

Representing your interests

The Disability Action and Awareness Group (DAAG)

by Victoria Dingle

SOHA ENCOURAGES RESIDENTS to get involved and make decisions about their home and the community they live in. You can get involved in various ways but one group, DAAG, represents the interests of Soha Housing's disabled residents.

There are lots of different types of disabilities, some visible and some hidden. I have hidden disabilities, the main one

being Rheumatoid Arthritis. It's hard when you suffer with pain and an illness but you look like nothing is wrong.

DAAG welcomes anyone and allows each and every one to have a voice. Members are supported to contribute to the continuous improvement of Soha's services.

During DAAG meetings we discuss various topics affecting our community and spend time socialising. Many friendships have been formed and it's a lot of fun. A summer BBQ and Christmas lunch are two important events we all look forward to each year.

We also regularly welcome guest speakers. One scheme that we learnt about and now use is the Safe Places scheme. It helps vulnerable people if they feel scared or at risk while they're out in the community. They can go to one of the Safe Place scheme locations (which display the logo shown on the left prominently on a window or door) and get immediate support. Soha's office (Royal Scot House, 99 Station Rd, Didcot OX11 7NN) is one of those Safe Places.

Look out for the symbol in your neighbourhood and get more information from www.safeplaces.org.uk or from Soha Customer Services.

If you'd like to know more about the Disability Action and Awareness Group or to join it, please contact the Resident Engagement team at Soha. They're on ri@soha.co.uk or 0800 014 15 45 (Freephone).



What does DAAG mean to its members?

WENDY AND BERT:
"WE LIKE SPENDING TIME WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE. TOGETHER WE CAN PUT A FINGER ON ANY PROBLEM REGARDING DISABILITY AND FIND OUT ANSWERS."

ANNE:
"I THINK IT'S WONDERFUL, GREAT COMPANY AND EVERYONE IS ALWAYS FRIENDLY."

PAULINE SAYS:
"I FEEL ISOLATED AT HOME BUT DAAG GETS ME OUT AND MIXING WITH PEOPLE ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH AS ME. WE SHARE EXPERIENCES AND UNDERSTANDING OF DISABILITIES TOGETHER."



Marlow Bridge by Chris Hall

COMPETITION

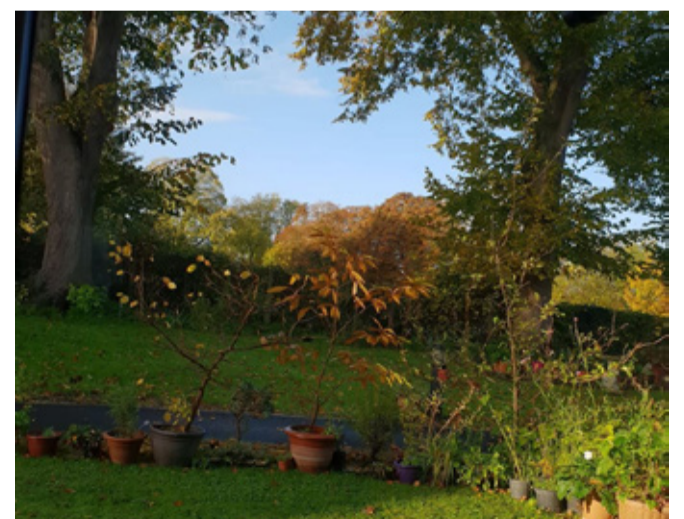
WE REALLY LOVE seeing your photos, and judging by the entries we received for the competition in the last edition, you love showing them to us!

Once again, there's a £25 shopping voucher up for grabs if you send in the winning photo on the topic of "Nature and Architecture". You don't need a fancy camera or phone and you can even wait for better weather if you like as our photographers, Chris and Phill and the winner of the last competition, Linda, will judge mid-May. So send in your pictures by **email only please to tenantstimes@gmail.com**. The deadline is 30 April. Chris has sent us his Marlow Bridge composition to get you inspired.

Here is one of the shortlisted entries from last time, with Linda's winning swan picture below.



Linda, Watchfield



Angela, Cholsey



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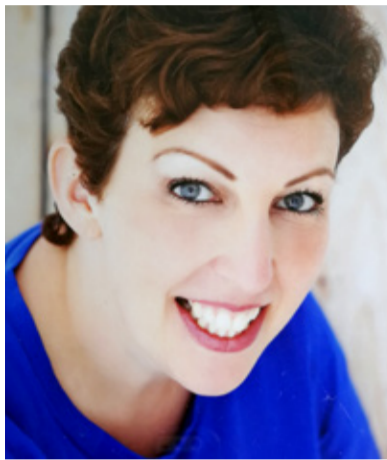
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Claire Hughes – Editor



Victoria Dingle – Co-Editor

UNSUNG HEROES



Citizens Advice in Didcot High Street

COMPUTER GURU JOHN SAYS DID YOU KNOW THAT SPAM MAIL WAS NAMED AFTER THE CANNED MEAT AFTER MONTY PYTHON DESCRIBED IT AS "HORRIBLE, UBIQUITOUS AND INESCAPABLE"!

LOCAL HISTORY



Dreena tickles the ivories

Faringdon Folly

Dreena Barnard-Lloyd takes a "magical" walk at a historic site.

THIS GOTHIC STYLE, 100 feet high tower commissioned by Gerald Tyrwhitt-Wilson, the eccentric Lord Berners (1884 – 1950) makes for a wonderful afternoon out. Built by Lord George Wellsley in the 1930s, the Faringdon Folly is said to be the last one built in England.

Standing magnificently in a beautifully kept woodland copse and with panoramic views of the surrounding countryside, it's all just a short way from the centre of the pretty market town of Faringdon. The tower is open the 1st and 3rd Sundays from April to October but the estate is open year-round for thoroughly enjoyable and certainly interesting walks.

The woodland surrounding the Folly has been designed to reflect the quirky and fun personality of Lord Berners. It even has a piano nestling among the foliage to reference him being a classical composer (as well as a novelist and painter). Throughout the woods there are many carvings which bring a real "story time" feel to the estate. Our walk on a cold but sunny afternoon was peaceful and delightful.

Both the Folly tower and the woodland are owned by the Folly Tower Trust and managed by volunteers. There is a guide as well as informative and witty information boards at intervals in the woods. They document the history and interests of Lord Berners, including quotes from poems he wrote. One of the boards says: "This Folly means Fun and is often open for special events. At Hallowe'en, it's haunted by hobgoblins and the little witches and warlocks of Faringdon come traipsing up the tower to be scared out of their skins ..."

For those who love to walk among trees, there are many species including Scots Pine, Spruce, Beech and Silver Birch. Many are from the original planting in the 1780s, by Henry James Pye (who, it is said, the nursery rhyme *Sing a Song of Sixpence* is a dig at). There are plenty of resting places where you can also be treated to musical birdsong.

The Folly woods have become one of my go-to places. They're relatively local, but are always interesting and fun. And there's the prospect of an afternoon tea in Faringdon to follow!

YOU:TH SPEAKS!

Didcot year 10 and 11 students told us what helps during exam season

How parents and carers can help us

1. Try to make sure there is a quiet space in the house for revision – somewhere where there are no distractions and you can't be tempted by the TV.
2. Be positive and supportive all the time; it's hard work trying to juggle revision
3. Get some healthy snacks in to keep hunger at bay. Fruit, soup and sandwiches are good examples (and maybe some chocolate cake!)
4. Plan times in the house for revision, making a rota of when the house needs to be quiet. Don't invite too many people round if the time's been carved out for revision.
5. No extra chores please! We need to spend all our time revising so being taken off house chores would be great!
6. Please don't put too much pressure on us having to get top marks. "I have three brothers and they are all really clever. We are all different, so it is important to remember we may all get different grades, but have worked the same."

Helping ourselves

1. Get yourself a revision buddy. It will help if you are stuck on a topic, and you may be able to help others.
2. Don't cram the day before, you need to prepare and make sure you are making a revision plan (your teachers can help) or you can mind map.
3. Look after yourself, get plenty of rest, eat properly and take some time out.
4. Try to use online resources and take some sample papers. They will help you to time yourself and be more prepared about how exam papers are set out.
5. Don't stress! Make sure you speak to people if you are worried about anything – a teacher, tutor, other adult or your friends will listen.
6. Have a treat and a goal once a week. Plan days out or a time to relax as carefully as you plan the revision.

Resources for parents and students

- <https://revisionworld.com/gcse-revision>
- <https://www.methodmaths.info/>
- <https://quizlet.com/login>
- <http://www.gojimo.com/>
- <https://www.kerboodle.com/users/login>
- <https://www.senecalearning.com/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>
- <https://www.kerboodle.com/users/login>
- <https://hegartymaths.com/>

EDITOR'S LETTER

AS THE DARK mornings and nights draw to a close and we wake to see sunshine and flowers in abundance, we welcome the joys of Spring.

We have tried to encompass them in this edition. From Polish celebrations, to beautiful photography to the yummiest of recipes. Spring is an important time of the year: it is a symbol of rebirth and new things and opens the door to the corridor of Summer.

"Spring: a lovely reminder of how beautiful change can be", I read in a card. Yet it can also be a season of challenge and the unknown. As many young people prepare for exams it's important that, like the new flowers of Spring we recognise how to support and nurture growth.

We hope you enjoy this edition of *Tenants' Times*. As they say, "if you do: tell other people, and if you don't: tell us!" Your feedback is always welcome. Best wishes,

Claire

Contributors

Claire Hughes, Didcot (Editor)
Victoria Dingle, Henley-on-Thames (Co-Editor)
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Dreena Barnard-Lloyd, Wheatley
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Celebrating 80 Years of the Citizens Advice Bureau

1939 to 2019 – 80 years of helping others

As the need for people seeking information is growing, Claire Hughes looked into the history of the CAB.

Residents are still accessing services locally to support themselves and their families.

FORMED DURING THE beginning of WWII, the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) was the solution to those who were directly affected by the onset of war. With families reaching out for immediate solutions the CAB offered support relating to rationing, illness, evacuation and those who lost their homes.

Fast forward 80 years and the organisation, staffed mainly by trained volunteers, is helping the British public to access information to empower them to find solutions to many problems.

Now known just as Citizens Advice, it is still helping thousands of people gain control of their lives by providing a free confidential advice.

- The charity helps 2.7 million people with 100,000 more people advised in 2019 compared to the year before.
- 1 in 3 people seek information on more than one issue.
- Run predominantly by volunteers.
- 4 in 10 people will use the services of the CAB in their lifetime.
- 42% of people report to have a long-term health condition or disability.

As well as support, the CAB can also be a valuable point of information to signpost to resources locally, and those with a specific range of problems. For more information and to find your local office visit website www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

Knowing that *Tenants' Times* was investigating support for residents with extra needs Maureen Adams, Director of Services and Communities at Soha, shared information for those who are experiencing the effects

of Dementia and mild cognitive impairment. They can be found on the opposite page, in the Write up Your Street section. If you know of any support groups in your community, let us know and we'll publicise them in the next edition!



In honour of Spring

by Irenka Motyka

SNOWDROPS, PRIMROSES, CATKINS, violets, hellebores and even daisies have graced the developing new year for some weeks. Despite some ferocious weather, we've enjoyed "cycle-worthy" gleaming bright, warm days, that make the heart soar as Spring beckons!

In Britain, as in many other countries, we enjoy many curious old traditions to welcome the season. One such is the shaking of knee-pad bells, clashing together of sticks and waving of white handkerchiefs in Morris Dance – an ancient ritual said to drive away the dark forces and welcome new life as Spring returns.

Spring is of course Easter time, and in Poland there are many colourful traditions associated with it. Polish people form a procession on Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter Sunday, carrying intricately created Palms of greenery and flowers. Then on the day before Easter Sunday, a



May Morris, with Paul Waterman on the concertina

decorated basket of greenery, bread, salt and pepper, eggs and other foods such as sausage and cakes are taken to the church to be blessed. A beautifully painted egg (representing new life) is shared with the family at table as they wish one another health, grace, success, good scholarship and every blessing.

We call the next day Wet Monday (possibly dating from Pagan worship of the elements) and it is a hilarious time when boys throw water over girls and spank them with pussy willow branches. A slightly less dramatic version of events is using a wet flannel on the unwary as we did at home!

Do you have any traditions associated with any particular time of year in your family or from your culture? Tell us more at tenantstimes@gmail.com

COMPUTER GURU JOHN SAYS DID YOU KNOW THAT THE FIRST MOBILE PHONE SOLD IN THE US WEIGHED ALMOST AS MUCH AS A BAG OF FLOUR?!

WRITE UP YOUR STREET

Focus on support for Dementia

● **KENNINGTON MEMORY CLUB.** A safe supportive club for people with Dementia Mondays and Thursdays 9.30am – 3.30pm. Visit www.kenningtonmemoryclub.org.uk, email kenningtonmc.info@gmail.com, or ring 07852 883496

● **ABINGDON ABBEY CINEMA** "relaxed screenings" – a relaxed atmosphere with reduced volume and low lighting. Second Tuesday of the month 10.30 am. Visit www.theabbey.ac/web or boxoffice@theabbey.ac

● **ABINGDON 35 OCK** Street Café Group – this lively and supportive group for those with Dementia or mild cognitive impairment, and their carers Friday mornings 10.30 – 11.30 am. dementiafriendlyabingdon@gmail.com

● **ABINGDON SINGING FOR THE BLUES GROUP** meets the second and last Wednesday of the month 2 – 3.30pm Peachcroft Centre "a social activity for people with dementia and their carer, enabling them to sing songs in a safe and stimulating environment"

● **DIDCOT SUPPORT GROUP** – a peer support group for carers, giving opportunities to share experience and information in a supportive environment. Meeting the first Thursday of the month 10 – 11.30am Didcot Health Centre

For info on either of the above two groups contact Kate Czecska 07889 604599 oxford@alzheimers.org.uk

GET IN TOUCH!

WE LOVE YOUR feedback, ideas for articles, recipes or anything else you'd like us to know ... just get in touch.

By post: **FREEPOST SOHA HOUSING** (that's all you need, but it must be in capitals!)

By email: tenantstimes@gmail.com

By phone: ring Soha free on **0800 014 15 45** (and ask for the *Tenants' Times* team)

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

TENANTS'TIMES IS changing and we would like YOU to get involved by suggesting a new name. Think residents, think inclusive. What have you got for us? A selection of ideas will be put to the Members' Forum. Contact us at tenantstimes@gmail.com or call **0800 014 15 45** (Freephone)

OPEN TO IDEAS

SOHA WANTS YOUR suggestions to help shape the organisation's plans for the next few years. You can give your thoughts on housing, your community, jobs, children and the environment at www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZRL2ZN2 or call the Resident Engagement team for free on **0800 014 15 45** until 31 March.



RESIDENTS' RECIPES



Victoria's Lemon Tart

Ingredients:

For the pastry:

- 250g plain flour
- 70g icing sugar
- 125g butter
- 2 eggs – yolks only

Filling

- 5 eggs
- 140g caster sugar
- 150ml double cream
- 3 lemons – juice and zest

Method:

1. To make the pastry base – mix the flour and icing sugar in a bowl. Rub the butter into the flour using fingers to create a breadcrumb consistency. Mix in the egg yolks, no whites.
2. Roll into a ball and divide in half. If it has not formed a dough-like consistency, add 1 tbsp water until it comes together. Flatten out the pastry with your hands, cover and put in the fridge for 30 minutes minimum.
3. To make the filling part – beat eggs and cream then add the sugar and the juice. When mixed fully, stir in the zest from the lemons.
4. Remove the pastry from the fridge, roll out on a floured surface and put into a non-stick tart dish. Make a few holes in the bottom with a fork and put back in the fridge for a further 30 minutes.
5. Heat oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3.
6. Line the tart with foil and fill with rice or pastry beans.
7. Bake the pastry for 10 minutes, remove the tart tin from the oven, discard the foil, and bake for another 20 minutes. Remove from the oven, pour in the lemon mixture and bake again for 30-35 minutes until just set.
8. Leave to cool then put in the fridge to fully set when cool enough.
9. Enjoy with or without cream.



GROW YOUR OWN

IT SEEMS WE got you wondering in the last *Tenants' Times* when we said that Guinness World Records have been won in the gardens of South Oxfordshire! We asked Jessica Dingle (aged 6) to interview one such guru* – her uncle, Tim Saint – and to find out his five top tips.

- **SAVE SEEDS FROM** the vegetables that you have grown. Let them dry naturally then keep them safe. These can be used to grow new plants in the spring.
- **SEEDLINGS NEED TO** get direct sun, and where the temperature remains between 16-21 degrees Celsius. Plants need at least 6-8 hours of sunlight each day. You don't have to have a greenhouse – a window sill will do.
- **WATER PLANTS EVERY** day but don't overwater. Allow the water to soak away into the ground without leaving a trace and then you've done it just right!
- **COMPOST LEAVES WHEN** they fall to make good organic matter that can be mixed with garden centre or supermarket compost to make excellent soil.
- **GET THE BASICS** right and learn from your mistakes. Lettuce, carrots, tomatoes, bell peppers and spinach are all good plants for someone starting out growing vegetables.

*In 2018, for the largest red cabbage in the world!



Picture: Victoria Dingle



ENVIRONMENT

What's the *real* cost of your drink?

asks Paul Waterman

DID YOU KNOW



A 500ml bottle of water costs on average 50p



A 500ml of tap water in the UK costs 0.08p

You pay **625 times** more for bottled water!

What is the real cost of bottled water?

THERE IS A cost to the planet, for the convenience of having bottled water in a country that has the luxury of being able to drink water from the tap. In the UK each person uses on average 150 bottles of water a year – that's 7.7 billion plastic water bottles every year.

And that's just the water bottles! The world's top three plastic polluters are all drinks companies: Coca-Cola, Nestle and PepsiCo.

So... what if we stopped drinking bottled water? Imagine how much oil, water and energy we could save, along with the diesel, petrol and electricity that's used to package, transport and refrigerate all those bottles. Every step in the bottle's life adds to its carbon footprint. 50ml of crude oil is needed to make just one plastic bottle. It takes five minutes to drink and over 450 years to break down.

What's even worse is that in the UK we only recycle 57% of our plastic bottles. Over 3.3 billion water bottles end up in landfill or as litter in the sea and countryside every year. Here they will take hundreds of years to disappear, breaking down into micro-plastics as they do. These in turn kill animals and birds, and enter our food chain. We have no idea what the cost will be to our health in the future.

For more information see A Drop in the Ocean at www.adropintheocean.org.uk/a-drop-in-the-ocean/ and Shine A Light <https://www.adropintheocean.org.uk/shinealight/>

(Material quoted with the kind permission of A Drop in the Ocean.)

COMPUTER GURU JOHN SAYS DID YOU KNOW THAT APPLE, MICROSOFT, HP, AND GOOGLE ARE ALL COMPANIES THAT STARTED LIFE IN SOMEONE'S GARAGE?