

# FIVE TO TRY IN 2015

With a New Year comes the obligatory long list of resolutions - if one of yours is to try a new pastime, we have some suggestions



## Put on a performance

Oxford Drama Network (ODN), is an umbrella organisation for about 60 member groups who perform across the county. If you're looking to tread the boards and share your acting skills with the rest of your local community there's sure to be a group near you. If you love drama or musicals then try Goring Gap Players, Chinnor Musical Theatre, Witney Dramatic Society or Didcot Phoenix Drama Group. All the information you need on how to get involved is on the GATA website at [oxfordshiredramanetwork.org](http://oxfordshiredramanetwork.org). Or perhaps you're more musical, in which case try getting together with other like-minded folk at The Oxford Singers ([oxfordsingers.org](http://oxfordsingers.org)) or the A440 Chamber Orchestra ([a440co.com](http://a440co.com)).

## Pick up a paintbrush

Finding the time to indulge in a hobby such as oil painting or life drawing is hard to do for those of us with busy lives. One solution is to be strict with ourselves and pick one day of the week to dedicate to a new pastime. That's where a regular art class or workshop can help. If you're looking for just such an opportunity here are a few you could try in 2015. Sunningwell School of Art near Abingdon hosts classes in life drawing, watercolour and even pottery courses ([artschool.org.uk](http://artschool.org.uk)). In Radford, Lisa Jayne Art Studio runs art days as well as regular classes in silk painting, expressionist watercolours and portraiture ([lisajayne.uk.com](http://lisajayne.uk.com)). Over in Henley, at Singers Lane Studios, they run art classes for children as well as adults, see [singerslanestudios.com](http://singerslanestudios.com)





## Be selfless

Perhaps this year as your resolution you have decided to do more for others, and the perfect way to do that is to become a volunteer. There are so many avenues to choose from, from working with the Wildlife Trust to helping a child to read. It's a great way to meet new friends and develop new skills – all while helping your local community. Not sure where to start? If you visit [ocva.org.uk](http://ocva.org.uk) they can help to match you to the perfect post if you type in your criteria. Alternatively, if you choose your interest and postcode from the drop down menu on national website [www.do-it.org.uk](http://www.do-it.org.uk) you'll soon be on your way to helping others.



## Overcome obstacles

When it comes to exercise why settle for taking up cycling or jogging when you can go all out and challenge yourself on a crazy assault course? There are lots you can tackle in Oxfordshire, starting with the Vision Wild Run, on 28th March. It's a five or 10k assault course where you will encounter water, climbing, crawling, obstacles and, of course, plenty of mud. Sign up at [visionwildrun.co.uk](http://visionwildrun.co.uk). You can add another survivors medal to your collection at the Monster Race in Cornbury Park on 18th April, see [monsterrace.co.uk](http://monsterrace.co.uk). Last but not least, there's Rough Runner on 16th May in Chipping Norton, which is said to have inspired the shows *Gladiators* and *Wipeout*. See [roughrunner.com](http://roughrunner.com)



## Join our club

There are many hundreds of clubs and societies that meet across the county every week or month. Some of the more unusual ones include Abingdon Naturalists Society who enjoy activities such as fungi forays and birdwatching. They meet at Abingdon School at 7.30pm each Wednesday. If you like looking up to the stars, how about joining a local Astronomical Society? There's one in Chipping Norton, see [www.cnaag.com](http://www.cnaag.com) that meets on the third Monday of the month. There's also one in Abingdon, see [www.abingdonastro.org.uk](http://www.abingdonastro.org.uk), that regularly meet for observing evenings. Or, if you're a bit of a gamer, you could join the boardGOATS, who meet on alternate Tuesdays in Stanford-on-the-Vale at the Horse and Jockey pub. Just some of the games they've played lately include Bohnanza, Secret Moon and Love Letter!

