

ISSUE #55
OCT 2014

HEADINGTON MONTHLY

YOUR LOCAL FREE COMMUNITY MAGAZINE AND BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Spooky!!!



IT'S OCTOBER ALREADY!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- * Books
- * Gardening
- * Oxford United is back!
- * Plus all the usual staples you've come to expect.

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In the HM Zoo



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DEADLINES FOR NOVEMBER 2014

Commercial:

3rd October 2014 5pm

Charity/Non-Profit and

Design Requests

1st October 2014



Dear Readers

October. Can you believe it's the 10th month of the year already? Our summer is fading away, the leaves are falling, and we are gearing up for the icy season that somehow makes life seem that little bit cosier.

Over here at HM, things are progressing nicely as we bring back old staples like Tim McGovern's much-missed Oxford United updates.

As to receiving your Headington Monthly?

Last month we did a hybrid distribution method, where HM was delivered directly to some doorsteps, while others were placed in high-visibility places within Headington.

We are pleased to announce that from this month, all distribution will be through the new method. Everyone needs to shop, so pick up yours at one of the supermarkets or shops where you see Headington Monthly. It's free and it's yours to take.

I'm off back to my little cave now, to carry on making films about things for your viewing pleasure. I really hope you have a great October!

All the best

Ben

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By popular demand. Tim McGovern, our roving sporting reporter, is back after a hiatus with more Oxford United news and updates.

Big Changes

Since last season ended, Oxford United has appeared to be a hub of near chaos. We now have a new chairman, Darryl Eales, and a new manager, Michael Appleton. When the transition of chairmen passed, Gary Waddock was told his services were no longer needed at Oxford after only 8 games in charge. Another famous face to leave the Kassam over the summer was club legend James Constable.

He is the club's 2nd all-time top scorer with 106 goals, only 1 behind Graham Atkinson. However, some new faces have joined the crew. Strikers Danny Hylton and Will Hoskins and midfielders Michael Collins and Junior Brown all joined the club on permanent deals. George Long, Joe Riley, Carlton Morris, Alex Jakubiak and Tyrone Barnett have all joined the club on loan deals from Sheffield United, Bolton, Norwich, Watford and Peterborough.

The season began on what Oxford fans would call a "sour note". We started at home against Burton Albion, a team who are always in contention for promotion, but never quite reach the final furlong. After some sloppy play, Oxford deservedly lost the game 1-0. Season prospects seemed good after this as we travelled to Bristol City in the Capital One cup. Oxford came from behind to triumph 2-1 after first goals for the club from Carlton Morris and Danny Hylton secured a place for the U's in the next round against Premier League side West Brom.

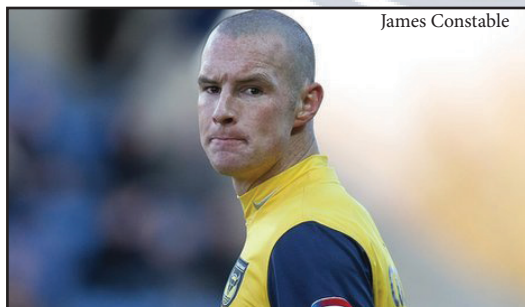
Unfortunately we were unable to continue this tenacious play when we returned to the league against Mansfield away. Again, it was a sloppy performance resulting in a 2-1 loss for the Oxford side. The only goal of the game from our side of the stadium was a penalty that came from Danny Hylton.

We seemed to be under a curse as the next two games also resulted in 1-0 losses. We were unable to take any points away from either Morecambe or Portsmouth. Things at this point left us at the bottom of the Football League. A position Oxford United has never held before. Despite these poor results, things looked promising as Oxford held Premier League side West Brom to a draw. We lost 7-6 on penalties, but this looked as though we had the potential to kick-start our form from here on in.

The next game was very tense and exciting at home to Dagenham and Redbridge. Oxford took the lead a little over 3 minutes in thanks to Alex Jakubiak. Dagenham took two goals before the hour mark but we took the lead again thanks to two goals from Danny Hylton. We were unable to hold onto this as they equalised with 20 minutes left. It showed promise and determination. Only a point, but still, a great game.



Michael Appleton



James Constable

Will Oxford ever win a game again? Let's hope so, and wish Michael Appleton and Darryl Eales the best of luck in their new roles. We must not forget a massive thank you to James "Beano" Constable. 🇬🇧

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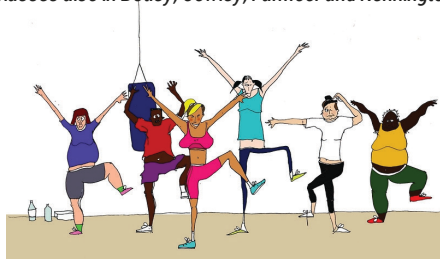
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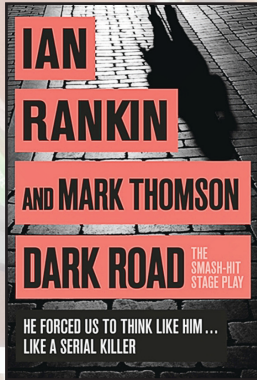
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A Good Read

Dark Road – Ian Rankin and Mark Thompson



As Rankin says in his introduction, *Dark Road* was written in response to a query about why we see crime fiction dominating television and bestseller lists, but not on the stage. 'It started,' he says, 'almost as a dare'.

Following a widely praised run at the Lyceum Theatre in Edinburgh, the script has now been released in book form. Initially, there were some groans from die-hard fans who had hoped for, or expected, the inclusion of Rankin's most famous creation, John Rebus. But whilst the characters here inhabit the same world, Rebus is not present even as a shadow, and the play works better for it.

Reading a script is different to reading a novel, and it is clear that Rankin found the process different too. Here the dialogue has to carry and develop the characters. The central character, Isobel MacArthur, is as successful on the page as reviews suggest she was on the stage. As she approaches retirement from a distinguished career, Scotland's first female Chief Constable is drawn to revisit one of her earlier cases: that of Alfred

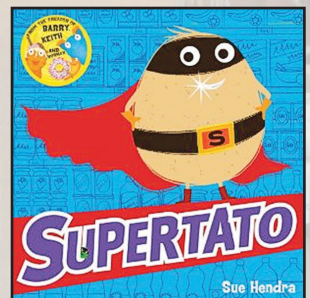
Chalmers, convicted for the murders of four young women twenty five years previously. Chalmers has always protested his innocence, and the key evidence in the case has been conveniently lost...

The scenes between Isobel and Chalmers are tautly written and full of menace. As a counterpoint, the black humour of Frank Bowman and the tapes of the original interviews, which Isobel obsessively revisits, take us into familiar territory. Unfortunately, the relationship between Isobel and her daughter is less convincingly drawn, and this weakens the ending – perhaps here the gap between page and performance is most evident. Nevertheless, the script will stay with you, and there is certainly evidence that the dare has paid off. Here's hoping it is not Rankin's last foray into scriptwriting.


Supertato – Sue Hendra

Sue Hendra will be familiar to parents everywhere as the creator of Barry, Keith and Norman – a fish, a cat and a slug respectively, all with rather odd features. Her latest creation is Supertato – a crime fighting superhero who just happens to be a spud. Strange? Not if you have already read about the fish with fingers!

As Hendra points out at the start, some vegetables are frozen for a good reason. The supermarket is thrown into chaos when a pea escapes from the freezer, intent on causing mayhem. Luckily Supertato is there to save the day, facing up bravely to the threat of the masher in order to ensure that the veggies can live safely again.



Be warned, though – some editions of the book come with stickers.

Once they have finished laughing, your children may find them. And you may be summoned downstairs to a decorated kitchen with the words, 'Mummy, there seems to be an escapee (geddit?) on the loose...' To be honest, if they can get that absorbed in the book, it has to be a good thing! 

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Why Children Should Learn an Instrument



Music is an important part of life – nearly everyone enjoys listening to it. Yet relatively few of us have the ability to create it. Scientists say that children who play an instrument do better academically than those who don't. It can benefit their reading age because it enhances comprehension skills. Learning to understand beat, rhythm and scales improves their maths skills as children learn how to divide, create fractions and recognise patterns. Listening to pitch, rhythm and tempo helps to sharpen their concentration and using mnemonic devices to learn musical patterns can improve memory.

Co-ordination and motor skills are also developed as a child learns to convert written notes to movement of hands, arms and feet. This improved co-ordination and timing can benefit children in other hobbies such as dance and sports.


Children who learn as part of a group cultivate social skills as they interact with other class members. They learn to wait patiently for their turn, and show respect for others. It's also a chance to make friends, especially if they play in a band or orchestra.

Mastering an instrument and achieving goals takes months or even years. Perseverance and patience are useful qualities developed along the way, as is self-confidence which grows further if they go on to perform in public.

Caring for their instrument teaches a child responsibility, while managing their time to ensure that practice is done regularly helps them develop organisational skills.

Finally, learning about and playing a musical instrument can help children discover the role of music in other cultures, and this familiarity from an early age helps foster open-mindedness about worlds and traditions beyond the ones they know.

If your child shows an interest in learning an instrument, be sure to choose one that excites them (my daughter was horrified to be presented with a cello when what she coveted was a clarinet). Select an instrument that suits their ability and temperament, and make sure it produces a sound that you can tolerate for hours as you listen to them practise (I have memories of my mum banishing me to the furthest corner of the house because she couldn't bear the sound of me screeching on the violin!).

I was nine when my parents found me a piano teacher, and even though the road has not always been smooth, I am forever grateful to them for taking this decision, as I consider myself amongst the privileged few who have had the opportunity to learn an instrument and enjoy the benefits this brings. 

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What a load of Rhubarb!!!

Cast your mind back to the fabulous sunny months of April, May and June, when the rhubarb plants were producing delicious stems of juicy fruit, perfectly ripe for crumble. Each of the stems (so technically not a fruit at all) which blushed with the colour of pink champagne or deep raspberry sorbet depending on the variety, could easily be torn from the plant, topped and tailed and then either used immediately or blanched and frozen for later.

Rhubarb freezes very well, and lasts for around a year, in fact I made a crumble in April this year using last years frozen harvest. Chopped into 1cm pieces, it can be placed directly into freezer bags, but to retain its colour should be blanched for around 1 minute in boiling water. Allow to cool and dry before freezing. To revive, boil in a little fresh orange juice, a teaspoon of cinnamon powder and sugar to taste before allowing to cool. It's a versatile crop and makes great jam, compote and crumble, and tastes delicious when made as above and served with crème fraîche.

It originates from the colder parts of China and its popularity is fairly recent in historical terms, becoming more widely eaten as sugar became less expensive. The leaves are toxic and so too are the stems later on in the year, because the toxic acids move down the stems from the leaves and into the crown as the winter temperatures cool.

October is the perfect time to plant rhubarb if you haven't got any at the moment and would like a patch of your own. It's quite un-fussy and will grow in sun or part shade as long as the soil is moisture retentive. Add well-rotted manure to the planting hole and mulch the plant with a 'doughnut' shape of manure about 50cm deep in spring. Give

the plant a feed with 'blood, fish and bone' in March and watch it grow! It's an easy perennial plant, which produces giant leaves and is pretty resistant to pests, although hungry mammals might feast on the crowns in early spring when food is scarce.

Early rhubarb can be 'forced' inside up-turned dust bins, but only do this with established plants. Place a black bin (or terracotta rhubarb forcing jar if you're a pro) over the plant in early spring, and then enjoy the small, tender and sweet stems as they develop and search for the light. Grown commercially in large dark sheds in the Yorkshire rhubarb triangle - between Wakefield, Leeds and Morley - this wonderful vegetable (classed as a fruit for tax reasons) can also be divided up this month if you have a large overgrown patch. **M**

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School Phobia???

There seems to be growing evidence of a condition known as School Phobia. It was first recorded in America around 1941, then gained further attention in the 1960's, and has become more commonly diagnosed in recent years.

Kay Mawson, the mother of sufferer Andrew, describes School Phobia as the 'fear of school,' which brings on debilitating symptoms. She says that to avoid the fear, children exhibit behaviour often called School Refusal. For her son the causes were a sensation of feeling trapped and out of control in school and therefore feeling insecure and unsafe. He also suffered from separation anxiety resulting from being apart and out of contact with those he cared about, and being fearful that something might happen to them. Kay feels it is important to raise awareness of the condition because it is commonly misunderstood, and often remains untreated. Many parents become distressed at finding themselves struggling with courts, schools and truancy issues.


Last years Netmums and the TV programme This Morning carried out a poll of 1,054 parents. This suggested that one in five British children suffer from School Phobia but only half of parents are aware of it. Children aged five to six and 10 and 11 were the most frequent sufferers. Common behaviours include faking illness to try to avoid school, or going for registration and then leaving. Many sufferers have temper tantrums and scream and kick if forced to attend. Forty six percent

of those referred to in the study also became ill with genuine stress related conditions such as headaches and stomach aches. Many had difficulty sleeping.

Whilst in some cases the factors were not related to specific instances at school, the parents of other sufferers felt the condition had been triggered by bullying, under-performance or a general sense of being overwhelmed by school expectations.

The study suggests that many parents struggled to get help; indeed some experts claim that parental behaviour has sometimes made cases worse. Some parents have been able to get their children medically diagnosed with School Phobia, and pupils in the UK have obtained places at special units for anxious and school phobic children.

There remain differences of opinion on the best way to handle the condition. Some feel that getting the child into school is crucial even if it involves parental accompaniment and perhaps arranging special acclimatisation sessions. Some parents have found that moving their child to a more supportive school helped tremendously, while others believe that home schooling provides the solution.

Kay Mawson advises parents to research all of the available options and discuss them with their child and perhaps an educational psychologist. That way there is a consensus on the best way to move forward, though arrangements should be reviewed on a regular basis. 

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An Idiot's Guide to Fireworks

Fireworks have come a long way since the ancient Chinese used red firecrackers to ward off evil spirits. Here's a summary of the various types available.

Sky Rocket – Launched into the air it can climb up to 200 feet before exploding with a loud bang in a variety of colours and effects. A variation is the Colossus which whistles as it ascends before exploding.

Roman Candle – Enclosed in a cardboard casing, individual balls shoot out stars periodically after ignition. Noise effects include hums and crackles.

Fountain – Enjoy the beauty but not the noise of a firework as a shower of sparks is quietly released in either a single or variety of colours.

Catherine Wheel – A tube filled with gunpowder is coiled to produce a wheel effect. When the fuse is lit, the wheel rotates at speed, producing a spiral effect of coloured flame and sparks. Noise effects include crackles and whistles.

Mine – The loudest firework, its effect is dramatic and spectacular but short-lived. The mine is shot from a mortar shell on ground level and shoots coloured stars into the sky with flashes and bangs.

Sparkler – Held by hand on a metal stick, a constant stream of white or coloured sparks can create dazzling shapes and patterns if waved around.

In today's modern world, there really is a firework for everyone! 🇬🇧



Nutella Yum Yum Cake

Nutella never really made sense to me on bread. Sure it tastes good, but the desire to spoon the chocolatey goo into my mouth, always outweighed the need to wait just a few seconds longer to spread it generously onto the slice of toast, browning so tediously in the toaster.

Despite my impatience, however, I have come to realise that hard as it is, hanging on just a little while longer can really pay off. As demonstrated here, Nutella is diverse enough to be used on pretty much anything, and all that potential is wasted each time I choose to spoon feed myself with it, rather than use it to add flavour to other foods.

So as of right now, I have decided to set myself on a mission. Mission name: 'Use Nutella On Everything And Make It Work' Case Number One : Nutella on cake. AKA Nutella Yum Yum Cake. To make your very own circular lump of deliciousness, read on..



To make, you will need...

- 225g of soft butter
- 225g of sugar
- 225g Self raising flour
- 4 Medium eggs
- 50g of cocoa powder (Hot chocolate powder works just as well)
- 1 heaped tspn of baking powder
- A dash of milk and a spot of boiling water
- 1 whole 200g jar of Nutella

To begin, measure out your ingredients and using a large mixing bowl, cream the butter with a fork until soft and gooey. Next add the sugar and beat the two ingredients until they become light and fluffy. Take your eggs and crack them into the bowl one by one, whisking them into the mixture. Sift the flour into the bowl and add the cocoa powder and the baking powder. Continue to whisk the mixture so it's consistency stays a lump-free thick paste. If your mixture is drying out a little, I find it helps to add a splash of cold milk and a teaspoon of water as you want to keep the paste moist, but not


watery.

Now the mixture is ready, grease your cake pans with butter and line with baking paper. Pour the mixture into the pans, making sure you spread it evenly to prevent the sponge looking uneven when baked.

Place the pans into a pre-heated oven for 25-30minutes at 50C

When the cakes are ready remove them from the oven and leave on a heat proof surface to cool for an hour or two.

When confident that they have nicely cooled, you can peel them out of the baking paper and crack on with the filling! Lay one half of the sponge flat and spread over half the jar of Nutella. Place the second piece of sponge on top like a sandwich and use the rest of the Nutella to cover the top. Place the cake in the fridge so the Nutella can set, leaving you with a nice base to push on any decorations of your choice if you so desire. Here I have used Smarties and Skittles but feel free to go crazy.

And there you have it. The delicious Nutella Yum Yum Cake. Scoff at your own risk of becoming addicted. :) 



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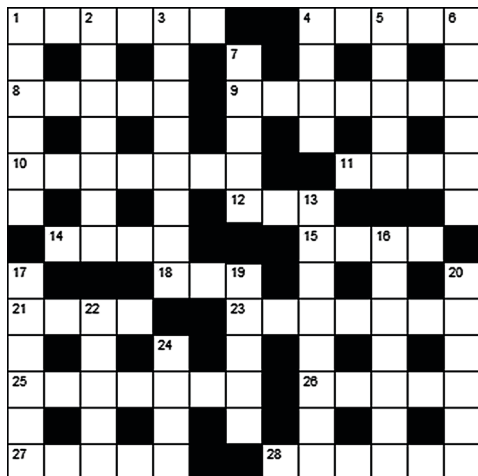
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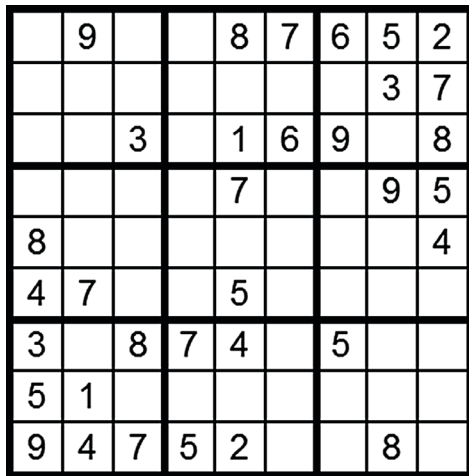
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ACROSS

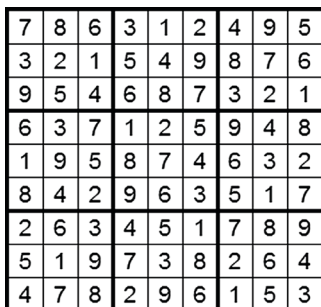
- 1 Zooming, dashing (6)
- 4 Pallid, milky (5)
- 8 Ivory horns (5)
- 9 Crepe (7)
- 10 Witty, pithy saying (7)
- 11 Rubber wheel-cover (4)
- 12 Ocean (3)
- 14 Broad smile (4)
- 15 Connects head and body! (4)
- 18 Space (3)
- 21 Rant, rage (4)
- 23 Soothing baby-song (7)
- 25 Where the Pope lives (7)
- 26 Spanish gentleman (5)
- 27 Sweetie on a stick (5)
- 28 Frank (6)

DOWN

- 1 Putrid, rancid (6)
- 2 Till-operator (7)
- 3 Facial jewellery (8)
- 4 Magic stick (4)
- 5 Country famed for pasta (5)
- 6 One more than ten (6)
- 7 Sends annoying emails (5)
- 13 Island near Wales (8)
- 16 Tethered (7)
- 17 Trek, tour (6)
- 19 Aircraft (5)
- 20 Cross-breed, half-blood (6)
- 22 Necessary (5)
- 24 Disgusting (4)

Last month's Brain Games solutions:

did you get them right?



How to Play SUDOKU

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Fill in the grid so that each row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through to 9 with no repetition.

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But beware! Sudoku is highly addictive.

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WHAT'S ON IN OCTOBER

HEADINGTON LIBRARY

Tue. 21 Oct. 5.30pm

Headington resident and author Terry Cudbird will give an illustrated talk about his latest book - "Walking the Retreat - the retreat to the Marne 1914, revisited"

Ross Mackenzie's Pictures and Stories from Wild Places

Sat. 18 Oct. 3pm

The Coach House, Quarry Road, Headington, Oxford OX3 8NU

I'll be talking about polar bears in the Arctic and penguins in the Falkland Islands and the Antarctic, and also about my recent trips to islands in Arctic Norway and to some of the most remote islands in northern Scotland – St Kilda, Foula and Fair Isle. You'll get a chance to see pictures from these places and to talk to me about why I spend so much time in wild remote places.

Oxsrads's Craft and Gift Fair,

Sun. 19th Oct. 2014

Court place Farm, Marsh Lane, Marston, Oxon, OX3 0NQ

Oxsrads are holding their annual craft and gift fair on Sunday 19th October. This event is held to raise funds for improvements to the center, so that all users can continue to enjoy the facilities. The Craft and gift fair will open at 10.30 and close at 4pm. During this period there will be lots of lovely handmade items and gifts including Soap, cards, Jewellery, paperweights, card making materials, knitted items, sewn items, handmade handbags, painted glass, wooden items to name just a few so why not come along and join us for a wonderful day and get your Christmas shopping off to a great start with so many wonderful items for everyone all under one roof and then when you have finished you could buy a cake from the cake stall, a strip or two of raffle tickets with a chance to win some great prizes and sit down with a lovely cup of tea or coffee from the cafe. For any more information please contact Helen Wharton-Smith, Oxsrads Craft and gift fair organiser 07866 651326

Handel's MESSIAH

Kennington & District United Choirs

2.30 pm on Sunday 5th October 2014

Holywell Music Room, Holywell Street, Oxford
FREE admission.

Charity concert. Collection for Helen and Douglas House Hospice.

OXFORD FIDDLE GROUP CONCERT.

Sun. 2nd Nov.

Headington Quarry Village Hall.

Twelve fiddles plus backing for a magical sound. Concert starts 7.00pm.

Money raised from this event will go towards the Headington Quarry Village Hall Refurbishment Fund. Tickets on the door £8.00 Advance Tickets £6.00 from Paul Rogers or email jaspersdadox@gmail.com. Licensed Bar. Please come and join us for an enjoyable evening.

Andrzej Panufnik CENTENARY CONCERT

Sat. 22 Nov. 7pm


Jacqueline du Pré Building, St Hilda's College, Cowley Place, Oxford OX4 1DY.

Pianist Clare Hammond will curate an evening of solo piano works and song to mark the centenary of Anglo-Polish composer Andrzej Panufnik's birth at the Jacqueline du Pré Music Building.

Tickets £20 gallery / £15 stalls / £5 students available from the Oxford Playhouse, <http://www.ticketsoxford.com>, 01865 305305. Entry to the pre-concert talk is free.

ART EXHIBITION - HEADINGTON LIBRARY

Mon. 6 Oct. - Sat. 18 Oct.

Art Exhibition by Bury Knowle Art Group - an exhibition of works by local artists, running from Monday 6th October - Saturday, 18th October 

Have an event? We happily publicise non-profit, community and charity events through this page. Please email ads@headingtonmonthly.co.uk with the subject heading "Community Events" before 10 October with your events for November 2014.

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Should My Child Have a Mobile Phone?

When my daughter entered secondary school and started to become more independent, I decided to buy her a mobile phone to keep in touch and check that all was well. But I soon discovered that we had different agendas! She treated her mobile phone like an additional body part. It accompanied her everywhere – to the dinner table, to the bathroom, to bed. She checked it constantly, and the 300 texts per month that I thought adequate, soon got swallowed up in her incessant cyber chatter.

Much has changed since then. Texting was once the major attraction, but now mobile phones can have any number of uses, from accessing social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, to using apps like WhatsApp and Snapchat and for gaming, videos and music.

Mobile phones are a great way to stay in touch and they are indispensable in emergencies, but they can also be a huge hindrance. Young people are much less active, preferring online games or social media sites to sports and other activities. Conversation has been replaced by instant messaging or texting, and schoolwork for some students is suffering due to long hours spent on phones instead of on their studies or even sleep!


To ensure that mobile phones remain our children's servant and not their master, a few ground rules need to be set in place.

First, decide if your child is ready for their own phone. If they are generally responsible and trustworthy and able to look after their own belongings, maybe they are. The average child receives their first phone at the age of 12. This seems like a sensible time to me.

Seriously consider buying a basic model for their first phone. At this stage it's all about safety, not social status or games, and the phone should be regarded as a tool, not a toy. Only consider a smart phone when your child is much older, say 16-18 years old.

Set limits for the number of texts or minutes. A monthly capped contract can help with this, or alternatively a pay as you go scheme, which will only allow a certain spend before it needs topping up again. Consider taking out insurance should the phone get lost or broken, and ask your child to contribute to the cost as they get older and are able to earn.

Designate certain times when the phone should be turned off or left behind, such as at the dinner table, after 10pm, or in the bedroom - and limit the number of hours they spend on the phone to leave time for other interests.

Finally, make sure you follow your own rules. You can't expect your child to abide by them if you don't, as you are their greatest role model! 

CONTACTS, COMMUNITY, CALENDAR.

We like to support our local community, so if you're a non-profit, charity or community organisation and would like a free listing in this section, or to tell the community about your event at no charge, please contact us at charity@headingtonmonthly.co.uk. Please note that space is limited and submissions will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis.

Doctors:

- * Barton Surgery, Underhill Circus, Headington - 01865 744 221
- * Bury Knowle Health Centre, 207 London Road, Headington - 01865 761651
- * Manor Surgery, Osler Road, Headington - 01865 762 535
- * The Richards Medical Centre, 12 Old High Street, Headington - 01865 741 211

Dentists:

- * 310 Dental Care, 310 London Road, Headington - 01865 766975
- * Bury Knowle Dental Practice, 207 London Road, Headington - 01865 308 400
- * Euro Dental Practice, 61 London Road, Headington - 01865 308400
- * John Miller Dental Practice, 6a The Parade, Windmill Road, Headington - 01865 308 050
- * Kennett Road Dental Practice, 3 Kennett Road, Headington - 01865 761 965
- * Manor Dental Practice, 7 Osler Road, Headington - 01865 750 056
- * Studental, Oxford Brookes University, Headington Hill Campus - 01865 484 608

Chemists:

- * Barton Pharmacy, 6 Underhill Circus, Headington - 01865 763 106
- * Boots Pharmacy, 96 London Road, Headington - 01865 763 106
- * Boots Bury Knowle, 207 Bury Knowle Health Centre, Headington - 01865 765 559
- * Roundway Pharmacy, 3 Roundway, Headington - 01865 766 994

Libraries:

- * Headington Library, North Place, Headington - 01865 762 867

Other Useful Numbers:

- * Age UK - 01235 849 400
- * Childline - 0800 1111
- * Citizen's Advice Bureau - 0870 200 608
- * John Radcliffe Hospital - 01865 741 166
- * Gas Emergencies - 0800 111 999
- * Power Outages - 08000 929 282
(Scottish Power)
- * Thames Valley Police - 101
- * Oxford City Council - 01865 252 900
- * Rt. Hon. Andrew Smith MP - 02072 194 512
- * NHS Direct - 111
- * The Samaritans - 08457 909 090

City Councillors for Headington:

- * Ruth Wilkinson - 07789 368 300
- * Altaf Khan - 07931 345 554

School Terms 2014-2015

Term	Date	# Days
Term 1	1 Sep - 24 Oct	40
Oct. Holiday	27 Oct - 31 Oct	
Term 2	3 Nov - 19 Dec	35
Christmas Holiday	22 Dec - 2 Jan	
Term 3	5 Jan - 13 Feb	30
Feb Holiday	16 Feb - 20 Feb	
Term 4	23 Feb - 27 Mar	25
Apr Holiday	30 Mar - 10 Apr	
Term 5	13 Apr - 22 May	29
Late Spring	25 May - 29 May	
Term 6	1 Jun - 20 Jul	36
School Year Begins	1 September 2015	
Total		195

This information is taken from the Oxford City Council website. Please contact your school or visit your school's website to check the return dates for your school and obtain dates of teacher inset days.



Jam Today...

Autumn is the perfect time to start preserving. You can use home grown fruits or those you've foraged amongst the hedgerows. Preserving is relatively easy. Once the fruit has been picked, washed and prepared, you just need some simple equipment to turn it into marvellous produce. You can get lots of advice from your local cook shop on what's required, but some basics are: a large heavy based saucepan, spoons and funnels, a sugar thermometer, containers and jars, lids and labels.


The concept of preserving foods has been around since the earliest humans. To survive, ancient man had to harness nature. In frozen climates he froze seal meat on the ice.

In tropical climates he dried foods in the sun. Food by its nature begins to spoil the moment it is harvested. So the ability to preserve food enabled ancient man to make roots, and live in one place and form a community.

Preservation with the use of honey or sugar was well known to the earliest cultures. It was commonplace for fruits to be kept in honey. In ancient Greece quince was mixed with honey, dried and packed tightly into jars. The Romans cooked the quince and honey producing a solid texture. As there's not enough sunlight in Northern climates to successfully dry fruits, housewives learned to make preserves, heating the fruit with sugar, and this is the method we know today.

Whilst there is no longer a pressing survival reason for preserving, it can be very rewarding. As well as providing delightful food and drink for you to consume, you could also make your preserved fruits into lovely Christmas gifts. There are many possibilities including jams and marmalades, chutneys and pickles, and beverages such as sloe gin. Many establishments run evening classes which can help you create these and many other fabulous recipes, such as fruit butter or fruit cheese.

When preserving, you should use fruits that are sun ripened, as the process will not improve green tasteless fruit. Using fruit that has a high acid content is recommended, as it is less likely to harbour bacteria. When filling jars, you should ensure they are hot as temperature drops will increase the likelihood of bacteria forming. For the same reason, always cover your jars straight away and when the jars are cooled, you should recheck the seals and tighten lids to prevent any air entering and causing mould to form. Or you could use a waxed disc of paper and cellophane to act as a cover.

Keep your preserves in a cool, dark, dry place. Chutneys and pickles can last for around a year, and fruit liqueurs and fruits in alcohol up to two years. Once opened, store in the fridge and use quickly. 

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