

WOODSTOCK & BLADON *news*

September 2024

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Editorial

Welcome to my first issue of Woodstock and Bladon News. I would like to start by acknowledging the support and assistance of the previous editor, Sian Godwin, who has made the transition easier than it might have been. And thanks also to various volunteers who have helped in numerous ways.

As you can see, the format is largely the same. We are experimenting with typefaces and layout; there are more colour pages; and they are distributed throughout the magazine rather than in the centre. We have also changed the paper to silk finish throughout, to allow the photographs to print more clearly.

There are a few new sections - Woodstocks around the World, a Visitor's View of Woodstock, and a section on locals view of recent events - this month there are four views on the European summit. Next month, please send in your thoughts on the gas distribution incident affecting us recently.

We are planning to have content on our website - www.wobl.news - but this is very much in its infancy, so please be patient. However, one section that is very much alive is the Culture Calendar where we have already added many events, such as talks, concerts, music events, etc. We are hoping that this page will be the go to place to find upcoming cultural events. Please visit https://wobl.news/timely_calendar, and if your organisation would like to list future events, please send an email.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

Please do Write for Your Local Magazine

Send your contributions to: editor@wobl.news

The next deadline is 15th September for the October 2024 issue (there is some flexibility).

We aim to be balanced and inclusive, and welcome all new contributions that may be of interest to our readers.

Printed by Windrush Press, Witney

Woodstock and Bladon News is printed on 100% sustainable paper which helps promote environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests.

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Subscriptions

The magazine costs £2 per issue, or £20 per year (for 10 issues).

It can be purchased locally at Mary and Martins Newsagent, The Woodstock Bookshop, Woodstock Town Hall, and the Wootton Stores, and it can also be delivered to your door on a monthly basis - please contact Nick (editor@wobl.news) for Woodstock, or Lucy for Bladon. To pay by bank transfer, please pay to Nicholas Manby-Brown 04-29-09 31146627 and use the first line of your address as the reference. (This bank account is temporary until a business account is set-up)

The magazine can also be purchased for online reading - to start with the Editor will be sending the pdf manually, but it is envisaged that we will have an online distribution system if this way of receiving the magazine proves popular. Please send an Email to editor@wobl.news

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Cover painting - Rod Craig

Answers for July crossword:

Across: 7. Lunar, 8. Mauritius, 10. Needles, 11. Against, 13. Circular, 14. Abseil, 15. Wed, 16. Elevate, 18. Map,

22. Paella, 24. Reliance, 26. Mystify, 27. Encrypt, 29. Bulldozer, 30. Ebony.

Down: 1. Juvenile, 2. Haddock, 3. Dam, 4. Pregnant, 5. At first, 6. Muesli, 9. Bell, 12. Bravery, 17. Leapfrog, 19. Al Capone,

20. All told, 21. Nairobi, 23. Asylum, 25. Lane, 28. Vet.

Woodstock - Which Woodstock?

“Didn’t Jimi Hendrix headline? Oh gosh, what a fabulous event that was... Has it changed much since?”. “Erm, sorry, wrong continent” I’d reply. That Woodstock wasn’t even in Woodstock – but on a farm 40 miles southwest of it in Bethel, New York in 1969 – a few weeks after the moon landing. What hasn’t changed during the intervening 55 years? Well, not much in terms of moon landings I suppose.

So when I became editor, I thought it would be interesting to try to discover how many other Woodstocks there were in the world, and to present an article on all of them eventually.

This sort of a situation led down a rabbit hole. There must be many places sharing the same name. Woodstock is in fact, an old Anglo-Saxon name meaning 'a clearing in the trees' which let’s face it, most places would’ve been in days long past. Further down that burrow revealed that there are a great many Woodstocks in the western world. Thirty-three of them to be precise showed up through a search.

There started a thought process... How many of them had origins in the Woodstock of Oxfordshire that we know and love so well? After all, this Woodstock has been around since 1179. Take Australia for example. It has place names that are either totally aboriginal - and invariably impossible to spell such as Woolloomooloo (a suburb of Sydney - the sign for which stretches right across the three lane freeway), or repetitive such as Bli Bli, Gin Gin, or Wagga Wagga - thinking of music and the birthplace of our beloved Bee Gees. Alternatively, Derby, Albany, Newcastle, which are decidedly British names. Early settlers left their homes in the British Isles and went off to seek new beginnings in The Land Of Opportunity. After the gold rush, they would gravitate to places where there was the prospect of finding work in their field of expertise. Newcastle (New South Wales) is a classic example of this. Australia’s Newcastle is on the east coast, and their industry is coal mining. Manchester left its name slightly differently. Those from the cotton and linen industries settled in Australia and the product became called “Manchester”. If looking to buy bed linen or tablecloths etc., one goes to the Manchester department or shop.

The total number of Woodstocks found so far is 33; 22 of which are in the USA, 4 in Australia, Canada has 2, Jamaica 2, New Zealand 1, South Africa 1, and UK this fabulous one. The largest of these has a population of approximately 50,000, and the smallest is literally not much more than a hamlet.

We will feature a Woodstock regularly - it will be a fascinating journey to explore, and we'll get to know a writer and through that a community in each of the other Woodstocks Around The World.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor.

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Woodstock Live 2014; Woodstock, UK



Woodstock 1969; New York State, USA

Old Woodstock Mock Mayor: an American visitor's view

Hello! My name is Pat Cook and I've been recruited (right off the street, literally) as the Foreign Correspondent by your editor. He clearly has a death wish! I've been to the UK a number of times over 60 years, but haunted by the notion that there must be something else besides London, I determined to see a bit more. The Cotswolds seemed a good choice and thus began my week in Woodstock.

Perhaps I should tell you a bit about myself. American. That says a lot. Texas, that defines it a bit more. So, I wind up in Woodstock (not to be confused with a musical event in 1969) caught up in the celebration of the Mock Mayor Festival. Well, this certainly sets it apart from London, and suddenly the UK is much more personal. To be intimate with your neighbor is how people lived for tens of thousands of years when most lived in groups of 400 or less. I live in Houston, a city of over four million, over fifty miles across. London is likewise. Woodstock struck me as a place where one expects to know nearly everyone you pass on the street, meet in a shop, or sit next to in the pub. So, is that a big deal?

The Mock Mayor Festival says so in a number of ways. The smiles are bigger and more abundant. The comfort between people is easy to see. There is a joy born in the safety of being swallowed by a sea of friends, a strength that supports one another, and a confidence to face those things that lurk beyond the borders. There is a special quality in being partnered with the one next to you and Woodstock seems to have that well in hand. Good on you!

Pat Cook



Photos taken by Pat Cook



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Letters to the Editor

Dear Sirs

Mrs Lesley Seligman: can anyone help?

I am seeking memories of Lesley Seligman, a former resident of Woodstock House.

Lesley was the wife of Henry Seligman, a German Jew who was interned on the Isle of Man and later was involved with atomic research. Lesley also had a brother Michael Gordon Bradley (1923--1998).

My link is tenuous! Their daughter Gisela lived with my great grand parents, one of three to live with relatives of mine and the final one to complete my research.

I am hoping to get more information to lead me to Gisela and/or her brothers who I now know were called Andrew and Paul.They were both born in Oxford and one or both may still be alive.

I am happy for my email to be given out: kevmarkey08@aol.com.

Kevin Markey

Dear Editor

Can there be any doubt that our doctors are the most hard working, respected and valuable people in Woodstock and the whole area? Odd then that the future of our health care is on their shoulders, with not much help so far from the NHS, Blenheim as developers or the County and District councils?

Blenheim have apparently offered to build something on the Banbury Road site, well out of town and no buses. Nothing is guaranteed and might not happen for many years, if at all. The old police station, which they also own, stands empty, and is large, central, close to the shops, near the buses and has lots of parking. Even on a temporary rented basis it would be ideal for doctors and patients.

Doctors have said they will listen to patients, and our town council is considering ways in which we can all be consulted.

Stan Scott

Dear Editor,

The urgent need for a new surgery for Woodstock has been an ongoing subject for local discussion for years. The subject is not rocket science but it is made more complicated by the numbers of participants involved in the discussions and the often conflicting commercial interests of the parties involved.

It would be wrong to think that our local government leaders (eg, the County, District or Town Councils) are directly involved in the provision of a new

surgery. They are not prime movers in this instance. Our local representatives are at best merely facilitators, trying to get the parties around the negotiating table.

Personally, I don't think our local Town Council is of much significance in this issue at all. The main players are the GPs themselves, (some of whom own the current inadequate site and are likely to want to access their capital investment for their personal need), the NHS (which stipulates what is required for the site and the building but doesn't have funding available to pay to build it) and the Blenheim Estates Trust (which own the land and whose S106 statutory capital obligations are dependent upon more house building). The Government pays the GPs for some of their business activities but they seem to stand back from taking responsibility for injecting capital into a new surgery building.

Slightly more on the fringe of these discussions, I would suggest, is the Bus Company because if it transpires that the surgery has to be built outside the immediate town centre, the new building must be made regularly and easily accessible by local transport for people who are likely to be pretty unwell. Without easy access to it, the new building would merely be a "white elephant".

So please can we lock representatives from each of these prime movers into a room and throw away the key, until a viable and sensible agreement as to the new surgery building is reached by them? Only then should these individuals be let out of detention! The discussion around this critical need for Woodstock has gone on long enough. The losers are local patients who are losing patience. Pardon the pun!

Yours, Jo Lamb

Sir

Residents' Parking: In the first year of residential parking in Woodstock the County Council raised just over £250k. Interestingly 62% of the income came from pay and display. I make no comment on the rights or wrongs of this policy, readers can come to their own conclusions from the breakdown of income in the table below.

June 2023 to July 2024

Residents permits	£28,535
Visitor permits	£925
Hotel permits	£27,000
Business permits	£4,920
Pay and Display income	£155,119
Penalty Charge Notice	£33,710

Currently residents' permits at £65.00 are the lowest in Oxfordshire, they rise to £110 in many other towns/areas. What chance OCC exploit this cash cow in our town in the years to come?

Michael Farley

Dear Sir

Some of your readers will already know that on 12th August there was a court case in Oxford which was brought by Mr Sharone Parnes against Woodstock Town Council (case ref. 355MC672). It was a public hearing before Judge Lumb, several of our community being present. Mr Parnes has been a councillor on Woodstock Town Council for over ten years.

Councillor Parnes' case involving personal damages against the Town Council was struck out by the judge for a whole series of reasons and accordingly costs of £1168.50 were awarded against Councillor Parnes.

This is a most unusual case both as to parties, claim, possible conflict of interest, judgement and award of costs against plaintiff as well as the long duration of proceedings. Now that the case has been struck out the electors of Woodstock must feel entitled to some public disclosures.

The Judges strictures speak for themselves but such disclosures are the least the electors should expect. Specifically the Mayor should require Councillor Parnes to account for his conduct which can be seen as most unbecoming of a councillor. In the context of an elected councillor it would be entirely reasonable to expect a public personal statement in the absence of which electors will like me be left with an uncomfortable feeling undermining respect for and confidence in Woodstock Town Council.

Yours faithfully, Christopher Donald



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Wake Up to Woodstock!

For those of you that don't already know, Woodstock has its very own association for businesses. An award-winning non-profit organisation, it works towards enhancing visitor experience in Woodstock, which in turn, benefit the businesses within it.

Offering membership to businesses with a Woodstock postcode, Wake Up to Woodstock offers the chance to be part of a growing community, by sharing information about its services and offering regular networking opportunities. With over sixty businesses onboard, why not take advantage?

With various levels of service available including bronze, silver and gold, each member has the chance to be part of a quarterly e-shot distributed by Blenheim Palace to its database, consisting of thousands of people around the country, who've signed up to receive regular information about the venue and town.

WUTW has received local and national recognition for their excellence in Visitor Experience, Small Business Enterprise, and Community and partner with Experience Oxfordshire, the official destination organisation for Oxfordshire.

Wake Up to Woodstock is also behind two key events:

Woodstock Festive Fayre

This year it takes place on Friday 29th November (5pm to 8pm) and Saturday 30th November (10am to 7pm).

The exciting news is that's it's now being held at three venues!

Shop and be merry at St Mary Magdalene Church and, brand new for 2024, the addition of two new Festive Fayre venues, so be sure to cross the road from the church and continue your Festive Fayre visit at The Oxfordshire Museum and The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

The fayre has built up a reputation for providing exceptional quality and variety and is pleased to bring to you another impressive artisan gift wonderland in 2024.

Night of a Thousand Candles

Enjoy the magic of Christmas on Saturday 30th November at this free event. Celebrate the town's Christmas lights switch-on with live music, singing, food & drink and all things festive. 6pm to 7.30pm - outside Woodstock Town Hall.

For more information visit <https://www.wutw.co.uk> .



Woodstock: a flourishing arts scene

What do you immediately associate with the name of ‘Woodstock’?

Is it a history stretching back a thousand years? Or maybe the hippy music festival in Woodstock USA? Or the recent European political summit at Blenheim Palace? All of these, maybe. But to my mind one can add the recent flourishing of Woodstock as a vibrant centre for all the arts

To start with the visual arts, the hugely enjoyable exhibition of Quentin Blake’s book covers at the Oxfordshire Museum is there to enjoy for free until Sunday 8th September. This exhibition inspired a series of fun craft workshops for the whole family over the summer: if you missed these make a note to check next year for family craft workshops at the museum. Workshops at the Museum will continue with clay sculpture on Saturday 21st September; and on 12th October with a weekend-long workshop on ceramics when you will be able to create mosaic mirrors.

Outside the museum adding colour and vibrancy to the street scene, and also drawing in discerning art connoisseurs to our varied mix of visitors, we are lucky to have three excellent commercial art galleries all of which feature contemporary art amidst changing exhibition programmes. They also have talks and demonstrations by artists so well worth while checking their web-sites. If you enjoy talks on the history of art, these are also on offer in Woodstock: the art historian Alice Foster will be giving six talks on the Flemish Masters at the St Hugh’s Centre from October. It is fair to say that Alice has been giving art history talks in Woodstock for over twenty years and has a loyal fan base here.

Up at Blenheim Palace there is a magnificent exhibition of paintings by the Iraqi artist, Mohammed Sami. These are highly skilled and evocative semi-abstracts, cleverly displayed throughout the public rooms at Blenheim often commenting obliquely on their surroundings. This will continue until 8th October, free to Blenheim annual pass holders. Many thanks to the Blenheim Palace Art Foundation for bringing us impressive art from a series of international artists over the past few years.

Back in the town, Woodstock Live has come and gone and been enjoyed by many over the August Bank Holiday. This is now an established annual event for popular music and a great showcase for local talent, both professional and amateur. Throughout the year, Woodstock Jazz, promoted by ‘The Little Live Music Co.’ offers jazz evenings with professional artists at the St Hugh’s Centre. And finally on the music scene, the Woodstock Music Society continues to maintain its fine reputation after many years of concerts in the Church of St Mary Magdalene. Their skilled combination of amateur and professional singers has always delivered the highest quality to their audiences: look out for details of their next concert in December on their web-site.

Woodstock is also a town which can boast its very own bookshop whose new owner and new manager enthusiastically promote local authors with book launches and writers’ events, and also support local book groups, of which there are many. The Woodstock Literature Society (full disclosure - I write as its current Chair!) offers an umbrella for many of these groups and for individuals who value talks by current authors and by academics on a wide range of literary topics. The society also arranges Town Hall book groups: again check the website for details. Coming on Thursday 19th September at 8.00 in the Town Hall, prize-winning local author Elizabeth Lowry will talk about ‘Experiments in Historical Fiction’ Both visitors and members will be welcomed as ever with a glass of wine! The Oxfordshire Museum also offers a rich programme of talks, including ‘An Introduction to Roman Coins’ on 10th September at 10.00am and ‘Oxfordshire Treasures’ on Friday 13th September at 12.00noon

Additionally, the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum offer a lively talks programme, both live in the Coach House and remotely on Zoom.

Finally to conclude this look at literary events in Woodstock, the very young have not been over-looked! The Woodstock Library (found inside the Museum) offers Storytime on Tuesdays at 3.30pm; and Rhymetime for the very young on Wednesdays at 12.00noon. Such a lovely idea to start the very young on a lifetime of book-enjoyment. Both workshops are free of charge.

This is just an overview of an exciting scene: In the interest of brevity, I have not given web-site details for any of the above mentioned but all can be quickly found via Google. Nor have I mentioned the other societies offering excellent talks, such as the long-established and popular Woodstock Society, as I have restricted this overview to the arts. Woodstock is a town with enormous vitality and we are fortunate that so many writers of both fiction and non-fiction, art historians, artists, art teachers, and musicians live here and add so much to the quality of local life.

Look out for more in-depth coverage of local arts events in WOBL throughout the year!

Linda Glees

A New Palace in Woodstock

The Tippy Palace, Park Street, Woodstock

There’s a clever, new shop in the centre of Woodstock, with a brave owner and an enthusiastic manager: it’s called The Tippy Palace at 1 Market Place.

It’s licensed to sell alcohol for consumption off and on the premises, which means that customers can try before they buy - or just keep on trying. But this isn’t a run-of-the-mill purveyor of alcoholic beverages. It’s (almost!) unique in that its focus is squarely, though not wholly, on English wine – which is about three quarters of its opening stock.

Arguably, it’s this specialism, over and above the normal risk that accompanies a new business venture, that requires owner Jonathan Cooper-Bagnall’s courage and manager Josh Smith’s enthusiasm. But anyone who knows anything about the relatively new and very fast-growing English wine scene – and Jonathan and Josh know a lot – has good reason to be confident.

For a start, English wines are delicious. Some of them – for example Nyetimber and Chapel Down sparklers – have been delighting palates for many years now. Since then, development and refinement of grape type and winemaking have been almost exponential. Many of us will recall the schadenfreude we felt when English bubbly shockingly bested the best of French champagne at a much publicised ‘blind’ comparison of the two in Reims in 2023. Since then, the French have learnt their lesson and champagne houses such as Pommery, Moët and Taittinger are buying big-time into English vineyards and land for new plantings. English sparklers are becoming a new source of national pride!

English wines are also varied and now include dry whites, reds, and rosés made from the classic grapes Chardonnay and Pinot Noir (plus Pinot Meunier in the mix for the bubbly). The Tippy Palace will initially feature around 60 English wines - a collection of 25 sparkling, plus 15 still whites, ten reds and five or more rosés, with prices from £15 to £60. About a quarter of the wines on offer will be ‘Tippy Cousins’ from France, Italy, Spain and the United States. Also, in a conscious effort to be sustainable and reduce glass waste, there will also be ‘Tippy Quaffables’ offering two reds, a white and a rose available in wine-on-tap to take home in three sizes of refillable glass bottle, priced from £10. Lovers of craft beer will also find two of those on offer which can be taken home in a 3-pint glass ‘Growler’.

And of course, there are tastings throughout the day and Josh will be running ongoing events such as ‘Meet-the Producers’ and ‘Paired Tastings’. There’s even a cosy back room for when more serious analysis is required or if you simply want to get together with friends.

English wines bring another advantage: they are very accessible. There are no difficult names to get your tongue around. Their origins are straightforward, mainly growing in counties along, or not far from, the southern coast of England. The UK now boasts nearly a thousand vineyards including some in Wales and even a few acres of vines in Scotland! Many of these are new plantings and therefore have a few years to wait before they yield productive fruit. What’s more, you can easily visit the producers. Over three quarters of the 200-odd wineries offer tours, tastings and stay-overs. Indeed, income from wine tourism accounts for nearly a quarter of total receipts, demonstrating the sophistication of the visitor experience.

There’s a refreshing lack of pretension around English wine. Being relatively new, it’s not so bound by tradition, ancient and complex classifications, and club-room bores! So, I would encourage you to do your bit for Britain and get along to The Tippy Palace. It’s got its own cellar and chillers and there are any number of good eateries nearby to fall into afterwards. Or just walk home (in a straight line of course) with a bottle or two for your lunch or supper.

For opening hours and further details see <https://www.tippypalace.com>

Giles Lewis



Jonathan Cooper-Bagnall and Josh Smith outside The Tippy Palace in Woodstock

The Feathers is Back - a Review

Our local OXINABOX.CO.UK founder, Katherine MacAlister, has reviewed The Feathers for her website, and she has kindly agreed to allow her review to be included in this magazine. Please go to their website to see the full review.

After an extensive seven month, multi-million pound transformation, The Feathers has finally opened its courtyard garden and brasserie style restaurant to the public with a soft launch.

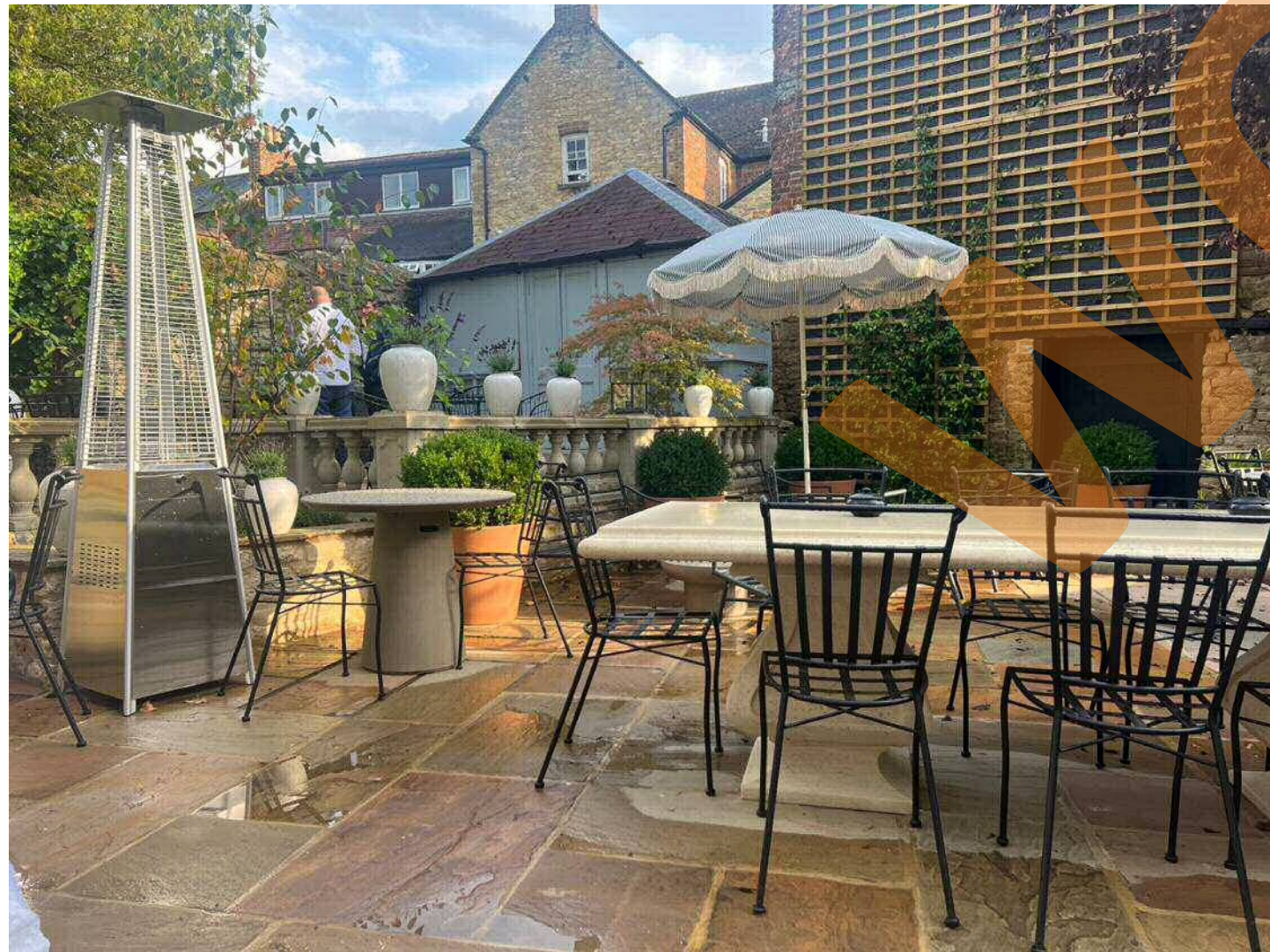
The hotel room refurbishment is still ongoing, but while the sun shines the crowds are flocking to sample its incredible cocktails and drinks menu, and the wonderful food being served up by chef couple Luke Rawicki (head chef) and Shannon Mulholland (sous chef).

New owner Daniel Ede of Ede Homes was very wise to keep them on, their eminent skillset admirable. Throw in new operations manager Andy Henderson, a Woodstock local who opened The Bell at Charlbury recently, and the stage is set for a wonderful culinary experience.

We arrived for dinner on Saturday night, just missing a spontaneous lunchtime barbecue in the courtyard garden, held whenever the weather is hot enough. Seated in the dappled courtyard, an oasis away from the madding crowds of Woodstock, the cocktails are truly exceptional. An extensive list, perfectly executed with fresh ingredients and verve, they are intoxicating in every way!

Having enjoyed the sunshine there numerous times this week, we can recommend the passionfruit martini and the spicy margarita, aided by the waistcoated, immaculate and attentive staff who are always on hand. Service here is massive.

Their are big plans afoot to bring the outside in, with a glass-fronted bar extending from the back of the hotel into the courtyard planned for next year, but in the meantime we enjoyed the bar snacks – a stunning plate of huge, fresh, delectable oysters (see main pic), hailing straight from Maldon in Essex, served with a mignonette sauce (red wine vinegar, shallot, thyme, black pepper) for £4.50 each, which set the bar high.



Looking south over the revamped courtyard at The Feathers



Led through the modern Aviary Bar, to the The Nest brasserie, which stretches the length of Market Street, we let Luke and Shannon work their magic.

Some nibbles then – the mozzarella sticks with a buffalo sauce and chives, standard on so many menus but here given centre stage – home-made, crispy, huge, crunchy, hot and sprinkled with herbs and parmesan, they were so good we groaned. The roasted aubergine dip with flatbread was another big hit, flavoured with lemon and pomegranate seeds, we'd have preferred it to be room temperature rather than cold, but it followed through with that deep flavour.

Starters next – yes we were going all in, my husband announcing he loved the sound of them all – a Jerusalem artichoke royale with black garlic and

pickled goats cheese (£12), which was so nuanced and cleverly balanced, each mouthful was different.

And the hand dived Orkney scallop with fermented carrot and chicken butter sauce (£18), an inspired and original dish, the scallop arriving sliced, exquisitely seared and salty, the sauce poured from a tiny jug, the chicken skin persillade crumb on the carrot giving it a real level of sophistication.

Then the pea and mint tortellini with oyster mushroom and radish (£12), beautiful to behold, the filling bursting with fresh herbs and veg, although the pasta could have done with another 30 seconds.

And the monkfish with sweetcorn, prosciutto and pak choi (£39), the sweetcorn almost like a chowder, flavoured with pickled shallots, garlic and chives. Heaavenly.

We threw in two side dishes the crispy layered potato (£6) which was covered in parmesan, salt and truffle, and so luscious we had to restrain ourselves not to order more, and the Isle of Wight tomatoes with a miso, garlic dressing and toasted seeds, (7.50) – juicy and sweet.

But it was the desserts which truly took the biscuit (excuse the pun) so well executed, they took our breath away – the peach and almond tart tatin (£21 for two), with a yoghurt sorbet and thyme caramel topped with a milk foam crisp, which was both sweet and sour, crisp and chewy as it should be, the fruit soft and succulent.

The caramel chocolate namelaka with a malt crumble and lime ice cream (£10) was a masterclass in textures and contrasting taste, as recommended by our lovely waitress Paridhi. The Japanese dish arrived as a velvety, creamy ganache, the topping like a cross between a crumble and popcorn, offset by the tart ice cream. Genius.

It was a remarkable meal all round, but having been fans of Luke and Shannon for a long time, not a surprise. Accomplished, innovative and ambitious they have got The Feathers dining options off to a cracking start, and one can only imagine that as the courtyard's snack and sharing plate menus expand and the glass dining extension comes into service next year, that this is just the beginning for this exciting duo.

So whether you just pop in for a cocktail and some oysters, or go the whole hog with lunch or dinner, The Feathers will be starring on Oxfordshire's culinary map. Woodstock is lucky to have it.

The Feathers bar and courtyard are open seven days a week for drinks and bar snacks while The Nest is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays. To book for lunch or dinner ring 01993 812291 or go to <http://www.feathers.co.uk>



Luke Rawicki and Shannon Mulholland
All photographs courtesy of Ox in a Box

FEASTOCK 2024
Wine, dine and wander at Woodstock's
Safari Supper



Feastock is a Community travelling supper event, designed to be an inclusive way of meeting new people. This year we are sponsored by Breckon & Breckon and are raising funds for Yellow Submarine and West Oxfordshire food bank.

You can choose to be a host of up to 6 people or a traveller around Woodstock. We kick off this years event with nibbles, fizz and beer at St Hugh's Church Hall on Saturday 28th September.

Please scan this code for more info and tickets.



WOODSTOCK JAZZ

27th September
Doors 7:00
Show 7:30pm



Tickets £20.00
from Website
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Hetty Kate Quartet

Really - Don't Miss This!

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**BLADON AND WOODSTOCK
FLOWER CLUB**

Hello everyone - at last we are experiencing a summer with occasional very hot days. We British always have something to say about the weather!! But it did us proud on our social evening on 12th August and we were able to sit outside all evening. It was a most enjoyable evening with lots of fun and wonderful food made by members. We had a quiz, and members were asked to bring a decorated napkin ring or corsage which we placed on the tables. They were all beautiful and very creative.

Our next meeting on 9th September is a workshop with Christine Pearce, an Area demonstrator and Tutor, when we will be doing a Halloween themed table arrangement.

On 14th October, we have Emma 'Signature Flowers' with her demonstration titled Fashion-ed Flowers. We also have an Imposed Workshop in November and in December our meeting will be one open to the public in Exeter Hall, Kidlington with a Christmas demonstration by Arnaud Metarie, a world renowned demonstrator. So, plenty to look forward to. We meet in the Bowls and Tennis Clubhouse Cadogan Park Woodstock the second Monday of each month and our meetings start at 7pm. Visitors are very welcome with a charge of £8. Please get in touch with me if you would like to know more.

Margaret Lang (01865 376587)

European Summit: Some Local Views

Claudia: Having just moved to Woodstock a month before the European meeting at Blenheim Palace, I found myself unexpectedly at the heart of a major international event. The gathering of around 50 European leaders not only brought global attention to our quaint, historic town but also gave my family and friends a clearer sense of where we now call home—a truly beautiful and remarkable place.

The excitement of being near such a significant event was palpable, though it did come with a few minor inconveniences. Road closures, heightened security, and the constant presence of helicopters added some pressure, but these were small prices to pay for being part of a moment that put Woodstock on the world stage. Overall, it was a memorable experience that highlighted the unique charm of our town while also reminding us of its place in history.

Nick: I've lived in Woodstock for 15 years and vividly remember Trump's visit in 2018 - the European summit was similar in many ways - sunny, lots of police, proud that our community was in the spotlight, no problems, etc. But it didn't quite have the same gravitas (or fun), and the security seemed heavier and more intrusive somehow - cameras everywhere and roads closed.

And I couldn't help but think that how when we never have enough money for a surgery for example, they managed to find enough to take the police away from every part of the country to protect our leaders. And of course it was ok for them to speed through our new 20mph zones, but woe betide anyone else caught doing a little above the speed limit !!!! I was left wondering why they could not have had a Zoom meeting?

Leslee: I thought it rather special to have such a global event on our doorstep. All the policing was a bit of a hoot and some of the security kit quite fascinating. I hope the shops were not adversely affected. It certainly gave everyone something to chatter about for 48 hours! Or for some, to grumble about...forever, no doubt!

Meaghan: As the balmy hot summer finally arrived in Woodstock so too did the political summit roll in to town. The stunning green lawns surrounding the Palace disappeared under white canopied tents to feed and entertain the visiting dignitaries. Every entrance and exit manned 24hours a day by High-viz henchman signalling the riff raff were to be well and truly kept out. As a resident of Woodstock it's always exciting when there is an event at the palace, a tangible buzz is felt as we welcome an eclectic mix of visitors to enjoy the artisan eateries and boutiques integral to our local economy; this felt different there was a disconnect as the gentrified European politicians and their cronies landed in town.

As we took to the coffee shops that line our pretty streets I was reminded of being a child, excitement abounding looking forward to waving a flag or a sticky ice cream-soaked hand in anticipation of catching a smile from a glamorous Royal or President. What I was met with on this occasion was numerous motorcades flanked by riders and range rovers, not a smile or wave in sight, even our dear King slipped in and out without so much as a "wot ho" to us mere mortals of Woodstock. It seemed the only contribution to Woodstock residents was the certain rise in air pollution and some of the quietest trading days this year.

I sadly conclude that a vanity project that cost millions to host and seemed more like a post Brexit party invitation to show we can still all play together nicely; that clogged up our highways and byways so we could barely get to the supermarket came and went with no real benefit to our local community! Game fairs and concerts and circuses and shows yes please; no more visits from the politicians to the Palace to render our idyllic and thriving little corner of the world a ghost town!

Woodstock and Bladon Churches Together

'We plough the fields and scatter ...' Words that may transport you in nostalgic delight back to the past or send a shiver down your spine because of the quaint outdated sentiment expressed.

Yet the intention of the German poet Matthais Claudias (translated into English by Jane Campbell) was an expression of thankfulness. Thankfulness for the safe gathering of the harvest for another year. Which in former age, would have been an enterprise, far more prone to failure, and yet also a far more community binding event.

Some within our community are involved with the large-scale harvest of crops through farming; many will harvest their endeavors in gardens and allotments; but all of us will be receiving the blessing of the harvest of food we buy from shops and markets.

The thankfulness that is expressed in Matthais Claudias hymn is one we can all share in at least in spirit if not in the exact repetition of word. A thankfulness for all that we have.

For Christians that thankfulness is expressed to God, the one who in the New Testament, in words that echo the chorus of Claudias's hymn, says, 'Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights.' (James 1:17)

In this season of harvest may the spirit of thankfulness for all that we have rise up within us.

Rev. Andy Mills, Woodstock Baptist Church

Woodstock Town Council Meetings

9th July 2024

9 councillors and 9 members of the public attended. The Town Clerk was at another meeting in Witney so Councillor Grant took the minutes. There was no audio/visual recording of the meeting as no one was able to operate the system.

There were 3 speakers in the public speaking session. Firstly, Stan Scott encouraged communication between the residents and the new Town Council, especially regarding the solar farm proposal and the possible use of the police station site for a new surgery. The Mayor expressed his personal view on the latest solar farm consultation in a letter to West Oxfordshire District Council. Next, Kay Sentance from Community First asked the Council if there were any questions on or additions to her final report. The report will be presented at the August Town Council meeting. Finally, Nick Manby-Brown, former Mayor, said he was disappointed that the expensive meeting recording device, purchased by the previous Council, was not being used as he had left notes on its operation before he left.

In the Mayor’s report, three tasks have been identified to be completed as soon as possible: the appointment of a full-time Town Clerk, the finalising of the previous Council’s accounts and to appoint an additional councillor to make a full complement of 12. A new Town Clerk has been appointed and will start in August. The final accounts will be discussed in detail at the August meeting. The new Opportunities Group will work on several schemes to attract Section 106 monies as well as from other outside sources. The Mayor hopes to invite all the business owners in Woodstock to the Town Hall to hear concerns and try to find ways the Council can help. The Council will also be more active on events such as Remembrance Sunday, the Mayor’s Carol Service and hopefully holding an event for volunteers and carers next year.

Councillor Grant commented that, following discussions, the church would now pay towards the clock repair reducing the amount the Council would pay.

County Councillor Andy Graham was asked to comment on traffic arrangements for the upcoming EU summit taking place at Blenheim Palace on 18 July. Councillor Graham said the summit would lead to road closures and diversions and that the rights of way in the Park would be closed. Some bus stops would be suspended and that there would be areas of clearways where traffic could not stop. Councillor Graham said the nursery in Park View would be opening on 15th July. Regarding a possible move of the surgery to the old police station site, most parties concluded that this site was not suitable. Councillor Graham said the County Council were doing everything they could to find a solution, working with the GPs, Blenheim Estate and West Oxfordshire District

Council. Councillor Graham also said that talks were continuing regarding a new library and it is hoped it will be sited on the previous Hensington Road site. Councillor Grant commented on the condition of the verges in Woodstock, Councillor Graham asked for her to send him specifics.

Councillor Parnes proposed a motion regarding support of a letter from the GPs of Woodstock Surgery which called for timely and coordinated action to secure a new surgery for Woodstock given the age of the existing building and the influx of patients from the new houses being built in the area. The motion was carried unanimously.

Councillor Martin asked the Council to consider a motion asking for a comprehensive review of the community benefits package proposed by the developers of Botley West Solar Farm. Councillor Martin asked the Council to send a formal communication to Rachel Wileman, Director of Planning, Environment and Climate Change at Oxfordshire County Council to ask for a significant increase in the community benefit provision to ensure local residents see meaningful benefits from the development. The motion was carried unanimously. The Council’s response to Botley West’s Targeted Consultation was discussed and it was agreed to defer the item to the Extraordinary meeting to be held on 24th July.

Due to restrictions of space not all Council business has been included. For full details please refer to the Town Council website for agendas and minutes.

24th July 2024

6 councillors and the Town Clerk and 6 members of the public attended. The Mayor announced that the audio/visual recording system was working, there were no objections.

Suspending standing orders, the Mayor declared an open discussion for the Council and members of the public regarding Drs Becker and Fisher presenting their case for a new surgery for Woodstock and asking if the Town Council could help in any way. Dr Becker said that the surgery is “bursting at the seams” and more GPs are needed but there is no more space. The surgery will not be able to look after residents from the new homes being built with an estimated increase of 2-3,000 patients. The surgery has 9,600 patients, 60% living outside of Woodstock. They urgently need new premises and have written to the Integrated Care Board (ICB), the NHS body responsible for local population health and shared strategic priorities for a decision on a new surgery for Woodstock. A surgery on the new Banbury Road development is being considered, the former police station site on Hensington Road has been considered unsuitable due to lack of parking and space for future expansion. Calum Miller, the new Bicester and Woodstock MP, has also been contacted. Dr Fisher finished by saying they had written to several relevant parties to make them aware of the “oncoming storm”. A problem with the Banbury Road site was highlighted,

pedestrian access and safety when coming from town, especially if using public transport. A possible option that has been discussed would be for Blenheim to build the surgery on the Banbury Road development site (which would allow for future expansion, but with a loss of affordable housing) and the NHS then rent it from Blenheim. Councillor Poskitt added that this was not a new issue, Woodstock has been number 1 or 2 in line for a new surgery for many years in Oxfordshire but the NHS did not have funds available. Several people spoke in favour of the old police station site but again it was explained that 10 to 20 years of potential expansion is required for a new surgery site. The Mayor concluded the discussion by making a resolution to help find a solution and to back our GPs.

At the public participation, Hilary Brown from Sustainable Woodstock asked if the Council would encourage residents to engage with an Oxfordshire County Council survey on the Climate Emergency.

The Town Council then considered their response to the Botley West Solar Farm targeted consultation. The Town Clerk will respond to the consultation to include Councillors comments with respect to removing and replanting hedgerows. The Mayor said the maps had no scale, lacked detail and were difficult to understand.

Next came a report from the Environment Working Group who met on 24th June. Councillor Banbury agreed to oversee the Water Meadows. Councillor Grant suggested a working budget of £75K for the group, there being several outstanding projects needing funding such as the dredging of the River Glyme in the Water Meadows. The Mayor agreed that action should be taken urgently. The Clerk added that there was an allocation of £8K for the Water Meadows from an Environment Working Group budget of £66K. The Mayor stated that there was money available in the Council reserves if work needed doing, the reserves standing currently at £338K. Recommendations from the Working Group included urgent action to be taken when any graffiti is reported, repairs to the New Road playground and repairs to the Lawn Cemetery (Green Lane) lychgate and front wall.

The Governors of Woodstock Primary School had written to the Town Council about their concern of the volume of traffic outside of their school at drop off and pick up times making it unsafe for those wishing to walk to school. Problems are caused by parked cars, speeding motorists, cars mounting the pavement and coaches using Shipton Road instead of Flemings Road. They asked the Council what could be done to make the road safer as it will only get worse as the school is expanding in September. The Council have referred the matter to Oxfordshire County Council who are responsible for the highways.

Due to restrictions of space not all Council business has been included. For full details please refer to the Town Council website for agendas and minutes.

13th August 2024

4 councillors, plus our previous Clerk and our new Town Clerk, Valentin Lavdakov, and 15 members of the public attended.

The standing orders were suspended to allow a subject that was not included in the agenda to be addressed by a member of the public in the public speaking session.

Jo Lamb spoke regarding the County Court hearing of 12th August in Oxford, in which Councillor Parnes brought an action against Woodstock Town Council. Councillor Parnes was not present at the Council meeting.

For background, as far as I know, the public are still unaware of the reasons why action was taken by Cllr Parnes.

Throughout the time of this court action all discussions in Council meetings have been held in private session under the title ‘Civil Claim’. We were told the civil claim began in 2022. Several months ago, during a council meeting, a member of the public made a request for more information regards the civil claim but due to the impending court hearing no information was able to be shared.

At this meeting, Jo asked the Council to consider her presentation for the full Council September meeting.

Jo attended the hearing and she summarised. The judge rejected the case for the following reasons:

Councillor Parnes had committed a breach of the court process by failing to submit the correct documentation in a timely manner and there were no acceptable reasons for these breaches. The judge said that the case was in the public interest but these breaches would not be waived. Jo added that as a result Councillor Parnes was now liable for costs payable to the Town Council.

Jo continued with the following points to the Town Council:

1. In the interests of transparency and the interest of the local community Jo asked for there to be a full report by the Town Council on the hearing and this to be made public.
2. She asked that the report should include the time spent by the Clerk and Town Council, time that could have been spent on other important issues.
3. She noted that Councillor Parnes has had a conflict of interest with the Town Council since 2022 and should consider his position as a Town Councillor.

Jo finished by saying that hopefully all parties can now move on and Council time can be spent more productively.

Six planning items were also on the agenda. For full details please refer to the Town Council website for agendas and minutes.

All reports by Graham Brown

Updates on Botley West

The 'Solar Gold Rush'

Scrutiny and debate of the 'Solar Gold Rush', as highlighted in the Sunday Times on 4th August, is more important than ever. We welcome the move towards greener energy, but facts are important too.

Blenheim stands to benefit by tens of millions of pounds, resting on the decision to grant permission for the mega solar power station, Botley West.

Government land use policy is very clear and states (in National Policy Statement published January 2024), "applicants should, where possible, utilise suitable previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land and industrial land. Where the proposed use of any agricultural land has been shown to be necessary, poorer quality land should be preferred to higher quality."

The decision will ultimately be made by the Secretary of State, currently Ed Miliband, and this is because Botley West is so massive it is considered 'nationally significant' and too important for your local council to decide on.

Blenheim CEO Dominic Hare's erroneous statement in the Sunday Times: Dominic Hare is completely wrong when he describes the land proposed for the mega solar power station, Botley West, as "relatively poor land". The Developer's own survey (in their PEIR report Vol 1 Chapter 17) using the Government's Agricultural Land Classification 5 point Scale shows that NONE of the land is either poor (grade 4) or very poor (grade 5). 100% is either excellent quality (grade 1), very good (grade 2) or good to moderate (grade 3). 38% of the whole area of Botley West (and a higher percentage if considering just the panel area) is in the category of 'Best and Most Versatile Land' (grades 1,2 or 3a - BMV) and the remainder is still moderate NOT poor i.e. it is still capable of producing moderate yields of cereals and grass which can be grazed or harvested over most of the year.

While not prohibiting the siting of solar farms on 'BMV' land, Government Policy does say that it should be a 'material consideration' when considering an application for planning permission. We can only hope that the Secretary of State follows the guidelines. Using any 'Best and Most Versatile Land' for Botley West is more than a 'material consideration'; it would be a scandalous abuse of a privileged land owner putting their own financial interests first.

UPDATES FROM STOP BOTLEY WEST: Be among the first to get all the latest news, media and information about what's next.

Watch out for news of walks to highlight the heritage, beautiful landscapes and precious footpaths that would be blighted if Botley West were to go ahead.

Please register for updates (& also encourage your family and friends too) at stopbotleywest.com

Also, please write to your new MP, Calum Miller (calum.miller@oxonlibdems.uk) with all your concerns about Botley West.

Stop Botley West, Hanborough Villages Group

Old Woodstock Mock Mayor Elections Two Mock Mayors Elected, Local MP Convicted and Record Funds Raised.

On July 20th, Woodstock witnessed a day of irreverence and mock democracy as the annual Old Woodstock Mock Mayor Elections unfolded. This 238-year-old tradition saw a new Mock Mayor elected, a long-awaited Junior Mock Mayor victory, and a busy Mock Court convicting everyone from the local MP to a delinquent dog.

Nick Tonks, a local businessman, clinched the Mock Mayor title with an eccentric speech blending underwear and software references, coupled with promises of discounted burials. The Junior Mock Mayor race was won by Felicity Richards, finally victorious after three years of spirited campaigning amidst accusations of electoral corruption. Honorable mention should go to Poppy and Phoebe's spirited Junior Mock Mayor speeches, and Robert Edwards giving an honest speech from a politician (who'd have thought!)

The Mock Court was packed! Calum Miller, Woodstock's new MP, faced charges of failing to perform ridiculous election stunts, while the Woodstock Arms' landlord, Colonel David Lynch-Thomas, defended himself against accusations of excessive cheerfulness with an epic, if not entirely coherent, poetic plea. Jorge Costa was accused of betrayal of the Crown Inn -- and was found culpado! Mevlan Karaj yet again appealed his conviction in 2023.



Other memorable cases included a man accusing his wife of flatulence (a pyrrhic victory at best), and a labrador named Luther charged with devouring garden furniture.

The traditional procession drew a large crowd, winding its way from New Woodstock Town Square to Blenheim Park. At the River Glyme, both the new Mock Mayor and Junior Mock Mayor were gently dunked in a timehonored ceremony. The procession returned to Woodstock, led by the Town Crier Karen 'Straight Outta Clapham' Jones, and was concluded with a dance-off between the mayors. John Banbury, Mayor of New Woodstock since 1843, read a rousing poem and



performed an energetic dance with Mock Mayor Tonks, who strangely had a tape measure in his hand. This completed the ceremony.

Music was a key feature of the day, with DJ Lucy setting the tone early on, followed by The Kokroachez's energetic indie rock, and Two Tone All Ska getting everyone on their feet to close out the evening. Sol Samba, celebrating 25 years of bringing Brazilian rhythms to Oxfordshire, added vibrant energy to the proceedings, with their chief sambista facing mock charges for 'unlawful distribution of infectious grooves' while attempting to evade justice disguised as the Cookie Monster.



This year marked two new features: the introduction of a charity bar and the closure of roads. The road closure created a traffic-free, relaxed atmosphere, and the bar contributed significantly to fundraising efforts. The event saw a 60% increase in funds raised for local charities including the Woodstock Lunch Club, the Marlborough School PTA, and Tuesday Tots at the Methodist Church.

The Mock Mayor Elections continue to evolve while maintaining their core traditions. Despite challenges

such as the loss of all pubs in Old Woodstock, the event has successfully reinvented itself, introducing new elements like the Mock Court, creating a festival atmosphere in the Town Square, while preserving the essential ritual of electing a Mock Mayor.

The Mock Mayor committee would like to thank all their sponsors, volunteers, supporters and the wonderful Woodstock community for making this event so special. As the sun set on another election, it was clear that this quirky tradition continues to play a vital role in bringing the community together, providing entertainment, and supporting local causes. The ability of the event to adapt while maintaining its historical roots bodes well for its future, ensuring that the Mock Mayor will continue to reign (in jest) over Old Woodstock for years to come.

Ed Creasey

They Came They Saw They ‘Kilconquered’

Blenheim Park Cricket Club Visits a Unique Cricket Ground



Blenheim Park Cricket Club travelled to the delightful setting of Elie in Scotland to play cricket on the beach against the Ship Inn. Previously the club visited in 2013 and lost a controversial game due to some sort of a local rule, they had twelve players!!

Playing at Elie is considered to be elite in the echelons of cricket fixtures. Elie are very serious about beach cricket and were playing the Free Foresters the day before. There are some important local rules as follows:

A six hit into the sun terrace earns the player their height in beer; a one-handed catch by a spectator earns the same; and any player getting a duck has to do the walk of shame - they have to return the long route around the sand dune rather than the steps.

Anyway, enough said, and to the game. Skipper Malcolm West lost the toss and the home side decided to bat in their finest green outfits. Local knowledge is very important, and Elie amassed a very good score of 197 off 30 overs, our keeper Rob Kerr starred with the ball and took 3 wickets in a cameo bowling performance. It is fair to say Rob is a very enthusiastic celebrator of wickets and this delighted the large crowd as he circled the playing area jumping and cheering his wicket taking. He also took 2 stumpings and a catch to complete his fielding duties as a keeper.

There was some good batting by G Riddle retiring on 52 with good contributions from Jack Currie hitting 36, Ian Murdoch 28 and Liam Kerr 25. There were notable

bowling efforts from the skipper with 2 for 22 and a miserly 0 for 4 from the wee man Phil Spearman as well as the previously mentioned starring role of Rob Kerr with 3 for 16.

Just to mention each player had to bowl 3 overs hence why Rob Kerr swapped the gloves and Phil Reay ably deputized for the 3 overs needed.

Just to show the reader/s how serious beach cricket is, there are drinks breaks at 15 overs to enjoy pints of Thatchers’ Cider who were the sponsors of the weekend. A barrel was provided in the VP lounge for the whole day’s cricket and evening. Tea was fantastic, with scones, scotch eggs (obviously), and sandwiches a plenty.

The Blenheim squad was 16 strong, or weak, depending on your take, featuring 10 past or present Woodstock



known for big hitting. Can the Ship Inn afford his height in beer? Jake was batting serenely the other end and then B Tait began to bowl, his first 4 deliveries (as per Ben Stokes) were dispatched for huge sixes over mid-wicket and suddenly we were in the box seat, what could go wrong?

56 needed with 5 wickets left and 12 overs to go, Jake was then out, and another wicket fell. Tom continued to hit sixes and, no, he is caught behind but reprieved sportingly by the keeper. Reaches his 50 and then has to retire, we are down to our last 2 men of Rob Kerr and Stan the man. The score is nudged and edged until 5 is needed and Stan is out allowing Big Tom back in.

You guessed it, a huge 6 from Tom and the game is won, a fantastic innings of 58, including 8 sixes and 1 four win the game. One of the sixes is just wide of the sun terrace, so long Tom did not win his height in drink but had the consolation of the man of the match champagne.

Match Report and photographs
David Hughes, BPCC Chairman



AFTER THE STORM

A Review of a Mohammed Sami Exhibition at Blenheim Palace

Celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Blenheim Art Foundation, the Palace are currently staging an exhibition of fourteen paintings by the artist Mohammed Sami entitled 'After the Storm'.

Sami was born in Baghdad in 1984 and his work is greatly influenced by the memories and first hand experience of the pain, chaos and tragedy of war. For this exhibition he has created an entirely new body of work inspired by and relating to the history and military themes of Blenheim Palace. The paintings are often ambiguous, leaving possible interpretations to the viewer.

The Grinder and *Wiped Off* are essentially observational paintings presented in such a way as to cause unease and encourage the viewer to speculate on the history that led to the scenarios. With a viewpoint from above, *The Grinder* depicts the ominous shadow of a ceiling fan cast across an empty table with four abandoned chairs suggesting a terminated meeting, the blades of the fan itself, seeming to become more deadly with every moment. *Wiped Off* displays a surrealistic quality in its detailed rendering of a mop suggestive of a gun leaning against a wall. On the floor we see broken plates and an ominous pool of blood.

Several paintings in the exhibition explore a trompe l'oeil theme. *After the Storm* cleverly reproduces a section of the brocade wallpaper on which it is displayed. In the centre is a faded rectangle surrounded by bullet holes; a possible implication here being the destruction and removal of a painting which had inspired an act of violent vandalism.

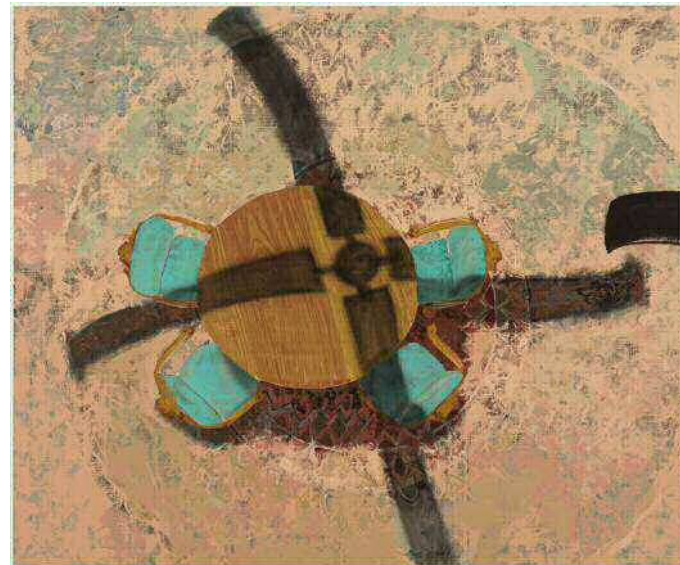
Inspired by Blenheim's collection of portraits in military and ceremonial attire, Sami depicts three versions of figures in uniform, festooned with medals and decorations, but with the heads obscured, suggesting the faceless glorification of war and the honours presented to its leaders.

Highlights of the show could be two huge landscapes (both approximately 10 by 16 feet), which dazzle the viewer with their scale and use of paint, from thin acrylic washes to heavily laden brushstrokes. *The Eastern Gate* inspired by, but contrasting, the sweeping landscapes of Capability Brown, depicts the city of Baghdad shrouded in an orange fluorescent glow caused by the area's frequent dust storms. The foreground sets the building off beautifully in its use of a cool complimentary viridian green, in which we can make out the ominous tracks of a military tank, further unsettling the viewer. The equally huge *Massacre* shows the edge of a field of sunflowers with trampled plants and traces of horses'

hooves in the foreground, again leaving the viewer to speculate on events leading up to this scenario; sunflowers hold great significance in Iraq for their agricultural value and represent hope and loyalty.

The exhibition is presented at Blenheim Palace and finishes on 6 October 2024

Reviewed by John Somerscales



The Grinder



Reborn, installation view



Reborn



The Eastern Gate

*Painting Photographs: Marcus Leith
Courtesy of the artist, Modern Art, London, and
Luhning Augustine, New York*

*Installation Photograph by Tom Lindboe
Courtesy of Blenheim Art Foundation*

The Arts Society Cotswolds

Lecture on Wednesday 11th September 2024

The Body as a Place: The Sculpture of Antony Gormley. Speaker: Anna Moszynska

Antony Gormley is probably best well-known for his iconic 'Angel of the North', imposingly situated beside the A1 near Gateshead. However, this 20-metre-high landmark sculpture is just one of a host of memorable pieces that he has created during the course of a prolific career that already spans over four decades. Having known Gormley since he was a student at the Slade and written two books on the artist's drawings, I review the development of this major British sculptor from a unique perspective. In the context of his work overall, I examine his continuous fascination with the body as a place - both of experience and of interaction with its surroundings.

About our speaker: Anna is a lecturer and writer specialising in contemporary art. During the 1990s, she oversaw the development of the subject as the first Master's Degree at Sotheby's Institute. She has also taught at other institutions in London including The City Lit, the Royal Academy and Tate, as well as lecturing in cities ranging from Dubai to New York and Berlin to Sydney. She offers guest lectures on the Sotheby's Institute MA in Contemporary Art as well as running her own courses. Apart from many catalogue essays she has written on living artists, her books include *Abstract Art* (1990, enlarged ed. 2020) and *Sculpture Now* (2013), both published by Thames & Hudson, and two books on the drawings of Antony Gormley. She enjoys introducing art to audiences in a lively and approachable way to make modern and contemporary art both accessible and interesting.

This hybrid lecture will be held at the Warwick Hall, Church Green, Burford, OX18 4RZ at 11am and via Zoom. Please be seated by 10.50 for notices of upcoming events. Numbers are no longer restricted but booking is recommended to reserve a place via our website (see below). Non-members are welcome (space permitting) at a charge of £10. Further information will be circulated via the newsletter and bookings can be made via the website (see below) or please call Lisa Etheridge on 01285 711805 for a booking form.

To learn more about The Arts Society Cotswolds and to see what lectures, Special Interest Days and other activities are planned, please log into the website www.theartsocietycotswolds.org.uk or contact Carolyn Walton on 01993 822296

The Woodstock Bookshop

Talk on Saturday 14th September at 3pm

Join us to hear Professor Tim Coulson talk and take questions about his new book: *The Universal History of Us*. Tim describes the scientific basis of our existence beginning with its origin in the Big Bang, billions of years ago. His ultimate mission is to answer the question of whether the existence of the human race was inevitable or if in the end we are all just incredibly lucky to be here. Interwoven in this epic history of humanity are colourful snippets of Tim's own life and research.

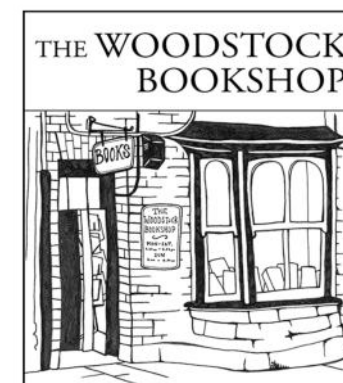
'Most scientists know only their own field. Tim Coulson is at home with science as an integrated whole. A pleasure to read, and a lasting accomplishment' Richard Dawkins, University of Oxford and New College

'Step aside Star Wars - ours is the most astonishing origin story you'll ever hear and its beautifully told by Tim Coulson' Professor Ken Norris, Natural History Museum

Tim Coulson has played a major role in establishing the new Department of Biology at the University Oxford, where he is a Professorial Fellow at Jesus College.

The talk takes place at Woodstock Town Hall - Tickets £5 including a glass of wine and snacks - BOOKING ESSENTIAL

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Woodstock CE Primary School

A Year 6 Children and Headteacher Farewell

This is always a busy time of year in school for the children and the teachers, in particular our wonderful Year 6 children who are about to end their primary school journey before starting their secondary education in September. The children did an amazing job with their SATS assessments back in May and since then have been away on residential breaks, and have been preparing for their end-of-year performance and leavers' service. It has been wonderful to see all the children grow and flourish over their time at Woodstock CE Primary School. I know that colleagues will join me in saying how proud we are of them all and that we wish them the very best for their futures as they embark on the next stage of their learning.

We also say farewell to our Headteacher, Christian McGuinness (picture below), who is leaving us at the end of this term to take up a new and exciting role for the Oxfordshire Diocese Board of Education. Christian joined Woodstock CE Primary School in September 2020, which was an interesting time for all of us as it followed a period of national lockdown. There are many memories of his time with us, in particular his enthusiasm for running! Staff and pupils would like to wish him good luck in his next venture.



u3a

We had a real treat in July with Richard O Smith visiting us for the speaker meeting - the subject Oxford Z – A 1000 years of History in 26 letters. An historian and comedian regaling us with snippets such as Oliver Cromwell demanding to borrow a book from the Bodleian Library and receiving a book in a sealed envelope entitled Bodleian Book of Rules which stated no book could be taken away.

August then gave us our annual social event at St Hugh's Centre which was planned as an open afternoon to encourage new people to come along and see what the u3a does. Demonstration by the Play Reading group was a treat, as was the Recorder group, and Art, and with displays from some of our many other interest groups, there was much to grab our time. Although our monthly meetings give us social time together with the entertainment of interesting and varied speakers, the main drive of the organisation is smaller groups which develop around members' personal interests and participation with like-minded people. Please do check our website for further information: www.woodstocku3a.uk.

Our next monthly speaker meeting on 5th September is Dr Tony Hersch with 'A day in the life of a Magistrate'. Do join us at 1.45pm for 2pm at St Hugh's Centre, Hensington Road, Woodstock - visitor fee £2 to include tea and biscuits - all welcome.

Sue Blackshaw, Chair, Woodstock & District u3a, chair@woodstocku3a.uk

Park View Childcare

New Child Care Facility for Woodstock

Park View Childcare is excited to create an inclusive and high-quality learning environment where all children will thrive and learn independently, led by their own interests and ideas. Their individual needs and learning will be supported through strong pedagogical practice, well-planned observation, planning and assessment. The focus will be on a good balance of adult led and child led activities, predominately following the interests of children in their play.

Our approach is to deliver outstanding early childhood education through the provision of rich opportunities for all children to build, through play, skills such as concentration, curiosity, and a love for the natural world. Thus, actively supporting each child to grow into a competent and confident learner as they develop their skills and abilities.

Operational Director Lorraine Wheatley with a wealth of early years' experience, will utilize her strong knowledge base training background to upskill existing educators to the sector. She will ensure the relevant qualifications and ratios are always met in full and nurture staffs developing careers, continuing their highly valued professional development.

Educational Director Sonja Fenton-Pryor who has an extensive background of leading nurseries to outstanding practice, will use her sound knowledge and drive to set and maintain high quality standards in implementing an educational curriculum to promote children's learning and development.

Both Lorraine and Sonja recognise the importance of working with parents to achieve these goals and are looking forward to meeting and supporting families in the area.

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

What's On at SOFO

'Journeys Through War' Young people's art competition and exhibition

Open to entries until 29 September. Exhibition opens 19 October 2024

We're running our first open art competition for 7 - 18 year olds this Summer, with submissions going on display at the museum this October. There's still time to submit entries up to the end of September 2024. Painting, drawing, collage, even digital art can be accepted, and entries need to tie into the theme of 'Journeys Through War'.

Find out more and enter at: bit.ly/summerartcomp

Posting Letters to the Moon: The Wartime Letters of Celia Johnson and Peter Fleming

Join us at Blenheim on Wednesday 2 October 2024 for a three course dinner in The Orangery and an outstanding show in The Marlborough Room, as actress Lucy Fleming, with her husband Simon Williams, read these funny, poignant letters sent between her mother Celia Johnson (Brief Encounter) and the famous writer and explorer Peter Fleming.

Find out more and book your tickets at: www.soho.org.uk/whats-on

10th Anniversary offer for WOBL readers

Show us your copy of Woodstock and Bladon News or quote this offer to receive a FREE bottle of Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum's Anniversary Ale when you sign up for a museum membership!

Museum memberships start at £10 per year and all include an annual pass to the county's military museum and all its exhibitions. Many membership levels also include free tickets to talks, exclusive event invitations and many other offers.

Brewed by Hook Norton Brewery, Horsa Hop is an amber English IPA perfect for Summer. The limited-edition beer was released to celebrate 10 years since the museum was first opened by HRH Princess Anne on 24 September 2014, but also commemorates the 80th anniversary of D-Day and the contribution made by Oxfordshire people in the historic campaign of 1944.

Find out more about the museum and membership options when you visit, or online at: www.soho.org.uk

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum in an independent museum and registered charity (No. 1145408) dedicated to preserving and showcasing the county's wartime stories.

Woodstock in Bloom

There is a foraging opportunity in the centre of Woodstock. On the Millenium Triangle at the junction of High Street with Oxford Street there is a vigorous rosemary bush. Any resident who is about to cook lamb is welcome to take a modest sprig for culinary use. The flower beds on this site are at their best in June and July. Only the red and white "hotlips" flowering sage heroically still blooms to the end of Summer.

Ian Leslie, Brian Jennings, Ruth Sutherland, Elizabeth Poskitt, Stephen Pix, Jane Carlin and the Carrington family have faithfully watered Woodstock's petunias in the plant holders throughout the Summer. I am deeply grateful to them all. I still need a volunteer to water the stone planters at the top of Manor Road in Old Woodstock. Please tel. 811616.

The rose bed in Oxford Road was planted in an unsuitable site under the spreading chestnut trees over forty years ago and is, to say the least, showing signs of old age in spite of the valiant endeavour of Liz and Nick Hiscock who have removed a great slag heap of conkers every year. We are about to give it a decent burial.

Robert Edwards



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References supplied on request.

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CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

The Oxfordshire Museum

We have been having a busy Summer at the museum with our family themed activities. This year they have been based on our Quentin Blake: Book Covers exhibition which ends 8 September.

We have also been developing a range of adult workshops in conjunction with local experts. Ceramicist Ros Ingram is holding two workshops. Sculpt a ceramic Highland Cow on Saturday 21 August 10-4pm and Sculpt a ceramic Hedgehog on Saturday 5 Oct 10.30am-1.30pm.

For more information, including prices and booking information, please email handsonheritage@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Did you know that Oxfordshire Museum Service is also responsible for Swalcliffe Barn? The barn, situated in the picturesque village of Swalcliffe six miles west of Banbury and surrounded by beautiful countryside, is one of the finest 15th century half-cruck barns in England. It was constructed in 1401 for New College, Oxford. It is a Grade 1 listed building and a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

It was acquired by the Oxfordshire Buildings Trust in 1990 and is leased to Oxfordshire County Council and used by the Museums Service to exhibit agricultural and trade vehicles from the county.

The Friends of Swalcliffe Barn are looking for more volunteers to help care for this important building. A volunteer open day is being held Saturday 12 October between 10-4pm. Do pop along and say hello!



Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

Monthly talks in the Museum in Woodstock at 7.30pm

Wednesday 4th September 'The Foundling Hospital'. Speaker: John Caldicott. The philanthropic sea captain Thomas Coram campaigned for nearly two decades to build a hospital for Foundlings in London. Opening in 1741, the institution continued until the 1950s. Our speaker was a former pupil and a former governor of Coram (The Thomas Coram Foundation for Children).

Wednesday 2nd October 'Lawyer, Town Clerk and Ruthless Land Speculator? The life of Henry John North of Woodstock'. Gareth Winrow, author, researcher and academic.

Talks are free to Friends. Visitors are welcome in person or by ZOOM for a fee of £5. For further details Email: friendsoftheoxfordshiremuseum@gmail.com; website: www.friendsoftom.org.uk

Panniers: Everyday cycling in Woodstock and Bladon

This summer we visited the Netherlands where people of all ages get around on foot and by bicycle and High Streets are bustling with minimal car parking.

Better cycling infrastructure definitely helps - but there is also safety in numbers. Writing in The Times, John Parkin, a professor of transport engineering, said that there needs to be between 10-15 per cent of people carrying out journeys by bicycle for it to be considered "more of the norm".

If a driver anticipates seeing a cyclist every time they pass through a junction, he says, it creates a "social warning effect" leading to a greater sense of caution. The level needed for that effect is, apparently, about 60 or more cyclists per hour per junction. In Woodstock and Bladon we are not quite there yet.

Feeling unsafe on the road is one of the major barriers to cycling. Fewer children are cycling, according to Halfords, with parents citing safety concerns as a big factor. Exacerbating the problem, the last government cut the already modest investment in cycling infrastructure, further increasing our dependence on cars to get around.

In Woodstock and Bladon, the increased cycle parking and 20mph limits have been a step forward. We now await progress on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

In the meantime, please help us to increase that 10-15% of the population using a bike for short, local journeys. The more of us who do it, the safer we all will be!

David Walker is a member of Sustainable Woodstock, the Village Travel Network and is a qualified Bikeability instructor

WOODSTOCK'S HOLLYHOCKS

In July and August many areas of our town are adorned by hollyhocks. These tough and independent-minded flowers have decorated our streets for at least seventy years, despite the threat from the unfortunately necessary weed sprayer.



Self-seeded, July hollyhocks in Woodstock, growing rampant along Rectory Lane (left) and Harrison's Lane (right)

The hollyhocks this year have been particularly colourful. Harrison's Lane, Chaucer's Lane and Rectory Lane are the best sites but the flowers have recently colonized Cockpit Close and the top end of Manor Road. They did not appear in the Olivet Chappel area of Oxford Street this year. I have plenty of seed if anybody wishes to repopulate them there.

Scattering Hollyhock seeds can often lead to disappointment; they grow best where they choose, often thriving where you would not expect any plant to do so, germinating in the smallest cracks in our footpaths or by the sides of roads. They then develop deep fleshy roots like a hungry parsnip which perhaps explains their resistance to drought and ability to survive dry spells. Hollyhocks are usually biennial, flowering in their second Summer. They thrive in free-draining soil; if too damp their roots rot and they will not then appear the following year. They flower sequentially along a single stem thereby maximizing their ability to propagate whatever challenges arise from the inevitable changes of weather.

Rust, leaf spot and other diseases disfigure the leaves but seldom harm the plant's ability to flower. I looked in vain for hollyhocks in my gardening books until I found them named as Alcea rosea which is a member of the mallow family. Wild mallow in profusion dominate the middle verge of the dual carriageway between the Bladon roundabout and Begbroke while the slightly larger marsh mallow used to grow beside the Oxford canal near the old cement works. Are they still there, I wonder?

Robert Edwards



If you see this man around Woodstock, stop and say "hello". Robert Edwards still needs a volunteer to water the stone planters at the top of Manor Road in Old Woodstock (see p.25). Or telephone 01993 811616.

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SHELTERING IN WOODSTOCK?

Sustainable Woodstock promotes active and sustainable travel (walking, cycling, bus, train, car-pooling/sharing, etc) ... and making improvements to infrastructure, services and facilities, can make life easier. We are partners in the Village Travel Network (www.vtn.org.uk) and we have been working alongside volunteers from villages surrounding Blenheim (and with Blenheim), to try and improve and identify new routes for cycling and walking. For example, the new Community Path in Blenheim Park linking Bladon and Long Hanborough ... and the train station.



A few years ago, there were complaints about the condition of the bus shelters in Woodstock. Town bus shelters are the responsibility of the Town Council and they had several discussions regarding their upkeep or replacement. A company offered to refurbish Woodstock's shelters at no cost and in return they would be used for advertising. The offer was rejected by the Council and as far as I can tell the subject wasn't revisited. After learning in a recent Town Council meeting that the council has a surplus of funds and are looking for opportunities for the town, wouldn't this be a good time to use some of those funds or return to the companies to see if their offer still stands ... and move this project along? Why not make public transport a little more attractive to users ... who deserve better.

Two new shelters were installed by Oxford County Council from S106 funds (from the Park View development) and these new shelters now highlight the poor condition of the others. It would be great news to bus users if the Town Council could pick this up again and take action.

For example, the bus stop opposite the entrance to Blenheim is used by many residents, school children and visitors to Blenheim and Woodstock ... reducing car journey and emissions. The shelter's main purpose is to protect users from the elements but 4 large sections of perspex are missing which means you can get soaking wet during a downpour and in addition, the perspex that is left is badly smeared ... it's grotty ... not a great advert for town visitors or a great experience to those who use it. I'm aware of similar complaints about the Hill Rise bus stop.

Perhaps some want to see additional shelters, if so, where? I would like to see them well-lit, have the possibility of sitting, and display live updates of bus times.

Improving connectivity to cover the first and last mile to public transport by walking, cycling, and also between Woodstock and surrounding villages can help us access jobs, services, contribute to a healthier lifestyle, reduce carbon emissions and save us money too. Better and new routes and the slower speeds will help cyclists and walkers feel safer. Recently, the VTN group submitted an application to Oxford County Council for funding to help towards funding improvements (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans LCWIP). Many towns throughout Oxfordshire have submitted similar plans and VTN is unusual as the application is in support of developing a rural network.

Hilary Brown, Sustainable Woodstock
sustainablewoodstockuk@gmail.com

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SPORT - TENNIS

AN EXCITING DEVELOPMENT FOR SPORT IN WOODSTOCK is taking place at the town's Tennis Club. In February, WODC gave planning permission to light the courts through the winter months, which will transform the availability of tennis in Woodstock right through the year.



But they're not floodlights. The Club has undertaken careful research and installed an innovative tennis court lighting system called Tweener, developed in France and taking off all across Europe, being installed in the most prestigious tournament venues including Monte Carlo and the famous Mouratoglou tennis academy. Crucially, instead of being raised high on pylons, LED lights are mounted in strips along the side fences of the courts. One of the main benefits of this imaginative design is that, being fixed at court level rather than raised on high, it's elegant and unobtrusive.

And the energy consumption of Tweener is roughly half that of floodlighting. The carbon footprint is further (hugely) reduced because construction, delivery and installation are so simple: instead of needing machinery to excavate courts, lay cables and erect pylons, the Tweener strips were simply delivered to the Club and attached to the fences by brackets.

Before submitting the planning application, members at Woodstock play-tested the Tweener system at clubs in London, Devon and Manchester and were delighted with what they found. The Woodstock Tennis Club courts will now be lit for the first time this September.

For more details, visit the club's website page: <https://wbtc.org.uk/news/court-lighting-installed/>

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BRITISH TRANSPLANT GAMES

On the last Thursday of July, myself and a friend attended the opening of the British Transplant Games in Nottingham - I had also attended the opening ceremony in Coventry the previous year. I can hear you asking; why is this an article in the Woodstock and Bladon News?



The Black Living Donor Choir at the Civic Reception at Nottingham Castle

Well, to start with, the event is both emotional and inspirational, and I was pleased to have been invited as I was Woodstock Mayor at the time of the Coventry Games. The event takes place in different host cities every summer and the games see teams from hospitals across the UK come together to compete in a medley of sports. The 4-day event attracts around 1000 transplant athletes and more than 1700 supporters. An inclusive Games: transplant survivors including children as young as five can compete in more than 25 sports and indeed, many athletes also go on to compete at the World Transplant Games.

The Games are organised on behalf of Transplant Sport whose aim is to raise awareness of the need for organ donation, encourage transplant recipients to lead active lifestyles and show appreciation for, and remember their donors and their families. The British Transplant Games also help to increase the awareness of Anthony Nolan and their need for blood stem cells and bone marrow donation.

The picture above shows the Black Living Donor Choir, all of whom had given a kidney to relatives or strangers, and the choir master who was waiting for a suitable donor.

But why mention it here? Well the answer is that the games are coming to Oxfordshire in July 2025, with a parade from the centre of Woodstock to the Great Courtyard in Blenheim where the opening ceremony will take place.

If you would like to sponsor the event, or become a volunteer, or have any other ideas as to how you can help, please send an EMail in the first instance to editor@wobl.news. And of course we met the real Robin Hood in the oldest pub in England.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

KNIT FOR PEACE

Knit, crochet or draw for peace at Woodstock Methodist Church.

2pm-4pm on Mon 2nd Sep, Mon 7th Oct, Mon 4th Nov.

The charity Knit for Peace grew out of a project developed in Rwanda, which brought together women of traditionally hostile communities (Hutu and Tutsi) to knit items of clothes. The knitters were paid and the clothes were distributed to street children and orphans.

Knit for Peace has grown and grown, and there are now thousands of knitters, including many in the UK. People and their differences come together as they sit, knit and crochet, and help others in need. Finished items are sent to hundreds of places including hospitals, women's refuges, prisons, community groups, hospices and refugee camps. Receiving something handmade is very special.

So please bring your size 8 (4mm) needles and hooks (4mm) and help knit for peace. At present there is a particular need for large blankets, so the aim will be to make two of these – one knitted, one crocheted. They will be made up of simple 6 inch squares (wool be provided). If you would prefer to come and knit or crochet something else, either for the charity or to give to a friend, that would also be brilliant.

Besides the knitting, there will be opportunity to illustrate greeting cards, using simple instructions for drawing and colouring. Card makers can choose where to send them as an act of encouragement to friends or people in need.

Tea, coffee and cake will be available for knitters, crocheters, card makers and anyone else who would just like to call in for a chat. For more information, please contact Sue Harper at: susanharper2@hotmail.co.uk

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

The Woodstock Society 2024/25

The Society begins its 59th Season on Monday 16th September at 8.00 pm.

The season's programme begins with a talk 'Entrenching Inequality : the failures of privatisation and outsourcing...how did it come to this in the UK' from Emeritus Professor Gwyn Bevan, MA (Oxon)

Gwyn was former head of the Department of Management & Political Science at LSE. He has served on advisory committees to the Inspectorate of Police & Fire Services in England & Wales, the Education Committee of the Rockefeller Foundation on research in developing countries and England on allocating funding for healthcare and public health.

His opinion has been sought by many other organisations. Gwyn is the author of the widely acclaimed book: 'How Did Britain Come To This ? A century of systemic failures of government here.'

This will be a most opportune time to hear from such a well respected local resident.

The venue for all forthcoming talks will be: St Mary Magdalen Church, Woodstock

Annual membership WS £25.00 for 9 talks; Visitor fee £8.00. All are welcome.

Woodstock Social Club

The following notice was received from the Secretary and Acting Chair

WSC announced that it is temporarily closing from Monday 19th August.

The Committee made this difficult decision in order to protect the capital reserves we have and to mitigate losses we have sustained due to recent lack of use by our members and customers.

The committee are now looking at various ideas concerning how and when we will be able to re-open WSC and ask our members please to not speculate until further announcements are made.

The previous Chairperson position of WSC was resigned on 25th July and the committee wish to thank the outgoing chair for all their previous commitment and work provided to WSC. The Honorary Secretary will stand in as acting chair for future meetings, or a temporary chair will be nominated for each meeting, as required.

There will be an AGM held on Saturday 12th October, at 7pm in the WSC hall and we invite and request all our members to attend.

For any questions, enquiries and renewals, please contact secretary.woodstocksc@gmail.com

Probus

Probus has had two Monthly Meetings since our last report with very interesting Speakers. The first was Johnathan Clarke, Development Director at Oxford United Football Club. He spoke about the new Stadium planned near the Oxford Parkway Station.

The Stadium will be to international standards seating 16,000 and incorporating a 180 bed Hotel and conference/banqueting facilities for up to 1,000. There will also be retail space facing the roundabout and parking for 250 cars which will be open throughout the week and weekend. Cost of the project is around £150,000,000 and will provide the Yellows with a pitch and spectator seating they can be proud of. The start date depends to a large extent on the planning process.

Our second Speaker came as a duo from London -Oxford Airport, James Dillon-Godfray, Business Development and David Austen, Air Traffic. Further Capital investment has been going into the Airport to support expansion. Many may have noticed the new 3 hanger facility built for the Helicopter part of Airbus at a cost of £50,000,000. This is where the standard versions are adapted for special mission such as air sea rescue, air ambulance and military capabilities. Flight control has also benefitted with a big upgrade in the Radar system. This means that they are able to land a greater variety of aircraft including small commercial aircraft the sort that you see at London City. There are however no present plans for a scheduled service. All this has led to the Airspace - Public Consultation which is currently underway. In the next phase of the Consultation the proposed take-off and landing utilisation of airspace and flight paths will be put forward. This should include both fixed wing and rotary aircraft and the phase that Woodstock and surrounding villages need to consider very fully in providing comment. Final consideration of the proposals is undertaken by the Civil Aviation Authority. In our vote of thanks to the Speakers we recognised the important economic driver effect that this brings while worrying that our quiet rural corner of England is slowly slipping by.

Speed was also on our agenda as were visits to Cotswold Airport and ProDrive in Banbury - if you want to win the Le Mans in an Aston Martin Racing car or enter the DAKAR Rally in a hot Subaru - this is the place to go!

Michael Bowles, Past President



WOODSTOCK SURGERY

Editor's Comment: The following is a letter dated 27 June 2024, sent by the Woodstock Surgery GP partners to West Oxfordshire District Council, Woodstock Town Council, Cherwell District Council, the Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, & West Berkshire Integrated Care Board, and the Patients of Woodstock Surgery. As Editor, I wrote to all the stakeholders to request some dialogue, but sadly had no replies as we went to press. Hopefully next month we will be able get some answers and have more discussions on this important issue.

Dear Council Members, Integrated Care Board Representatives, and Residents,

Subject: Urgent Concerns Regarding Planned Housing Developments and Impact on Local Healthcare Services

As General Practitioner partners at Woodstock Surgery, we are writing to you to address an urgent and pressing issue that significantly impacts our community's healthcare services. Our surgery is currently operating at full capacity, with no available space to accommodate additional staff. The existing doctors are already managing patient loads that exceed those of comparable local practices.

It has come to our attention that local housing developers are planning to submit proposals for the construction of between 500 and 1000 new homes in our area. While we understand the need for housing development to accommodate a growing population, this expansion presents a considerable challenge for our healthcare provision capabilities.

Current Challenges:

1. Space Constraints: Our surgery has reached its physical capacity. We have tried to raise this a number of times over a number of years. We lack the space to hire additional healthcare staff or utilise the NHS national programme of ‘additional roles,’ which limits our ability to expand services.
2. Patient Load: The current doctors are managing a higher number of patients than is sustainable. This strain impacts the quality of care we can provide, and increases wait times for appointments.
3. Resource Limitations: Despite our best efforts, we are stretched thin in terms of medical resources and administrative support, making it increasingly difficult to maintain the high standards of care our patients deserve.

Projected Impact of Housing Development:

1. Increased Patient Numbers: The influx of residents from 500 to 1000 new homes will likely overwhelm our already burdened practice. We estimate a significant rise in the number of patients seeking our services, which we are not equipped to handle under current conditions.
2. Potential Closure of Patient List: To manage the demand and maintain a reasonable quality of care, we may be forced to close our patient list. This would mean we could no longer accept new patients, leaving many residents without access to local healthcare services.
3. Strain on Existing Healthcare Infrastructure: Without intervention, the new development will place additional pressure on an already strained healthcare infrastructure, exacerbating issues such as appointment availability, timely medical attention, and overall patient satisfaction.

Call to Action: We urgently request that the Local Councils and the Integrated Care Board collaborate to address this impending crisis. Specifically, we need:

1. Funding and Support for New Premises: Investment in new, larger premises that can accommodate additional staff and resources to ensure we have modern, flexible, and adaptable accommodation for the future.
2. Strategic Planning: Proactive planning to ensure that the healthcare needs of an expanded population are met without compromising the quality of care for existing patients.
3. Community Engagement: Transparency and engagement with the community regarding plans and measures being taken to support local healthcare services.
4. Utilization of Section 106 Agreements: Leveraging Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure contributions from housing developers. These contributions can be directed towards expanding healthcare facilities to meet the increased demand, thereby ensuring that the necessary infrastructure accompanies the housing development.

We believe that with timely and coordinated action, we can mitigate the negative impacts of the housing development and continue to provide high-quality healthcare to all residents of Woodstock and the surrounding area.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. We look forward to your prompt response and collaborative efforts to ensure the wellbeing of our community.

Sincerely,

Drs Duncan Becker, Tanya Frankel, Wing Cheung, Tom Fisher, Maureen Obiakor (GP Partners, Woodstock Surgery)

Bladon Parish Council

Meet your new Parish Councillors

Councillor Liam Rogan moved out of Bladon and has stepped down from the Parish Council. He was pivotal in helping to organize the village Jubilee celebrations, managing finances and maintenance and relocation of our village defibrillator and he will be missed!

Rogan’s departure left an opening, advertised in the June issue of this newsletter, which recently has been filled by our newest co-opted Parish Councillor, Fabio Assandri, who brings his own brand of enthusiasm and expertise to the role. Councillor Assandri’s areas of interest will be: Emergency Plan Management; Finance; Governance; Parking; Planning Applications; Conservation Areas; Public Consultations; and the War Memorial.

In addition, two other members have been co-opted over the past year: Councillor Tom Sayers (Areas of Responsibility: Traffic (inc. calming/speedwatch/crossings); Emergency Plan Management; Finance; Governance; Parking; Planning Applications; Conservation Areas; Public Consultations; War Memorial) and Councillor Colin Fletcher (Areas of Responsibility: Cemetery; Environment (inc. flooding/drainage/estate); Emergency Plan Management; Finance; Governance; Parking; Planning Applications; Conservation Areas; Public Consultations; War Memorial).

Find out more about your Parish Councillors on the Bladon Parish Council website: bladon-pc.gov.uk. If you have any questions, please contact the Clerk at clerk@bladon-pc.gov.uk.

Defibrillator Training

In June, St John’s Ambulance ran a very successful, well-attended training session on our new defibrillator, which is located on the front of The White House. We will be organising another training session in the next few months for those who were unable to attend the last session. Please keep an eye on the Bladon Community Facebook page for updates.

The old defibrillator was donated to Medical Life Lines, an apolitical humanitarian charity that delivers medical aid to Ukraine, focusing on civilian casualties.

Bladon Snippets from the Past

The great wind in the 1980s created such havoc. Climate change or a hole in the ozone layer were not blamed. Huge cedar trees on the top of Bladon Woods, a statement on the skyline were blown over, their great roots torn out of the ground leaving a gaping hole.

An area of conifer trees toppled over like ninepins. So much to wonder at! One subsequent glory a legacy of hundreds of super-large Foxglove seeds had germinated in the void as thick as cress. A memorable sight to recall where the conifers had been.

It’s an ill wind that blows nobody any good.

Mary F. Sitch

Bladon Community Lunches

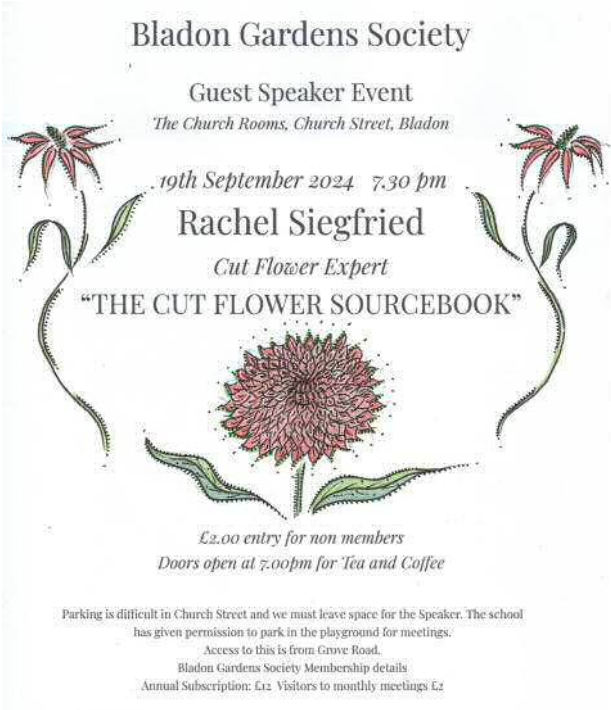
For over 40 years we have held community lunches in Bladon. These are facilitated by the Church; we are allowed to use the Church Room free of charge, but the lunches are run and attended by a diverse group of people some with connections to the Church and some with no connection at all.

The lunches are held on the first Tuesday of every month. Diners come from the surrounding villages, Woodstock and of course, Bladon. We meet at around 12 noon and lunch is served at 12.30pm.

Whilst some community lunches have a smack of charity about them, the Bladon lunches have no other purpose than to enable people to socialise and enjoy a meal together. We charge £5 to cover costs and the cooks do not charge for their labour. We find that this covers costs adequately and we usually make a small surplus. From the surplus, we give a donation to the Church of £150 per year towards the costs of heat and light. We serve a main course (let us know if you are vegetarian), a choice of home-made cakes and a cup of coffee, all included in the price. Our Christmas lunch is £10 but is a full Christmas turkey lunch with all the trimmings, a glass of wine and of course Christmas pudding and crackers! (interpret the last word as you will).

Since the Covid lockdown was lifted the number of diners has fallen so if you would like to come along and join us, you would be most welcome. Our next lunch is on 3 September. We would also welcome anyone interested in helping with the cooking. Usually each team cooks 2 meals per year.

If you would like further information, please do not hesitate to contact Mollie Hance on 01993 811354 or email mollie.hance@tiscali.co.uk.



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Combe Community Cinema

Saturday, September 21 sees the start of a new season at the Community cinema in the Combe Community Hub - the former Methodist Church - in Park Street, Combe.

Last season, we had a very successful showing of the National Theatre's 'Dear England'. In September, we will be showing the NT's hit production of Noel Coward's provocative comedy 'Present Laughter' starring Andrew Scott (Vanya, Fleabag), Sophie Thompson (Four Weddings and a Funeral) and Indira Varma (Mission Impossible). This was filmed live during its sell-out run at The Old Vic.

To book tickets just go to ticketsource.co.uk and enter Combe Community Cinema. Tickets are £12.00 (or £13.00 on the door if seats are available).

On Friday, October 18, we will be showing 'Hit the Road', a funny family drama with delightful performances from its actors, particularly six-year-old Rayan Sarlak. On Friday, November 22 the film will be 'The Holdovers'. Set in late 1970 and early 1971, the award-winning film stars Paul Giamatti as a strict classics teacher at a New England boarding school who is forced to chaperone a handful of students with nowhere to go over the Christmas break.

All screenings, apart from 'Present Laughter', will feature subtitles. A bar will be available serving wine, beer and soft drinks. Note the opening time for 'Present Laughter' is 7pm, with the screening starting at 7.30pm. For all the other films the opening time is 7.30pm, with the main feature starting at 8.00pm.

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Gwen Mason will be holding her annual coffee morning on Friday 27th September 2024 at 12 Plane Tree Way from 10.00 a.m. till Noon.

There will be a raffle and Bring and Buy. Do come and join Gwen and her regular helpers.

There will be Cancer Research Christmas cards on sale.

Tel 811473 for any enquiries.

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OXFORD BUS AND MORRIS MOTORS MUSEUM

Heritage Open days in 2024 is from Friday 6 to Sunday 15 September.



The museum has taken part for many years, giving free heritage bus rides in the City of Oxford from 10am until approximately 4pm. The main stop is in Bonn Square and this year we shall be there on Saturday 14 September. Visit our website for more details: www.oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk. Come along and have a free tour of Oxford.

This year we are also holding events on Sunday 8 September at the museum. Volunteers will be talking on 'The Ups and Downs in the Development of the Bicycle' and 'Reducing bus heights to fit under Oxford Railway Bridge'. For details and booking, go to www.heritageopendays.org.uk.

On Heritage Open Days there are lots of places to visit, many not usually open to the public like the Old Ticket Office at Culham Station, special exhibitions at museums such as 'Tube Exhibit Journeys' at The Rumble Museum in Cheyney School and others at the Witney and District and the Aston Martin Heritage Museums.

Heritage Open Days is England's largest community-led festival of history and culture, involving thousands of local volunteers and organisations. In Oxford it is known as Open Doors. Every year in September it brings people together to celebrate their heritage, community and history. Stories are told, traditions explored, and histories brought to life. It is your chance to see hidden places and try out new experiences – and it is all FREE.

From time to time visiting buses turn up at the museum, sometimes without warning! Recently CG 9607 was driven to the museum. It is 92 years old! It was an AEC Regal 4 (4-cylinder petrol engine) with a Harrington body seating 32 with a rear entrance but had a new 6-cylinder diesel engine in the late 1930s. It continued in service unchanged until 1957 when it was damaged in a fire at Provincial's Hoeford depot.

It was fitted with a front entrance body and re-entered service as a one man operated bus in 1962. CG 9607

continued in service until 1970. One reason that it continued in operation until well after more modern vehicles were available was due to its short length, which was needed to negotiate a tight turn over a narrow railway bridge on the Eastleigh-Fareham railway.

After a short stay in the ownership of a local scout group, the bus was acquired for preservation by David Whitaker, who brought it to the museum.



CG9607: 1934 AEC Regal 4 Photo: P. Statham



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BEAUTIFUL BLENHEIM 2024

Results Revealed



number of occasions at different times of the year, and the day in November when I took this photograph was particularly lovely."

"I thought the way the afternoon sun lit up the trees and reflected in the water was magical and the ducks just added another dimension to the picture."

Barry was presented with the First Place prize at an award ceremony at Blenheim Palace - of a Champagne afternoon tea for two, plus a Private Tour of Blenheim Palace and a Blenheim Palace hamper.

Regarding the First Place winning photograph, His Grace The Duke of Marlborough, said: "I chose this photograph as it has captured the beauty of the colours shining on the leaves of the trees together with the ducks peacefully feeding in the darker end of the water."

Also congratulations to Mark Hatt - awarded Second Place and another congratulations to Barry Roberts - awarded Third Place.

A selection of higher-placed photos are on display alongside the IGPTY 17 exhibition at Blenheim Palace until 9th September, 2024.

Now in its sixth exhibition year, the IGPTY-run (International Garden Photographer of the Year) Special Award for Blenheim Palace is now a well-established competition and winning is highly-coveted by entrants.

From pastoral watery scenes to the venerable old oak trees that Blenheim is famous for, the latest dramatic awarded images have now been revealed for the 'Beautiful Blenheim 2024' (Competition 17) Special Award!

First place was awarded to Barry Roberts - for the photograph 'Lovely on the Water' (pictured on the left).

Barry Roberts said: "It really made my day when I heard I had been awarded 1st place in the Beautiful Blenheim Special Award. I have visited Blenheim Palace on a

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STOP PRESS

The Town Council has a new Clerk - Mr Valentin Lavdakov, who started at the beginning of August. We wish him well. We asked for a few words to introduce himself, and he replied that they are currently restructuring so will provide more information later.

The Social Club sadly closed its doors on Sunday 19 August for a couple of months (see Page 31). We hope to have more news for the next issue, and we are planning to write an article on the history of this important local institution.

Police Notice. Our PCSO has reported that there have been a number of thefts from vehicles. Cars parked in beauty spots are still getting broken into as valuables left within are on display. There have also been a number of thefts of vehicles - predominately pickup style.

Wootton Talks. The talk at 7.30pm on Friday September 13th had to be re-arranged and is now Drew Gardner who will detail his monumental project recreating photographs of black American Civil War combatants with their descendants. The project was three years in the making, following comprehensive searches of archives for photographs of black soldiers, where the identity of the person in the photograph could be verified.

SGN. All households (2,180 of them) should be back on mains gas by publication date - we are planning to have a Locals Views page on this next month. Please write in.



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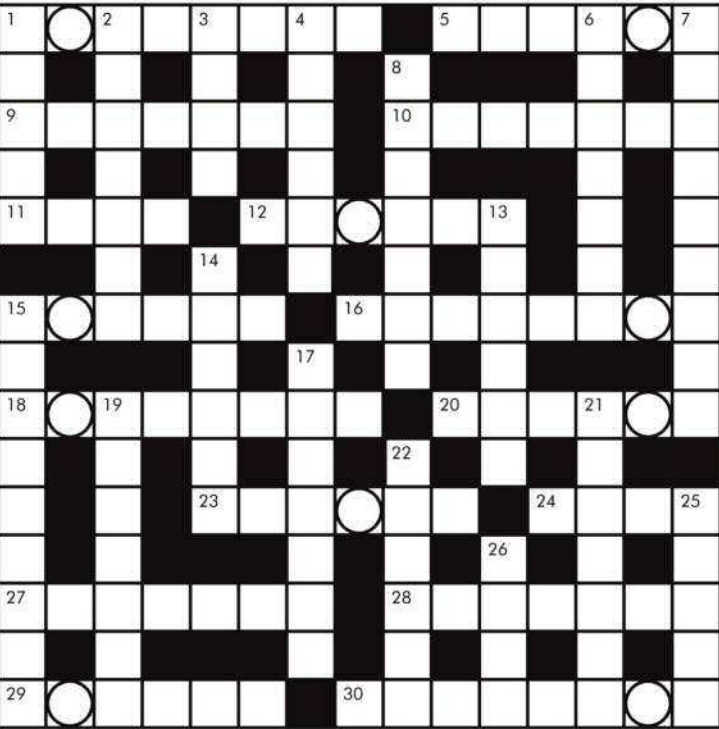
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Solve the clues to this straight crossword. Read through the letters in the marked squares to reveal a Team GB Olympian who won a gold medal at Paris 2024.



- Across

 - 1. Compliant
 - 5. Demilitarise
 - 9. Blood sugar
 - 10. Mobile home
 - 11. Brief letter
 - 12. Dump waste illegally (3-3)
 - 15. Tedious
 - 16. Scheming
 - 18. Songwriter
 - 20. Evade capture
 - 23. Plaza
 - 24. Wound mark
 - 27. Mimic
 - 28. Wailing Irish spirit
 - 29. To do list
 - 30. Automobiles
- Down

 - 1. Harmonium
 - 2. 0 degrees latitude
 - 3. Press clothes
 - 4. Sewing implement
 - 6. Air sacs
 - 7. Long speech
 - 8. Coal-carrying pail
 - 13. Penalise
 - 14. Light bites
 - 15. Classic dancer
 - 17. Promised
 - 19. Need, call for
 - 21. Intoxicating liquid
 - 22. Multiply threefold
 - 25. Tall woody grasses
 - 26. Against

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