasingly digital world, it's a great way

to build personal connections, make new friends and to help in bringing communities together. We're a diverse group of people of different ages and from different backgrounds, held together by a shared sense of belonging. For more information visit newmoonmorris.co.uk.

Whilst Morris dancing is most commonly associated with the summer months, we're involved in activities throughout the year, such as Village Fetes, Community events and Folk Festivals. This month, for example, New Moon Morris will be performing as part of the Tring Apple Fair on Saturday 11th October, at Pitstone Museum's Open Day on Sunday 12th October, and then we'll be dancing the sun down at the top of Pitstone Hill at sunset on 26th October.

At New Moon Morris we welcome everyone - no previous dancing experience is needed, and it is suitable for most people of average fitness and mobility. We also appreciate that people have lots of other demands on their time, and this is why there's no big commitment – members are free to join us for as many or as few activities as they like. If you fancy giving it a try, we're running a 'Come and try Morris' session on Sat 25th October at Ivinghoe Town Hall from 10.00-12.30. To book a free ticket for this session, please contact squire.newmoon@gmail.com. Rehearsals take place every Tuesday evening at the Ivinghoe Town Hall from 7.45 – 10.00pm. Why not give it a try? You'll never know unless you do...

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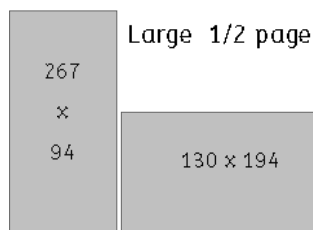
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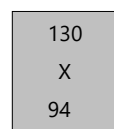
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Large 1/2 page

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63 x 94

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Village News is written, edited, produced and distributed entirely by local volunteers. We aim to be local, interesting, informative, fun and a good read. Please let us know if we are not!

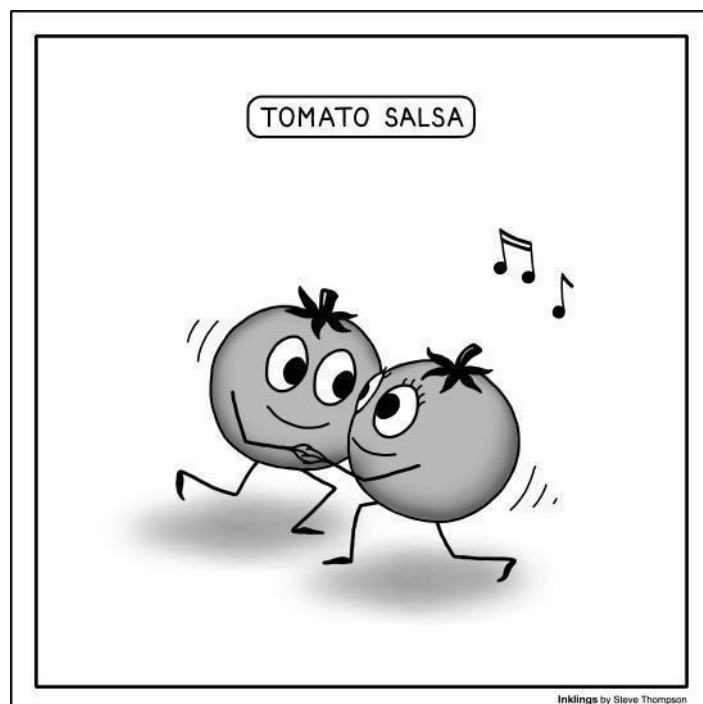
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The editor for the November edition is John McCall and the deadline for items is: Wednesday 15 October

And in a packed edition this month (thank you to everyone who contributed) we report on the last of the summer events. The nights are now longer than the days, and we look forward to what autumn has in store.

Our MP has offered to contribute to Village News, and her first piece is on page 17, so please contact her should you have any ideas or concerns that you believe she would benefit from knowing about.

Please welcome Bardi, our new Police Community Support Officer and catch up with him at Wilstone shop; details on page 7.



You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: www.wilstone.me.uk or just scan me

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What's on in & around our villages

Diary Dates

Wilstone Film Nights

Fridays
17th October
21st November
12th December
16th January
20th February
20th March
17th April
at Wilstone Village Hall
7.15pm

Tring Farmers Market

11th October - Apple parade
25th October
See below right for details
8th November

Twilight Market

Saturday 8th November 2025, from 3-6pm, victory hall
Craft stands, local produce and mulled wine. Fund raiser for victory hall with the help of the Horti Village Society.

AGM for Victory Hall.

Friday 28th November 2025 at 7.30pm, all welcome.

Tring Rural Parish Council

Meeting start at 7.30pm The public are welcome to attend

Wednesday 1 October Wilstone Village Hall

Wednesday 3 December Long Marston Victory Hall

Church Services

Below is a list of the Services for the Village churches for September – **these could change so please check online** at <https://www.tringteamparish.org.uk/news-events> or phone the Rectory on 01442 822170

We also will have live streamed services online so please take a [look](#)

Sunday 5th October – Trinity 16

6pm – Celtic Prayer – All Saints, Long Marston

Tuesday 7th October

10am – Holy Communion -St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 12th October – Trinity 17

8am BCP & 10am Harvest WfA at Tring,

10am HC at Aldbury

Tuesday 14th October

10am Morning Prayer – St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 19th October – Trinity 18

10am – Holy Communion – All Saints, Long Marston

Tuesday 21st October

10am – Holy Communion cw, St Cross Wilstone

Sunday 26th October – Last Sunday after Trinity / Bible Sunday

3.30pm – Evensong BCP– St Mary's Puttenham

Tuesday 28th October

10am – Morning Prayer– St Cross, Wilstone

MILLENNIUM EDUCATION FOUNDATION Registered Charity No. 1077157

Are you hoping to go to University or College in 2026, but are concerned that financial resources might not match up to the requirements?

Are you under the age of 22? Have you lived in Aldbury, Long Marston, Marsworth, Pitstone, Puttenham, Tring, Wigginton or Wilstone for at least three years?

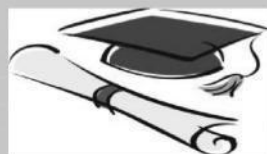
To see if you would be eligible for a grant, apply to Tring Charities' Millennium Education Foundation for information and an application form.

Website details: www.tringcharities.co.uk/education

Telephone: Elaine Winter, Secretary to the Trustees
01442 827913

Email: info@tringcharities.co.uk

Please note that the closing date is **15 November 2025** to lodge a completed application for grants payable from Autumn 2026.



**Closing date
15 November**



9.00 am – 2.00 pm
Church Square, Tring
Saturdays

Please note new closing time of 2.00 pm

11* and 25 October

* the Apple Parade Day and Market on
11 October will be at
The Market Place, Brook St

You can always find a copy of **Village News** wherever you are: www.wilstone.me.uk or just scan me



Jo Woodbridge completed her Wing Walk for Brain Tumour Research on Friday 22nd August. She says "it was a fantastic experience.



Brain Tumour Research

Together we will find a cure.



"Thank you to everyone for their support, my fundraising total is amazing, far more than my prediction. Mark received his Stereotactic Radiosurgery (SRS) on 19th, 20th and 21st August so that week was pretty busy. Mark had to wear a bespoke

tight-fitting mask for the treatment so that the radiographer could pinpoint the exact area to target. He then had to take steroids for 9 days which has disrupted his sleep. Other than that, he has been well and hopefully this will continue. This is a link to my Just Giving page where I have posted a few more pictures and a link to a short video via Facebook."

https://www.justgiving.com/page/jo-woodbridge-1?utm_medium=FA&utm_source=CL

Step back to the 1990s at Discover Bucks Museum

25 October 2025 – 22 February 2026, Discover Bucks Museum, Church Street, Aylesbury HP20 2QP

For opening times, ticket prices and booking information visit discoverbucksmuseum.org

This autumn, you are invited on a vibrant journey back to the decade of Britpop, Cool Britannia, Pokémon, Power Rangers and dial-up internet with the new exhibition, I Grew Up 90s. The exhibition brings together more than 200 iconic objects and artworks that bring the Nineties back to vivid life.

From Teletubbies to Trainspotting, Lara Croft to The Spice Girls, I Grew Up 90s celebrates a decade defined by creativity, optimism and unforgettable pop culture moments. Visitors can revisit toys, games, fashion, films, music and television shows that shaped a generation — and even test their skills on a retro arcade machine featuring classics like Tetris, Tekken, Street Fighter, and Sonic the Hedgehog.

The exhibition is curated by cultural historian and curator Matt Fox, capturing the sights, sounds and spirit of the 1990s. He will be available to chat about all things 90s!, in person for photographs and interviews at the museum from 22 – 24 October or for phone interviews at other times.

"Those that grew up 30 years ago in the 1990s - before smart phones, social media or reality TV - can genuinely state that life was very different then." Fox says. "I Grew Up 90s is a time capsule of that era, seen through the eyes of those who lived it as children and teenagers."



October at the Queens Head Long Marston

Saturday 4th from 5pm

Dinning

With the Goat Boat

Saturday 11th

Italian Night, Pop up 3 course menu

Saturday 18th at 7:30pm

Race Night

Tickets available to book

Tuesday 21st from 7:30

Quiz Night

Thursday 23rd from 7:30pm

Haldi Indian Pop Up Menu

With Alvin (Elvis tribute singer)

Book Now £39.95

Sunday 26th from 7pm

Open Mic Night

Saturday 1st November

Halloween Disco

Every Thursday from 6pm.

Pie & Pint Night £13.95

Friday Night is **Pizza Night**

Return of Sunday Roasts 1pm till 4pm

Chicken, Beef & Pork.



Whitchurch Morris



Interested in Morris Dancing?

Looking for a new way to keep fit?

You are invited to any of our Free Taster Sessions on Tuesday 7th, 14th and 21st October at Wilstone Village Hall at 8.15pm.

This is your opportunity to learn English Traditional Dances from the Cotswolds.

We have lots of fun and can turn almost anyone into a dancer, if they are prepared to have a go.

This is open to all, but under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.

Go on, you know you want to!

Contact Details: email: info@whitchurchmorris.org.uk phone: 07778 609678



Wilstone Film Nights



The Penguin Lessons

Starring Steve Coogan and Juan Salvador (the penguin)

Our first of seven films starts this season with a delightful witty and whimsical story about a disillusioned Englishman who goes to teach in a school in revolutionary Argentina in 1976. He finds his life transformed when he rescues an orphaned penguin from the beach.

This is a delightful film with very dry humour, as you would expect from the talented Steve Coogan.

Scan the QR code shown below to see a preview of forthcoming films.



Friday October 17th

At Wilstone Village Hall. Doors open at 7.15pm.

Film starts at 8pm. Licenced bar.

Tickets £7.50 from Wilstone Community Shop.





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SAT 8am-1pm

SUN 9am-noon

Shop and Repair Café working together for the benefit of Wilstone

Wilstone's Repair Café opened in the village hall early in 2024 and since then there's been an event nearly every month. Approaching one hundred items have been brought for repair including toasters, jet cleaners, computer printers and trousers and jackets. Not all items could be repaired of course, but at least the customers then know that

they definitely need to buy a replacement.

But this is only half the Repair Café story – the other half is the Café where tea, coffee and biscuits are served while the customers wait for their items to be repaired. As with the repairers, these kitchen staff are all volunteers willingly giving up their time for one Saturday morning a month.

The refreshments are all organised by the shop and usually there's a member of the shop staff in attendance supported by other volunteers from the village. The takings go back to the shop and any surplus goes towards the maintenance of the hall along with the, often generous, donations from the repairs.

Fancy a cuppa with our community copper?

By the time you read this, Wilstone will have a new Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) called Bardhyl Agallili, also known as Bardi. He'll enjoy a chat with villagers over a cup of tea or coffee in the shop where you can discuss any issues that you might have regarding village life. Ask in the shop or check on the shop's Instagram or Facebook pages to see when he will be available.



Beacon Villages Community Library by Janet Page

Many people will already know that the library is undergoing a period of change. This means the library committee is without a chair, and we also need some new committee members. It isn't an onerous task, but a very important one, as we steer the library through the transition stage and into what we hope will be a bright future.

We are now a solely volunteer run library and owing to a current shortage of volunteers we have had to temporarily reduce our opening times. The current volunteers have pulled together to ensure we can offer the best possible service but we would like to welcome more people to join the team.

If you think you can help by volunteering in the library, and/or being on the committee, get in touch with Janet me; secretary@bvcl.org.uk, speak to one of the current committee members, or call into the library.

Run by the community, for the community

www.bvcl.org.uk

General enquiries: info@bvcl.org.uk 01296 387890

Committee enquiries: secretary@bvcl.org.uk

Current opening hours:

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 2 - 5pm

Saturday 10am - 1pm

A seasonal community celebration of food, environment and culture throughout October



Tring's Own Apple Fayre

Sunday 5 October
Apple Day

Saturday 11 October
Apple Parade & Tring Farmers' Market

 [TringsOwnAppleFayre](https://www.facebook.com/TringsOwnAppleFayre)

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FRIDAY 14TH NOVEMBER
6 - 9 PM

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Free charity event offers one-of-a-kind experience to help the homeless

Hertfordshire-based homelessness charity, DENS, has announced the return of its popular Sponsored Sleepout on Friday 21st November, with free places available for everyone in the community.

Taking place at the new venue of Hammond Academy in Hemel Hempstead, the fundraising event promises an inspiring night under the stars, packed full of community spirit and entertainment.

Open to adults and children aged eight and over, the evening will include activities for all ages, an informative Q&A session about the charity's work and live music performances.

When it's time to bed down, participants can experience just a small glimpse of the challenges faced by rough sleepers during the harsh winter months.

At dawn, they can wake up feeling a huge sense of achievement, knowing the sponsorship they have raised will make a life-changing impact for local people facing homelessness each night.

Last year's edition saw a record-breaking attendance – raising an astonishing £33,000 to help rebuild the lives of local people facing homelessness.

Free places for the DENS Sponsored Sleepout are available now at www.dens.org.uk/sleepout25.

A Fresh Start to the Year

By Laura Whateley

It has been wonderful to welcome our children and families back to school after the summer break. There has been a real sense of energy and enthusiasm around the classrooms and playground, and we are already looking forward to the year ahead. It always amazes me how quickly our smallest children settle into the school routine.

Over the holidays, many of our pupils took part in the local reading challenge in Tring library, and it was fantastic to see their love of books continue to grow. Our children also joined in with the village fair, reminding us once again of the close ties between our school and the wider community. One highlight of the summer was seeing the enormous sunflower (shown right) grown by last year's Class 1!

This term, we have already enjoyed a special start: Classes 1 to 5 took part in exciting drumming workshops on the second day back. The hall was filled with rhythm, teamwork and plenty of smiles. If any families are interested in music lessons for their children, details on how to sign up are available from the school office.

At Long Marston, our Christian vision and our values of kindness, respect and resilience continue to guide everything we do. Whether it is helping a friend, trying something new, or persevering with a challenge, these values are at the heart of school life.

We are looking forward to another year of learning, growing and working together – both within the school and as part of our village community.



Long Marston VA C of E Primary School



Long Marston School Hosts Inter-village

By competitors Eloise and Sam, (both 11)

At the end of last term, Long Marston school hosted Inter-village which is a sporting event for small schools around Tring. The schools that took part are Long Marston, St. Barts (Wigginton), Aldbury and Little Gaddeston. Unfortunately, Great Gaddeston and Gaddeston Row couldn't take part this year.

The races this year that the schools took part in were; the flat race, the long race, the potato race, tunnel ball, relay, egg and spoon, skipping and sack. The races this year were very competitive by all the children who took part and they looked like they all enjoyed it.



Here are some views from some children who took part:

'it was really good, everyone who took part were really nice and supportive'

'it was a great experience to represent our whole school'

'It was good. I enjoyed skipping and I won'

'I enjoyed running and skipping'

'Overall it was a great afternoon. All the kids were really cheerful and respectful'

'I liked the atmosphere and seeing my friends cheering me on and winning felt amazing'

The scores were as follows

1st Long Marston - 206 points

2nd St Barts - 186 points

3rd Little Gaddeston 172 points

4th Aldbury - 156 points

A big well done to all the competitors and schools that took part.

We were very proud to have won this year!



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From our Reporter at the council meeting

Going, going, gone!

Chair Cllr Fox welcomed those present to the meeting and started by thanking Malcom Morgan and yours truly for stepping in at the last minute to cover financial matters and minuting respectively, in the absence of the Clerk.

Cllr Fox then announced that Cllr Murray had tendered his resignation that very morning, the frustrations that your doughty councillors experience when trying to get anything done having proved too much.

An example of which: the previously reported progress on the pedestrian crossing outside Long Marston school, where the council was awaiting news of extra funds, proved not to be worth the wait. It seems that the project was deemed too expensive, and a couple of other minor issues. Given that some of the funds were coming from the Section 106 levy from the Lendon Grove development, Cllr Fox is asking County Cllr Symington that this money is returned to the TRPC and will be meeting with her soon.

Also on their way out are the grants for the Warden and Concurrent Services, currently provided by Dacorum. Cllr Fox reported that TRPC receive £14k at the moment; next year this will halve to £7k, until by 2028/29 it will be zero. This poses the question of funding the Warden's post, and things like grass cutting. The TRPC don't want the grass cutting to be managed by Dacorum, because at the moment it can be arranged as and when required. To maintain these services, an increase to the precept (the TRPC bit of our council tax) was discussed.

More Water?

This led to Cllr Macdonald asking who covers the costs of dredging the Tring Bourne? Cllr Fox responded that the responsibilities were passed to the riparian landowners. Cllr Macdonald pointed out that the proposed Astrope Lane development would increase drainage into the ditches. It was agreed to discuss this further at October's meeting. Cllr Macdonald reported that the Flood Working Party (FWP) would be meeting with County Cllr Symington regarding flooding, keeping ditches clear and water flowing away from the villages. Cllr Adams asked whether a face-to-face meeting with the riparian landowners would be possible.

Success stories

Long Marston's village show was a huge success; Cllr Fox extended thanks to Yvonne Addison and Kim Fox for their hard work.

Home Ground Cafe finally opened on 16th August. The position of signage was discussed. It was hoped people would enjoy it and it would be a real asset to the village. It will be a year before its financial viability can be determined. In the meantime, Cllr Foster requested that use of the term "CAB" be removed from all documents henceforth! Phase 1 is 96% complete, although there are problems with the concrete in two sections of the car park, which need to be re-laid.

Malcom Morgan gave a breakdown of the funding sources for Phase 1, and reported there are no additional funds as yet for Phase 2 - the terracing and landscaping. Phase 1 has cost just shy of £122K. Cllr Fox reported there is a delay to the installation of permanent WiFi, because there is no postal address for the cafe yet - Royal Mail is still waiting for information from Dacorum. Until this is received, BT will not install its Wifi. In the meantime, the Clerk has arranged for temporary Wifi.

Swings and roundabouts

The RoSPA report has highlighted safety issues for users of the equipment at Long Marston and Wilstone, which will be addressed. Funds for the remedial work of removing the tree seedlings on the pump track was also approved. Cllr Fox thanked the children who sent in the letter about the

condition of the pump track for bringing it to the TRPC's attention.

Cllr Macdonald gave an update on Victory Hall. The toilet refurbishment is complete, as are repairs to the roof. There are plans to decorate the lobby, and replace the curtains with blinds. Another Twilight Market and a play are also planned.

Cllr Adams reported that the Repair Cafes at Wilstone Village Hall are going well, and she would be attending the next meeting in September.

Watch this space:

- The Wilstone petting farm proposal from three years ago has been resurrected, and the newer councillors were invited to visit the site. Cllrs Wood and Adams volunteered.
- Also in Wilstone it was agreed that a pre-planning-application submission, regarding installing grass-crete at the edge of the recreation ground to increase parking for hall users, could be made by Peter Walker.
- Finally, it was agreed that the HORTI's firework display could take place on Long Marston's recreation ground, but without a bonfire due to concerns about its proximity to the cafe.

And a last word on my experience of minuting the meeting, as well as putting together this article:

The Chairman's Refrain

"Not for the minutes!" Was the chairman's refrain,
"Not for the minutes!" again and again!
To the amusement of councillors, the public, and me,
What was behind his erstwhile plea?

The chairman is used to a considerate clerk,
Who will temper his comments, if close to the mark!
The Temp needed guidance on what to omit,
To be diplomatic about what to min-it.

So, what was discussed, that required such censor?
I cannot say - you should have been there!



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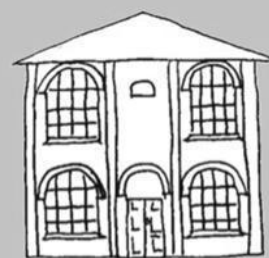
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From the Vicarage

by the Reverent
Cannon
Jane Bannister

It has proved a very good way to get to know parents and students, and the money raised is divided between a children's charity (such as the Children's Society, or an educational appeal from Christian Aid or Oxfam) and church.

More people are using it, partly because more people know about it, but also because people want to save money, and they don't want to waste items. We are becoming more and more aware of the long term cost of cheap clothing, both to people who are paid a pittance to make it, and the waste when we throw it away after a couple of wears. Cheap online shopping has not helped this. There is much more information about how to repair clothes, how to repurpose them, and those of you who are fans of Patrick Grant on the Great British Sewing Bee, will know how he promotes buying fewer, good quality items. Buying second hand, or vintage, has become a way of life for many as they sell online, although it does mean that charity shops are suffering as they only receive the poorer quality items.

As humans, we have to be aware of the effect we have on the world and its resources. There are times when we need to modify our behaviour, when we learn the results of what we do having not known about them before. Those of us who are Christians are also aware that we have responsibility to God to care for this world that we have been given, and that can mean making sacrifices; not everyone will do that, but sometimes we cannot wait for others to take the lead and we need to go first.

Dear God, Creator of the earth, this sacred home we share:
Give us new eyes to see the beauty all around and to protect the wonders of creation.

Give us new arms to embrace the strangers among us and to know them as family.

Give us new ears to hear and understand those who live off the land and sea, and to hear and understand those who extract its resources.

Give us new hearts to recognise the brokenness in our communities and to heal the wounds we have inflicted.

Give us new hands to serve the earth and its people and to shape beloved community.

For you are the One who seeks the lost, binds our wounds and sets us free,

And it is in the name of Jesus the Christ we pray.

Amen.

Tring School second hand uniform shop is run by the church from the parish hall in Tring. We took it on just before the school was rebuilt. It had been run by willing volunteers for one afternoon a month, but on a weekday afternoon when many parents were at work. While Michelle has a background in retail, I do not, and so together we tried to find the best way forward for providing this resource. Schools have to provide information about second hand uniform as part of a legal commitment to keeping costs down for carers and parents.

Unsurprisingly, it has proved popular from the beginning. We now hold two sales a month, normally on a Sunday lunchtime and a Tuesday evening, and we sell both the items with the school logo on, and shirts and trousers. We have learnt what are the peak points in the year, and which garments are always in demand (ties!). The blazers are worn every day by the students and so get very battered, but if we can, we repair them by sewing on buttons and mending ripped seams. PE kit however seems to be indestructible, in part because it is worn far less, but also the joys of synthetic fabrics.

Eco-Church

Count on Nature results 2025

by Anne Nobbs

What a long, hot Summer we had this year! Now, as we head into Autumn, the scything and raking behind the church is all completed, and the wet and windy weather is bringing down the leaves. There are areas of longer grass that have been left as a refuge for mini-beasts as they prepare for Winter, and the seeds from the wild flowers and grasses will be nestling into the soil, ready to emerge next Spring.

Back in June a number of people around the parish took part in our 'Churches Count on Nature' project. This was the third year when we teamed up with the charity 'Caring for God's Acre' (CfGA) and iNaturalist (an online wildlife database and verification tool) to observe species in the five churches in Tring Team Parish. Collating all the records onto a single spreadsheet, and adding binomials (scientific classification names) to the myriad common names we give to different species is quite a task – and an education! After that, we do a simple analysis of who found what, and where. Then all the results are sent to CfGA to be included in official national records.

Initial results this year suggest that – thanks largely to Jill Timms in Aldbury and members of the Sunday Club there – young people made up nearly half of all those who recorded species in our churchyards and they managed to make just under 60 records. All schools in the area were invited to take part, and helped us to publicise the event in advance.

In all, over 200 records were made, representing around 170 different species. St Peter & St Paul visitors recorded just under half of these. The remainder were spotted in the village churches. Of course, many were the type of plants, birds and insects that we see every day, but we know how important it is to note their presence. Some species that are now rare were once considered commonplace!

Thank you to all those who took part in this citizen science project with us. The event was part of our church's response to Great Big Green Week.

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Celebrating the Season; WI style

By Clare Hill

Harvest has been celebrated for centuries in cultures around the world and on Tuesday, 9 September, over 30 local women met in Victory Hall, Long Marston to do just that!

The evening started with an engaging creative activity led by Janet Skells where foraged foliage was made into headdress "crowns" or "swags" to decorate front doors. The natural foliage of berries, ears of corn, crab apples and hops were gathered sustainably from local hedgerows and were supplemented by flower cuttings from our members' own gardens. Giving some added colour were hydrangea, sedum, roses, dahlias and sunflowers. This was a really fun activity and the amazing results can be seen in the photos here...you may have also spotted some around the villages too?



Typically, of course, Harvest is a reminder of the connection between the land and our tables as it is the time to gather in the crops. A more modern interpretation is that it is also a time to pause, reflect and be grateful for the good and positive in our lives whilst supporting those that can find themselves less fortunate. On that note, a very important part of the evening was to highlight our chosen charity, the Aylesbury Women's Aid Refuge. A very worthy cause that we are proud to support and which fully aligns with the WI ethos to Connect Women, Support Women and Empower Women.

Honouring the tradition of gathering together to share in the seasons bounty, we invited a representative of the Refuge to join us. Our members listened closely to the difficult challenges the Refuge experiences and the harrowing events that can lead women and children to seek their support. Our members very generously donated toiletries and baby care items and a healthy financial donation generated from the proceeds of a "Bring and Buy" sale were thankfully received.

We then very convivially sat at a long table adorned with candles and more flowers, chatting with old and new friends whilst we were served a delicious choice of home made vegetable soups and various fruit puddings. All whilst listening to seasonal music playing in the background, expertly curated by our President, Clare Hill.

Thanks to all the members that helped make the evening such fun and in particular the WI committee; Clare Hill, Kate Heslop, Sue Foster, Lynn Foster, Yvonne Addison, Gillie Mann and Susan Hughes.

Note: The Long Marston and Puttenham WI meet every 2nd Tuesday of the month in Victory Hall, Long Marston @ 7.30pm.



New members are very welcome. Please get in touch with any of the WI committee if you would like to give it a try, contact: lmandputwi@gmail.com.



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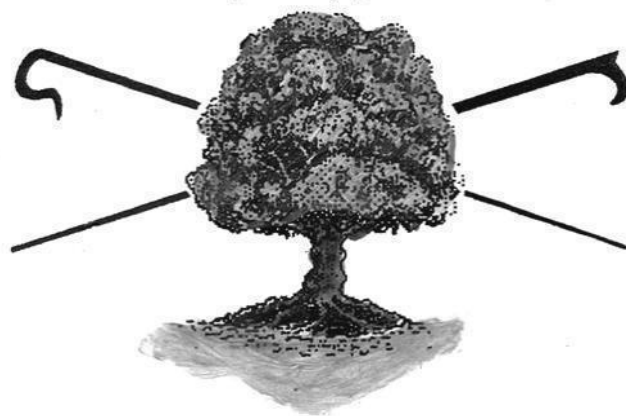
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Your MP Report: Listening to Our Communities this Summer

Victoria Collins MP

WHEN I was elected last July, I made a clear commitment to bring better services to the constituency of Harpenden & Berkhamsted. This means fighting for improved health and social care, stronger SEND support, protecting our environment (including our precious chalk streams), and getting the vital support needed with the cost of living pressures facing our local businesses and residents.

The constituency of Harpenden & Berkhamsted encompasses far more than the two towns in our name. I have the privilege of representing fantastic communities stretching from Wilstone to the Gaddesdens, and from Long Marston to Wheathampsted, each with their own unique character and challenges.

Over the parliamentary summer recess, I had the opportunity to visit all of the wonderful villages and towns across our area. My priority has been listening to your concerns, visiting local businesses and organisations doing amazing work in our community, and hosting roundtable discussions on issues such as mental health and chalk streams to understand how we can tackle important issues that matter.

One particular highlight of my summer tour was joining in the celebrations at Long Marston Fair. It was wonderful to see the community spirit that makes our villages so special, and to meet so many of you where we could chat about both the joys and concerns of village life.

However, the summer tour has not just been about festivities. I held a constituency surgery in Wilstone

specifically to hear your concerns about speeding through the village, an issue that affects the safety of residents and children. I also heard about sewage concerns as well as individual cases. These direct conversations with you help me understand the real impact of these problems on daily life, and I have taken all issues raised with me back to parliament to make sure your voices are heard.

Transport has emerged as a top priority across our constituency, keeping our towns and villages connected is more important than ever. I have called for a rail fare freeze to ease the burden on commuters who are already struggling with rising costs, and thanks to residents, when the X5 bus service stopped running in May, myself and fellow MPs worked hard with local campaigners to secure better connections for our communities. I am pleased to report that the 500 bus, that has partially replaced the cancelled X5 service, running through Aylesbury, Tring, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead now runs every half hour, providing much-needed transport links between our villages and towns - though we must go further. I recently called in parliament for better investment and a simpler structure so residents can carry on their day-to-day appointments with ease.

These summer months have reinforced my determination to be an MP who listens first and acts on what I hear. Whether it is transport links, speeding concerns, or supporting our brilliant local organisations and businesses, I am here to work with you in making our communities even better places to live and work.

If you have concerns or ideas you would like to discuss, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me and my team by emailing: victoria.collins.mp@parliament.uk

Sudoku Corner by Colin Moore

No 192 moderate

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Solution on page 22

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The Puttenham Page

by Christine Rutter

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Hard to Bear

A Story of Longub Puttastone

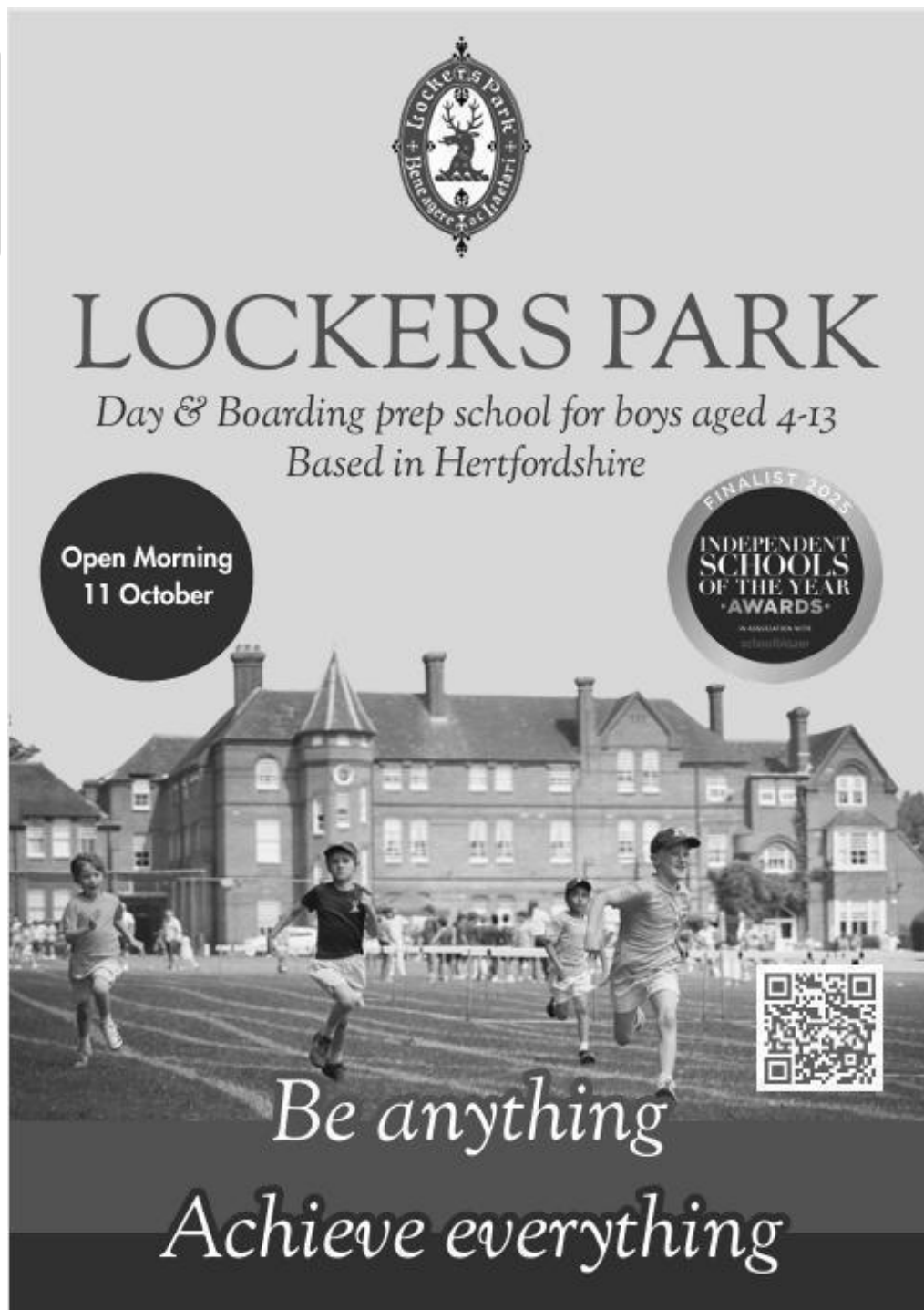
By Martin Winship

The Headmistress of Longub Puttastone village school was in a reflective mood. The autumn often found her tending towards introspection and slightly ill at ease; what Kenneth Grahame referred to whimsically as "the Spirit of Divine Discontent" had possessed her once again. The beginning of October was not her favourite time of year. Although she accepted that September was technically the first month of autumn, she always felt that really it was the tail-end of summer, and that October was the actual start of the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. She also had to accept that it meant that summer, with all its promise and possibilities (even if seldom realised) was irrefutably over, and the inevitable decline into cold winds, drenching rain and occasional snow, with the resulting mud and gloom, had finally begun. She sighed, and gazed at the sunshine flickering through the gently stirring leaves of the nearby black poplar. There was some comfort in the sight. Indeed, for her the really cheering prospect was that the dire prognostications of the global warming prophets might prove to be correct, and the climate, especially in the dull British autumn and winter, would improve to resemble the often mentioned Mediterranean version. She sat up a little straighter in her chair. The weather forecast, she recalled, had suggested that October might be a kinder month this year, with plenty of sunshine and unseasonably mild temperatures, and after all, she reasoned, even weather forecasters had to get it right sometimes. Perhaps it was not too late to organise one last swansong outdoor activity for her pupils, before fresh air became not much more than a pleasant memory. She tapped her fingers on her desk, and metaphorically put her thinking-cap on.

There were mixed reactions when the Headmistress announced to a full school assembly her intention to organise a Teddy Bear's Picnic. Most of the children's faces remained determinedly unmoved, apart from one or two of the more enthusiastically pink inclined young girls, who seemed quite excited at the prospect. The rest, it gradually

emerged, were to a greater or lesser extent puzzled. What was a "picnic"? And for that matter, what on earth was a "Teddy Bear"? It became apparent that while Teds were still very popular, they were sold chiefly as souvenirs of various tourist attractions, rather than as children's companions. Their place had been taken in the affections of small children by such as Square Pants Lunch Box, or Squidgy Mallow Dolphin, or a Cuddly Dinosaur and so on. The Headmistress was obliged to widen the field to include such unlikely newcomers to have any hope of a good turn-out. Soon, however, it became clear that while the popularity of Bears as best friends had waned in the case of children, the position was quite different for the teachers and helpers at the school, most of whom it seemed still possessed a treasured Bruin from when they were little, and were keen to take an active part in the proceedings. And their enthusiasm was matched by the parents of the children.

Continued on next page



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It was not long before the picnic idea was fairly hijacked and taken out of the hands of the Headmistress, as more and more villagers learnt of the impending beano and became captivated, and determined to take part too. Before Jack Robinson could be summoned, it had become a village event, although to avoid further possible friction it was still to be held in the school grounds.

As the Headmistress had hoped, the weather on the day proved to be in a remarkably helpful mood, and the sun shone down on a colourful scene of picnic blankets, sun shades and a healthy turn-out of Teddy Bears, alongside many more modern incarnations. To begin with, most of the children were at least severely bemused by the bizarre behaviour of the grown-ups, who were not usually in the habit of sitting on potentially damp grass and arranging small dead animals around a square of cloth, also laid directly on the grass. Even more worrying was the way these clearly disturbed grown-ups then apparently tried to get the same dead animals to eat some of the food from the pots, plates, and platters arranged on the cloths. But children are very resilient, and they soon became engrossed with the other children, and involved in interesting and exciting things to do, most of which consisted of tearing about making an enormous amount of noise.

Other stalwarts of the community turned up with their ursine friends under their arms. The vicar was very emotional, and immensely proud of his particular little furry friend. The creature had evidently been well loved, and although it still had (apart from an odd patch here and there) most of its fur, it did have a quite alarming squint, which was the reason, no doubt, that the vicar had christened it Gladly – an obvious and rather predictable nod to the mondegreen associated with Fanny J Crosby's hymn Keep Thou My Way. Gladly had a narrow escape when the owner of Brando, the Great Dane, decided it would be a good idea to bring the enormous dog along to the junket. Brando was still feeling piqued at the blowing up of his balls* (see Village News November 2024) and was on the look-out for some sort of replacements. When he caught sight of Gladly something in his tiny mind clicked, and he made a robust attempt to get to know Gladly better. The vicar clutched his beloved bear and beat a hasty retreat, closely followed by Brando and his hapless owner who was as ever helplessly dragged along behind.

Prunella was dismayed when she heard of the proposed Teddy Bear's picnic, as she had no such keepsake from her childhood. She had several exquisite china dolls (which she had not been allowed to play with) but no Teddy. Refusing to be left out of any social occasion, she ordered her husband to visit Hamley's without delay and obtain for her the finest Steiff bear that money could buy. She would pass the brand-new bear off as hers since she was a small girl; the fact that it turned out to be a special coronation bear for King Charles III made the claim appear unlikely. Oblivious to such doubts, Prunella showed off the classic ear-stud, but she was temporarily taken aback when it seemed that Thomas's tatty old bear had a similar stud. Prunella was relieved when it turned out to be an old dolly mixture that had become stuck there years ago. Thomas admitted that after so long it did taste a bit odd.

*Tennis balls, of course.

Rodney, sadly, also had no bear to call his own (he had sold it when he was twelve), but his entrepreneurial instincts did not let him down. He managed to do a deal with a bloke he knew, who happened to be in possession of a sealed box of Teddies that he had rescued when it had unfortunately fallen off a lorry. Rodney bought the box, confident that he would do a roaring trade at the picnic. As it turned out he did, but not exactly in the way he had imagined. When he chose his pitch in the school grounds, and opened the box to look for the first time at his goods, he was surprised to find, not the jolly little furry funsters he had confidently expected, but a great many flimsy lady's garments, with a good deal of lacy material and elastic appendages. Rodney's initial dismay and then chagrin with his business friend was soon dispelled, as he found he did a cracking good trade with many of the husbands and boyfriends from the village. Ben Winchester actually had to be led away by his much younger wife to a quiet corner where he gradually regained his composure.

Few knew the true story of Old Siegfried's bear. It had been bought new for a young lad back in the 1920s, and had been the boy's companion until he had joined up, and served King and country in the Second World War. Posted out East, this young man had fared reasonably well, but sadly, his bear had been captured by the Japanese, in whose hands it had suffered terribly. At the end of the war, the bear had been liberated by some English nurses, who had kindly repatriated it to Blighty, where the bear was given a job at an orphanage, helping the poor, sad children. It had been much loved and cuddled, despite its by now disreputable appearance, but eventually it became too ragged and worn out even for little orphans, and was unceremoniously disposed of. Even then its long and varied career was not over, for it was discovered by the bin men, who gave it the place of honour cable-tied to the radiator of their truck. In this esteemed position it served several years, until the ties perished and it fell – outside Siegfried's cottage, as it happened. When he came across it he was not at first sure what it was, thinking it might be an unusual form of roadkill and speculating about potential sausages. He realised that it was in fact the remains of some sort of toy, and he fancied it would make an effective bird scarer at his allotment. He had not put this plan into action when the picnic was announced, so he took Cyclops (it only had one eye) along for the fun of it. Several children screamed when they saw the creature, and a stir of disquiet went round the school grounds as more parents and teachers noticed it, whatever it was. What might have ensued would be futile speculation. As it was, Brando having seen the vicar off, had returned with an improved opinion of himself. The first thing he saw on re-entering the school grounds was Cyclops, loosely hanging from Siegfried's hand. Without hesitation, Brando lunged, and with the weird creature firmly held in his great slobbering jaw, he made his escape with his owner once more being pulled along, protesting feebly, behind.

Siegfried never saw Cyclops again, and in view of its remarkable history, perhaps this was a fitting ending for such a well-lived Teddy Bear. In any case, if Siegfried had carried out his plan to use it as a bird scarer, he would no doubt have made a dog's dinner of it.

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Dacorums Coucillors Tring West

Brian Patterson 01442 823868

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Open for tea

Words and pictures by Sue Foster

The Parish Council had already recognised the need for more car parking for those who use the recreation ground and this need was merged with the development of the community café to be located on the recreation field. Funding for this combined project came from a variety of sources. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL money), which the Parish Council receives a proportion of, from the local authority for new housing developments in the area, a Lottery Community Grant, a Green Grant from Dacorum and another small grant from HCC. It should be noted that both the CIL money and grants were specifically given for new projects and cannot be used for the maintenance of facilities. A Community Interest Company has been set up to oversee the project.

On Saturday 16th August after much eager anticipation and hard work Home Ground Café opened. The signs were out, as were the flags and people from the village, walkers, cyclists and old friends of Helena, our lovely cafe operator, came to taste the coffee tea and delicious cakes.

Tring Rural Parish Council set up some 18 months ago a working party composed of several councillors and residents to move the idea of a community hub forward. It had become clear over recent years that residents of Long Marston felt isolated and wanted a place where they could meet without having to drive and leave the village. Amongst the old and the young this sentiment was particularly evident. Since the pandemic levels of isolation have become worse and there is a growing home working community so with these points in mind the working party pressed ahead with ideas for a community café.



As I write the café has been open for 4 weeks. The variety of drinks, cakes and lunches seems to be increasing day by day ... delicious homemade quiche with new potatoes and salad and sausage rolls are very popular and the seasonal autumnal plum and damson cakes a real treat. Sandwiches, scones and breakfast options are on the menu and so too are Helena's very special afternoon teas. I'm told you need to book ahead for these!

Thank you to those who have already supported this community project and we look forward to welcoming ALL of you over the coming months.

<https://www.tringrural-pc.gov.uk/2025/09/the-home-ground-with-dottie-about-cake/>



Royal Championship

By Chris Mann

Photos from John Kaye

You may have imagined that tent pegging was something Boy Scouts did in a gale but, as I discovered, it is a much more exciting and spectacular affair involving richly caparisoned horses and highly skilled (and brave) riders in spectacular uniforms.



The sport came to Long Marston two years ago, following the purchase of a field in Astrope Lane by the Bierton-based Royal Tent Pegging Club. The inaugural event in 2023 proved a great success, both with competitors and locals who had turned up to see what the sport was all about, the friendliness and hospitality of the organisers much appreciated by all.

After a gap in 2024 due to inclement weather, the sport made a welcome return to Long Marston last month, attracting an impressive turn-out from both the tent-pegging community and local villagers. I spoke to event organiser Waheed Khan who gave me a brief outline of the sport and his thoughts on its role in community relations. 'Although the sport is very competitive, as organisers we see the community element as equally important. We want to make both the tent-pegging and village communities feel welcome so, for me, seeing so many local residents here supporting the event and clearly enjoying themselves is great'.

The Astrope tent-pegging course is about 100 yards in length, the competing horsemen charging down at full gallop, swivelling their lance down at the last moment to spear 'their' tent peg (actually a piece of board about six inches long and three inches wide). The day comprised several disciplines including single riders, pairs and team competitions. I found the team competition particularly impressive, four horsemen charging down the course side by side at full gallop, the crowd cheering as their favourites successfully speared their targets. An impressive and fearsome sight, it was not difficult to see why tent-pegging was considered such effective military training in years gone by"

The 'home' of modern tent-pegging is Pakistan but the UK's Tentpegging Association has built up a thriving sport over here, with some 26 teams (including, I believe, regimental teams from the British army) competing in a series of events over the summer season. These take place mainly in the northwest of England and Birmingham, so the Long Marston competition is a bit of an outlier but no less welcome for that, certainly for the Bierton-based Royal Tentpegging Club who appreciate the benefit of, just for once, not having to travel half the length of the country to compete! When it comes again to Long Marston take my advice and don't miss it!

