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December 2024

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Editorial

When I first took over WOBL I had to use my personal bank account in order to get the magazine up and running quickly. For various reasons, I have now decided to publish the magazine from a limited company. The magazine will therefore be trading as Woodstock and Bladon News Limited, and a new bank account has been opened, details of which can be found in the Subscriptions section.

We have also joined the Free Speech Union, which offers advice on what should and shouldn't be said in the increasingly sensitive public arena.

Related to that subject, the Town Council has now changed its policy on what is allowed to be sold and displayed on Council premises. As a result, WOBL will no longer be on sale there. However, when one door closes, another opens, and we are delighted to welcome The Woodstock Greengrocers as a new point of sale. Also, I am very happy to announce that Blenheim Palace has kindly allowed our local magazine to be sold on one of their counters in their beautiful retail area. Thank you to all the organisations that sell this magazine.

I am afraid that there will be a gap on 'Woodstock Around The World'. There is, though, a lovely article about a recent visit of MG TB's in September. And with the announcement of an election for the Town Council on 16 January (tbc), there is further discussion on this topic. I have also been sent two letters on the flooding issue in Woodstock and would welcome any other contributions.

Due to the Town Council election, I feel we should publish a possibly shortened edition for January.

With many thanks to all who contribute, to those who help with the distribution, to our advertisers, and of course to our readers and subscribers.

And finally, a very Happy Christmas to everyone.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

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This month's front cover shows a watercolour 'Approaching the hill, Woodstock' by John Somerscales. To see more of John's work, please visit www.jdsomerscales.co.uk.

Answers to November Crossword - The endangered Australian animal was a 'Hairy Nosed Wombat'
Across: 8. Behemoth, 9. Mortar, 10. Roll, 11. Steer, 12. Easy, 13. Immunise, 15. Lotto, 16. Play up, 19. Assets, 21. Cameo, 23. Lewdness, 26. Warm, 27. Drool, 29. Term, 30. Berlin, 31. Squirrel.
Down: 1. Reform, 2. Jealousy, 3. Bonsai, 4. Ghee, 5. Umbrella, 6. Priest, 7. Passport, 14. Easel, 17. Lactated, 18. Prodding, 20. Sanitary, 22. Mumble, 24. Walrus, 25. Surfed, 28. Oast.

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Subscriptions

The magazine costs £2 per issue, or £20 per year.

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An online version can also be purchased. Please send an EMail to editor@wobl.news

Please do write for our Magazine

Send your contributions to: editor@wobl.news

The next deadline is Christmas Eve, Tuesday 24 December for the January 2025 issue.

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

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Woodstock Town Meeting: A New Doctors' Surgery

Woodstock Town Council called a Town Meeting, held on 21st November, to ask the relevant parties what was happening with respect to a new surgery and to give the community an opportunity to ask questions. Chaired by the Mayor Councillor Ann Grant, speakers included Calum Miller MP, Dr Duncan Becker from the surgery, Oxfordshire County Councillor Andy Graham, and Roger File and Marilyn Davies from Blenheim Estates. Councillor Ashton from West Oxfordshire District Council was unable to attend. The meeting was recorded by the Town Clerk.

The well attended meeting started with short presentations from each speaker and all expressed their disappointment and acknowledged the frustration held by all.

Calum Miller summarised what he understood as the current situation after meeting with stakeholders himself and explained the complex process involved in creating a new surgery. The GPs own the current surgery and the Integrated Care Board (ICB), regional organisations responsible for planning and funding NHS services, is not responsible for financing the building of a new surgery, only its operation. Ultimately, the ICB have to approve a new surgery. Blenheim could help by identifying a possible local site being the major landowner in the area. Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council can help with planning but have limited roles. The question was posed as to what is actually needed in a new surgery. The key issues are finding a location, funding the build and securing operating costs.

Dr. Becker said they had spent the last 25 years looking for a new building. They currently have 9,700 patients with 40% from Woodstock and 60% from the surrounding area, with one of the oldest populations in Oxfordshire. There is money for more GPs but they are unable to accommodate them due to lack of space. He acknowledged the many issues facing the surgery including poor wheelchair access and no parking. The surgery has taken advice from the company that advised on the Long Hanborough and Chipping Norton surgeries and confirmed the old police station site in Hensington Road was deemed too small by the ICB, not allowing for future expansion. The GPs preferred an edge of town site. With the increase in the local population there is a real possibility that soon they will not be able to take on any more patients and close their list.

Councillor Andy Graham from Oxfordshire County Council was passionate about social responsibility and wanted to take up this cause and has been working hard to promote discussions between the stakeholders to come up with a solution. He said that OCC and

WODC had to find ways of prioritising funds and work together with the developers. He wanted the project to have a timeline and be more transparent.

Roger File from Blenheim explained that Blenheim had purchased the police station site in 2017 in order for it to be used for a surgery but as explained the application failed as the ICB did not think the site large enough. He explained the ICB had a limited pot of money and to win support from the ICB the new application had to be better than other bids.

Town Councillor Sarah Williams read a statement from the ICB. Basically, the ICB are responsible for GP services in Oxfordshire and the GPs own or lease a practice. It is the GPs responsibility to identify a new suitable site which they had not yet done. The ICB does not hold capital to build a new surgery, it funds their operation.

There were many questions from the audience which I will try to summarise. There were several questions regarding the size and suitability of the Hensington Road site and that other examples exist of similar sized surgeries. Could a compromise be found? There was general consent from the panel that as the ICB decided this site was unsuitable that thoughts should move on from this site. Roger File explained that there had been a lot of work going on in the background that perhaps the community was not aware of and Marilyn Davies said that they could communicate this better in future. Timeline questions were raised, Calum Miller said there would be a meeting before Christmas and hoped for progress on funding and a site by the middle of 2025. He would be speaking to the government on ways forward. Roger File said realistically when a site had been secured with ICB approval the planning application would take 1 to 2 years and building 1 to 2 years so 2 to 4 years in total. At this point the Mayor asked if building new houses could cease until a new surgery is built. There was no response from the panel. It was noted that will people buy houses in Woodstock if there are no places available at the surgery?

Regarding using S106 (money from the housing developer given for local infrastructure) to fund the surgery build, Andy Graham said this is too late as the money from Park View, Hill Rise and Banbury Road had already been allocated. Andy Graham said there is a need for District and County Councils to prioritise health provision in S106 funding.

Regarding possible sites, the Recreation Ground off of New Road was rejected due to poor highway access. Roger File suggested a site to the south east of Park View, land in Cherwell District where Blenheim had previously applied to build houses but had recently

Woodstock Town Meeting: A New Doctors' Surgery (cont)

withdrawn their application. Councillor Poskitt suggested this option would take too long and that the Banbury Road development would be more suitable. She said, in her experience, planning development is not stopped on the grounds of infrastructure. From evaluations and modelling Roger File said he knew what the ICB required and that the ICB were also talking to Cherwell District Council regarding the planned Begbroke development.

The question was posed was there a contingency plan if the surgery **did** become unusable? Dr Becker explained that they were trying to make it better wherever possible but it is an old building and they cannot increase the floor space.

To summarise. New land or an existing site suitable for the long-term provision of services must be identified as soon as possible. An application is then made to the ICB with funding for the land and building to be identified.

The Mayor thanked the speakers and the meeting concluded.

Graham Brown

THE WOODSTOCK SOCIETY

Monday 16th December 2024

QUENTIN HAYES



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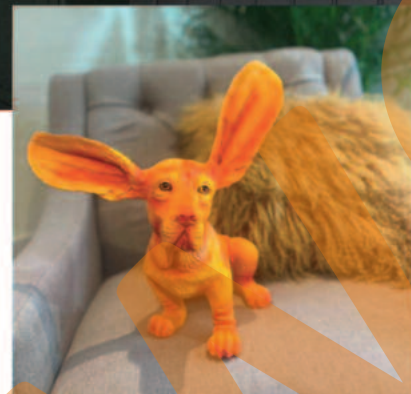
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Woodstock Literature Society

Edwardian Fiction: Feminism and Terrorism

The Edwardian period, the not quite ten years from the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 to that of her son Edward VII in 1910, has been referred to as a historical punctuation mark in literature between high Victorian style and modernism. However, writer and literary critic Dr David Grylls in his November lecture to the Woodstock Literature Society, "Edwardian Fiction: Feminism and Terrorism", guided his audience through examples of the political, social and cultural phenomena that surely can be seen as creating an individual character for this era.

To set the scene, Dr Grylls first identified four recurrent themes in Edwardian fiction: the contrast between surface calm and turbulence below, rebellion and conflict, social divisions and unfulfilled love. Although these themes are inherently serious, highlighting the societal tensions of the time, they are often treated comically or ironically. All four of these themes were then tied by Dr Grylls into the three works he used as examples of the genre.

Anna of the Five Towns by Arnold Bennett, although published in 1902, is set in 1889-1890. Following on from the "new women" characters in the novels of the late Victorian period, Dr Grylls charts in this book the progression into "feminism" of a sort, hemmed in as it is by conventions of social and family position, religion and romantic ideals. Interestingly, as is the case with Bennett, many of the most successful Edwardian novels which focused on the retarded lives and discontentment of women were written by men. Having concluded that Anna's attempts to escape from male control ultimately failed, Dr Grylls's found a modicum of real liberation in his second "feminism" example, E.M. Forster's A Room with a View (1908). The willingness of the central female character to take risks to fulfil her own happiness seems Edwardian, rather than Victorian, and is set against the background of the more secular, progressive values of that time.

The second topic, that of "terrorism", was discussed by Dr Grylls in the context of Joseph Conrad's The Secret Agent (1907). Although Edwardian, Dr Grylls pointed out the many ways in which it is a precursor to modernism, with features such as the themes of anarchy, nihilism, and espionage, and the use of irony, cynicism and disrupted chronology, as well as naturalistic dark and squalid settings.

Dr Grylls succinct and well supported defence of Edwardian fiction surely disabused all those listening of the idea that this short, but significant, period was just a "semi-colon" between Victorianism and modernism in literature.

Rebecca Vickers

The first WLS talk of 2025 will be on Saturday 18 January when Professor Peter McCullough will speak on John Donne. For details of next year's programme, see www.woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk



Dr David Grylls

The Woodstock Society

The society enjoyed a really fabulous talk by Brian Kay in October.

Brian was a founder member of the Kings Singers, having studied music at Kings College, Cambridge. As the bass member of the troupe, this 14 year period took him to 2,000 concerts all over the world and recalls being part of the backing group for The Pink Floyd!

We learned how, from his singing start, he developed a second career as a choral conductor, leading the Leith Musical Festival and the Huddersfield Choral Society before being appointed as the principal conductor of the Really Big Chorus of 2,000 singers.

From these achievements, greater glory followed in the form of a third career as a radio presenter, presenting 'Friday Night is Music Night' on Radio 2 and '3 for All' and 'Brian Kay's Light Programme' on Radio 3.

He had clearly loved every part of his musical career and his presentation and humour were infectious.

We would like to thank him for a marvelous evening.

Interview with the Rev. Sarah Bourne

Woodstock's new Rector talks to Linda Gleees



There is a new face at the Church of St Mary Magdalene. Woodstock's new Rector is the Rev. Sarah Bourne who was licensed by the bishop in a formal ceremony on 2nd October.

Although she has only been in Woodstock a few weeks, Sarah has been packing in meetings and visits in the hope of familiarising herself with her parish as quickly as possible. She has already visited all the schools, met all the other ministers from other churches, and visited the Town Council. She loves the magnificent view from her Rectory window across the lake and relishes the walk through Blenheim park to the sister church of Bladon.

Her background is relevant to her current role, as she is keen to utilise the arts to bring people to the church, and her career over the years has nourished this ambition. Sarah is a Classics graduate from Cambridge, and also a keen musician who plays the oboe and piano. She explained to me that her father was an ordained minister and she grew up steeped in church music. Before her own ordination she often played the organ for church services. At Cambridge she met her future husband Chris singing in the Magdalene College Chapel choir. They married and had three daughters, all of whom are musical like their parents and indeed the oldest, Catriona, is a professional musician playing the harp and flute. Sarah was delighted that at her induction service Catriona was there to accompany the prayers with her harp.

I asked her whether her musical background had influenced her decision to come to Woodstock, and was really pleased to learn that she had been attracted by the description in the parish profile of Woodstock and Bladon as an arts-enriched town. Sarah and her husband were based at Shipston-on-Stour since the early 1990s where Chris followed his calling as a vet and Sarah was a secondary school teacher. After her ordination in 2015, she served as a priest in Shipston-on-Stour and the surrounding villages before going to work at Coventry Cathedral. At Shipston she and Chris and their three daughters formed a 'family band' offering a mix of classical music with ceilidhs for charity events at churches throughout the Cotswolds. Her daughter Catriona has now formed a quartet with other professional musicians and has just released an album, called 'Triquetra', whose style is described as 'folk-infused jazz'. At this point, I suggested that a charity concert featuring Catriona and her quartet in the church here might well prove extremely enjoyable! Later, she held the position of Chaplain for the Arts at the Church of St Mary Banbury. Her most remarkable achievement was organising an arts festival at the church in 2022: single-handedly she planned events ranging from choral concerts to poetry readings to ceramic workshops. Her over-riding purpose is to leverage the arts as a means of access to the church for the whole community, and she hopes to continue to expand and diversify the offering by the church to local people here in Woodstock. In particular she hopes to bring more young people into the church, and has started with the Marlborough School Christmas carol service this year, as well as carol services for both the primary schools in Woodstock and Bladon.

At a practical level she wishes to bring more volunteers into the church to spread the responsibility and the rewards of caring for an ancient building with a modern community role. She is especially impressed by the quality of the volunteering already in place in the parish. At a religious level she has been profoundly influenced by time spent at Coventry Cathedral with its well-known mission of peace and reconciliation started in the aftermath of the Second World War, and she is a trustee for the Community of the Cross of Nails (CCN) which is based at Coventry Cathedral. She arranged Zoom talks and online services from St Mary's Banbury with Christians in other European countries during the Covid lockdown in order to build closer links and harmony between the UK and Europe at a time of separation and political tension. I wondered to myself whether she would be interested in attempting the work of reconciliation in Woodstock, which sadly always seems to be required at our local political level.

But I decided to leave this discussion for another day! Her skills and faith may yet be needed.

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Letters to the Editor

Section S106

Oxfordshire County Council being the local authority for Oxfordshire is supposedly committed to delivering top quality services and value for money on behalf of the county's 600,000+ residents. However, having run a business in Woodstock since 1996 as well as living in town, I have witnessed a deterioration in the service levels that are available to Woodstock residents.

New housing has dramatically increased the town's population without any thought or mitigation given to how already overstretched essential services such as school places and GP appointment availability at the Woodstock Surgery are increased. The pavements are cracked with loose paving which is hazardous especially for elderly people, there is an abundance of litter strewn around town, weeds are allowed to grow unchecked with deep roots establishing themselves at the base of stone walls which will eventually cause structural damage to properties many of which are Listed buildings, just to name a few areas of concern.

A lack of funding seems to be the common excuse and reason given for service levels having deteriorated, so imagine my surprise to learn that 'cash-strapped' Oxfordshire County Council had £278 million stashed away in its bank accounts in May 2024 which had been received as compulsory payments by housing developers under rules contained within Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

These compulsory payments are made by housing developers to Oxfordshire County Council which must be used to mitigate any negative effect that new houses being built will have on the essential services such as schools, pavements, footpaths Etc. Sensible one would have thought, as an increase of residents living in an area will of course put pressure on already over-stretched essential services and the infrastructure in general.

It appears as if Oxfordshire County Council had however 'banked' the £278 million of money paid across to them by the aforementioned housing developers under Section 106 and they have not used that money for the purposes that it was intended. To make matters worse, there's the possibility that housing developers might seek to claw back the unspent money after five years of it not having been used.

Looking at the situation further, it appears as if Oxfordshire County Council had collected, received and 'banked' £16.1 million by May 2024 from Section 106 payments which should have been used to improve services in Woodstock and Chipping Norton combined.

The £278 million and the Woodstock/Chipping Norton £16.1 million is not the definitive figure and the end of this 'banked' money scandal, because each time a housing developer receives planning permission to build new houses in our area, they are obligated to pay additional monies across to Oxfordshire County Council under Section 106, so the aforementioned 'banked' figures will surely rise as time passes.

All towns must be fit for purpose and be able to support the needs of residents. There are a number of services in Woodstock which fall outside of an acceptable standard that need to be addressed.

May I suggest that Woodstock Town Council challenges Oxfordshire County Council and insists that the Section 106 money that should have been used to benefit Woodstock and improve services that has been 'banked', is immediately released and used for the purpose that it was intended which in turn will benefit all Woodstock residents.

Andrew Hennell, Antiques Of Woodstock

Pollarded Trees and Christmas Lights

I write to support the views of the letter in your last issue from Susan McGlynn. I don't live in any of the streets in which the trees have been pollarded, so I can't comment on the birdsong etc but I do think that Woodstock looks a worse place for the work done.

I moved to Woodstock twelve or so years ago and when I got a chance to have a clear look at the place I thought how lucky we are to live in such a beautiful town. My friends that visit from Oxford and further afield also comment with the same view.

I am no arboriculturist but I do know that one can pollard trees any time within their dormancy period, which can be as late as May in some years but can be safely treated up to the end of March in all years.

So why do so shortly after the Christmas lights are placed on them? The lights in Woodstock are always something to look forward to. I realise there are still some lights on the smaller trees but the larger trees when lit are so much more impressive during the festive period. I was pleased to see the lights going up earlier this year only to find a week or so later they weren't there and the trees had been butchered.

I assume that there is a chargeable cost to the work of erection of the lighting, when I asked who was responsible I was told there are two councils involved. The Town Council and Oxfordshire County Council. When I asked who on earth was responsible for the extra cost, I was told that it was us, apparently. It is clear to me that neither of the two councils consult with one another.

I assume that when asked each council would blame the other. Is this due to petty rivalry or just total incompetence? I do notice from the WOBL that there seems to be a lot of unrest within the Town Council. A lot of questions were asked in the last issue and perhaps when this issue comes out we may have some clearer answers given. It does look, reading the last WOBL, as though someone needs to grab the subject by the scruff of the neck and sort the trouble out.

C.W.Baldwin

Solar Power

I wrote to this magazine just over a year ago about solar power, trying to balance some issues arising from the Botley West project and would like to do this again.

It is widely accepted now that there is a critical need to generate clean energy to reduce carbon emissions to fight climate change. To this end, solar and wind are relatively quick, easy and cheap ways to do this. Yes, they are not perfect but they are currently the best tools we have. The comprehensive report from the World Bank from 2020 (Solar Power Potential by Country) states that the UK is second from bottom on the ranking of the potential of countries to generate solar power but it also states that even here in the UK it is a worthwhile exercise. That is the reason we see solar farms and solar panels all around us. Oxfordshire needs energy and our area is considered unsuitable for onshore wind which therefore leaves solar. The under investment in the National Grid means there are only certain areas where large scale solar can be installed and connected, Botley West has that connection. The Government is desperately trying to catch up on a lack of action in the last 20 years and solar is a relatively fast way to do this. Studies show that solar installations, depending on their location, become carbon neutral after 2-6 years. The website of the Low Carbon Hub, a social enterprise based in Oxford which develops community-owned renewable energy installations, has an excellent Q & A section on Botley West which debunks myths and misinformation about solar power. We need to install solar on roofs and in fields, as quickly as possible, this is an emergency.

So what can we do? Wait, leave it to others, hope for the best? Engaging in the process will help. Push for more and push hard. Push for more tree planting, better hedges, more wildlife reserves, more public footpaths, more biodiversity, more community benefit. If this project does go ahead then the community benefit fund of £50K a year offered by the developers to the local communities is insulting for a project of this size. A similar project in Nottingham is offering £1million a year, other renewable projects far more...

Graham Brown

Woodstock Town Council (WTC)

I am writing in to raise serious concerns about what appears to be gross failings in governance and transparency at Woodstock Town Council (WTC). These alleged failures have left many in the community disillusioned and questioning whether this council is fit to serve.

As a result, I have formally requested that West Oxfordshire District Council investigate WTC's conduct and consider disbanding the current council, paving the way for fresh elections. While this is a drastic step, I believe it is necessary given the weight of the allegations and the damage already done to public confidence.

The following key issues warrant immediate attention:

1. Leadership Failures
Mayor John Banbury's abrupt resignation has yet to be fully explained, leaving the community in the dark. What followed was a hastily arranged meeting where Cllr Ann Grant was appointed as the new Mayor, with what appears to be little to no transparency or public engagement in the process.

2. Suppression of Public Voices
The recently implemented Public Participation Protocol has, in effect, stripped residents of meaningful opportunities to engage with their elected representatives. It grants the Chair unchecked power to silence speakers and even allows for the use of police to remove individuals - policies that appear to contravene Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998 and stifle democratic freedoms.

3. Censorship Through Policies
The Notice Board and Entrance Halls Policy actively bans materials critical of the council, suppressing dissenting voices and undermining accountability. This attempt to control criticism and stifle public discourse is alarming and raises serious questions about the council's commitment to openness and transparency.

4. Mismanagement and Confusion
Poorly scheduled meetings and conflicting procedural statements have created unnecessary confusion among both Councillors and residents. Meanwhile, ongoing legal disputes involving a sitting Councillor cast a further shadow over the council's integrity, leaving the community in doubt about its ability to manage itself effectively.

The people of Woodstock deserve a council that upholds democratic principles, values public participation, and operates with integrity. Instead, the current WTC has allegedly demonstrated incompetence, disregard for transparency, and an apparent lack of accountability to its constituents.

Letters are continued on Page 15

A Visitors' View of Woodstock

TB85 - Held 17 to 20 September 2024

This event was organised by Mike and Jeff to celebrate the 85th anniversary of all MG TB's leaving the production line at Abingdon. All 379 of the cars were produced during 1939 until the war effort meant that the MG factory became involved with production of tanks and airplanes. It was decided to base the event in Woodstock, Oxfordshire as this provided a fairly central location for likely participants and also gave access to the lovely town of Woodstock, beautiful Blenheim Palace and the delightful Cotswold countryside.

The MG TB is considered by many to be the best handling and driving of the T Series sports cars, produced by MG from 1936 to 1955. With its combination of the new, in 1939, XPAG engine coupled with sliding trunnion suspension which gave a firmer pre-war type of driving experience. The post-war MG TC dropped the sliding trunnion suspension for cheaper and easier to maintain rubber shackle suspension. The TB was built on a simple ladder chassis upon which sat a traditional ash timber frame clad in a simple two seat bodywork provided with a weatherproof hood and sidescreens. The power attainable from the very strong engine meant that many TB's were used for racing. This has helped to ensure that a good number of these 85 year old cars still exist in the hands of knowledgeable enthusiasts.



Wednesday visitor, a local MG TB

Planning for TB85 began almost immediately after the TB80 event held five years ago at nearby Witney and really started in earnest some two years ago when the Marlborough Arms hotel in Woodstock was selected as our base. This proved to be an excellent choice with its location in the centre of historic Woodstock and being on the doorstep of Blenheim Palace. The hotel catered for us excellently with comfortable rooms, friendly, helpful staff and a visiting chef providing good quality evening meals. In addition a secure car park provided reassurance and a good location for much chatting and discussion of the finer points of MG TB history. The dates chosen for the event proved to be extremely fortuitous as we were blessed with warm, dry weather throughout with the exception of some rain for those travelling home southwards on the Friday.



MG TB Special

18 people stayed at the hotel for the event, travelling from many parts of the UK, with an additional owner and his wife staying for part of the time on a visit from the USA. This gentleman came with a long list of TB related questions and managed to receive answers to them all from the assembled body of expertise. One local owner visited on the Wednesday so at one point we had 10 MG TB's together in the car park. This was almost certainly the biggest gathering of these rare cars for at least 75 years.

On the Wednesday the main visit was to Blenheim Palace with use of pre-booked tickets. Prior to this some ventured to the very pretty nearby village of Great Tew to capture a first taste of the unique Cotswold scenery of honey coloured stone cottages set in beautiful countryside. Others took in the architecture, shops and cafes of Woodstock and for those who



The MG TBs at the Old New Inn, Bourton-on-Water



MG TB on the road near Adlestrop

after the son of Geoffrey Chaucer, the famous poet, who lived in a house at that location. A conversation with one of the very helpful Palace staff revealed that this gate was built circa 1730 at this location as the original choice to position it on Oxford Road had been denied due to opposition from a landowner. Now in the grounds of the Palace we continued to the main entrance taking in our first sight of the Palace façade and beautifully landscaped gardens. We collected our tickets from a very well organised and easy to locate reception office. On the way back we again marvelled at the richness of the buildings and street scenes which revealed themselves. It was a measure of the range and diversity of the townscape that the walk back took as long as the walk there as we kept discovering new points of interest such as the ancient stocks in Park Street outside Fletcher's House where a Georgian frontage had clearly been added to a much earlier house.

The trip to Blenheim proved to be everything we hoped for. Designed by Sir John Vanbrugh in the baroque style and built over about a 20 year period from 1705 it is truly one of England's great palaces and many of the magnificent rooms with their rich decoration can be viewed. Built for John Churchill, the 1st Duke of Marlborough, as a gift from Queen Anne for his prowess at the Battle of Blenheim, the palace contains much well-presented history relating to Sir Winston Churchill, who was born there. It was interesting to understand that he was only born at the Palace by accident during a visit by his parents to relatives there. He was 2 months premature. The gardens, ultimately designed by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown around 1764 also provided a great display with great vistas and formal settings. At dinner that evening everyone agreed that the visit was very special and it had been a most enjoyable day.

Thursday saw the cars, drivers and passengers undertaking a 70 mile tour of parts of the Cotswolds using narrow country lanes wherever possible with stops along the route to take in the scenery and nearby attractions.

Navigation was done using 'tulip' diagrams frequently used on such events. This system relies heavily on the skill and concentration of the passenger to interpret the route book. Everyone managed to negotiate the route without any serious errors but the sight of Woodstock and the Marlborough Arms was a welcome sight after an enjoyable but quite tiring day.

Friday morning dawned sunny and bright and after another excellent breakfast we said our farewells after a most enjoyable time. The cars all behaved well and there was talk of a TB90 with many enthusiastic to see this happen. Hopefully we will be able to. Huge thanks are due to the Marlborough Arms Hotel, their staff and to everyone who attended for making it such a special event and celebration of the MG TB's 85th anniversary.

Jeff Townsend & Mike Inglehearn



MG TBs at The Marlborough Arms

Woodstock Town Council Meetings

12th November 2024

6 councillors and 11 members of the public attended. The Town Clerk was assisted by the Responsible Finance Officer. The meeting was recorded.

A new protocol to clarify public participation at Council meetings was proposed, briefly discussed, and carried. Any subject can now be raised by the public and the Chair has the right to declare any question or statement inappropriate. The suggestion of adjourning the meeting for public participation was not endorsed by the Council. The full rules for public participation can be found on the Council website under Policies and Procedures. Three members of the public then spoke. Jo Lamb spoke of her concern of the new protocol believing it may reduce the rights of the public to free speech at Council meetings. Hilary Brown from Sustainable Woodstock then spoke to thank Councillor Poskitt for placing bus shelters on the agenda and asked the council not to defer or delay their repair and upgrade and to improve the experience of bus users. A third speaker also expressed his concern on the new protocol for public participation at Council meetings. The Mayor was satisfied with what had been previously agreed by the Council on the participation protocol.

Councillor Sarah Williams was then nominated and voted in as Deputy Mayor.

The Clerk reported that to enhance Woodstock’s Christmas lights five fully decorated 7 foot Christmas trees for the town will be delivered, at a cost of around £4,500.

County Councillor Andy Graham reported that the parking improvements review would go to the County Council on 14th November. The decision for Glympton to reduce the speed limit from 30 to 20 mph would also be made on 14th. There would be a walkabout in Woodstock by County Council Highways to assess dangerous areas, such as the barrier by the Black Prince, on 22nd November. Councillor Banbury pointed out the poor lighting in Willoughby Way. The Mayor reminded Councillor Graham of the issue of broken bollards in front of the Woodstock Arms on Market Street. This was reported on Fix My Street in August.

District Councillor Poskitt reported on a meeting about the proposed Botley West Solar Farm. If the project goes ahead there is a need to lobby for community benefit and the District Council would like volunteers from Councils and Parishes in the surrounding area to be included. Councillor Poskitt also highlighted the District Council’s Rural Crime

Survey, focused on reducing rural crime and anti-social behaviour. The survey can be found on the Your Voice District Council website.

The Council had no objection to a planning application from St Mary Magdalene Church for a large solar panel array on the lower south facing roof.

In the Financial Report, the Cash in Hand as of 31st October this year is £463,596.60.

The Capital Expenditure budget for 2025/6 was then discussed. Items included new waste bins, speed indicators to slow traffic and bus shelters (with £6,000 proposed for refurbishment this financial year). Councillor Cooper also proposed that solar panels for the Community Centre be included in the budget.

A 13% increase in the precept (the amount required from Council Tax payers in our area to fund the Council’s operations) has been proposed. Councillor Poskitt noted this would not be popular and Councillor Parnes suggested the fund surplus (currently standing at £398,000) could be used. The Mayor concluded the discussion by deferring it to the upcoming budget meeting.

Councillor Poskitt then presented a request from the North Oxfordshire Food Bank for support for Christmas parcels for Woodstock. There are five individuals and five families who currently receive regular support from this Food Bank. The total cost would be £250 and the Council proposal was to provide £115. After discussion it was decided that £100 would be donated.

Councillor Parnes reported the dangerous broken barrier outside of houses past the Marlborough School on Shipton Road. After Oxfordshire County Council replying to say it was not their responsibility it was decided to write to Pye Homes/Blenheim.

Councillor Parnes noted breaches of GDPR by the Town Council and requested these be rectified and that incident logs be created.

Finally, an open Town Meeting will be held on 21st November in St Mary Magdalene Church to discuss the possibility of a new doctors’ surgery. Our new MP, Calum Miller, will attend and representatives from the following will be invited - Woodstock Practice, Integrated Care Board, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and Blenheim.

Please note that due to redecoration work in the Town Hall the December Town Council meeting will be held at the Community Centre on 12th December, 7pm.

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

Graham Brown

Letters (cont. from Page 11)

By calling for a thorough investigation and the potential disbandment of the Council, I aim to restore trust in our local governance and ensure that Woodstock is represented by leaders who respect and prioritise their community.

I strongly encourage the residents of Woodstock to stand together, demand better from their elected representatives, and push for leadership that values transparency, accountability, and the rights of its constituents. To those sitting on the current Council, I urge you to reflect on your actions and remember your responsibility is to serve the public, not silence them.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Mr Bowman-Smith

Editor Comment: The retiring Mayor and the three resigning Councillors were contacted to ask whether they wanted to submit a letter.

Town Council Election - 15 Jan

Local health campaigner Nick Melliss calls on fellow residents to join him in turning the Town Council around.

Nick Melliss is a key organiser amongst the thirty people who signed a request to force a Town Council election in January. He tells us what he loves about Woodstock and why it's time for change.

Why I decided to call for a Town Council election.

I love Woodstock and believe its residents deserve a strong and active Town Council. There are some problems here that have been going on for far too long - like the lack of a decent GP surgery. We need an active Town Council that is focussed on change not infighting. Court cases, sudden resignations, rowdy meetings - our local council has a poor reputation - it's time for a fresh start.

Three Town Councillor seats are vacant - that doesn't help anyone. Let's fill them with people who want and will work for change. I'm prepared to stand - and I'm inviting others to join me.

What I love about Woodstock.

The pubs are excellent, I like the restaurants, there's a good butcher, a good barber so I can get my haircut at anytime. I even managed to buy my carpets locally when I did up my house before I moved in. I'm lucky that I live close to the town so I can get into the town easily, and feel part of the community. And it's especially beautiful at this time of year - with the Christmas lights and a real buzz.

A better GP surgery is top of my list - but there's more.

The surgery situation is urgent. Dr Becker described it at a recent town meeting as 'already at crisis point'. People are having clinical appointments in converted broom cupboards. And when the doctors need to meet as a team, they close the surgery and use the waiting room as there is no other room that's big enough. I notice how tiny it is particularly, because I use a mobility scooter, but I'm not the only one. Just look at the door frames next time you're in. They're chipped with bashes from patients simply trying to get through the doors. No one wants to start their health appointment with an obstacle course.

And we need a new public library. The library is no bigger than my sitting room, which isn't big. Children need a lively, exciting library full of interesting books to encourage them to start a reading habit that will last them a lifetime. The pavements are rubbish. I had to buy a new mobility scooter so I could feel safe trundling round the town. So lots of good things but also a lot to be done. Woodstock deserves the basics along with its luxuries!

Only relentless pressure will fix this.

I have written about twenty letters to the Council, to the MP, to Blenheim, to the surgery and to regional NHS commissioning bosses in the last four months on the GP surgery. I've met the doctors. I won't give up and I'll just continue til I get the job done. Woodstock deserves a decent surgery.

Get involved!

If people want to join me in running for Town Council they should contact the Democracy Officer at West Oxfordshire District Council. And if they like, people are welcome to contact me. My email is newgpsurgery@gmail.com. I want to work with anyone interested in being part of a fresh Town Council that gets stuff done.



Nick Melliss

Martin Kemp

In November, Martin Kemp, Woodstock resident and Emeritus Professor in the History of Art at the University of Oxford received the insignia of Ufficiale of the Ordine della Stella d'Italia (OSI), for services to Italian culture. The honour was presented in London at the residence of the Italian Ambassador, Inigo Lambertini, on behalf of the Italian President of the Republic.



Italian Ambassador, Inigo Lambertini (rhs), with Martin Kemp at OSI presentation

Martin Kemp was trained in Natural Sciences and Art History. There followed a long career in academia working at universities in Glasgow, St Andrews and Oxford from where his students have gone onto success across a spectrum of fields. He has published extensively on Italian Renaissance art and Leonardo da Vinci. Martin has been involved with curating a number of major exhibitions, including the popular Hockney’s Eye: The Art and Technology of Depiction in Cambridge, 2022.

Martin broadcasts on radio, podcasts, film and TV (including appearing with Philomena Cunk as part of the satirical TV series Cunk On!) He continues to research, write and lecture extensively with another big work on Leonardo being published next year.

Rare Books Come to Woodstock

This December, Woodstock will be welcoming a Pop-Up Shop with a difference: three leading international rare book dealers will be bringing a selection of their stock and setting up shop for the week of 16-22nd December in 14 Market Place.

Woodstock’s own Susanne Schulz-Falster is one of the world’s most respected dealers in Continental Books of the eighteenth century. Specialising in rare books of the European Enlightenment, Susanne also deals in book history, arts and manufacturing, children’s books, and the history of ideas.

She will be joined by Deborah Coltham, the current President of the Antiquarian Booksellers’ Association, who specialises in rare books in the fields of Science and Medicine. She will be bringing a selection of books and objects from her eclectic stock of books, manuscripts and ephemeral items from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries.

Completing this bibliophilic trio is Amanda Hall, from Wiltshire, who specialises in rare books of the long eighteenth century, with a focus on English and Continental Literature, particularly imaginary voyages and utopias, works by women, children’s books, and games.

In a world where antiquarian bookshops are fast disappearing from the high street, remind yourself of that smell of old books and and the pleasures and serendipity of browsing among old volumes.



Updates on 'Botley West'

Expert View: Mega Solar Power Station should be turned down because of excessive flood risk



A leading hydrology expert has recommended that the proposed Botley West mega power station should be **turned down** because of the increased flood risk to homes, businesses and public amenities that was highlighted by recent extensive Oxfordshire flooding. Clive Carpenter, a senior hydrologist with more than 30 years of experience in strategic water management for large scale infrastructure projects, **challenges** developer Photovolt Development Partners (PVDP)’s claim that ‘solar panels **do not** significantly increase (rain) run-off peak flow and **volumes** from solar developments.’

“Recent research in this **technical area** provides consistent conclusions that solar panels increase peak run-off, increase total flows and increase erosion compared to the pre-development situation,” states Mr Carpenter in an independent report commissioned by the Stop Botley West community group.

He has reviewed “potential **omissions, errors and inaccuracies** in the documentation” on hydrology and flood risk provided by Botley West developer SolarFive/PVDP in its Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) that was the basis of four rounds of public consultation earlier this year. Mr Carpenter concludes that PVDP “**fails** to adequately consider storm water rainfall run-off from the solar panels”. He goes on to state that the proposed Botley West development would potentially require “such significant water management infrastructure as to **question the feasibility and viability** of the proposed development”.

Mr Carpenter also says that PVDP “has **not demonstrated** that they will be able to adequately manage surface water run-off and sediment mobilisation during the construction phase.” He adds that the size of the scheme and nature of the terrain present “challenges which could prevent delivering the proposed development”. He concludes: “Accordingly, the Development Consent Order (which PVDP has said it is due to apply for in November) **should not be approved.**”

His independent flood risk report has been **reviewed** by a number of Oxfordshire county and district **councillors**, including Dr. Lidia Arciszewska, who is West Oxfordshire District Council’s Executive lead on Environment issues and District Councillor for Freeland and Hanborough. She commented: “As Environment Portfolio holder with responsibility for Flood Alleviation and Natural Flood Management at

WODC, I am concerned about the effects that the Botley West Solar Farm installation might have on surface water run-offs and **increased risk of flooding** in the area.

Mr Carpenter’s report, which cites substantial **evidence** demonstrating that solar panels might enhance the surface water run-offs, definitely should be taken into consideration.”

Her concerns were echoed by Cllr. Sarah Veasey, West Oxford District councillor for North Leigh, who sits on WODC’s Development Control committee. She said: “**I strongly oppose** Botley West for a large number of reasons including for it being in the wrong place; for its overall size, for the loss of food security due to the use of the land, for the destruction of the landscape of West Oxfordshire especially around towns and villages with high heritage value and high tourist footfall, and for questions about the viability of grid transmission etc. This study by Mr Carpenter **adds yet another reason to oppose the Botley West proposal.**”

Prof. Alex Rogers, chair of Stop Botley West, commented: “One of our main concerns is that PVDP is proposing to build a large part of the Botley West mega power station, with a footprint larger than Heathrow Airport, on a complex catchment area dominated by three river valleys. **Increased storm run-off leaving such a large site will cause flooding in these catchment areas.**

These three river valleys and their highly fertile flood meadows are precisely why there is such a rich mosaic of densely clustered homes, habitat and heritage in this area, stretching back to the Stone Age and beyond.

“This is exactly why we believe that the proposed Botley West development would be sited in the wrong place. **We support** Mr Carpenter’s report concluding that the Botley West development should be turned down, and we **urge PVDP and Blenheim Estate to consider alternative options such as a network of community-scale solar farms.**”

What can YOU do about this?

- 1. Please make a donation to our fighting fund via our website stopbotleywest.com. If you are in a position to make a significant donation to fund a heritage expert please contact us via our Chair: alex.rogers@stopbotleywest.com to arrange a personal meeting.
- 2. Please write to your new MP, Calum Miller (Calum.Miller@oxonlibdems.uk) and to the Leader of WODC, Andy Graham (andy.graham@oxfordshire.gov.uk) with all your concerns about Botley West.

Stop Botley West, Hanborough Villages Group

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"The team is superbly put together, showing professionalism and personality in equal measure"
Legal 500, 2024



Nothing Good Happens When You Die Without a Will

Right, so you've decided not to bother writing a will. Maybe you're too busy. Maybe you think it's all a bit morbid, or perhaps you've just assumed that after you shuffle off this mortal coil, everyone will simply "work it out." Well, if that's your plan then the last thing anyone will remember about you is the massive headache you gave them from beyond the grave.

So, what does happen when you die without a will? Simple. The government steps in to sort it out for you. Yes, that's right – the very same government that can't fix the potholes on your street is now in charge of deciding who gets your house and all your hard-earned cash. And let me tell you, they do it with all the grace and nuance of a bull in a china shop.

First up, your estate goes into what's charmingly called "intestacy." No, that's not a place in Italy. It's a legal term that means your assets are now at the mercy of ancient rules, written by people who thought a carriage was cutting-edge technology. These rules, as you can imagine, don't care if you had a complicated family situation. No, the law will just divvy things up based on a rigid hierarchy, and good luck to anyone who doesn't fit into their neat little categories.

If you're married and think, "Well, everything will just go to my spouse, no worries," think again. It doesn't work like that. If you've got kids, your spouse gets a cut, sure—but not the whole estate. The rest is split between your spouse and your children. Which, if you've got grown-up kids who already have homes, cars, and a fondness for skiing holidays, isn't exactly ideal. And if you've got young children, congratulations, their inheritance could be locked away in some legal vault until they come of age. Meanwhile, your spouse is left scrambling to figure out how to pay the bills with half a house and a frozen bank account.

And that's if you're lucky. If you're unmarried, well, it gets even messier. Your long-term partner, the one you've spent the last 20 years with? The one who's been putting up with your snoring, your taste in terrible TV, and your insistence on BBQing in the rain? They could end up with nothing. Nada. Zilch. Everything could go to your blood relatives, no matter how distant or irrelevant they might be. So, while your partner is left grieving (and probably selling the house just to keep their head above water), your estranged cousin in Margate who once borrowed your lawnmower and never returned it is now planning a luxury cruise, courtesy of your hard-earned cash.

And it doesn't stop there. If you've got no close relatives—no spouse, no kids, no parents still kicking about—then we enter the truly absurd. The government will start combing through the family tree, looking for anyone with a vague genetic connection to you. That uncle you haven't seen since you were five? He's suddenly a key player. Or maybe it's your third cousin Gerald, who you met once at a wedding, though he spent most of it drunkenly telling you about his collection of miniature spoons. Well, guess what? Gerald might just be your new heir.

And if, somehow, they can't find anyone—no relatives at all—then guess what? The state gets everything. That's right, your house, your hard-earned savings, the stash of cash under your mattress, and, yes, that gleaming vintage car in your garage you polished every Sunday all handed over to the government. The very same people who'll likely blow it all on a new road sign pointing in the wrong direction or a public art installation that looks suspiciously like an unfinished IKEA bookshelf.

So, what's the moral of the story here? If you die without a will, you're not saving yourself time or effort. You're leaving your family in the middle of a legal minefield, where every step they take could blow up into a lengthy, expensive court battle.

Writing a will isn't hard. It's not glamorous, but neither is paying your taxes or cleaning out the gutters - and you still do those things (or at least, I hope you do). A will is just another one of those grown-up responsibilities you have to get around to at some point. So, if you haven't written a will yet, do it. Do it now.



Anna Boucher, Senior Associate

Anna Boucher is an inheritance tax, wills and probate specialist solicitor at The Burnside Partnership (Combe office). Each month, Anna will share helpful tips on inheritance law, mixing humour with practical advice. If you have any follow-up questions, you can email her at anna.boucher@theburnsidepartnership.com or call the Combe office on 01865 987781 and ask for her secretary, Bev.



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Woodstock Flooding

Editor Comment: In September 2024, as we all know, there was a huge amount of rainfall. But instead of the usual flooding in the water meadows, there was flooding in many new, different parts of Woodstock, including Bens Close, Manor Road, Hensington Close, and Upper Campsfield Road, with as many as 20 properties affected. In the following, two residents share their moving stories. Please write in if you want to share your own story.

Simon Gardner

On Monday 23rd September my house was flooded. I live in Shipton Glebe down a small private lane off the Upper Campsfield road. The rain that day was particularly heavy and it did not ease up all day. I returned home around 18.00 to find that puddles were forming in my driveway at the front of my house, and on the back lawn the levels were rising.

By 21.30 the levels had risen considerably and water was starting to enter my house from 3 sides. My wife and I went through the ground floor of the house removing what we could upstairs and lifting items off the floor to try and save the furniture. By 22.30 we had 28 inches of water in the whole ground floor of the house. I stayed up all night and by 04.00 the water levels had peaked and by 08.00 had started to drain away. I contacted my insurers first thing Tuesday morning and by Friday we had a loss adjustor on site and a Team of specialists who installed dehumidifiers which are still running and removing water some 2 months later and for the foreseeable future. The Loss Adjustor has estimated costs in the region of hundreds of thousands to reinstate the property, replace damaged items; and it will take between 9-12 months to complete. I have just received my house insurance renewal, which has now doubled due to the claim.

I have lived at this address for the last 18 years and the previous occupier 20 years and we have never seen water levels of this magnitude. Do I believe it was down to inclement weather and Global warming - partially; do I believe that the recent Housing development in Woodstock had any bearing - yes most definitely. You cannot build housing estates of this magnitude pumping thousands of tons of concrete into the ground without affecting water levels. I am now very concerned going forward with potentially more development planned and all the fields surrounding me with solar panels if it gets approved, that flooding will only increase. It is time that Blenheim Estate and their Building Company PYE put the environment and the community first rather than greed and spoiling the environment. With the recent events in Ukraine it is time to grow our own crops and get behind our farmers and rely less on imports and use the land more effectively.

Katie Read

On Monday 23rd September, I came downstairs and noticed how high the water was around the house from the deluge of rain during the night. For some reason I never thought for a second that it would actually come in. Of all the things I worry about flooding wasn't one of them. We are not near a river or a brook, we had not built on a flood plain. But as the children got ready to leave for school, water came in from all entrances to the house – the front door, the side door, the bi-folds. We rushed to get towels but all in vain by that point. We were completely unprepared and unfamiliar with what to do in this situation so watched, panicked as the house we built six years ago filled to around 9 inches of what we later discovered was brown water.

I'm acutely aware that people in Valencia and other parts of Spain have had things a lot worse lately, but nothing prepares you for the sudden loss of your own space. We were fortunate enough to have family to stay with in the immediate aftermath but there were many others flooded in our town who had to move into hotels.

The insurance company has rehoused us in Begbroke so not far from family or school – I have a newfound respect for anyone driving kids into Woodstock every morning! – but we now have a full ground-floor renovation to manage. What unnerves me the most is building back and then living in fear that it will happen again and to this end, I feel determined to find out the cause and have reassurance that it was resolved. On top of the renovation therefore, we also know we have a fight on our hands to get that reassurance from Thames Water. Anyone affected could see it was the drains unable to cope with that level of rain that was the issue. On Banbury Road, friends reported that water came up to the door so although they weren't flooded this time, if the issue isn't resolved they may be next.

On the Friday after we were flooded, Thames Water made an appearance at our house to see the damage. We then got a text message from them to say that a fault had been found with a nearby wasteland and they would start investigating this 24 hours later. No one will contact us directly about the results of this investigation but we will try to access it via freedom of information. They then wrote to us to say how awful it was that we'd had sewage water in our house and that they would give us £150! I wrote them a letter cc'ing our MP Callum Miller saying that we didn't want £150, we wanted answers and solutions. I've not had a reply from either.

If anyone else is in the same situation, please contact me via the editor, as many voices are better than one in these instances.

CONFLICT: A Review

Based around the theme of 'Conflict', the Woodstock Artists Group created an entertaining and thought provoking show last month in the Soldiers of Oxford Museum: the show included painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, print-making, collage, and installations.

Three large and colourfull full-length portraits by Caroline Parkes celebrated the efforts of women assuming traditional male roles in WWII such as pilots, welders and ship-builders. A variety of work by Rod Craig included figure-based work provoking an emotional response reflecting divisions based on fear and prejudice, while Theodora Boorman’s series of Prussian blue cyanotypes were based on portraits of WWI servicemen with symbolic representations of conflict such as light flares and shell craters.



Soldiers by Jane Smith Shipyard Girl by Caroline Parkes

A large and colourful acrylic painting 'Godstow' by Anita Joice represented an historical take on conflicts which have led to the gradual destruction of the Abbey, first during the Dissolution and later the English Civil War. In 'HMS Centaur in a gale' Hannah Cushion imaginatively combined a vintage postcard with embroidery to speculate on themes of conflict in war and the battle with nature due to the climate crisis. Jane Smith’s work included a highly original photo collage based entirely on elements and items contained within the museum itself.

Of the three photographers who exhibited, Pete Seaward’s image 'Anguish' showed the sadness of orphaned children who have lost parents through wars and natural disasters. Using materials and imagery of destruction, Rana Ibrahim has deepened her understanding of conflict and helped to process her emotions around displacement and belonging; Jules Gregory has created some atmospheric shots of the 'Standing with Giants' figures while on display at Blenheim; trudging through the misty lawns 'with the spirit of fallen soldiers leaving their bodies'; Rosalind Butt’s bleak and desolate monochrome photographs depicted local scenes in winter ravaged by wind and high water, creating inhospitable and impassable landscapes.

John Earney’s sculpture Crevasse was an alabaster piece displaying the cracks and flaws brought about by the gradual eroding process of glaciation, suggesting that harmony and beauty can result from damage and conflict. Maxine Baker’s highly observed pencil drawing 'Conflict' depicted a funnel of barbed wire on a desolate hillside, the knots in the wire suggesting the forms of grasping fingers while Louisa Foster’s mixed media work included collage, painting and drawing; the carefully conceived trench was contrasted with ghostly disappearing figures suggesting ambiguity between the safety below and conflict above ground. 'Battle Lines Redrawn' by Jane Topliss was a moving installation containing collected and found elements representing WWI battlefields creating a unique stillness and poignancy.

Natasha Bond’s translucent oil painting 'Embrace' showed two wrestlers embroiled in a fight where the tangle of limbs suggests an ambiguity between intimacy, separation and menace. A large collection of paintings and drawings by JaneGreer contemplated the friction caused by language differences throughout the world as used to subjugate and destroy indigenous cultures. 'Wild Poppies' a botanical illustration by Polly Wyatt was used as a symbol of remembrance and hope for peace; finally Sophie McCullam created a colourful tapestry in the form of a world map as she contemplated current conflicts throughout the world.

John Somerscales



Godstow by Anita Joice



Paintings by Jane Greer



Some of the artists contributing to 'Conflict'. All photos courtesy of Trish Hanks

Panniers

Everyday cycling in Woodstock and Bladon

Just because it is winter, that doesn’t mean that those of us who get around Woodstock and Bladon by bicycle need to put our machines back in the shed until spring. With the right preparation we can keep cycling in all but the most extreme conditions. It is definitely time to make sure that our bikes - particularly the tyres and brakes - are in good condition, and that our clothing not only keeps the weather at bay but ensures that we are visible on the road.



Lights are essential after dark and hi-vis jackets help other road users to see you

One of the first lessons in Bikeability Level One is 'preparing for the journey'. Do your **ABC** checks - **A**ir in your tyres, **B**reaks that stop the bike and a **C**hain that runs smoothly and is rust-free. If you will be riding in the dark, then reflectors and lights are a legal requirement. Although hi-vis is optional, the Highway Code recommends that light-coloured or fluorescent clothing can help other road users to see you.

Another Bikeability mantra that applies particularly in winter is 'The kerb is not your friend. Gutters fill with leaves and debris and gullies are wet and slippery so keep at least an arm's length from the kerb at all times.

A Merry Christmas to all - and keep riding!

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



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The Oxfordshire Museum

In December we welcome back the Oxfordshire Craft Guild for their winter selling exhibition at the Oxfordshire Museum. We are also co-hosting the Woodstock Festive Fayre this year and very much looking forward to being a part of it. The shop and café will be open throughout and the café will have Mulled Wine and Mince Pies on the menu.

Our Christmas workshops are selling fast so if you haven't booked your place don't delay.

We also have a Victorian Christmas theme at the Museum this year so come along and take part in our Christmas I-spy trail or one of our Christmas craft activities. Keep an eye on the What's on page for more information.

January will see the return of the Bird Photographer of the Year Exhibition, which we are really excited about and we will have bird themed activities over half term.

For information on all our exhibitions, events and workshops please visit the what's on page on our website www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/museums

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

Monthly talks in the Museum in Woodstock at 7.30pm

Wednesday 4th December

'Street of Shame or Street of Adventure?' St Brides' Fleet Street and the World of the Media.

David Meara, Archdeacon Emeritus of London

St Bride's Fleet Street is an iconic London church designed by Sir Christopher Wren and is the spiritual home of the British Press. We shall hear about the unique Ministry of St Bride's to the world of journalism.

Wednesday 8th January

'Chef to 4 Prime Ministers'

Alan Lavender

Wednesday 5th February

'The Life and Achievements of Lord Nuffield.'

Robert Hawes and Frank Collingwood

Please note change from original programme: the talks originally advertised for January and February have been swapped over.

Talks are free to Friends, who are also sent a Zoom link. Visitors are welcome in person or by Zoom for a £5 fee.

For further details Email: contactfriendsoftom@gmail.com or website: www.friendsoftom.org.uk

Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum

Please send in your Poohs ahead of E.H. Shepard exhibition

In 2025, Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum will launch a brand-new exhibition of original artwork by E. H. Shepard, best known as the original illustrator for A. A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh and the 1931 edition of Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows.

The collection of Shepard's work, including some of his children's illustrations alongside a wealth of his Great War sketches and comic art, come to the museum on loan from the University of Surrey archives and The Shepard Trust - many of which have never been on public display before.

The Woodstock-based museum is asking visitors and local people to share the impact the characters Shepard drew to life have had on them, and is calling for them to bring in their own teddy bears, toys and games to go on show alongside the exhibition itself.

By the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Ernest H. Shepard had already become a regular contributor to the popular Punch magazine, and he often drew cartoons about the war for the magazine, and other publications. By 1915 recruitment increased, to include those over 30, and Shepard soon enlisted, serving as an officer in the Royal Garrison Artillery, first in France and later Italy. From the start of his officer training in 1915, he began to document the war as he saw it, in pencil sketches, pen and ink drawings, and even watercolours.

The museum looks forward to welcoming visitors to the new exhibition from 18th January to 31st August 2025.

Saturday 7th December 2024 - 10.15am - 11am Behind the Scenes Archive Tours

Your access-all-areas pass to the museum! Get a look 'behind the scenes' at Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum and join our Collections Manager one of our Archive Tours. Admission to our public galleries is also included with your tour ticket.

Saturday 7th December 2024 - 2pm - 3pm 12 Objects of Christmas - Saturday Tea, Cake & Talk

A festive twist on our Oxfordshire's Military History in 50 Objects talk, with Collections Manager Kim Davies. Discover the stories of a dozen objects from the archives, all with a Christmas theme. A slice of cake and your choice of tea or coffee is included with your ticket.



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www.oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk

Is there a lost Woodstock Charter?

King Henry II created New Woodstock by having hostelryes built at the gates of his manor house and park. His son, King John, granted an annual fair in September which was independent from the Royal rents and taxes. This indicates that Woodstock was managing its own affairs and must therefore have had a rudimentary administration.

In 1453 the otherwise ineffectual King Henry VI granted Woodstock's earliest surviving charter. It includes the statement (in latin) that "our beloved Tenants of our Vill of New Woodstock and the Residents and Inhabitants of the same Vill have represented to Us after what manner themselves have for no short time past used and enjoyed certain Liberties and Free Customs." Among other items the King granted "a certain pool or marsh adjoining the town and known as le Pool" at a yearly rent of four marks (£1 - 6s - 8d). This means that the town meadows are technically still rented although at some stage the Crown sold the freehold to a third party.

The Public Record Office has no evidence of any earlier charter but there is evidence that Woodstock already had Mayors at least from the 14th century. Three leases in the archives of Balliol College which are witnessed by Mayors of Woodstock survive.

- 1. 1398. Witnessed by Edmund Mundi, Mayor of Woodstock.
- 2. 1407. Witnessed by Thomas Orleton, Mayor of Woodstock.
- 3. 1414. Witnessed by Nicholas Blackhall, Mayor of Woodstock.

In 1402 the Mayor and bailiffs were forfeited £5 of fellow's goods "for allowing an escape."

It would have been possible for a town to have Mayors without having a Charter if it was a Borough by Prescription. One of the meanigs of prescription in my Chambers dictionary is "a custom continued until it becomes a right or has the force of law." Squatters' rights would be a similar example of this Common Law custom.

It is a reasonable conclusion that our earliest Borough Charter was indeed granted in 1453 and that for a long time before that our predecessors and their Mayors lived in a Borough by Prescription.

Details of the Balliol leases were found in a manuscript note by Richard Ramsbotham who was Woodstock's first (honorary) archivist. He was a history teacher who retired to Woodstock just before World War II and found the Borough's ancient records in heaps which had been piled up for centuries in the

offices of local solicitors who acted as part time town clerks. Mr Ramsbotham spent years identifying and indexing these papers for which he was awarded the Freedom of the Borough. He was the grandfather of Liz Woodward of Hedge End.

Robert Edwards

Girlguiding Woodstock District

Did you know that we have a house in India!?

Our leaders got the opportunity to visit Sangam in Pune, a WAGGGS World Centre. There we had a traditional welcome and saw some of the local sites. We then left on a 2 week tour of Rajasthan - an amazing experience! We rode camels, camped in the desert, saw elephants, ate lots of naan bread, visited historic sites, stayed in a palace, took hair raising rickshaw rides, ziplined, and made amazing memories.

The Rainbows, Brownies and Guides attended Remembrance Parade, while our leaders in India visited the war grave of a local Bletchington man who died in WWII and was buried in Pune.

Theme awards have been presented and Bronze awards are nearly completed.

We're celebrating Christmas with ice skating at Blenheim.

Woodstock Trefoil have been working on challenge badges.

We have spaces in all our Woodstock units: Rainbows for girls age 4-7 on a Wednesday Brownies for girls age 7-10 on a Monday Guides for girls age 10-14 on a Thursday And: Trefoil for anyone age 18+ meeting monthly. You don't have to have been on Guiding to join us at Trefoil, just be ready for fun, challenges, chats and more.

Register at www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus Or email girlguidingwoodstock@hotmail.co.uk to find out more

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Woodstock and Bladon Methodist Churches

On the national Methodist Church website, you'll find an Advent and Christmas campaign called "Hush the Noise: join the love song this Christmas", words recalling a 175-year-old American hymn. As a child, I remember being moved by words from "It came upon the midnight clear": "...and man, at war with man, hears not the love-song which they bring. O hush the noise, ye men of strife, and hear the angels sing!" Which is perhaps a slightly more poetic way of saying, "will you not just shut up!"

The author, Edmund Sears, wrote in the aftermath of war and spoke out against rich and powerful slaveholders and the institution of slavery. Many of the rich and powerful still fill the air with their voices; and we wonder whether they really listen to anyone else.

A challenging question for me is always: am I really listening? Am I really listening for the voices beyond the loud shouts of the dealers in slaves, and violence, and political power for the sake of political power? Can I say to those loud voices: will you not just shut up? Hush the noise; and hear the angels sing!

It's an old saying that we have two ears but only one mouth. Of course, that's so we can tell where sounds are coming from; but it's a handy rule of thumb to be quick to listen and slow to speak. Where might you and I hear the angels sing, I wonder?

Paul Carter

Nativity Trail and Christmas Tree Festival Teas Saturday 14th December 2024, 2-4.30pm

To celebrate the start of this year's Christmas Tree Festival, Woodstock Methodist Church is holding an All-Age Nativity Trail around the church with refreshments being served. Come along and...

- View the 20+ mini beautiful Christmas Trees and find out more about the organisations who have decorated them including Woodstock Primary School, Tuesday Tots, Spencer Court plus many others.
- Take part in the fun Nativity Trail and learn more about Christmas story from Mary, Joseph, the Angels and others involved in the Christmas story.
- Enjoy a cup of tea, coffee and a piece of cake or mince-pie.

All are welcome and entry is free.

If you can't make Saturday 14 December, the Christmas Trees will be available to view on Sunday 15 December, Saturday 21 December to Wednesday 1 January (inclusive) and Saturday 4 January during daylight hours. Although the trail and teas will only be available on 14 December.

u3a

The Woodstock and District u3a speaker meeting in November gave us Vivien Sieber speaking about Kino and Kinder - her family's journey in the shadow of the Holocaust. A sombre recounting of the survival of her grandparents and Vivien's own journey in researching that evolving story. Her book 'Kino and Kinder' is available from usual sources.

Whilst the speaker meetings are a chance to meet other members, our Interest Groups are the main stay of the u3a movement. Members who are willing to share their knowledge and skills will meet as an Interest Group and develop those links, i.e. Art, Recorders, Photography, Board Games, Foreign Language, etc., with most sessions taking place during the daytime. Do check our website for further information; although the website is currently being redeveloped, all should be ready by the turn of the year.

Our next speaker meeting on December 5th sees a visit from Gloria Camino who will show us the glories of Machu Picchu, the great Citadel of the Incas in southern Peru. Her talks cover fascinating aspects of her research, including origin, urban planning and design, the connection with astronomy and Inca religion.

Please join us (visitors £2) at 1.45 for the 2pm talks at St Hugh's Centre, Hensington Road, Woodstock.

On 2nd January we have a visit from Yanto Evans of the Royal British Legion - the talk will be on his experience in the Falklands War in 1982, where he served with the Parachute Regiment.

Sue Blackshaw, Chair, Woodstock & District u3a

Woodstock in Bloom

A wet Summer and a wet Autumn. How did we stop it from raining?

After the tired old roses under the Oxford Road chestnuts had been grubbed up, Nick and Liz Hiscock and I waited for the conkers to fall so that they could be removed before the next step. We waited but for once in the life of Woodstock there were no conkers at that site this year. Cofidently we sowed a giant box of grass seed on 28th October. Three weeks of drought followed. Will our seeds germinate eventually?

Some we win. Some we lose. It is called gardening.

We planted tulip bulbs in the plant holders on the junction of Market Street with Oxford Street. Green wire netting in small rectangles was placed over them to discourage squirrels. Somebody has removed / borrowed / abducted all this netting. What possible use can he or she have for it. Does anybody know where it all went?

Robert Edwards

Woodstock Natural History Society

Woodstock Natural History Society’s monthly meetings, to which all are welcome, are held at St Hugh’s Hall, Hensington Road, Woodstock, from 7.15 pm until 9.00 pm on the second Tuesday of each month. On Tuesday 12th October Dr David Duthie spoke on “Protecting Global Biological Diversity: an Insight into the UN Environment Programme”. David has dedicated a quarter-century to the encouragement of governmental efforts on biodiversity. One sometimes forgets that global progress requires political commitment and buy-in, and that environmental efforts need dedicated secretariats to rack up countries’ efforts.

David began his talk with 24 charts, each displaying a significant indicator. Half related to environmental loss and half were economic, and the association between the two was both evident and stark.

His next illustrations were astonishing. That living animals of all species make up a remarkably small percentage of the earth’s total biomass is unsurprising for those familiar with the Taiga forest and the Giant Redwood. What was shocking was the balance between wild and domesticated mammals. Even when marine mammals are included, only 4% of mammals, by biomass, are wild animals, as opposed to 34% humans and 62% livestock. Indeed, by biomass, all wild mammals weigh about the same as domesticated horses, donkeys and camels! David also showed us a forty-year sequence of moth observations at the same site in Costa Rica, the Central American country with the best-preserved forest coverage, despite which the reduction in number and species variety of moths was depressingly unremitting.

David demonstrated how co-ordinated international action on biodiversity (or at least talking about it) began with the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. The following year saw the entry-into-force of the UN Convention on Biodiversity. There followed a plethora of smaller parallel conventions, and in 1996, as the principal convention gained ratifications, and buoyed by a generous donation from the Japanese government, the Convention acquired a permanent secretariat in Montreal. Since then, this Secretariat has organised a series of CoPs, “conferences of the parties” to encourage state parties to the Convention to put more effort into Biodiversity, and to create protected areas by aggregating lands under the care of public authorities with lands set aside by willing landlords. Biodiversity requires substantial areas of land, particularly if larger flora and fauna are to be preserved. It also requires cash flows that are harmful to nature to be supplanted by cash flows positive to biodiversity.

David’s talk showed what dedicated human activity can achieve, and what the united action of states can achieve. Yet still there is a relentless march to extinction, as population and resource pressure squeezes nature still harder. We were left realising that much, more work has to be done.

Our Tuesday meetings are augmented by a wonderful programme of guided walks, social events and visits. The next three meetings are our Christmas party, a New Year’s Walk and Blenheim, and our Members’ photo evening. Contact us for information.

We would love to see you at one of our events, and very much hope that you will want to become a member. For a copy of our programme please email contactwnhs@gmail.com, please also check this column regularly, and turn up at one of our Tuesday evenings. We are also keen to help young people into an appreciation of nature, and will do what we can to assist schoolteachers wishing to embark on relevant projects.

Dr Stephen Vickers, Meetings correspondent, WNHS

Bladon and Woodstock Flower Club

Hello everyone - here I am again and as I look out of the window the sun is shining but there is a chill in the air. We had a wonderful Imposed workshop on 11 November. We worked in groups of three and were given the same flowers, foliage, sticks, wool and wire wreath rings and from that we had to create an arrangement in one hour. Every arrangement was so different and yet we had used the same items. All the arrangements were raffled at the end of the evening.

We now look forward to our big event at Exeter Hall on 4 December when we have Arnaud Metarie demonstrating his Festive Floral Fantasy. This is our fund-raising event but at the same time it will be a very sociable evening.

The Club does not meet in January. On 10 February we have Carol Gardiner, a National Demonstrator, with 'Winters Palette', at our usual meeting place - the Bowls and Tennis Clubhouse, Cadogan Park, Woodstock. Our meetings start at 7pm with the doors opening at 6.15pm.

On 10 March we have our Annual General Meeting; after a short break of coffee and cake we have a National Speaker, Simone Squire, with 'More than a Slab of Chocolate'. Subscriptions are also due on that date of £42 for the year. Visitors are always welcome with a charge of £8. We do have a wonderfully varied programme already setup for 2025/2026. If you would like to know anything further about the Club, please contact me on 01865 376587

Margaret Lang

Woodstock Community
Christmas Lunch
Provided by Blenheim Palace
Christmas Day - Wednesday
25th December, 2024
St Mary Magdalene’s Church
Woodstock
12.30 - 3.00pm
Lunch served at 1pm
To reserve your place, please contact
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News from 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; 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.



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The Arts Society Cotswolds

Lecture on Wednesday 11th December 2024

The Goose is Getting Fat: A History of Christmas Traditions

What's behind the Wassail and why do we kiss under mistletoe and let loose women into York at Christmas? Every family hones its own traditions, but mainly they are based on a central theme: filling our houses with greenery and bling, sending cards, eating too much, wearing a silly hat, singing songs and playing games that we don't bother with for the rest of the year. How has all this come about? Some are based on pagan festivities that either honoured spirits or simply helped to break up the winter. Others, such as advent calendars and crackers, are much more recent.

This lecture cannot possibly cover all of our traditions, but it gives a glimpse behind the scenes to see our ancestors preparing for the day, stirring-up puddings and dragging Yule logs into the house on Christmas Eve and the rituals that went with it. We see Lords of Misrule lording it over rowdy parties, how pantomime developed and how a few carollers sent out a coded message.

About our speaker:

Imogen, after nearly 20 years in the British army, went to the University of Kent to study Anglo-Saxon & Medieval History and Art, graduating with 1st class honours, followed by an MPhil from the University of Birmingham. She works as a freelance lecturer across Britain and Europe as well as lecturing on small cruise ships and running study tours and courses on land. She is the author of Stone on Stone: the Men Who Built the Cathedrals, published 2019. A Freeman of the City of London, and a Member of the Company of Communicators.

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

Bus Shelters in the Town

Some do not drive or own a car, we’re being encouraged to leave the car at home, no longer being offered parking spaces at work ... and some try to reduce their carbon footprint. Building bigger roads for more and more cars will result in more congestion and pollution ... and even if we were to all go electric the increased congestion will drive us all crazy.

The shelters are the responsibility of the Town Council responsibility, the council has a healthy budget right now and the Council also has a responsibility to cut carbon. Some of you will know that I have been trying to represent some of the views of users, and at the November council meeting, I spoke at the public participation session and asked the Council to demonstrate to residents, employees and the public that they too want safe, comfortable shelters that provide us with helpful live information ... and I asked them if they would not defer or delay unnecessarily an investment.

Before Cllr Martin resigned, she asked the Clerk to send the details and the motion she had prepared to Cllrs Poskitt and Cooper. The shelters were discussed at the Council’s meeting but the full comments exchanged by Cllr Grant and Poskitt during the meeting weren’t entirely clear (poor acoustics in the Town Hall). It was acknowledged that the Manor Road and Hill Rise shelters needed to be replaced, and the Hensington Gate shelter was in need of repair. From the Council’s documents on their website) they have allocated £6000 funds to repair and paint them from their current budget, but this amount is unlikely to be adequate for replacing shelters. Cllr Poskitt indicated she would investigate the cost of replacement and acknowledged that waiting for S106 from the development at Hill Rise would take many years. They suggested the possibility of asking Blenheim to contribute to the shelter outside of Hensington Gate. I didn’t hear them mention live update information for the shelters. As no clear motion was proposed at the meeting, perhaps we will read more in the council minutes soon or in their Latest News on their website.

Please pass your ideas for improving the experience of public transport users to the Town Clerk and he can forward to the councillors. Email, clerk@woodstock-tc.gov.uk . You can also share your ideas with Sustainable Woodstock.

Hilary Brown, Sustainablewoodstockuk@gmail.com



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Woodstock Festive Fayre



Join us for the 6th edition, brought to you by Wake Up To Woodstock

Get into the Christmas spirit this November and experience the biggest Woodstock Festive Fayre to date in three amazing venues: St Mary Magdalene Church, The Oxfordshire Museum and The Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum.

Opening from 5 to 8pm on Friday 29 November and Saturday 30 November from 10am to 7pm; come and discover the unique creations from our 55 talented stallholders showcasing their unique crafts, delicious treats, and Christmas gifts including artisanal food and drink, cozy winter wear, jewellery, art and festive decorations - there will be something for everyone.

Whether you're looking for the perfect gift or simply want to savour a glass of mulled wine and delicious hot food, Woodstock Festive Fayre is the place to be!

Please come and support these local and artisanal businesses and celebrate the magic of Christmas. Admission is free and everyone is welcome (however, we ask that all four-legged friends enjoy the festive ambiance from outside the venues).

For more information about the Christmas Fayre, including a full list of stallholders please visit www.wutw.co.uk/woodstock-festive-fayre-2024/

We look forward to seeing you there!



Night of a Thousand Candles

Enjoy the magic of Christmas on Saturday 30 November at this free event for the whole family, between 5.30pm to 7pm outside Woodstock Town Hall.

Celebrate a traditional Victorian 'Christmas lights switch-on' featuring choir music and carols and singing, Santa, food & drink and all things festive. With a special visit from the local fire station for the kids to enjoy!

Bring your lanterns and candles to light up the square!

For more information visit www.wutw.co.uk

Woodstock Then and Now

This postcard of Park Street circa 1920 in an age before motorcars shows that the trees were pollarded.

Up to 1974 the Borough Council which was the Highway Authority for Woodstock pollarded every year in Autumn



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Oxford Bus Museum inc. Morris Motors & Historic Cycle Collection

Christmas and New Year

Father Christmas will be coming on Sundays 15 and 22 December to the bus museum in Long Hanborough from 10am until 3pm. Plans are being made to create his Grotto within a bus in the museum and to hold a Christmas Tombola. A small charge will be made for children to see Father Christmas but they will be given a gift. There will be bus rides at 12.15 and 2.15pm. A great way of entertaining your whole family!

If you are at a loose end after the festivities, why not visit the museum on New Year's Day when we are holding a running day. Several buses from our running fleet will take part with regular departures from the museum on different routes. You will be able to experience what it was like to travel by bus in the 1950s and 1960s.



The picture is of two objects outside in the museum yard. They often puzzle visitors. We have tried to grow plants in them to make the museum look more attractive. But what was their original purpose.

Until the 1960s buses were made by attaching a completed body onto a chassis, which had the engine and driving cab at the front, the transmission down the length of the chassis to the rear wheels.

After the First World War the War Department sold off its surplus lorries, which had been brought back from France. Some ex-servicemen bought the lorries and removed the lorry body and mounted a bus body on the chassis. Only later were chassis designed especially for buses.

When London Transport overhauled its buses, it would separate the body from the chassis at the start of the work. The overhaul of the bodies and chassis did not take the same time. When a chassis was complete, the first available body would be attached. It was rare that a departing chassis would have the same body as when it arrived.

Each new type of chassis had to be subjected to rigorous testing before being put on the market. To do this the weight of the body and its payload had to be replicated.

AEC of Southall, who made most of Oxford's buses until 1967, used these two weights mounted on the chassis frame between the wheels to simulate the weight of the body during testing.

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Sixth Form Open Evening

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The Marlborough C of E School Year 9 Battlefields Trip

Around midnight on Friday 18th October, a very sleepy coach carrying 45 Year 9s ventured out of the Marlborough School car park for the annual WWI Battlefields trip.

The first visit of the whirlwind three days was to the site of the Battle of Arras. Students first visited the site of the Vimy Ridge memorial, which commemorates the Canadian sacrifice during the offensive of April 1917. After Vimy Ridge came the Wellington tunnels, a series of strategic pathways dug by Maori tunnellers to secretly connect British soldiers to the front line. Finally, the group headed to the hostel, which has welcomed Marlborough students for many years, to enjoy a well-deserved dinner and rest.

On the second day, the coach travelled back into Northern France, this time to see sites along the Somme. Students began by looking at the Devonshire Cemetery, the final resting place of the 163 members of the Devonshire Regiment. Next came a visit to the Lochnagar crater, an enormous remnant of a mine which spreads 100 metres across. Finally, the group visited Thiepval, an enormous monument dedicated to the 72,000 British and South African soldiers who went missing during the Somme offensive. That evening, the whole group walked to the Menin Gate, from which troops departed for the battlefield. Here, they watched the Last Post, where buglers play to commemorate the fallen.

On our third and final day, students walked into the town of Ypres. Students saw the Menin Gate again before heading for Essex Farm Cemetery. The travellers hopped back on the bus on Sunday afternoon, threading back through Northern France and onto the ferry to Dover.

The annual battlefield trip is a valuable experience for students to get a sense for the scale and devastation of the First World War and pupils enjoyed the opportunity to enrich their history learning.

The Marlborough School Remembrance Assembly

The Whole School Assembly on Wednesday 13th November marked the time when the whole Marlborough community gathered to take part in our own act of Remembrance, as we do every year at that time.

Our Head of History, Mr Moss led the Assembly and spoke about the Kollwitz family - a German family consisting of parents Carl and Kate Kollwitz, and their three sons Franz, Hans and Peter. When Germany declared war in July 1914, their eldest sons Franz and Hans signed up the following day, Peter however, had to wait patiently until his 18th birthday before joining

up. Peter's friends had already joined and were waiting for him as Peter arrived in Flanders in January 1915.

On a beautiful sunny day in June, Carl and Kate Kollwitz received the news that they had dreaded ever since their boys had left for the front, that their son, Peter was dead, killed at Ypres in May 1915 - his body was never found. Two weeks later their grief was increased as they received the news that both Franz and Hans had been killed at Verdun in April.

Kate used her grief to campaign against the war, as she joined the growing protest movement in Germany. She used her art to show the true horrors of war and to get across her anti-war message. In 1937 she created her famous sculpture Pieta, which is a mother holding her dying son - the sculpture represents the sacrifice and suffering that everyone goes through during times of war. Today this sculpture can be seen in the Neue Wache, on Unter der Linden Strasse in Berlin and this building is a German memorial to the victims of war and dictatorship.

Mr Moss closed the Assembly with the following words: 'There are no winners in war, even if you claim victory, you are still left with the pain and misery that war brings. So at this time of remembrance, we need to reflect on the sacrifice that people took during these conflicts. We also need to show empathy to those who are remembering those who have fallen'.

Woodstock Remembrance Parade

Principal Mr Hanlon was joined by two of our Year 8 students, Cora and William, to attend the Woodstock Remembrance Sunday service and lay a wreath on behalf of the school community. The Reverend Sarah Bourne led a poignant service at the War Memorial and a two-minute silence was observed at 11:00 am followed by the sounding of the Last Post. The names of the servicemen and women were read out and will be remembered always.



L-R Cora, Mr Hanlon (Principal) and William, laying wreaths on behalf of The Marlborough School

Woodstock CE Primary School U11s Boys Football Tournament

We recently had the privilege of accompanying our



U11s football team to a tournament hosted by Stonesfield Primary School. It was a wonderful opportunity for a few of the Woodstock Partnership Schools to get together and play football. All the teams that attended did an amazing job of representing their schools and we were very grateful to Stonesfield for putting on such a great tournament. The Woodstock CE Primary team did a fantastic job of representing our school, showing team spirit, perseverance and skill throughout. After some very close matches, we made it through to the school's final and won 3-0. Well done team - thoroughly deserved.

Key Stage 1 Now & Then History Workshop



The children in Key Stage one travelled back in time to experience an old-fashioned classroom and learn how schooling has changed since the introduction of the 1870s Education Act. From slates, dip pens, free milk, the abacus and the cane! Photographs, objects and lots of practical activities helped bring the past to life. The children also got to explore toys from the past and how they have changed over time. Lots of fun was had by all of the children and teachers. The workshops were lead by the education team at the Woodstock Museum - thank you for a wonderful day!

Woodstock Town Remembrance Parade

We would like to say thank you to the children from our Pupil Parliament who represented the school at the Woodstock Town Remembrance Parade. It was touching to see so many local groups represented within the town, not only school but the fire brigade, cubs and brownies.



The children were a true credit to themselves and our school community. We also held a whole school Remembrance Collective Worship which included a two-minute silence which was an opportunity for us to remember and show respect.

Woodstock Lunch Club

Woodstock Lunch Club was formed over 40 years ago. The club meets on alternate Wednesday in the Woodstock Community Centre except during the months of August and December.

The club provides a two course lunch and tea or coffee, for £5.00. We welcome retired residents of Woodstock and the local area who would like to enjoy a hearty lunch and meet others for a chat. We are always pleased to hear from people who might like to join us.

Lunch is cooked by volunteers. At present we have four teams which means that each individual team member only cooks perhaps four or five times a year. We also have volunteer drivers assisting those members who have mobility issues. We are always pleased to hear from anyone interested in joining our cooking, and driving teams.

In November Woodstock Lunch Club was delighted to receive a very generous donation from the Woodstock Mock Mayor Committee.

Also in November ageUK gave a very interesting and informative talk with practical advice on scam awareness.

For further information please contact Pauline and James Smith on 01993 811934 or 07889 655012.



Treasurer Sue John being presented with cheque by the Woodstock Mock Mayor at The Star Inn.

Singing for Fun

Now at St Mary Magdalene Church every 1st Monday of the month at 2pm

Due to the closure of Woodstock Social Club, our Singing for Fun sessions have relocated to St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock, beginning on Monday 4 November at 2pm.

Please come and join us for an enjoyable and friendly hour where we chat, have a cup of tea/coffee, and sing our way through one of our large print songbooks. Don't say 'I can't sing' - it doesn't matter what your voice is like, we sing for fun! Most of our regulars are between 60 and 100+ but everyone is welcome and sessions are free.

We would like to say a big thank you to the Social Club for hosting us so warmly and generously for 8 years. Also to Andy Graham for helping us obtain a Councillor Priority Fund grant for the church heating costs. And thank you, St Mary Magdalene, for making this new chapter possible.

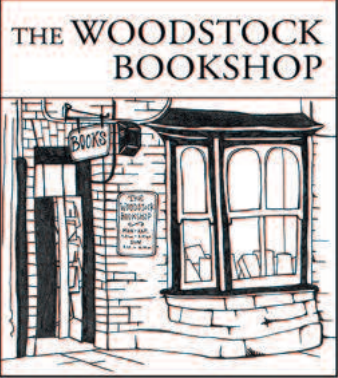
Tessa Hall and Paul Ralph

Woodstock 50+ Cinema Club

This Club shows films on the fourth Friday of every month at the Woodstock Methodist Church in Woodstock.

Please come and spend a relaxing morning for a get-together, watch a film, and enjoy a cup of tea or coffee, and biscuits.

Jessica, 07384 511698



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Woodstock Probus Club

Many members were recently able to go to the performance of Rigoletto by the Welsh National Opera at the New Theatre. This was excellent and we were very lucky as the company has been taking Industrial Action due to the major grant cuts

proposed. This could have a big impact on their ability to tour round parts of the UK.

At our November Meeting we were fortunate to have Emily Spencer, head of operations at Blenheim Palace tell us how the organisation is run internally and her roll in ensuring that the customer experience is a good to an excellent one on each visit. Quite a task when visitor numbers are now around 1,000,000 pa and several events can be happening at the same time. She particularly mentioned the European Political Community Meetings in July which was a huge endeavour.

The next challenge is to work round the extensive roof work to the Palace that is starting in January. The benefit of making a donation which is gift aided for the entrance fee is significant adding £1,200,000 pa to the funds for maintaining the Palace which is worth remembering.

We are shortly to be treated to a wine tasting of English wines that is being hosted by the 'Topsy Palace' in the Town Hall which should be interesting. While we all want to support 'local products', I have yet to have a drinkable English red.

Our annual Carol Service will be taking place in early December with the Witney Town Band to get us into the Christmas mood and hope all readers enjoy the celebrations.

Michael Bowles, Past President

Bladon Snippets from the Past

Spoiled for choice! Amazing that we were 'furnished' with 3 general stores and a 4th had just closed.

Smith's, now the Pottery in the 'square'.

Cockerall's, half way up Heath Lane, a general store plus paper and delivery business, and cigarettes when many residents smoked - me too, as with lots of WW2 folk it curbed the lust for food which was in short supply.

Maisey's, on Park Street, also a general store plus some footwear items such as plimsols (pumps). This became a Post Office when the Post Office lady further up in Grove Road retired.

"Wowee" a 4th shop had just closed.

Mary F. Sitch

Whats On in Dec and Jan

Editor's Note
For the latest information, please click on the Events link at www.wobl.news.
If you would like your event included here, please send an email to editor@wobl.news.

Wednesday 04 Dec 2024, 19:30
Oxfordshire Museum
Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
Street of Shame or Street of Adventure?
St Brides' Fleet Street and the World of the Media.
David Meara, Archdeacon Emeritus of London

Thursday 05 Dec 2024, 14:00
Woodstock and District u3a - Talk
St Hugh's Centre
Machu Picchu; Speaker: Gloria Camino

Sunday 15 Dec 2024, 15:00
St Mary Magdalene
Soldiers of Oxfordshire Trust - Music
A Christmas concert from The Waterloo Band & Bugles of The Rifles

Sunday 15 Dec 2024, 10:00
Oxford Bus Museum, Long Hanborough
Father Christmas with bus rides, between 10 and 4

Monday 16 Dec 2024, 20:00
St Mary Magdalene
The Woodstock Society - Talk
Quentin Hayes - A.I. Artistically Inspired? Are the Arts Still Relevant in the 21st Century?

Sunday 22 Dec 2024, 10:00
Oxford Bus Museum, Long Hanborough
Father Christmas with bus rides, between 10 and 4

Wednesday 01 Jan 2025, 10:00
Oxford Bus Museum, Long Hanborough
New Year's Day running event between 10 to 4

Thursday 02 Jan 2025, 14:00
St Hugh's Centre
Woodstock and District u3a - Talk
Yanto Evans of the Royal British Legion, will talk of his experiences in the Falklands War in 1982, where he served with the Parachute Regiment.

Wednesday 08 Jan 2025, 19:30
Coach House, Oxfordshire Museum
Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
'Chef to 4 Prime Ministers' with Alan Lavender

Wednesday 15 Jan 2025, 11:30
Woodstock Town Hall
Woodstock Literature Society - Open Book Group
Discussion of 'Staying On' by Paul Scott

Saturday 18 Jan 2025, 15:00
St Mary Magdalene
Woodstock Literature Society - Talk
Professor Peter McCullough on 'John Donne: Poet and Preacher'

STOP PRESS

Bereavement Cafe: The next Bereavement Cafe will be held at St Mary Magdalene's Church, Woodstock, and will take place on Friday 20 December, between 3 to 5pm.

Thames Valley Police: PCSO Helen Duffield has reported that has been a lot of thefts from vehicles for tools recently - ALL tools need to be removed or at least marked up for security and easy identity. There have also been thefts from vehicles at beauty spots where valuables have been left in sight. Finally, there is a wave of theft of motor vehicles - these are mainly Land Rovers and sports cars.

They also want to remind people to leave a light on in their home during the evenings to deter burglars.

Town Council Elections: Due to the resignation of three Councillors in the last month, over 30 people have called for an election (rather than have co-options). At the time of going to press, it is rumoured that this will be held on Thursday 16 January. If anyone is interested in putting their name forward, please contact the Clerk at the Town Hall, or West Oxfordshire District Council.



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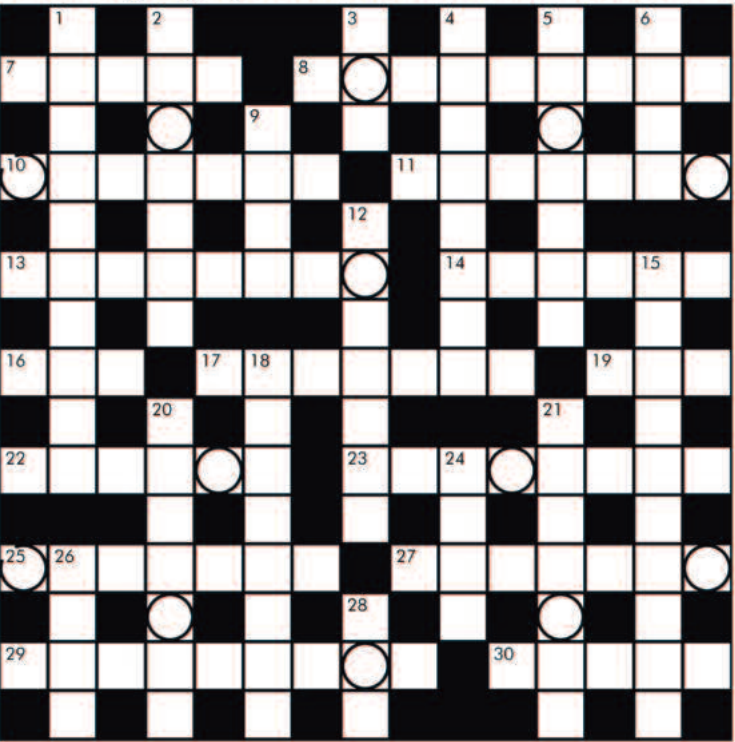
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Solve the clues to this straight crossword. Read through the letters in the marked squares to reveal a geographical feature that can be seen from Woodstock, South Africa.



- Across

 - 7. Shed hair
 - 8. Chronograph
 - 10. Periods of instruction
 - 11. Prohibited
 - 13. Department store
 - 14. Eat
 - 16. Skimp on
 - 17. Nemesis
 - 19. Tavern
 - 22. Encourage (4,2)
 - 23. Answer
 - 25. Newness
 - 27. Tire out
 - 29. Deteriorating
 - 30. Indelible mark
- Down

 - 1. Cash cow
 - 2. Scottish city
 - 3. Pig dwelling
 - 4. About to happen
 - 5. Leafy vegetable
 - 6. Caustic solution
 - 9. Against
 - 12. Sudden urge
 - 15. Fail or succeed (4,2,4)
 - 18. Incessant
 - 20. Relinquish
 - 21. Channels
 - 24. Elegant, sumptuous
 - 26. Woodwind instrument
 - 28. Pen fluid

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Sunday, 15th December

10.30am Christmas All-Age Nativity WB

Friday, 20th December

3.00pm Blue Christmas Service StMM-W

7.00pm Carol Service StM-B

Sunday, 22nd December

10.30am Carol Service WM

6.30pm Carol Service StMM-W

Tuesday, 24th December

2.30pm Christingle StM-B

4.00pm Christingle StMM-W

5.00pm Christmas Family Worship BM

7.00pm Carol Service StH

7.30pm Family Christmas Mass StH

11.15pm Midnight Communion WM

11.30pm Midnight Mass StM-B

11.30pm Midnight Mass StMM-W

Wednesday, 25th December

8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) StMM-W

9.30am Christmas Day Eucharist StM-B

9.30am Christmas Morning Mass StH

10.00am Christmas Day Celebration WB

10.30am Christmas Day Worship WM

11.00am Christmas Day Eucharist StMM-W

Sunday, 29th December

10.00 Christmas All-Age Service WB

10.00 Benefice Christmas Eucharist StMM-W

StM-B	St Martin's Church of England, Church St, Bladon
StMM-W	St Mary Magdalene's Church of England, Park St, Woodstock
StH	St Hugh of Lincoln's Roman Catholic Church, Hensington Rd, Woodstock
BM	Bladon Methodist Church, Park St, Bladon
WM	Woodstock Methodist Church, Oxford St, Woodstock
WB	Woodstock Baptist Church, High St, Woodstock