The Mystery of George's Halfpenny

See page 14 for the story...
Chairman's Report

Currently, the District Council is undertaking a community governance review – to review parish boundaries and parish and town council electoral arrangements. The suggested changes will affect the parish and we would urge you to look at the article in the newsletter and write to the District Council to let them know your views.

A Joint Strategic Housing Assessment has been completed and information about this process is on page 4. Sonning Common Parish Council are moving forward with their neighbourhood plan, information is available on the website at http://www.scpc-ndp.co.uk/3.html and http://www.southoxon.gov.uk/services-and-advice/planning-and-building/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/sonning-common-neighbo

Councillors from Kidmore End Parish Council attend Sonning Common Neighbourhood planning meetings. The Parish Council has been asked to make comments on Sonning Common Neighbourhood Development Plan draft report. The neighbourhood planning group are arranging public meetings to discuss the proposed sites in June.

Linked in part to this, the Governors of Chiltern Edge school have made an application to the Secretary of State to permit the sale of an area of the school field. The Governors hope to achieve a significant capital sum from the sale, particularly if the land can be used for housing development.

In the last month we have refurbished the play area at Gallowstree Common, so that it has a new play house and nest swing. We have had some feedback that the equipment is already being used and enjoyed.

I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Beddis for their help during the installation of the equipment, which was greatly appreciated.

Also at Gallowstree Common is the Diamond Jubilee Pavilion, the pavilion is available to hire at £10 an hour. The pavilion is a great space if you would like to run a weekly course, party, etc., so if you would like to hire the pavilion you can do so by contacting the parish clerk via the parish website. The pavilion is not fully booked during the day in the summer, but evenings, except Fridays, are booked by the cricket club.

The parish has allotments in two areas, Gallowstree Common and the new area at Cane End. This year within the budget there is an allocation of funds to get water to these allotments which will enhance them considerably.

The pond at Kidmore End has been an issue with flooding for some considerable time and was particularly challenging this winter. Work started on the 28th April to de-silt the pond and should take about 10 days. Hopefully this will reduce the problem next winter.

Also on the issue of flooding during the winter local flooding has also bought traffic issues to the fore, with 2 local bridges being closed. A summit to discuss the issues and the building of a third bridge from Reading took place on 3rd March, in Westminster, where local councils were requested to share information on traffic data. A further meeting is being planned for early June. Our current understanding is that OCC and SODC are not in favour of the 3rd bridge but we are staying abreast of any developments.

The council has bought 2 phone kiosks, one in Kidmore End and the other in Chalkhouse Green. Further in the newsletter there is an article asking for views on how the phone kiosks can be used. Any suggestions gratefully received via the website or by contacting one of the councillors.

The churchyard at St John’s always looks stunning at this time of year, with a floor of primroses. Throughout the year a few parishioners garden on a monthly basis, the numbers are currently low and hence a request for any support you can give for a couple of hours. Please bring your own gardening tools. Many thanks for anyone who is able to help.

Thank you to Nick Topham who has placed the duck house back on it’s stilts, just in time for the new families of ducks.

There are 2 vacancies on the parish council, if you would like information about the responsibilities please don’t hesitate to contact myself or any councillor.

I hope that everyone has a splendid spring.

Sue Biggs  Chairman of the parish council
Community Governance Review

The District Council is now consulting on its proposals. One proposal is that the boundary of Kidmore End Parish with the Parish of Sonning Common is altered, so that the entire site of Chiltern Edge School transfers into Sonning Common.

The Parish Council recognises that the School forms part of the community of Sonning Common, Kidmore End Parish Council believes that only that part of the school site identified in the prospective Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan should be transferred. It is opposed to the transfer of the school playing fields in Reades Lane to Sonning Common – those fields are not included in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

The Parish Council urges residents to make their views known to the District Council.

The criteria that the district council takes into account when making its decision are:

- Views expressed in relation to any changes, particularly from those people directly affected
- Natural or man made boundaries that help to define clearly one community from another
- Effective and convenient representation of local residents at parish level
- The newly created county council electoral divisions
- The extent to which proposals reflect the identities and interests of the affected community.
- The LGBCE’s proposals for the warding of South Oxfordshire for the purposes of district council elections

It’s important that any representations address the above criteria for the council to take note. Comments may be made to the District Council:

- By e-mail to cgr@southandvale.gov.uk
- By post to CGR
  South Oxfordshire District Council
  Legal & Democratic Services
  Benson Lane
  Crowmarsh Gifford
  Wallingford
  OX10 8ED

The closing date for comments is 31 May 2014.

The District Council’s proposals and criteria are available on:
and a map showing boundary change

These links are available on the parish website: http://www.kepc.info/communitygovernancereview.php

The map is on page 13 towards the end of the newsletter.

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STOP PRESS NAT WEST BANK, Sonning Common to close

The Nat West Bank in Sonning Common is to close. There is more information and a petition against the closure on the KEPC website; sign up now!
http://www.petitions24.com/stop_natwest_closing_the_sonning_common_bank
Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The County and District Councils in Oxfordshire, were requested by government to undertake a Joint Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), to measure future housing demand for the County. Future local plans will need to reflect the outcome of the assessment. The summary report of the findings of the SHMA and the economic forecasting report are available at:


One conclusion from the SHMA, which is an increase from previous estimates, is:

4.5 The SHMA concludes that across Oxfordshire, there is an identified need for provision of between 4,678 – 5,328 homes a year over the 2011-31 period. This level of housing provision is necessary to support committed economic growth; to support delivery of affordable housing; and to support an improvement in the affordability of housing over time.

Figure 15: Conclusions on Future Need for Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Needed per Year (2011-31)</th>
<th>A. Demographic Base + Shortfall</th>
<th>B. To Support Committed Economic Growth</th>
<th>C. To Meet Affordable Housing Need in Full</th>
<th>D. Range: Housing Need per Year</th>
<th>E. Midpoint of Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cherwell</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>1142</td>
<td>1123</td>
<td>1090-1190</td>
<td>1140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>2058</td>
<td>1200-1600</td>
<td>1400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Oxon</td>
<td>552</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>965</td>
<td>725-825</td>
<td>775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vale White Horse</td>
<td>508</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>683</td>
<td>1028</td>
<td>1028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Oxon</td>
<td>541</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>635-685</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire</td>
<td>3063</td>
<td>4280</td>
<td>5624</td>
<td>4678-5328</td>
<td>5003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As more new housing units are recommended in the next 15 years than are in present local plans, the District Council will need to decide where extra units should go in South Oxfordshire. Within the current SODC Core Strategy, which is part of the local plan, the parish of Kidmore End is classified as a small village and does not have a housing allocation. The core strategy was adopted in 2012 and sets out the vision for South Oxfordshire to 2027. The Council will be watching developments from the SHMA and related documents carefully.

Sonning Common and District Community Care Fund

After careful consideration it is with much sadness and regret that the Chairman and Committee of the above Fund have decided it is time to announce its closure.

There have been many happy years of fundraising for the Care Fund in its various forms since 1970 and in its later years we have been able to support The Sonning Common Health Centre, its staff and patients by funding the purchase of various pieces of equipment for the Centre and by helping to finance education courses for both doctors and nurses. We have also helped with the cost of providing for the needs of patients wishing to be nursed in their own homes.

All this has only been made possible by the generous support of our local community through donations and legacies and by supporting our popular Tombola at the FISH Autumn Fayre and we thank every one of you for your assistance over the years.
De-silting at Kidmore End Pond

A new family of ducks making the best of the pond whilst de-silting work is being carried out.

This is not an easy task, machines can help to a point, then manual labour takes over.
Summer Reading Challenge 2014

Are you ready for the latest Summer Reading Challenge, which begins on Saturday 12th July at a library near you? The theme this year is ‘Mythical Maze’ - so you can expect lots of mythical mystery storybooks in the library. Sign up from Saturday 12th July to receive your mythical poster, then read 6 books and visit the library 3 times over the summer (that’s once to sign up & 3 books per visit), to get stickers to put on the poster, as well as such things as bookmarks and wrist bands, and a medal and certificate to celebrate your achievement.

Sonning Common Library will be running special Saturday story times every Saturday in August at 10am, with the help of assorted volunteers, to make this a particularly mythical summer. We will be exploring mythical crafts to decorate the library, or for you to take home with you. Home-made cakes will be on sale too!

This year there’s also going to be a challenge for teenagers and adults – ask at the library for more details nearer the time!

Friendly Fridays

Members of staff at Sonning Common Library would like to welcome everyone to the library from 10 o’clock on Friday mornings for ‘Friendly Fridays’ – and if you can think of a better name, let us know! On the first and second Fridays of the month Scrabble groups already meet (all welcome), and we hope to have ‘Knit & Natter’, ‘Crochet & Chat’ and ‘Sew & So’ groups on the other Fridays. Even if you don’t want to join in any of those activities, please just come for coffee/tea and a chat!

Special Storytime: Fathers’ Day (15th June)

To celebrate Fathers’ Day on 15th June, on Saturday 14th June there will be a Fathers’ Day Special Storytime at 10 o’clock. After the stories there will be an opportunity to make something for the fathers in your family. Home-made cakes will be on sale too!

Volunteers in the library

We were gratified with the response to our call for volunteers to help staff run the library following the reduction in funding by OCC, and, by the time you read this their training should have begun. The training will have finished by mid-August so that volunteers can be in place before the start of the new school year.

News from The Reformation

Events for your diary this summer
‘Summer Solstice’ charity tractor run on 19th June in aid of the Air Ambulance
WW1 Anniversary Aug 2nd Tractor Run, BBQ and Band. Proceeds to the British Legion
I sure you will join us in congratulating Richard, Sam and their staff in attaining the No 1 ranking for restaurants in Reading on Trip Advisor. Well done.
Good Neighbour Scheme

Readers may recall from the last newsletter that we are looking into the possibility of setting up a "Good Neighbour Scheme" in this community. This is a volunteer-run service which provides help and support to those in need, be it older people, people with disabilities and those in temporary need through illness or anyone who is lonely or isolated of any age.

A number of schemes are running successfully in Oxfordshire communities, including Henley. Further information is available at: http://www.ocva.org.uk/volunteer/good_neighbour

The first step is to establish the level of need for a Good Neighbour Scheme in this parish and also gain an idea of how many volunteers the scheme might attract.

If this scheme was set up, would you use it? If so, what help would you require?
(Please circle all that apply)

- Transport for appointments, social events, hospital visiting .................. Yes No
- Collecting prescriptions, pensions, library books, shopping .............. Yes No
- Household tasks, minor repairs................................................................. Yes No
- Garden tidying........................................................................................... Yes No
- Help with pets............................................................................................. Yes No
- Someone to talk to/ befriending................................................................. Yes No
- Letter-writing or simple form-filling................... Yes No
- Reading to the blind or partially sighted ................................. Yes No
- Other help (please specify) ................................................................. Yes No

Would you like to volunteer as a good neighbour? If so, what could you help with?
(Please circle all that apply)

- Transport.............................................................................................. Yes No
- Collecting prescriptions, pensions, library books, shopping .............. Yes No
- Household tasks, minor repairs................................................................. Yes No
- Garden tidying........................................................................................... Yes No
- Help with pets............................................................................................. Yes No
- Someone to talk to/ befriending................................................................. Yes No
- Letter-writing or simple form-filling........................................................ Yes No
- Reading to the blind or partially sighted ................................. Yes No
- Other help (please specify) ................................................................. Yes No

Please tell us who you are and where you live so we can contact you when the scheme is up and running:

Name

Address

Tel  Mobile

Email

Please send your completed form to: Elizabeth Chandler, Roma House, Chalkhouse Green Road, Kidmore End RG4 9AU. This form can be printed from the online version of this newsletter at www.kepc.info
The new year brought 2 new families and the Pre-school is full to bursting! Our topic for the Winter and Spring (January to April) was ‘Colours and Numbers’, including the colours red, blue, yellow and green, and the numbers 1 to 10. The children have enjoyed lots of craft activities, and we have had an action packed term, celebrating ‘Burns Night, Chinese New Year, Candlemas, Valentine’s Day, St David’s Day, Shrove Tuesday and World Book Day. We try to keep strong ties with the local community, so we make an effort to attend the Little Lambs church group every month.

Our first open day of 2014, held in March, was very well attended and we welcomed 6 new families to pre-school who will be joining us in September 2014.

For those of you who always support our annual Easter Egg Hunt, this year the event was held at Kidmore End Primary school in April. Special thanks must go to Mrs Hull, the new headmistress of the school, to all the committee and to everyone who helped out and came to support us. Even though the Easter Egg Hunt was held after Easter, we managed to raise around £2000 for pre-school funds. This is an amazing amount, particularly when you consider the terrible weather forecast that we had, which did put some families off coming. It was a shame, because the day was lots of fun and we only had 3 rain showers which added to the excitement!

Our new topic for the Summer term is ‘Holidays’. We have many exciting activities planned for the children to do, including turning the pre-school into a travel agency, setting up our very own ice cream kiosk and café on the beach and exciting trips out to Legoland and to the play area in Kidmore End.

Now for some pre-school news. We have had permission for a new land line to the Parish room, which the pre-school is paying for. There is a phone in the parish room for use only by the pre-school during pre-school hours. This means that we now have broadband, so we can extend the learning opportunities for all the children by bringing new technology into pre-school sessions. We also have a new member of staff, Ruth Adams. Many of you may remember that Ruth used to work for us a few years ago; we are looking forward to working with her once more.

We are now full for September 2014, but we are keeping a reserve waiting list for any new families who may be moving into the area. We are now filling the register for September 2015. We are a small pre-school set in a rural location, with session numbers limited to 14 children. If you would like more information about our ‘Outstanding’ pre-school, or you would like to add your child to our waiting list, please contact me on 0118 9723700 or e-mail enquiries@keps.co.uk as soon as possible. Please check out our website at www.kidmoreendpreschool.co.uk for further information.

Best wishes,

Caroline Aldridge Pre-school Business Manager and Registrar

Health Walks

The summer programme for the health walks started after Easter – and what mixed weather we’ve been having! But the bluebells looked marvellous in all weathers. Health walking is for fitness – and it’s friendly, fun and free! The walks are for everyone, whatever their age and ability, and are graded accordingly. They’re especially beneficial for those who currently, for whatever reason, do little or no exercise. Timetables are available from the Health Centre, the library and the Herb Farm, or at www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk

Come and join us!
Farm News

Farmland makes up a large part of our rural parish and for many of us the farmer is an immediate neighbour, but a neighbour that we perhaps barely know. So here is your chance to get to know that neighbour a little better and to learn what is happening on the other side of your hedge. Roddy Young manages Vines Farm and explained a bit about what is going on there.

First some background information. Vines Farm is a mixed farm, both arable and livestock. It is the main farm within our parish and covers 400 Ha (1000 acres). The majority of the land is given over to growing crops. Wheat, barley and oats are grown regularly every year. Sometimes other crops are also grown, such as oilseed rape, borage (for linoleic acid), lupins (for animal feed) and poppies (for pharmaceuticals).

The farm also keeps 70 Pedigree Aberdeen Angus cattle for beef. These are kept under the Farm Assured scheme and their beef will ultimately appear on the shelves at Waitrose. As part of the scheme the farm is regularly inspected for animal welfare.

All farms are businesses too and have to make a profit to keep afloat. A few years ago Vines Farm decided to convert to Conservation Grade farming and now all wheat, barley and oats are grown to this standard, the crops being destined for brands such as Jordan’s. This niche market pays a better price and this way of farming has the added benefit of being more nature friendly.

You may be wondering what Conservation Grade means. It is not the same as organic farming since agrochemicals can be used but the idea is to increase biodiversity, to strike a balance between farming for food and for nature, to quote the website. A Conservation Grade farm has to devote 10% of its farmed area to the development of a specific range of habitats for wildlife. There is a requirement to plant a range of grasses and wildflowers to support wildlife. This includes flowers to provide pollen and nectar for insects and butterflies, plants to provide seeds for birds over winter and a mix of fine and tussocky grasses to provide cover for spiders, beetles and small mammals (and food for predators like barn owls). Bird and bat boxes are put up, and hedges are cut no more than every third year in order to preserve nesting habitats.

As a result a 6 metre margin has been set aside next to the hedgerows around many of the farm’s fields in order to develop these habitats and a pond has been created near to Vines Farm house. The aim is to increase biodiversity and a group from Reading University are monitoring this with a 4 year study which will be completed next year. Roddy already feels that biodiversity has increased and is looking forward to the results of the study. It is hoped that walkers will understand if they are discouraged from using paths through these wildlife areas. The inspection process is rigorous and the presence of a path causes part of that wildlife area to be written off.

Turning to the awful wet winter we have just had, it seems that the farm has fared pretty well. The land is light and freely draining which can be a problem at other times however it was an advantage this winter and flooding has not been a problem. The livestock were affected to a degree and cattle which would normally stay out through the winter had to be brought indoors from the boggy ground. Otherwise no great change.

Jackie Russell
The Parish Church

Sunday 16 March, at St John’s, saw the Licensing of the Revd Susan Cooper, as Associate Priest in the benefice, by the Rt Revd Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester. Susan has come from New Zealand; her interview had been conducted by Skype – a first for both the Bishop and the panel. Another first for the Bishop was his Licensing of a priest in the very recently created Archdeaconry of Dorchester.

Father Graham, together with our Licensed Readers, Morris and Stewart, have been delighted to welcome Susan to the ministry team which serves the two Parishes in the benefice.

Susan and her husband, Ron, will be moving into the benefice house, when their furniture arrives from New Zealand, towards the end of April.

We were saddened by the death of Betty Brindley, at the beginning of February. She and Ron arrived in Kidmore End in 1960 and became stalwart members of the church, which they served tirelessly, in so many ways – as Ron continues to do. In concluding her tribute to Betty, at a service in St John’s, Mrs Moira Lawrie said –

“Some people make such a difference to our lives, by being simply who they are. They make the world a better place and, when they are gone, we realise how lucky we were to have known them. We should not mourn that Betty died, but praise God that she lived.”

One date for readers’ diaries should be:–

Thursday, 29 May is Ascension Day, the fortieth day after Easter, the day we remember the ascent of Christ into heaven. We will celebrate it with Holy Communion at All Saints’, Peppard, at 8.00pm

Our Family Service is held, at 11am, on the third Sunday of each month. On that Sunday too, our Sunday School meets; they start in the school at 10.50am, and join us, in church, towards the end of our service, at which we have the beavers, cubs and the scouts present. We are always pleased to welcome new families to any of our services – but, particularly, to the Family Service.

For further news/information about the Parish Church, readers are invited to look at our website –

www.lambandflag.org

Neil Scott (On behalf of the Parochial Church Council)

Churchyard Working Parties

Last year, a number of villagers came to help lay fresh gravel on the paths at St John’s. It was lovely to have this help and the Church was extremely grateful. During the spring and summer months, the grass is mown regularly – it’s about to start again! – but there is always a great deal more than that to do, to keep the grounds in good condition. Now that the weather is more spring like, we held the first work party on May 10th. Not many people turned up for this, but it was lovely to have some support. The next work party will be on Saturday morning, May 31st, from 10.00am to 12.30pm. There is a great deal of pruning, weeding and tidying to be done, not to mention fallen branches to be cleared!

If many people come – children too – it makes it all the more fun! We would love to see you – and of course you would be very welcome to work in the churchyard at any time, not just on the monthly date. Please bring your own tools – and take great care on the uneven ground.

Jenny MacGregor  Churchwarden
Kidmore End Cricket Club

Kidmore End Cricket Club has started the 2014 season victorious having won both their games against Datchet and Bagshot. 1st XI Captain, Jeff Sheldon, has started the season in fine form having scored 106 Not Out against Datchet and 60 against Bagshot. The remaining pre-season games against Cookham Dean, Marlow Park and Wokingham have all fallen foul of the weather.

The Thames Valley League Campaign will start on 10th May, when the newly-promoted 1st XI travel to Datchet in Division 1, the 2nd XI will host Bagshot 2nd XI in Division 6B and the 3rd XI will travel to Cove 5th XI in Division 8B, following on from both sides being promoted from Division 9A last season.

The Junior Section is again thriving with sides being entered into the Berkshire Youth Cricket League from Under 9 to Under 15, and the continuing success of the Girls Sections is a positive step which the Club will continue to fully support.

Berkshire County Cricket Club will again return to Gallowstree Common on Sunday 25th May in the newly re-named Unicorns Counties Knockout Trophy. Their opponents will be Herefordshire County Cricket Club with play starting at 11:00.

The Annual Presidents XI vs Chairman’s XI will again be happening on Sunday 24th August with play due to start at 13:00. There will be usual off-field attractions including the ever popular Hog Roast.

David New 07786 527640 davidnew77@hotmail.co.uk

Tokers Green Carol Singers

This is a very belated thank you to all those villagers from Tokers Green who turned out in December to carol sing round some of the houses in the village.

We collected £130 which has been sent to Sue Ryder to be used at the local Nettlebed hospice so thanks also to all those who opened their doors and gave generously.

Do look out for notices around the village in December giving details of the date and time of the next carol singing.

Fiona and Andrew Harland
I am sure it is wonderful that the Parish has acquired the telephone boxes in Kidmore End and Chalkhouse Green under BT’s Adopt a Kiosk scheme. They are very useful as landmarks for directing delivery drivers. But attractive village furniture? Hmm, I am not so sure. Have you seen them? Yes, of course you have. What I mean is, have you actually looked at them lately? Let me show you.

This is Kidmore End’s drab specimen (right) with its back to the road and missing a pane of glass.

Chalkhouse Green’s telephone box is in an even sorrier state (below) next to an overflowing rubbish bin and is also missing a pane of glass.

Surely we could do something with our telephone kiosks? It seems a shame that such iconic structures are left to moulder. With a bit of TLC, a lick of paint and a new purpose serving the community they could be something to be proud of.

How about a library? Might be useful, in a parish without its own. The kiosks could have swap boxes for various items, a noticeboard, or be somewhere to exchange the produce from our gardens ... that glut of rhubarb or runner beans. Perhaps people would like to have a defibrillator nearby? Maybe the kiosks should be landscaped and surrounded with attractive plants, accompanied by a bench on which to sit and quietly contemplate or to read the book you have just chosen. They could be somewhere for passing cyclists and walkers to take a breather, an information point with maps? Perhaps you have a better idea? The parish council would like to hear your views. Please get in touch by email (webmaster@kepc.info) or speak to a councillor and let them know what you think.

Jackie Russell
Map showing the proposed area for transfer to Sonning Common Parish. (Hatched area.) GC parish council is requesting the field to the west of the main school buildings (Reades Lane playing Fields) be left in Kidmore End parish to maintain the open land buffer between the villages.
The Mystery of George's Halfpenny

It's one of those things. You walk about the parish, and by complete happenstance, you just happen to meet someone who has just found an old coin. I have to say that I was expecting it to be a few years old. You do find the odd new penny from time to time, presumably because people have holes in their pockets. But this one was brown, covered in mud, and the surface was hard to see.

But it was not just a few years old. As the person I met worked away with a wet finger at the surface in a rather expert-looking way, it was clear that, although much of the surface had been lost by being presumably in the soil for a long period of time, there was still much to be seen.

One of the most striking things was a picture of what I thought was Britannia on the reverse and the word Britannia around the edge. I have to say I thought Britannia was one of those things the Victorians invented, so I was hoping to see a Victorian penny. Certainly nothing more. I would have been very happy with that. In fact this coin was about old penny size, but it seemed a bit on the thin side. It did not have any knurling (ridge-like markings on the rim). But in fact the word Britannia was related to the Britannia I know from Victorian times. It was simply a seated goddess. The Romans had used her, but she had been left off coins until 1707, when the goddess was brought back as Britannia (matching seated goddess and country for the first time) and consciously used as an emblem of British imperial power and unity (i.e. before Victorian times and immediately after the Act of Union). But, as I tried to remember, the Victorian coins don't have the single word 'Britannia' on at all, but as part of Queen Victoria's titles. Strange.

But turning it over showed there was no Queen Victoria on the obverse. It was a king. Around the edge, and now very faint, we could just make out some words: Georgius II Rex (King George II).

And on the bottom of the reverse – the side with Britannia on – and below a line intended to separate out the picture from the date, was the date of minting: 1746.
The Mystery of George's Halfpenny  

It was a true copper coin, not a Victorian bronze one. It was one of the first coins to be made when it was decided that the coin was no longer to be worth its weight of metal, but was just a symbol. A century earlier and this coin would have been made of silver – and smaller. What is interesting was that nowhere on it did it say 'halfpenny'. In fact, the value of the coin was not stamped into it until 1860. So everyone just had to know that the coin was a halfpenny.

It seemed quite amazing. I know people find Roman coins and even Saxon hoards, but all the same, to be handling a coin a quarter of a millennium old found in our parish still seemed special.

As I continued with my walk with the dog I was tempted to imagine what might have been going on some quarter of a millennium ago in the fields and woods of the then Parish of Caversham, (Kidmore End not having come into existence at that time).

This was a Georgian halfpenny. Today it would have the purchasing power of 25p. So it was not all that valuable. But it was valuable enough to be large, and presumably not the thing you would have wanted to have lost then, no more than today.

So who could have lost it? Was it the landowner, strutting over his fields. Probably not, because it was a fairly low denomination coin. So perhaps it was the farm manager or one of the labourers. Who was most likely to have a hole in their pocket? A labourer would not get new clothes very often, so perhaps it was a labourer.

But what makes me suppose it was a man? Could it have been a woman bringing lunch for her husband out in the fields and have dropped it out of a pocket of an apron?

Or was it someone walking back to their home from the inn late at night, and so drunk they stumbled and fell, spilling the coin from their pocket? Or were they held up by a highwayman, and this just happened to be one of the coins that fell while the rest were being handed over – your money or your life!

Of course, we will never know. But it is interesting to think that I was holding a coin that had been handled by someone else in the village a quarter or a millennium ago.

Editor

With thanks to James Mather.

This George III coin has more clearly defined features, and will help you to identify the main features on 'our' coin.

PS

By the way, have you ever found anything old in your garden or elsewhere in the parish? Or do you have anything old like a real fireplace baker's oven? Do let me know if you have, and don't mind having it photographed.
## Local Weather Report: Spring 2014

### Average Temperature

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<tr>
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<th>Average Minimum Temperature</th>
<th>Average Maximum Temperature</th>
<th>Rainfall</th>
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<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Rainfall - 4 months to end of March 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rainfall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As we are all too well aware this period has been very wet! January was the wettest month with 172mm/6.8in rain and only 4 days without rain in the whole month. In December we had one dry week and in March we had 2 weeks without rain. There were six days which recorded more than 13mm/0.5in rain and two days with more 25mm/1in.

One positive effect (the only one?) of the rain was that we had fewer sub-zero temperatures recorded, December & January had five nights each, March had two nights, but there were no sub-zero nights in February. Including the sub-zero nights in November we have had fifteen nights below zero in the whole winter period.

The lowest daytime temperature recorded was 4.4C / 40F (on January 30th), such a difference to the previous winter. There were also three days when the maximum daytime temperature was lower than the overnight temperature, rather an unusual occurrence in winter.

### Lowest and highest temperatures for the 4 months to March 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lowest (day)</th>
<th>Highest (day)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
<td>29 (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>28 (29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>33 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>28 (19)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chris Brook
Gardening

I am trying to think 3 months ahead with my advice, so I hope that I am getting some things right.

Spring has finally arrived, and the garden is ablaze with colour. I am looking forward to getting the summer bedding out in the garden, and to visiting a few gardens and garden shows during the summer. Gardening is a continuing hobby of learning, trying out new ideas, seeing other people’s ideas and bringing them back to your own plot, and revising the plans that were brilliant as ideas, but did not turn out to be practical at all! Seeing new plant combinations and thinking about how they can be replicated in your own garden one is of my favourite reasons to garden. My new spring combination is Ophiopogon nigrescens (black Mondo grass), an evergreen, low-growing grass like plant with nearly black leaves and blue Anemone blanda (a spring-flowering corn).

Weeds are growing in an exponential fashion, so concentrate on small areas, rather than looking at the whole picture and being overwhelmed. Do not forget to tie up those herbaceous giants that always get missed. Tying up your delphiniums now will save a lot of heartache later in the spring. Encourage the new growth of early flowering clematis back to where you want it. I love the slightly untended and relaxed effect of allowing scramblers to scramble where they like, but they will get too exuberant and need some discipline to ensure that they do not take over.

Many people have been complaining about their lawns, particularly moss. There are some advantages to having lots of moss (soft and springy, and stays green even in a drought), but I do understand that many people prefer grass in their turf, rather than a mixture of weeds and moss. The rains have encouraged good grass growth, which has covered up the problem to some extent. Using a moss killer (ferrous sulphate) and hiring a scarifier to remove the moss is one way to remove this problem. The ferrous sulphate will also green-up your lawn, but the worry is that if there is too much moss, there will be nothing green left after treatment!

The most important thing to do in your garden this summer is to sit out in it and enjoy it.

Happy gardening!

Caroline Aldridge (Gardener for over 20 years and still learning)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Useful Numbers and Contacts</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thames Valley Police</strong>, non emergency 101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>emergency website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime Stoppers (anonymous)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SODC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open: - Mon-Thu 8.30 am - 5.00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ORCC Directory of Transport Schemes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire Rural Community Council, Jericho Farm, Worton, Oxon OX29 4SZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxfordshire Highways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fix my Street</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parish Councillors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parish Council Chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk to the Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SODC Councillors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malcolm Leonard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>District Councillor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rob Simister (<a href="mailto:rob_simister@msn.com">rob_simister@msn.com</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County Councillor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Bulmer (<a href="mailto:kevin.bulmer@oxfordshire.gov.uk">kevin.bulmer@oxfordshire.gov.uk</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizens Advice Bureau</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services available at 32 Market Place, Henley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop-in service - Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-booked appointments - every weekday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone advice - Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services also available at: (call above number for an appointment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodcote Community Centre (Old School House)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watlington Parish Office (Old School Place)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAB (Henley) website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kidmore End Parish Room</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookings: Paula Beville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diamond Jubilee Pavilion at Gallowstree Common</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookings: Roger Penfold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Newsletter Contributions**

Are we missing your club or society? Would you like to see their activities listed in the Newsletter? Do you have any news items for the Parish?

If you would like to contribute to the next edition, we’d be delighted to hear from you. Articles can be sent to any member of the editorial board.

The **closing date** for the next edition is **Friday 29 Aug 2014**.