



Spring NEWSLETTER

Issue 41 Jan 2022

We hope you all enjoyed a happy and safe Christmas and we send our very best wishes for a healthy 2022 for all! We are hoping that this forthcoming year will be the one when we can finally resume all our activities in full without the need for restrictions.

At the time of writing this newsletter we are still in uncertain times and we wait to see how the new Omicron variant impacts on schools. We recommend taking Lateral Flow Tests before going into school – do ask your school for supplies for this purpose.

What is certain is that more children than ever need our help more than ever.

Ofsted say in their Annual Report how important it is to continue with face-to-face education:-

- 'We must do all we can to make sure this generation is not denied its opportunities' Good, well-structured, face-to-face education will help most children catch up
- Daily routines, and the return of sport and extra-curricular activities, will improve children's mental and physical health.
- Those requiring specialist care and support must not be left wanting.
- Improvements that were in progress before the pandemic need to continue and other reforms must be taken forward urgently.

The last year was a difficult period to be young, and a challenging time to be learning. The restrictions everyone had to live under brought hardships to many, but children and learners faced more than their fair share, Ofsted's Annual Report finds. Read the full report here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-202021-education-childrens-services-and-skills>

Bicester news

The ARCh staff team has been changing – we were sad to say farewell to Bicester Field Worker Sue Bradshaw last term as she moved into her new teaching assistant role.

"I have really enjoyed the (almost) 5 years I have spent working at ARCh, and it has been lovely to work with such a fantastic team of people. It has been a pleasure to meet and work alongside such a wonderful and dedicated group of volunteers here in Bicester.

I wish you and ARCh all the best for the future. Best wishes Sue"





We now welcome Hannah Morrell who takes over the Bicester Field Worker role:

"I'm delighted to be joining ARCh as a Reading Helper and Field Worker. All children deserve to access engaging, enjoyable books; to be read to; to be heard reading; and to have opportunities to express their ideas and engage creatively with stories. I live in Bicester where my children attend our local primary school. I've worked in publishing, the charity sector (aid and development), and as an actress. I'm really looking forward to building relationships across our community – with schools,

teachers, and the ARCh team – and supporting the wonderful ARCh volunteers as they inspire and encourage children to love reading."



Hannah has already trained as an ARCh reading helper volunteer herself and began supporting the charity before Christmas, entering a team in the Bicester Santa Fun Run! The run was organised by Bicester Town Council and ARCh was chosen as one of the charities to receive donations by Bicester Mayor Nick Mawer.

Elaine and Jane volunteered to marshal at the event. So many cheery santas running was a wonderfully festive spectacle and the event was a great success.

Thanks to Gong Xi (Eddy) for pictures and our Bicester calendar and his beautiful Bicester book 2 which is to be displayed in our office for when we (eventually) are allowed visitors – this is an article about his pictures from the Oxford Mail <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/19691960.community-photographer-celebrates-one-year-bicester-pictures/>



The uncertainties resulting from the evolving Covid situation have meant that we have not yet been able to recruit an Administration Assistant to work in the office. Hopefully we will have good news on this front before too long.

Farewell to good friends and supporters

Last term we met with Chris Williams who has sadly decided to step down from volunteering. Chris began her volunteering career back in 1999 with Volunteer Reading Help (VRH). She subsequently became a Field Worker too, supporting fellow volunteers and their schools in her local area, until 2008. It was at this point that VRH made the decision to close 5 branches, Oxfordshire being the largest.

Chris and her husband Eddie provided enormous support at that time, helping us to form ARCh, in order to continue the vital work with Oxfordshire children that VRH had begun. The rest is history of course!

Chris and Eddie even came up with the name Assisted Reading for Children (acronym ARCh) and designed our logo!

Chris then continued her volunteering with children via ARCh in Faringdon Infants and became a founding trustee too.

We have always valued Chris so highly as have all at Faringdon Infants and she will be very much missed by everyone.

**Thank you
Chris and
Eddie for all
you have done
over the years.**



Volunteer Resources

<https://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/word-search>

This is a wonderful resource for making your own personalised word searches – all you do is list words you would like included – could be any theme e.g. words from a book you have been sharing with a child or the names of players in a child's favourite football team – and the size of the grid you require and then the wordsearch magically appears for you to print!

Oxford University Press has recently published its report How Schools are Closing the Word Gap. Here is the link:

<https://global.oup.com/education/content/dictionaries/key-issues/word-gap/?region=uk>

Thank you!

Enormous thanks to the Stonegarth Fund for making a financial contribution towards our work with the most disadvantaged children over the next 5 years.



We were delighted to be chosen as the recipient of Blackwells Giving Tree this year along with another local charity Jacari.

Blackwells Oxford customers were invited to purchase an extra book to be donated to us and we are looking forward to receiving delivery of the books this month!

**The Giving Tree at
Blackwells Oxford**

We were so pleased to be invited to Rupert House School in Henley to talk to the children there about our work.

Teacher Ruth Hamilton-Smith told us that the school would like to support ARCh through a variety of fundraising events throughout the school year. The children were very engaged with the talk given by our Field Worker Carolyn and volunteer David Jones and asked lots of questions!

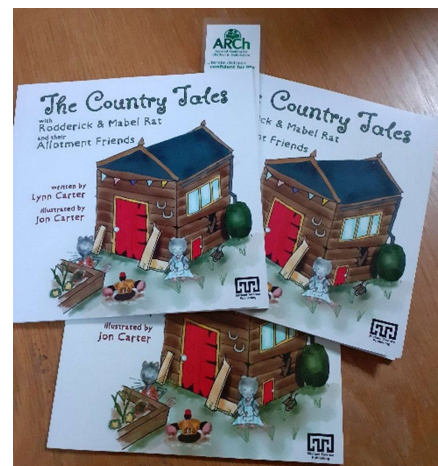
We are very much looking forward to this new relationship with an independent school.



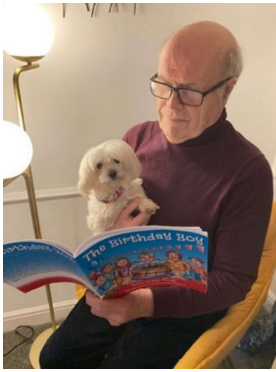
Thank you to Lynn Carter who very kindly donated copies of her book 'The Country Tales with Rodderick & Mabel Rat and their Allotment Friends'.

A tale of friendship and featuring wildlife and places in the Abingdon area.

Exciting times ahead for Lynn as she tells us she has been asked to produce an audio books and animation too!



ARCh volunteer Bert the author



We were very proud to share the news of ARCh volunteer, Bert Clough's latest children's book *The Birthday Boy*

The story book is now available on Amazon.

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Birthday-Boy-Bert-Clough/dp/1739805240>

We are hoping to order some copies to be available over the next few months. Also looking forward to the summer when Bert's 2nd book *Warbler* is being published with the profits going to ARCh. Thank you Bert!

Please vote for ARCh!

We are pleased to report that ARCh has been selected as one of the charities for customer token voting in all the Tesco Abingdon and Wantage stores from January until end of March 2022.

Please visit the stores to vote for ARCh! And ask family and friends to do the same!

To vote, you will need to make a purchase within store of any value. You will receive one token per transaction and it's not necessary to purchase a carrier bag in order to receive a token.

Trustee changes

We were sorry to say goodbye to Emily Hodges, Rebecca Elliott, Sinem Bilem and Michelle Price but thank them for their contributions.

Our trusty trustee treasurer also retired after many years' service - huge thanks to Noel Hetherington for all his work.

Jake Piper stepped down from her role as acting Chair at the end of December, We are enormously grateful to Jake for all her work during a very challenging time for the board.

We are now pleased to be welcoming 4 new trustees to the board – more details to follow.

Tea Talks

Oxford Playhouse's Tea Talks which ran in 2020 and 2021 in partnership with Age UK was created to inspire connection and creativity for later-in-life people across Oxfordshire. What started as weekly phone calls to encourage phone calls turned into two remotely recorded radio plays which you can listen to on the link below:

<https://www.oxfordplayhouse.com/take-part/community/teatalks/radioplay2021>

The participants became like friends to the facilitators and important part of the theatre community. They were generous in sharing their stories of love, war, compassion, touching moments and most recently, travel. They are looking at new projects for 2022 so do check in with the Oxford Playhouse in the future. Elaine was particularly touched by the dedication to her mum, Marie Ollive on their Christmas 2021 radio production. "The weekly phone calls from Beth at the Playhouse meant such a lot to my mum and she really looked forward to chatting about the many stories of her life. Unfortunately she passed away just before December and so was not able to hear her latest contribution."

This year's radio play is dedicated to Tea Talk's participant



Marie Ollive
1926-2021