

VIEWS

Bird life

Kite swoops to conquer

I am delighted to share one of the pictures of some birds we saw when we were out on our boat on The Thames in Marlow on Thursday, May 21. I thoroughly enjoyed taking many photos and am pleased to enclose what I think are the best.

The picture (right) is something I have never seen before and didn't know they did; a kite swooping down to fish like an osprey does. It was only a small fish but shows how they have adapted to their environment and eating what is available, not just carrion. –

Tracy from The Duke

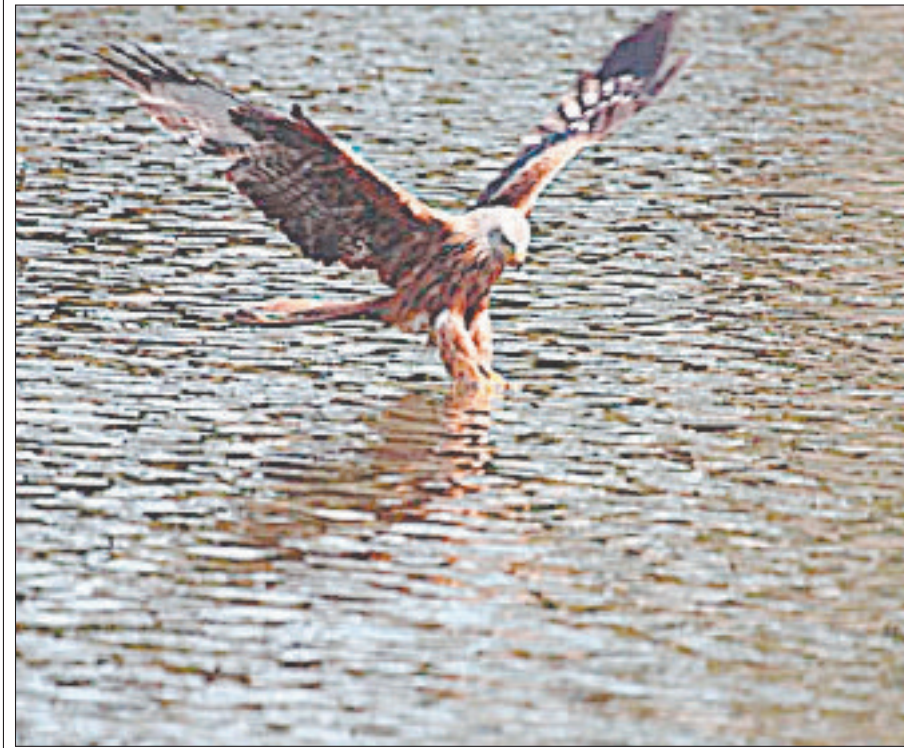
Pub closure

Death of the Black Prince

No, not another royal discovered beneath a car park, but the death knell of Princes Risborough's iconic pub named, just like the town, after the famous warring prince.

The company which owns the pub appealed against the Wycombe District Council decision to refuse planning permission for a block of flats on the site and the Government Inspector has indeed overturned that decision.

Despite our best efforts to persuade the company's agents that the pub/hotel was not only a viable enterprise, (there were



This picture shows a kite swooping for fish on the River Thames at Marlow.

three separate publicans who were interested in taking it on as a going concern), but also a huge community asset given the growth in visitor numbers, it was made perfectly clear to us that they only had one aim, to get the maximum profit by redeveloping

the site for housing and that the community was not their concern.

If all pub owners take a similar stance then it won't be long before there are no more pubs in England, (even if they are profitable, provide jobs, tax revenue and

boost the local economy), then what happens to our communities?

A sad day for Risborough indeed. – Cllr Alan Turner and Cllr Gary Hall, WDC Independent Councillors representing The Risboroughs Ward

Street survey

Fans focus on club's turnaround rather than defeat

Despite Wycombe Wanderers' agonising defeat to Southend United at Wembley, most Blues fans were upbeat before the game and happy with the massive turnaround after the club was almost relegated the previous season.



■ **Steve Sutton** went to Wembley with his children Chris and Gemma. He said: "I would love a win, but it's been a really good season, we have been to loads of games this season, everyone has been looking forward to it. Whatever happens I think we have exceeded expectations this year. The whole experience is just a great day out for the club and the fans."



■ **Bob Hogg** made the trip to Wembley. His son used to play football with Gareth Ainsworth in their back garden. Mr Hogg said: "I taught him all he knows. We used to follow Fleetwood Town and when Wycombe played Fleetwood we went to watch and Gareth was an inspiration. He didn't come on the pitch but he was so intense and they won 1-0 because of his impetus."



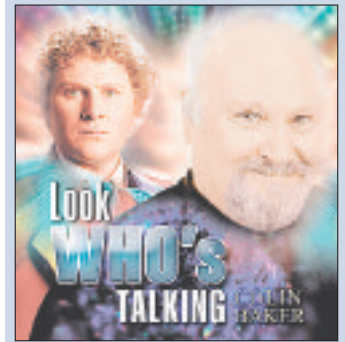
■ **The Ive family** made a banner to recognise a brilliant season from Wanderers after they watched them at that all-important game at Torquay. They said: "It was a massive turnaround from almost going out of the Football League last season, so I thought the players deserved something to show how much we appreciate them."



■ **Mark Heath**, who went to watch Wanderers play at Wembley with his family, said: "I came to the last play-off of the FA Trophy, so this is my fourth time with Wycombe. [This season has been] a complete turnaround, with such a small squad and such a small budget to be where we are is out of this world, didn't expect it and today is a bonus really."



■ **David and Lesley James** had seen three famous Wanderers victories at Wembley in the past and after made the trip to the ground alongside Southend fans. They said: "We don't live in Wycombe anymore. We had to come all the way with Southend fans. I've [David] been supporting them since the mid-60s." Lesley added: "And he took me to my first game in 1972."



A fantastic season despite play-off result

I suspect there will be many column inches in this week's edition of this paper in praise of Wycombe Wanderers' mighty effort last weekend and I am going to add to them. I was working in Germany and could only watch the match on my iPad. My wife was at Wembley. The drama that unfolded would have been tremendously exciting to an uninvolved spectator, but for the fans of both teams it was almost unendurable.

A year ago Wanderers survived in the league by the few atoms at the end of our fingernails. The jubilation was of course massive. Had we been relegated, given the resources of the club, it may well have been just the beginning of a catalogue of disasters that might have resulted in many years in the wilderness.

But, against all the odds, we survived and our sensible ambition was limited to consolidating our position in League 2. Had mid-table security been predicted, many of us would have been more than satisfied. But a combination of careful administration and Gareth Ainsworth's superb management of a small squad of men with big hearts and the will to work for Wycombe meant that we spent all bar the first eight weeks of the season in the top three. And we began to dream the impossible dream. Nearly relegated to promoted within one season.

It was not to be and I have only just recovered from the tension of pacing a hotel room in Dusseldorf with my stomach dancing round my ears (not a pretty image, I know) as first the one goal lead disappeared with seconds to go and then the unbearable agony of the swing of fortunes in the penalty shoot-out. Ecstasy if you win and misery if you don't.

But as the dust settles, there is not one member of that team who should do other than hold his head high. A penalty not scored does not eradicate the two hours of total commitment and courage that preceded it. Those players should all know they have nothing to apologise for and as fans we owe it to them to make sure they keep on remembering that when the new season starts with new hope. Gareth rightly won the League Two Manager award and I only hope we can keep him with us for many successful seasons ahead.

On a separate note – anyone notice I correctly predicted the Eurovision winner last week?

■ **Colin Baker is best known as BBC's Dr Who. He lives in High Wycombe with his family. See his archive of columns on our website bucksfreepress.co.uk**

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