

Goring Gap News

EVENTS, PEOPLE, BUSINESS, ARTS AND SPORT IN GORING AND STREATLEY

Happy Birthday commemorations for George's 60th



George Michael tribute act, some GM 'Lovelines' and floral tributes at the 60th birthday celebrations

Photos: Neil Horne, eyeimagine photography (top and bottom left) and Nicole Sharman (bottom right)

Fun, friendship and fundraising

The weekend of the 24-25 June 2023 saw yet another enormously successful fundraising ‘pilgrimage’ to Goring by the George Michael (GM) fans, or Lovelies. It was the largest attendance to date, celebrating what would have been GM’s 60th birthday. Well over one thousand Lovelies from all over England and the world made their way to Goring by land, sea and air,



Heather with the painting she won

Photo: Nicole Sharman

including from the US, Canada, Ireland, Scotland, France, Holland, Italy, Belgium, Germany, New Zealand and Australia.

The birthday festivities were not only a celebration of GM’s life and music but also served as an opportunity to raise funds for several deserving charities. GM, known for his philanthropy during his lifetime, would undoubtedly have been pleased to see his fans uniting to support causes close to his heart.

We had an unexpectedly exciting start to the weekend when ‘This Morning TV’ contacted Dawn Palmer at the Miller of Mansfield. The show dedicated their whole two hours as a tribute to GM and interviewed local businesses and Lovelies inside the pub and around Goring. The TV presenters in the studio were Dermot O’Leary and Alison Hammond, with Sharon Marshall live in Goring.



James Bermingham at The Catherine Wheel

Supporting the Hub and other charities

My favourite four USA Lovelies made their fourth pilgrimage to this year’s celebration with seven suitcases, filled with memorabilia and crafted items created over the past year by artisans in the USA. These Lovelies are ‘Partners of Hope’ for The George Michael Legacy Project, Inc. (GMLP) and the contents of their suitcases were used to raise funds for UK charities. For two days, item sales were available to fans outside Barbara’s bric-a-brac shop, with 100% of sales donated to help support charity work. The main local charity supported this year is the Hub – Bridging the Gap, well known to readers of GGN (see P11).



GM fans at Barbara’s Antiques and Bric-a-Brac

Photo: Neil Horne

For the last year GMLP have had a permanent shelf in the back of Barbara’s shop, full of George memorabilia, with 100% of proceeds going to the Hub, which also has their own shelf (originally also funded by GMLP) selling donated bric-a-brac. To add to the fundraising, we sell past copies of GGN. Lovelies collect the GGNs containing the birthday event articles, year after year. This issue will become collectable as well, so when you no longer need yours, please recycle it back to Barbara’s for next year’s fundraising. The GMLP also had ‘Choose Goring’

Michael's 60th Birthday



Photo: Neil Horne, eyeimage photography



Wayne Dilks playing at The Miller of Mansfield Photo Nicole Sharman

mugs, T-shirts, tote bags and pens, that proved to be very popular with both Lovelies and locals.

Being an extra special celebration, GMLP held a raffle in the garden of The Catherine Wheel. Items included an original oil painting worth £3,000 by a Dutch artist and George fan, other items included George memorabilia, donations from Mill Cottage (where George lived) and a two-day stay at the beautiful tranquil Townsend Farmhouse Airbnb in Streatley. The first two tickets were pulled by tribute artist James Bermingham, after performing his first song in the garden. A local lady called Heather Riser won the painting, so happily the picture will remain in the village.

A giant banner was posted in The Catherine Wheel for fans to write and express their thoughts and wishes for George. The banner will be digitised and will be made available to Lovelies as a digital file or print, for charity donations.

Local business participation

The events and items sold and raffled, organised by the GMLP, were a resounding success over a weekend of events facilitated by the unwavering support of local businesses. The Miller of Mansfield held two tribute nights: Fleetwood Mac tribute Fleetwood Mad and GM tribute Wayne Dilks. They sold T shirts and mugs and did their own raffle.

The Catherine Wheel held a free two-day festival and had the very popular GM tribute James Bermingham returning for the fourth year in a row. The annual collectable cups sold out at £5 each.

There was a fundraising event in Goring Village Hall with GM Tribute Steve Mitchell, raising money for one of George's charities, The Rainbow Trust.

The Goring Grocer with their Gorgeous George biscuits, Inspirations, The Village Cafe, Mill Cottage, Reeds Framing, GM French Lovelies and GeorgeMicheal25 all participated. These establishments/groups wholeheartedly embraced the celebrations, understanding the significance of this milestone for fans worldwide and between them added a very generous sum towards the Hub fundraising total.

There was a friendly and fun atmosphere for the entire event. The birthday weekend featured a multitude of activities and tribute performances that paid homage to GM's musical legacy. The air was filled



The banner for fans to sign

Photo: Nicole Sharman