



COMBWICH, OTTERHAMPTON AND STEART NEWSLETTER

Otter Tales

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General Information



50th Edition

Otterhampton Parish Council

Otterhampton Offcuts
Snippets from our May and April 2023 meetings

Wharf Road Enhancements

Parish councillors and volunteers spent another morning working on Wharf Road, clearing areas, tidying up and laying mulch. If you would like to volunteer to help with the ongoing upkeep of Wharf Road, please contact the clerk.



Antisocial Behaviour

We are still receiving reports of antisocial behaviour in Combwich, these include eggs being thrown at buildings and the telephone box which houses the defibrillator. A new sign that was erected at the entrance to Wharf Road was pulled down and put in the hedge.



If you are a victim of, or witness to, any antisocial behaviour, please report it through the Avon & Somerset website at <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/report/anti-social-behaviour/>

Defibrillators

We have two defibrillators in Combwich, one is in the old telephone box on Brookside Road and the other is on Ship Lane at the side of the Anchor Inn. Defibrillators are life-saving equipment and if they have been vandalised, this could mean a delay in someone receiving life-saving assistance. The defibrillators are checked once a week by volunteers but we require more volunteers to help with this. If you are interested, please contact the clerk to be put in touch with the co-ordinators.

Scooters

We have received many reports of near misses of children on scooters and cars during the school runs. We ask parents/carers to be vigilant when children are going down the hills and to ensure they are aware of the dangers.

Brownie Copse

It is hoped that work will start on the brownie copse in August as the nesting season ends. Several people
Email: otter.tales@aol.com

Contact details for the parish council

PARISH COUNCILLORS

Lindsey Parsons (Chair)	01278 653700
Rachel Perrett (Vice Chair)	01278 652958
Tina Gardener	01278 652642
Mike Haycraft	01278 653264
Connie Sanders	01278 653307
Amanda Gibbons	01278 652570
Andy Darch (Stear)	andydarch@live.co.uk
Gina Mear (Clerk)	01278 652499 otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com

County Ward Members

Mike Caswell	01278 652043
Brian Bolt	bbolt@hotmail.com

have already volunteered but if you would like to volunteer to help with clearing the area and then ongoing maintenance, please contact the clerk.

Dog Fouling

There is still an issue with dog fouling around Combwich, including in the fields where the public footpath goes from Brookside Road to the top of School Lane. Cows are now grazing in the field and dog excrement can be lethal to them. Please pick up after your dog.

Parish Council Meetings

Parish Council Meetings are open to the public so if you have a subject you would like to discuss please come along or email the clerk in advance so that the matter can be discussed. Parish Council meetings have now been moved to the second Thursday of the month so the next parish council meetings will be on Thursday 14th September, 12th October, 9th November and 14th December starting at 7.00pm, in Otterhampton Village Hall, there is no meeting in August.

Full details of the decisions taken at parish council meetings are contained within the minutes which are available on the three village notice boards (opposite the Post Office, opposite the Anchor Inn by the play area and on the wall of Ferricies Farm, Steart) or the Combwich.org.uk website.

Contact for Clerk (Gina Mear)
otterhamptonpcclerk@gmail.com or Tel 01278 652499

Harbour View Bar

Hello from the Harbour View Bar committee, we have been enjoying some glorious weather.

We are continuing with our monthly quiz which has been a great success, always a fun evening, with our quiz master Richard Navoy. June's quiz was won by Sue, Bruce, Rachel & their team. They shared the £70 jackpot. Well done to you all.



The darts presentation evening & AGM will be held in the hall on Friday 14th July.

The Garden Club have been using the bar & lounge area for their monthly meetings, Thank you to them for some very informative evenings.

It has been great to see Fridays develop into a friendly social gathering and we have enjoyed welcoming new members. We will remain closed on Saturdays for the time being, except for special events, .. i.e. quiz etc.

Up & Coming Events

We are having our annual Paella afternoon on August bank holiday Sunday. In the past this has been a brilliant day, great food, company & music.

Sat 16th Sept. BLITZ TIME SALLY.. will be starring at the village hall. Sally sang at The Armed Forces day at Vivary Park on Saturday 1st July, a lovely young lady who will be performing 40s wartime songs.

We are planning a late afternoon performance with a cream tea included in the ticket price. We are really looking forward to welcoming Sally to Comwich. Tickets for both events will be on sale in August. Look out for posters around the village & in the bar window.

Membership renewals are due at the end on August, prices may rise slightly, currently it is £5 for a year. Also with the continuing rise of CO2, gas for the beers, (nearly doubled in a year) some prices may also rise slightly. Please continue to support us, we are a 3 team committee, always looking for new members. We are volunteers and work hard to keep the club up & running for the village. Any questions about forthcoming events or any other queries:



Contact chair Steve Lang at
bloodstorm_20@sky.com

Bev Lang secretary at
beverly64@me.com

Ian Williams , treasurer
ian.wills@gmail.com

By the Seaside

The sun was beating down on the tranquil sea,
Waves hammer gently against the rocks,
While the tall buildings stare at me,
As fishermen wander along the docks,
"Bring in the boat!" called he,
Was heard by the ladies planting their pots,
At the café people drank their tea,
With happiness lots and lots.

By 11-year-old Poppy granddaughter of Helen Jowett



Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association (OPRA)

Registered Charity Number 1124017

We hope you all enjoyed the Coronation special edition, and also enjoyed the celebrations themselves. What a wonderful day it was and how magnificently King Tom and Queen Sue performed their duties on this special day. It was great to see the village out in force supporting the event and well done to the organisers and all the volunteers who worked very hard to put on this event. The special edition of Otter Tales was paid for and distributed by OPRA. We do have some spare copies if you would like one then please contact Barry on 652399 or barry.leathwood@btinternet.com They will be distributed on a first come basis.

The next big event in our calendar is the annual cricket match in memory of the late Murray Lister with all monies raised once again going to the Brain Tumour charity. This year it will be held on Saturday 5th August on the main common. The plan is for cricketers to meet at the Anchor for 1pm and if we can get them out of the pub the cricket will commence at 2pm! Your support, whether a cricketer or a spectator, would be greatly appreciated. There will be teas, coffees and cake and a BBQ available. For a donation, beers and ciders will also be provided. There will also be a raffle. Donations of cakes and raffle prizes will be very welcomed. Please remember to bring plenty of cash with you as we are unable to accept card payments. In case of inclement weather, the cricket will be held on the following Saturday.

This will be swiftly followed by the infamous cream tea with optional walk courtesy of Aly and Robin Prowse at Dowells Farm Steart. It will be held on Sunday 13th August, please put it in your diaries now. Confirmation and details of this event will be published nearer the time.

Our monthly walks will resume in September, normally on the third Sunday of the month meeting at the Anchor Inn at 9.30am. Look out for the posters, posts on All things Combwich Facebook page and the website www.combwich.org.uk You can also email barry.leathwood@btinternet.com to be put on our email distribution list for notifications of village events.

The 100 Club draw usually takes place every month at the Coffee Morning in Otterhampton Village Hall, although on occasions it has been necessary for the numbers to be drawn and witnessed by an independent observer by a video link. The winning numbers are displayed in the Post Office and the parish website www.combwich.org.uk

If you want to join the 100 Club or become involved in OPRA activities please contact Tina on 652642 or Sue 653663 or any committee member.



Murry Lister Memorial Cricket Match

2pm Saturday 5th August

Combwich Common

Proceeds to the Brain Tumour Charity

Fancy a game, (lack of skill not a problem) then go along to the Anchor at 1pm for team selection. All welcome

Not a player, then just join us for a fun afternoon of cricket and banter. Slow bowling only, all cricket gear provided. Teas, coffees and cake and a BBQ will be available from the Refreshment tent.



OTTERHAMPTON VILLAGE HALL

AGM - 2023



Hopefully everyone is enjoying the recent sunshine and long may it continue. The trustees are currently working on the events programme for the coming months in addition to the regular groups and activities running at the village hall.

The next date for your diary is Thursday 27th July when we will be holding the Otterhampton Village Hall AGM at 7.30pm. The AGM offers residents of Otterhampton, Steart and Combwich the opportunity to attend and hear the latest reports from the trustees and raise any question or comments regarding the Village Hall. Following the meeting, there will be a chance to meet the trustees and other parishioners over some cheese and wine, so please come along.

We are currently looking for volunteers and trustees to join us in shaping the future of the Village Hall. If you are passionate about ensuring the hall remains a valuable community asset, please contact Sue Barton on 01278 653531 or suecbarton@gmail.com to discuss volunteering or becoming a trustee.

For updates on everything relating to the village hall, please look at our website www.otterhamptonvillagehall.co.uk

50 Editions of Otter Tales

This is the 50th edition of Otter Tales. Right is the first one produced in July 2015. Copies of this and all subsequent editions can be viewed and downloaded from our local website www.combwich.org.uk. Just click on the Otter Tales logo on the left of the screen.

Previously there was an OPRA newsletter and before that a parish council one. Back in the 1980s the Combwich Clarion provided the local news and gossip! If you know of any earlier parish or village newsletters let us know.

This is your newsletter and we want it to reflect your interests, so please let us have your views. Tell us what you like and what you don't. We often feature local people in our "Profiles" which seem very popular. Perhaps you can suggest a candidate for profiling.

www.combwich.org.uk

COMBWICH, OTTERHAMPTON AND STEART NEWSLETTER July 2015 Issue 1

Otter Tales

New Newsletter for the villagers of Combwich, Otterhampton and Steart

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Bus Service
A petition calling for a better bus service for Combwich is being organised by local residents and supported by Somerset County Councillor John Edney.
To add your name to the list please go to the Post Office.

The Parish Council and the Otterhampton Parish Recreation Association, better known as OPRA have decided to abandon their own newsletters in favour of a new one for the whole community.

All community organisations are invited to submit articles for publication, tell us what you are doing and advertise your events in the diary section.

A team of volunteers has been put together to produce this and future editions. EDF Hinkley B has agreed to print it for us on a bi-monthly basis for which we are very grateful, and it will be delivered to every household in the parish by volunteers.

All community organisations are invited to submit articles for publication, tell us what you are doing and advertise your events in the diary section.

Don't like what you see or think we are missing something important? Then let us know, or better still write something for publication. There will be regular updates from your parish council and other organisations.

Our Beautiful Countryside

We may grumble from time to time, particularly about the weather (because we are British), but we recognise that we live in one of the most attractive parts of the country. Our parish has been enhanced by the development of the Steart Marshes which apart from providing both salt and fresh water habitat and opportunities for bird watchers, also provides miles of safe walking and cycling right on our doorstep. Summer or winter there is always something new to see.

If you have a picture of our lovely landscape you wish to share with us, email a copy to the editor with details of when and where it was taken.

Your village website
www.combwich.org.uk is the place to go for up to date information on what is happening in the parish and much more

Stear Marshes
War-time Quadrant Hut at Steart



Comwich & District WI - *Elizabeth Marriott*



At March's meeting we had the Devon and Somerset Air Ambulance team who give us a talk with video and photos which was incredibly inspirational. They receive no direct funding from the Government or the National Lottery and rely on the generosity of the public for support, their operational costs are over £5 million a year and the approximate cost per mission is £3,000. They dealt with 2,231 missions from 1st April to 31st March 2022 which included 51% trauma, 22% cardiac, 25% medical and 2% transfers during that month alone. They are operational 19 hours every day from 7am to 2am which continued during the Covid pandemic. They also provide an enhanced care service using two outreach cars, one based in Dorset and the other in Somerset which operate between 10am and 10pm every day.



April's meeting we had the lovely Cally Wills giving us a talk on exercise and teaching us some exercises either sitting or standing, it was amazing to feel so much more mobile afterwards, some of the ladies have since joined her weekly class and are thoroughly enjoying them.

May's meeting we had Nicole Turnbull from Steart Marshes Wildlife and Wetland Trust give us a talk with some lovely photos and video of Steart Marshes. We all learnt so much about the wildlife and fauna on our doorstep.

June was members' night; the committee have the night off and the evening is organised by the members and what an evening it was. We thoroughly enjoyed a DVD of a ukulele group playing at the Proms in London and were treated to popcorn, ice creams, cake and hot drinks, the evening was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Our next meeting is Thursday 20th July starting at 7.30pm when we have Ursula Franklin speaking about Mission Penguin and the competition is your smallest teddy bear.

If you are interested in joining our happy band, do come and join us at our next meeting, you will be sure of a warm welcome.



Walk and Cream Tea

Join us on Sunday 13th August for a lovely cream tea with an optional short walk around the Steart Peninsular. The cream tea is courtesy of Aly and Robin Prowse at Dowells Farm Steart.



Confirmation and details of this event will be published nearer the time.

Combwich Memories *by Sheena Tucker*

Wandering round our village, we can see many old buildings that can also be identified in photos taken years ago, and interesting to see how they blend into the surroundings we are familiar with today. However, there are quite a few that have disappeared completely, and little or no trace of them remains.

One such structure is the old garage and stores that once stood on the site of Harbour Court, near the Pill. Apart from being able to pick out the wall that fronted the road through the bushes, with a tell-tale gap at each end where you would have driven in to fill up with 4-Star or whatever your car needed, the site is almost unrecognisable, having been reused for more modern houses. The wooden-faced bungalow would appear to be all that remains of the related buildings from that time. And the lack of passing trade in a small village at the end of a cul-de-sac I suppose did not help its survival. In this photo from 1985, just look at the prices, helpfully given in gallons and litres, but we do also have to remember wages were lower too, of course (In case you are wondering, the equivalent gallon price is around £5.30 and the litre price around £1.20 in today's money)!



How many cars were in the village on those days, I wonder, and does anyone have a photo of their cherished family car from back then, perhaps? When did the garage first open, did you own or were you connected to the garage, or were you a customer with memories of it?



Ariel view of Combwich Pill, with the garage and stores in the centre, taken in 1988



If you are not already aware, there is a Facebook Page called "Combwich, Steart & Otterhampton Memories" where we love to see your old photos, or read your stories and recollections of our villages and parish, so please do share anything you have, or ask a friend or family member to share them on your behalf, if you do not use Facebook yourself.

Archive photos ed

NOTES TO A 'NOT' SO SLEEPY VILLAGE (Six) by Chris Ponka

They say you should never meet your heroes. (Nine times out of ten you could end up disappointed!) Depends who your heroes are though...

My real heroes have always been friends and local people.

People that run the shop, the landlord of the local pub, postmen, local musicians and artists, people that do things for the community... Although...

I was a young lad, it was around 1972 and I was on holiday with my parents in Skegness, which at that time still had a pier with a theatre at the end of it.

Who should be starring in summer season at that theatre?

None other than Norman Wisdom.

Could this be true? Norman Wisdom the big film star – in Skegness at the end of the pier?

He had starred in a Broadway musical (Where he was nominated for a Tony award!) He had starred in a big Hollywood blockbuster of a film ('The Night they Raided Minskys')...

Yet here he now was, at the end of the pier in Skegness.

(His popularity hadn't waned – having separated from his wife, he returned from the USA to look after his children)

Being a bit of a fan, as most kids were, I just had to see the show. It was brilliant, a packed house and Norman was hilarious – total knockabout, pantomime comedy at its finest – he was also a talented musician playing piano, drums, trumpet, saxophone, clarinet etc

After the show I just had to get his autograph!

The show finished about 10.30pm and it was pouring with rain

(Usual Holiday weather for Skeggy!)

About six of us waited at Stage Door for the great man to appear. After the dancers had left along with the supporting acts we continued to wait.

It was still raining – pouring...

Eventually a lady opened the door and said;

'Mr Wisdom won't be coming outside tonight to sign autographs because of the rain'

We all groaned in disappointment.

'However' she continued 'If you'd all care to follow me, Mr Wisdom will be happy to greet you in his dressing room!'

Not only were we going to meet him, we were being allowed into his dressing room!

We stood patiently in a corridor until his dressing room door eventually opened and the six of us piled in.

I looked in the corner, hanging up on a wire coat hanger was *THE* famous suit and cap (Next to an identical one, which he also wore, there being two shows each day!)

A small black & white portable TV stood on his dressing room table. (He was watching the ashes cricket highlights)

We all chatted, laughed and he signed our programmes...

I was lucky enough to meet him again quite a few times, many years later.

In the 2000 New Years Honours List he became SIR NORMAN WISDOM

He had just been knighted by Her Majesty the Queen, as he stood and walked away, he did what we call the 'pantomime trip', whereby as you are walking, you place the toes of one foot behind the heel of the other causing you to 'trip'.

(If not executed correctly and with expert timing you CAN end up flat on your face – I know as I've done it!)

THIS wasn't Norman showing off or trying to steal the show...

He was lightening the mood of a very formal occasion and also saying...

'We're all only human and can fall at any time'

Another reason why Her Majesty laughed....She knew it to be true!



The very signed photo, framed on the wall!

The London Classics Challenge

More people have climbed Everest than have completed the London Classics Challenge. There are three parts to the Challenge, the Ride London 100, Swim Serpentine and the London Marathon. Ride London 100 consists of a 100 mile bike ride out of London, around Surrey and back. Swim Serpentine is a two mile swim around the Serpentine lake in the middle of London and the iconic London Marathon.

My first challenge was the bike ride in 2019. The training was many a Saturday in the saddle developing cycling skills, leg muscle bulk and saddle-sore prevention! When the day arrived, it was glorious sunny weather, perfect for cycling and six hours and forty five minutes later I had completed the first part of the challenge and raised over £1200 for the British Heart Foundation.



Ian Rowland

Covid then got in the way, as it did for everyone. So it wasn't until last year that I could complete the second part of the challenge. Swimming up and down the pool is a good place to start but it is no substitute for open-water swimming. So, I took my goggles down to Cricket St Thomas and joined a small group of swimmers in the murky waters of their lake. On the day there were many different distances that people were attempting but two miles was my goal. It wasn't plain sailing right from the start as another swimmer flipped my goggles off. I managed to grab them and treading water I got them back in place and carried on. One hour and eight minutes later the second part of the challenge was done.

Just one part to go! The London Marathon is one of the best Marathons in the world. Training started right after Christmas and carrying the extra slice of Christmas cake made initial training hard but not as bad as the dark, wet and windy runs. There are two very different ways to train for a marathon, one is to run further each week and build up the distance in your legs, the second is to run longer each week but split the training over two days. I did the latter which sounded like the easier option, oh how wrong I was! Getting up on a Sunday with tired legs and the thought of running for two hours, having run for three hours on the Saturday, was not easy. A few weeks before the event I did my longest runs, sixteen miles on the Saturday and ten miles on the Sunday. Distance completed now all I had to do was put the two runs together on the day.

Sunday 23rd April 2023, Marathon Day! It was so well organized with very little hanging around at the start and before I knew it, I was off. "Don't go too quick at the start" is the advice everybody is given but it is so hard with adrenaline pumping and the crowds cheering. I quickly found the pace I was going to maintain all the way round. Six miles in, and Cutty Sark is the first of the landmarks. I was feeling good and enjoyed the atmosphere. Running over Tower Bridge with packed crowds either side giving support will remain with me forever. Its such an amazing feeling. Half way round and everything was going to plan, every mile was exactly the same time as the last, my heart rate was under control and I was keeping watered and fueled. Great support from my wife gave me a real boost at mile seventeen which is just when it starts to get hard. The crowds dried up and the city of London gave very little to distract from the aching legs. The real challenge then started, at mile twenty one, everyone said it would be easy from there because you are close to the finish. The reality is you are still five miles from the end. But a surprise cheer from my sisters gave me the belief I could get there. The crowds again played their part, right up to Bird Cage Walk when it goes eerily quiet before turning into the final three hundred and sixty five yards. Five hours and forty minutes after I crossed the start line, I had completed the hardest challenge of my life and raised over £1600 for The Orchard Vale Trust, a local Somerset charity. With the completion of the marathon, I was awarded the London Classics Medal, something I will treasure for the rest of my life.

Garden Club News *Dan Webber*

With trying to find a good alternative to peat free composts I've come across a problem concerning the herbicide aminopyralid which can be found in composts bought in the form of multi purpose composts, farmyard manures or soil improver.

Aminopyralid is a hormone-based weedkiller used on grass land and lawns to kill broad-leaved weeds without harming the grasses. This persistent chemical is not easily broken down and remains in the organic material even after it has passed through the digestive system of an animal or gone through a compost manufacturing process. It gets into garden waste which is made into garden compost by the local authority. It also seems to be making its way into commercially produced peat free garden compost.

I created a hot bed and capped it with a garden centre peat free compost and unfortunately it has aminopyralid in it. As you can see from the photo the tomato plants are distorted and stunted and simply will not grow.



Contaminated compost will affect seed sowing, potting up and mulching. Ask fellow gardeners about which composts work and which ones create problems.

If you're unsure about the manure or compost you have you can test it by germinating some peas or beans in a seed tray with the compost.

The plants will be stunted and new shoots deformed if the compost is contaminated.

Garden Club Help Scheme.

One of the aims of Garden Club is helping each other get what we need from our gardens. With this in mind Garden Club is establishing a garden help scheme for Garden Club members. The scheme will be co-ordinated by Mike Narraway.

To start the scheme, Andy Turnbull the site manager at Hinkley A Station and the volunteer Groundforce team from Hinkley A will help with people's garden projects.

The Hinkley Groundforce team will provide the labour. You will need to provide the materials for the job. The Groundforce team will assess the viability of each project taking into account Health and Safety, and hope to be able to work on the garden projects during the first week in August.

If you have a garden project that you are unable to manage and need help with, please register your project with Garden Club via the web: cosgardenclub.com.



SUMMER BBO

&

JULY MEETING



Where: **Combwich Boat Club** When: **Saturday 29th July 6pm**

Member Prices

Single Ticket £5

Family Ticket £12

Non-Member Prices

Single £7

Family Ticket £15

You provide your own drinks and a skewer of food for the BBQ

We will provide salads, desserts, bread and cutlery

TO BOOK PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE

DEADLINE FOR BOOKINGS 22ND JULY

PLEASE ADVISE OF ANY FOOD ALLERGIES



1st Comwich
Brownies

CORONATION SLEEPOVER AND UNDER AT THE BISHOP'S PALACE WELLS

Six of our older Brownies were lucky enough to secure places at this event over the Coronation weekend organised by Girlguiding Somerset. Places for the sleepover were limited to fifty for the whole of Somerset, whilst there were 200 places for sleeping outside in the Bishop's Garden under canvas. We applied early and limited the number of places we asked for, and were thrilled when we were allocated the number of places we wanted for this once in a lifetime event.



It was certainly something to remember.

We arrived on the Sunday lunchtime, had a picnic lunch then wandered around and took part in various activities on offer throughout the gardens, mingling with members of the public who were all telling us about their own recollections of being in Brownies and Guides.

When the Palace gates shut to the public, the girls went in turn to collect all their luggage from the Bishop's private garden and set up their beds for the evening. It was then time for a treasure hunt before we all had an open air supper provided by a fast food van, and it was good to see the Bishop mingling amongst the girls with his chips, especially considering he had been very much involved in the events of the previous day at Westminster Abbey. As one might guess, not **much** sleep was had!

Some comments from the girls:

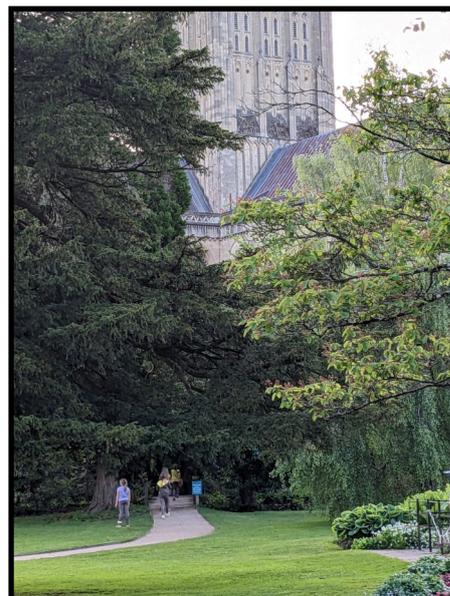
We then had a lovely time gathering around a make believe camp fire on the Bishop's croquet lawn, singing lots of traditional and modern camp fire songs. This was followed by hot chocolate and biscuits before bedtime.

'I liked all the fun activities especially the candle making'

'I loved my hot chocolate, yummy'

'I had a glitter tattoo, and it was fun going round everything'

'I loved, not liked, loved when we woke up in the night and went to the bathroom like 10000 times and then we were told off, and I had to get Isla's toothbrush at like 3 a.m.'



This is just one of the fun things we do. New Brownies always welcome.

Contact Liz Brown 652687 or Karen Barton 652673

Profile - Chris Ponka *(really more about his dad)*

Chris was born in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire as he wanted to be near his mother.

Yes – Ponka *is* his real name and not just a stage name. *'Who the heck would choose Ponka as a stage name?'* Originating from his Father who was Polish.

'My Father was fourteen when Hitler invaded Poland on September the first 1939. Although he never spoke much about his war experiences (not many did), over the years we would occasionally find snippets of information that we could then piece together.



Born in a small village in South West Poland *(Not too dissimilar in size to Comwich!)*

One day he was playing with his brother along with some friends near a haystack in a field, when they heard a rumble that at first they thought might be thunder. The rumble gradually became louder, which turned out to be motorbikes... followed closely by armoured cars, then tanks - then marching Nazi soldiers...

The houses in the village were raided, there was gunfire. The friends hid behind the haystack.

Soon they were captured and sent to work in a prisoner of war camp.

During the war my Father managed to escape from three prisoner of war camps. Somehow, he managed to find his way to Scotland, where he trained and became part of the Polish Paratrooper regiment.

I remember watching the film 'The Great Escape' with him as a teenager. Occasionally he would smile knowingly and mutter quietly under his breath 'That didn't happen like that' and I realised he was THERE!

Once as a kid, my Mother managed to lock us out of the house. She had lost her key and the only spare house key was inside. My Father got home from work and without panicking or saying much (He never swore!) calmly went to the shed, found an old wire coat hanger, cut a small piece of wire from it and bent it into an 'L' shape. He then proceeded to 'pick' the lock and within seconds, almost like magic – we were inside the house!

I asked how he had managed to do that. 'Have a try' he said. 'It's easy'. It wasn't easy at all – it was impossible! It was later that I realised this must have been his job in the prison camp... Locksmith!

After the war, like many others my Father was given the option of staying in England or returning to Poland. He'd met my Mother by this time, so decided to stay. Though for one entire year after the war – between 1945 and 1946 - he disappeared! There was no trace of where he was, or what he was doing. No contact with either remaining family in Poland or friends in this country.

It wasn't until after his death in 1995 that we discovered he had become part of the secret service, rounding up Nazi war criminals to put on trial. Having been in three prison camps, he had come into contact with many of them and along with others, was a vital witness. (To some atrocities that don't even bear thinking about!)

On his return in 1946 he was ordered to change his surname, just in case of any reprisals from Nazi sympathisers. He chose PONKA, which was the name of his best friend who had been shot and killed while escaping one of the prison camps.

So you see, when working in the Theatre and people sometimes ask if Ponka is my real name and I say yes, although it is indeed on my birth certificate, the answer is not totally accurate.

And as for my REAL surname?

Here I'd like to put something suitably amusing such as Trigger, Del-boy or Rodney *(Those of you who remember Only Fools and Horses will get it!)* Well, I think I shall keep that to myself...

It comes in handy for certain *passwords!*

Prayer Group

Please come and join us

every **THURSDAY**
morning at **9.00am**

to
Pray

At
St Peter's Church
Combwich

From Rev Jan Church
Contact no: 07733433526

Praise and Worship Service

St Peter's Church, Combwich

On the

**Second Sunday of the
Month**

@ 6.00pm

EVERYONE IS WELCOME
Coffee and Cake after.

There is a new Local Community Officer for Cornwall, Devon and South Somerset for the Churches Conservation Trust. Her name is Marie Leverette and she is going to be at All Saints Church in Otterhampton to meet with the community and discuss the future church plans of All Saints.

If you are interested please attend at All Saints Church on August 4th at 10.30am.
Tansey Wheeler

COMBWICH CHURCH FETE

Have a go at ringing the bells



Craft Stalls

**Plant
Sale**



@

St Peter's Church

SATURDAY 29TH JULY 2023

TIME: 14.30 - 17.00PM



Raffle

Contact: Rev Jan Church; 07733433526

Quantock Gate Parishes of Cannington, Fiddington
Otterhampton with Combwich, Stogursey and
Stolford, Stockland and Steart Bay

Birthday Bells

If you would like to have
'Happy Birthday' played on
the church bells

Email Combwich bell ringers

Email: bell.ringers@aol.com



We will ring 'Happy
Birthday' during Friday
evening bell practice.



WWT Steart Marshes

working in partnership with



**Environment
Agency**



Warden update Sam Wall

Many visitors have asked recently about why the lagoons in front of the Quantock hides and the lagoon north of the breach are so dry. This happens for a few different reasons including the lack of rainfall, the tides currently not being high enough to overtop the water structures and that the lagoons slowly silt up over a number of years. We are looking to dredge these lagoons later in the year (after breeding bird season and before wintering birds arrive) to deepen them to increase the amount of water they hold. This should reduce the amount of time we see the lagoons as dry as they are now over the next few summers before we have to dredge them again.

Engagement Update Nicole Turnbull

Wildlife Identification Guides: we are still selling our very own bespoke wildlife guide for Steart Marshes. It contains a snapshot of the species you can find on the reserve throughout the year, along with a map and some stunning aerial photos. This 10 page glossy leaflet can be purchased in the office for £4.25 per copy – please call in to take a look.

Events: Our engagement team worked hard at the Bath & West show talking to over 800 people across the 3 days of the event! We talked all things Steart related – wildlife, water, carbon storage, learning, health and wellbeing, and even recruited a new member and some potential new volunteers. Exhausting but well worth the effort!



Over the coming weeks you will can join us for the following event on and off-site...

Sun 30th July, 10am-3pm – **Dragonfly Day** - an onsite open day with a dragonfly theme, walks, craft, activities and Live Free Kitchen will be here with refreshments too!

---Keep an eye out on Twitter, Facebook, and www.wwt.org.uk/stearth for news and events

Reserve Office: 01278 651090 info.stearth@wwt.org.uk

Site Manager: Alys Laver 07717 505966 alys.laver@wwt.org.uk

Engagement and Learning Manager: Nicole Turnbull 07717 342061 nicole.turnbull@wwt.org.uk

Welcome to The Anchor

Live Music: Check the Anchor Facebook page for details of live music events. No room hire fee for party bookings and meetings. Pool table and dartboard

Open Monday to Friday 4pm bar open
 Food Wednesday to Friday 6pm to 8.30
 Sat 12 to 11 bar open
 Sun 12 to 6pm bar open
 Saturday 12 to 2pm and 6pm to 8.30 food
 Sun 12 to 2pm food



Hello all! We'd like to introduce our new pub managers, Fay and



Tabbie. Tabbie will be taking care of you at the front of house, behind the bar and Fay will mostly staying behind the scenes and working hard to prepare your tasty meals. They would both like to express their thanks for your patience whilst they have been settling in to our lovely pub. They have had a wonderful time saying hello to all the friendly faces of the locals.

We hope to see you all soon, The Anchor Team.



Otter Wheels

Your volunteer car scheme is here for you.

Is lack of transport a problem? Want to visit a friend or family, or go to the dentist, doctor, hospital, then maybe we can help.

Ring Otter Wheels on 07925154216— to book a trip, but please give as much notice as you can before you need to travel. You will need to register (if you have not already done so) on this number before you can book a trip

This not for profit car scheme has been running for several years with well over 1,200 trips completed. If you haven't tried us give us a go. Door to door service with friendly experienced drivers, all DBS checked and happy to help. Typical return journey prices are: -

	With bus pass	Without bus pass
Cannington Health Centre	£1.75	£3.50
Bridgwater Bus Station	£4.00	£8.00
Musgrove Hospital Taunton	£9.75	£19.50

Plus 50p booking fee

Please note, when you renew your bus pass you must let us have your new number.

Feedback

Email, comment, feedback, and suggestions to the editor please.

Stories, articles reports, events and other items for publication in the next edition of Otter Tales need to be received by Thursday **31st August 2023**.

Email The Editor:
otter.ales@aol.com

Defibrillators can save your life.

There are two defibrillators in Comwich. One is in the telephone box, the other at the Anchor/Ship Lane wall.

Stearth has one defibrillator. It is on the wall of the old chapel (signposted).

Dial 999 to call for an ambulance then follow the simple instructions. **NO TRAINING NEEDED**



Otter Tales:

Editor: Barry Leathwood. Assisted by Steven Parker.

Distribution: Bob Birkenhead email:

Birkenhead.bob@gmail.com

Articles for publication: email otter.ales@aol.com

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 Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information published in Otter Tales, the views expressed are those of individuals or organisations.

Articles for the next issue **Thursday 31st August**

Mobile Library: Dates and Times.

Thursday: 27th July, 24th August & 21st September

Combwich Harbour TA5 2QU 10.15 – 10.50

Combwich Post Office TA5 2QW 10.55 – 11.20

Stockland Bristol Club TA5 2PY 11.30– 11.55

For more information about this service contact Somerset Direct 0300 123224 or visit www.somerset.gov.uk/libraries

To keep up to date with all that is happening in the parish check the various village noticeboards, log onto www.comwich.org or visit the "All Things Comwich" Facebook page. For information about the village hall go to

www.otterhamptonvillagehall.co.uk

For local history visit **Combwich, Stearth and Otterhampton Memories Facebook Group**

To be notified of events and local information by email contact: barry.leathwood@btinternet.com.

Your favourite Jam, Marmalade and chutney and also plants are still available.

Proceeds from the market will be donate to charity.



**COMBWITH P.O.
& STORES**

- Groceries
- Off Licence
- Cards & Stationery
- Post Office

**Family Business
Established 20 Yrs**