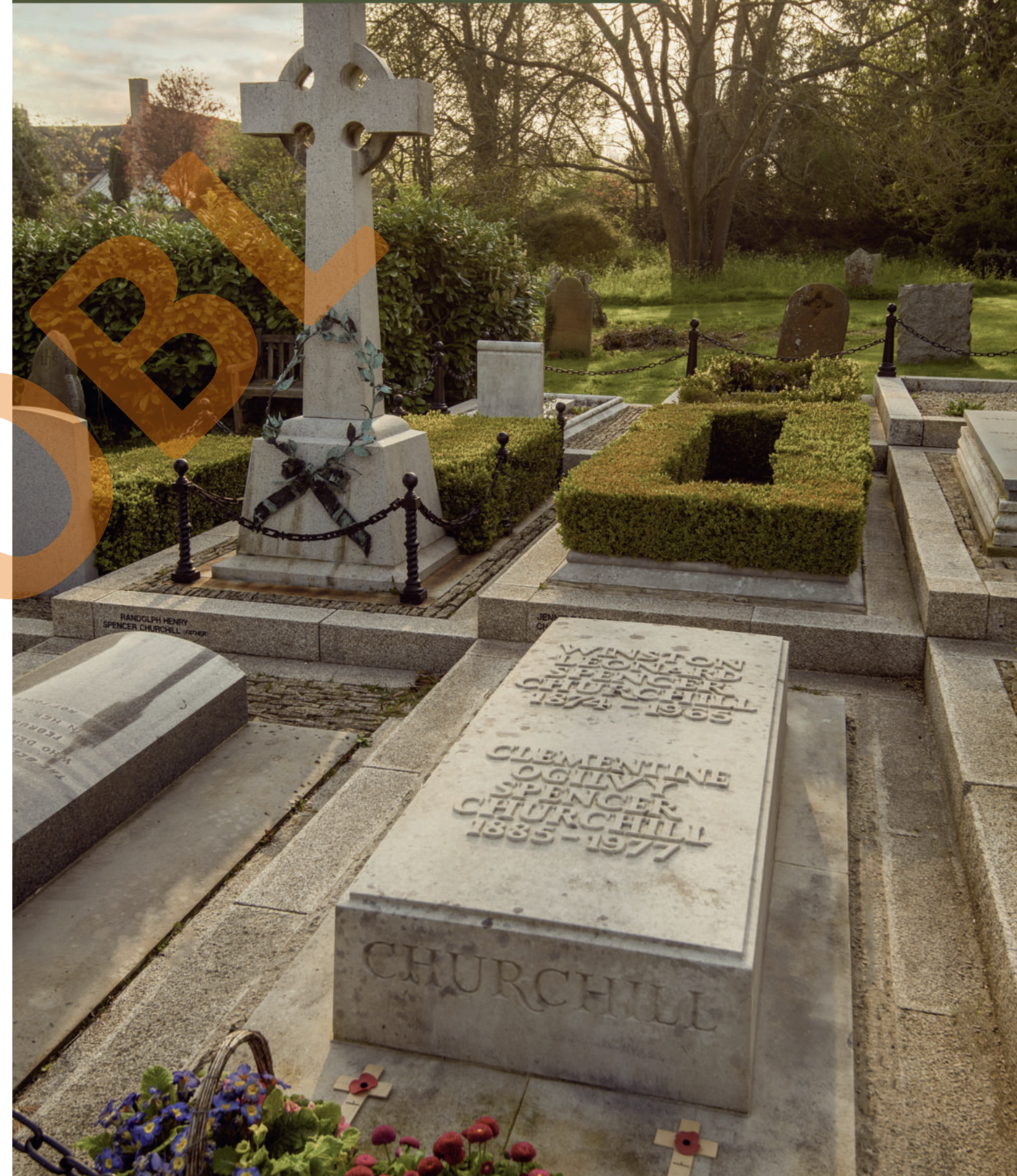


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May 2025

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Editorial

I hope that everyone had a lovely Easter and enjoyed the wonderful sunny weather we were all blessed with. I wonder what the summer will bring? Let's hope the weather stays good at least for May because there are many exciting events to look forward to.

First, we have the new Arts Festival organised by the Woodstock Bookshop on the first weekend in May. Coinciding with that there are VE Day celebrations in Bladon and then in Woodstock the following weekend (see Page 5). Then Artsweek comes to Woodstock towards the end of May (see Page 22). Feastock, the travelling dinner party, is happening soon; there will be a full report in the next issue. There are many other activities - some listed in the back of this magazine - which we are very lucky to enjoy, thanks to all the hard work of the organisers.

I decided to have the photograph of Churchill's grave in Bladon as the front cover this month due to VE Day coming on Thursday 8th May. Next month we will have an article about the Woodstock policeman, living in the town, who was on duty the day Sir Winston was buried there.

There is a new feature this month with an article about a trip to Japan. If anyone wants to write about their own travels, please get in touch. And soon we will have an article about a lucky resident who attended the 1999 Champions League Final where Manchester United beat Bayern Munich in stoppage time. Do you have any sporting, or other memorable memories, that you would like to share?

Once again, my grateful thanks to our contributors, distributors, advertisers, and of course our readers and subscribers, without whom this magazine would not be possible to produce.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

Disclaimer: Woodstock and Bladon News is a community amenity relying significantly on voluntary contributions and support. The Editor cannot be held responsible for any of the views expressed in its pages, nor does it endorse any products or services advertised. The Editor reserves the right to cut, edit, or omit any article submitted for publication, or to refuse advertisements for reasons of space limitation, suitability, etc. The Editor's decision is final. The contents of this magazine are Copyright and the intellectual property of the Authors.

Front Cover: Sir Winston Churchill's grave by Pete Seaward Photography

Answers to the April Crossword - The Bladon bells were rung to commemorate 'Sir Winston Churchill'
Across: 8. Stable, 9. Intruder, 11. Essential, 12. Setup, 13. Stilettos, 15. Rainy, 17. Solemn, 19. Hectic, 23. Scorn, 24. Thesaurus, 26. Chair, 28. Balaclava, 30. Loophole, 31. Pummel.
Down: 1. Assesses, 2. Laws, 3. Glance, 4. Endless, 5. Preserve, 6. Edit, 7. Trophy, 10. Piste, 14. Igloo, 16. Inter, 18. Monarchs, 20. Casually, 21. Stubble, 22. Reply, 23. Sickly, 25. Accrue, 27. Ahoy, 29. Aims.

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34	Stop Press and Crossword

There are many other reports and notices from local clubs and societies

Subscriptions

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

It can be purchased locally at Blenheim Palace, Mary and Martin's Newsagent, Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock Bookshop, Woodstock Grocers, and Wootton Stores. It can also be delivered to your door on a monthly basis - please contact Nick (editor@wobl.news) for Woodstock, or Lucy for Bladon.

For bank transfer, please pay to Woodstock and Bladon News Limited - 04-29-09 - 81754981, and use the first line of your address as the reference. To pay by cheque, please make cheque payable to N Manby-Brown (the business account does not accept cheques) and send to 51 Plane Tree Way, Woodstock OX20 1PE.

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 copy deadline is **Sunday 18 May 2025** for the June issue.

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

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VE Day Celebrations

There will be three events locally. On Sunday 4 May, Bladon are hosting their customary annual event with a Village Fete, military parade, and spitfire fly-past.

In the evening, we celebrate the 80th anniversary (at the exact time) of the liberation of Denmark. This is a very special service at Churchill's grave, and I strongly urge everyone to come and remember the enormous sacrifices that were made on our behalf.

Then on the following Saturday 10 May, Woodstock takes over - see adjacent advertisement and leaflets.

As a post-war child, I don't recall many VE Day celebrations. The 4th of May 1945 must have been a bitter-sweet day, with huge emotional swings. After all, whilst there was happiness that the six-year war in Europe was over, there were still huge battles being fought elsewhere in the world.

Every family would have lost relatives and friends, so there must have been a lot of sadness as well. My own father was still in Burma, and my mother in London, having lost a Belgian fiancé in a bombing raid over Hungary. She worked at Bletchley Park, but couldn't tell us of her wartime experiences until the 1970s.

*'When you go home, tell them of us and say,
For your tomorrow, we gave our today.'*

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor



Danish Liberation
Memorial Wreath Laying
St Martin's Church, Bladon
Sunday 4th May 2025, at 8.30pm
(please arrive at the Church by 8.15pm)

Do please join us for the short service and wreath laying which marks the time when the daily illegal BBC broadcast from London was interrupted by the news of the German Army's surrender to the Allied Forces represented by Field Marshal Montgomery, thereby ending the 5 year occupation of Denmark. This is still celebrated all over Denmark each year, and is a way to remember the people in the resistance movement and the British soldiers who fought to bring peace and hope for the future.

The Service will be conducted by Sarah Bourne, followed by the laying of wreaths by a representative from the Danish Embassy, a Deputy Lieutenant for Oxfordshire, and a member of the Royal British Legion, who will present standards. The Last Post and Reveille will be played.

The White House at Bladon is open for drinks all afternoon and evening, and we will all be gathering there after the service to celebrate the friendship between our respective nations.



VE DAY CELEBRATIONS
BLADON VILLAGE FETE
SUNDAY 4TH MAY

BBQ, Ice Creams, Outside Bar and Music &
Rodeo Bull at The White House
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Village Games at Recreational Ground
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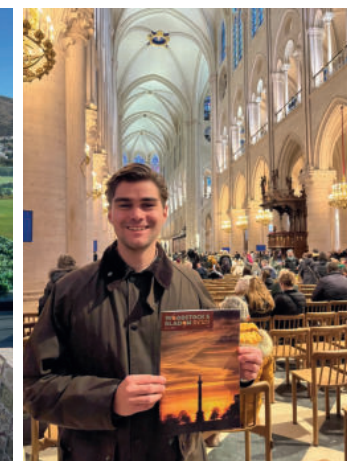
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WOBL Around The World



Thanks to everyone for taking their copies of Woodstock and Bladon News around the world, and it can be as little as 10 miles away, or the other side of the world.

This month we have, from top left to right and then down:

Mathew at Mount Fuji

Trisha in Cape Town, South Africa

Christian in the Notre Dame, Paris

Rachel at the Red Lion, Clovelly, Devon

Sophy (with Miki) at the Whangaparaoa Peninsula, north of Auckland, New Zealand

Caroline is overlooking Barcelona Harbour

Meg and Grace have the Matterhorn in the background at Zermatt, Switzerland

Editors Note: Please think about packing a copy of WOBL in your suitcase for the next journey, and then take a photo to show us where you have been.

**WOODSTOCK &
BLADON news**

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

Emma Parkin (nee Pollock)

In 2022 my friend, Emma, suffered the most unimaginable tragedy when her nine year old son, Sam, died suddenly from a rare stomach disorder.

Sam was a very creative boy - talented at art - and soon after his death, his mother instinctively started doing what he'd loved to do; forage in nature to create pictures and models. It became Emma's therapy and made her feel closer to Sam.

Taking inspiration and materials from things she'd grown, found or foraged, she began to make original, imaginative and eco-friendly gifts, using sustainable materials wherever possible, which she now sells on Etsy.

Emma was brought up in Bladon and we first met when she was at the village playgroup in the late 1970's with my daughter. Our families became good friends, and remain so to this day, which is why I'd like to help her by spreading the word.

Please look at her website:
<https://www.etsy.com/shop/littlefacecreations/>

£1 from every sale goes to a fund that supports charities and causes that Sam cared about.

Helen Stevenson

Dear Editor

A petition for the benefit of communities in which we all live

I spoke at the recent Woodstock Annual Town Meeting and encouraged residents to better understand community benefits* related to the Botley West Solar Farm. A comment made at the meeting and on social media since (We Love Woodstock) suggests a few are still unaware that community benefit has no bearing at all on the Government's decision. Whether you welcome the Botley West Solar Farm, have serious concerns about it, or want to STOP it - one thing is certain: IF the Government does give approval, it will generate clean energy ... and huge profits for the investors and developers. And yet local people are being offered so little despite this enormous and profitable scheme. We were shocked to learn that there is no legal requirement yet for a community benefit fund for these schemes in England. By any comparison, the £200K per annum suggested by the developers is wholly inadequate given its size, proximity to communities and the reasons listed by STOP Botley West campaigners. We think 2% of the project's revenue (approximately £1-2 million each year) should be invested directly in local communities. This will be for the lifetime of the proposal (35-40

years) and that would mean more where it's most needed.

We are calling on everyone including those who want to stop the development to sign the petition in the event the proposal is approved. The petition calls on Blenheim to do what they can to influence the developers so local people have a fairer share of the profits. The petition is NOT anti-Blenheim, but evidence is needed that you care about the community benefit. You do not have to live in Woodstock to sign, as we hope that speaking out can lead to a national policy for these schemes up and down the country. So, please feel free to share the petition far-and-wide ... please take a moment, read the petition and hopefully sign it:

<https://www.lowcarbonhub.org/make-botley-west-fair/>

* Renewable energy companies often establish funds that provide financial support to local communities. These funds can be used for a variety of purposes, such as funding local projects, supporting community groups, or improving local infrastructure.

Hilary Brown, Sustainable Woodstock

Bladon and Woodstock Flower Club

Hello everyone. On 14 April we welcomed our trainee demonstrator, Renate Petrauskiene, who will be very soon taking her final exams to become a fully qualified demonstrator. Her title was 'Blossoms of Unity' a floral journey of connection and growth. Renate came from Lithuania, and she was a joy and very amusing. She did exceptionally well and had made several of her very interesting containers. Her flowers all meant something to her through either the name or colour and her story throughout the demonstration was about life, the flow of it, it's ups and downs, it's sadness and kindness plus love. She demonstrated this well.

Our next meeting after this will not be until 9 June which is to be an inhouse workshop - Hand Tied and Frames as on the 14 May several members are going to Salisbury Cathedral for the Annual Flower Festival which is always a wonderful and spectacular event.

We do have a very interesting programme setup for the year so if you are interested in coming along to one of our happy friendly meetings, please contact Ann 07701 000977. We meet on the second Monday of the month in the Bowls and Tennis Clubhouse, Cadogan Park, Woodstock and the meetings start at 7pm. Our annual subscription is £42 and visitors are £10 which includes a raffle ticket.

Margaret Lang

Wootton Village Hall Talks

Our next speaker at 7.30pm on Friday 9 May is **Kit Yates** - an academic, the author of two best-selling books, and a broadcaster specialising in the role of mathematics in everyday life - and is renowned for explaining scientific material in layman's language with both wit and wisdom.

Kit is Professor of Mathematical Biology and Public Engagement at the University of Bath and Director of the Centre for Mathematical Biology there. His research demonstrates that mathematics can be used to describe all sorts of real-world phenomena - from embryo formation to locust swarming, and from sleeping sickness to egg-shell patterning.

He is a prominent commentator on the role of mathematics/science in society and writes regularly for The Guardian and The Independent and a range of other media outlets. He regularly features on radio shows like the BBC's *More or Less*, and *Inside Science* as well as on TV news shows and documentaries.

Kit, who lives in Wolvercote, is the author of two books, *The Maths of Life and Death* (a Sunday Times Science Book of the Year and translated into 25 languages) and *How to Expect the Unexpected*. For this book, Kit writes: "Ever since the dawn of human civilisation, we have been trying to make predictions about what's in store for us. We do this on a personal level, so that we can get on with our lives efficiently (should I hang my laundry out to dry, or will it rain?). But we also have to predict on a much larger scale, often for the good of our broader society."

Entry is £10 in cash - and includes free food. Wine and soft drinks are available for a modest donation. (Children over 16 welcome). Cards can be used to buy speakers' books. To reserve seats, please contact us through our website www.woottontalks.co.uk

Woodstock Baptist Church

Quiz Night in aid of the North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank

Everyone welcome to come along to a quiz night being hosted by Woodstock Baptist Church in aid of our local foodbank.

Saturday 17 May, 6.30pm for a 7pm start, the venue St. Hugh's Church Hall.

Free entry, free food, bring your own drinks, donations welcome for North Oxfordshire Community Foodbank. Maximum team size 8 people.

Should be a fun evening!

If you would like to come along just email wbcenquiry@woodstockbaptistchurch.org.uk so we know numbers for food.

Woodstock & District u3a

Our modest u3a branch is centred in Woodstock and attracts and welcomes members from Woodstock and the surrounding area to come along to the speaker meetings on the first Thursday of the month. Members also then have access to the many and varied interest groups which take place in member's homes or local halls depending on the numbers involved. The association is aimed at those recently retired or even long retired as most activities are daytime; our new website is up-to-date – please take a look. www.woodstocku3a.uk.

Monthly speaker meetings are held at St Hugh's, Hensington Road, Woodstock 1.45 for 2pm with a fee for non-members at £2 to include tea and biscuit. Interest groups develop accordingly to demand and the willingness of a member to run the group. We expect to commence Table Tennis after Easter and also a computer group to look at everyday IT problems and security. Our membership year commences 1 April leading into the AGM in early May. In June we have a special speaker John Field – Magician – a date (5th) surely for your diary.

Please do make contact via the website or come along to a speaker meeting and see what we are about.

Sue Blackshaw, Chair



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Woodstock Literature Society

Review of the April Talk: New Light on Daphne du Maurier by Dr Laura Varnam



When we think of Daphne du Maurier, we probably recall books and films set in the rugged Cornish landscape featuring romantic heroines facing dangerous situations. In her lively and fascinating talk, however, Dr Varnam revealed that the scope of du Maurier's work went well beyond popular novels such as *Frenchman's Creek* and *Jamaica Inn*.

She explained that du Maurier's work covered several genres, including short stories, plays, biographies and memoir in addition to her novels; that her fiction was set in many eras, including the Civil War period and Regency England, involving much research; and that her settings ranged far beyond Cornwall to include London, France, Venice and Jerusalem. She could create a villain we root for, in *The Progress of Julius*, a Dystopian future in *Rule Britannia*, truly disturbing ghostly moments in stories like *Don't Look Now*, and even comic scenes in several of her stories. One notable recurring feature is her use of male narrators; she grew up in a theatrical household and adopting different personae came naturally to her.

Her writing is also quite experimental, adopting different narrative techniques, and Dr Varnam illustrated this with reference to one of her lesser known novels, *The Parasites*. This novel adopts a

plural 1st person narrative voice, and takes place over one 24 hour period, inviting comparison with Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* and *The Waves*. A key idea in this novel is that of artistic delusion, a theme taken up in a short story called *The Alibi*, from *The Breaking Point* collection, which takes as its starting point the decision of a bored man to commit a random killing. Du Maurier was very interested in Carl Jung's theory of the doppelganger, and her work often seems to show how fine a line there is between our good and evil natures.

Another interesting connection that Dr Varnam made was between Du Maurier and the Brontës. In her biography *The Infernal World of Branwell Brontë*, she posits the idea that Branwell was never able to escape the fantasy world of his childhood, which his sisters did in their novels, and which of course Daphne du Maurier was able to achieve with great success in her own work. Her popularity, as Dr Varnam suggested, has obscured the rich variety and interest of du Maurier's work as a whole.

Dr Varnam told us that she became hooked on Daphne du Maurier's work after reading *The House on the Strand*, about someone travelling back in time to the Middle Ages, as a teenager. Many thanks to her for inspiring us to explore du Maurier's work further, in such an absorbing talk.

Anne Handsley



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From 9.30am on 17 May, leave your unwanted items outside your home near the road for the day to be picked up, free-of-charge, by people passing by

3 Reuse
Visit other stalls on your road and around Woodstock and pick up second-hand items to take home

4 Donate
Without obligation to do so, consider making an online donation to reflect the value of any items you have picked up to the Woodstock Primary School PTA, other charity advertised at the stall or a charity of your choice

5 Refresh
Could you or your children set up a stall outside your home and sell refreshments to passing neighbours?

6 Connect
In the spirit of this community event, why not organise a street party to bring your neighbours together for food and/or drinks during the day?

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Woodstock Town Council Meetings

8th April

Seven councillors were present. Apologies were received from Cllr's Addis, Spencer-Churchill, and Parnes. Cllr Poskitt arrived later.

Four members of the public attended but no one addressed the meeting.

The Mayor thanked those who attended the West Oxfordshire Wood Turners Association exhibition in the Mayors Parlour on 29 March. The raffle made £100 for the Woodstock Lunch Club and the Wood Turners Association were very happy with their proceeds. Thanks too for a recent grant to buy bird boxes in the water meadows. She announced that this would be her last full Town Council Meeting as Mayor although there is now an ETC Meeting on 15th April.

The Clerk reported that remedial work had commenced on the cobbles alongside the Town Hall, paid for with a grant from WODC, made available to upgrade the business environments in centres within the district.

For guidance, in the interests of neutrality the candidates due for election to fill the current WTC vacancy on 1st May are not allowed to canvas on WTC property including notice boards. Notices from the Returning Officer only may be posted.

Cllr Cooper - WODC reported that our district is a commendable 16th in the country for recycling. The Council have also commissioned a survey of empty homes with a view to getting them back into use.

Planning applications were considered. No objections to the applications, with the exception of Ref:25/00589/HHD where concerns were to be forwarded to WODC. The report from the Planning Inspectorate concluded that the appeal relating to 31 Oxford Rd was dismissed.

Finance was not considered as the documents did not arrive in time for Councillors to consider.

The schedule of meetings for 2025/26 were confirmed with efforts made to avoid a meeting in August.

A Report from the Environmental Working Party, available in full on the WTC website, was widely welcomed.

The Wychwood Project was to be approached with a request to return to manage the Water Meadows. Cllr Connolly requested a meeting with the Blenheim Hydrologist to discuss the condition of the banks on their side of the river. An application for Local Nature Reserve status is to be progressed as this opens up access to future support and funding.

The Environment Agency (EA) had produced a report on local flooding and they recommended an independent hydrologist be retained. It was decided not to consult an Independent hydrologist to advise the committee, due to the considerable expense and because the EA were due to make a further report.

The Parish Church have been recognised as a Bronze Eco Church awarded by an independent charity, however higher profile for the Eco activities was recommended and the WTC invited to join a future event showcasing the work being done. The Council commended the wonderful work done by volunteers in the churchyard.

VE Day - Plans ongoing including applications to close the roads. Local groups all working together: Wake up to Woodstock, Soldiers of Oxfordshire etc. There will be a service conducted by the Rector at 11am on 8th May at the war memorial.

Solar Panels on the Community Centre - following a feasibility report from Allcott Associates (structural engineers) Brecon and Brecon to be asked to secure quotations to carry out the installation. The report stated the roof is covered with asbestos cement tiles.

The GDPR Audit of WTC, carried out at the request of Cllr Parnes, concluded that the Council was meeting all their compliance requirements. Cllr's were nonetheless urged to take personal responsibility regarding the distribution of personal contact information for themselves and others.

Cllr Andy Graham OCC who joined the meeting later, reported that he had spoken to Blenheim regarding the flooding in Bladon and they will be investigating works on the River Glyme to alleviate the issue. Blenheim's retained traffic management company were currently considering the impacts of the Christmas Light trail on the locale so that last years issues are not repeated. Cllr Graham reported that recommendations are due to be received from the New Doctors Surgery Strategic Steering Committee on which he sits (end of May) moving the Surgery plans forward. Long grass cutting - Cllr Banbury asked for a schedule of who owned what and who was responsible for cutting those areas, so that areas were not left uncut.

Surgery - As there is no Woodstock presence on the Committee, Cllr Williams has asked to be able to sit in on the meetings to observe. The Chair is considering this request and will report back directly to the Mayor. Resolutions were all passed regarding the ongoing Freedom of Information requests which the Council has made regarding the surgery project.

Land use consultation - Cllr Wheatley had prepared a draft response which was well received. Cllr Poskitt gave constructive feedback which Cllr Wheatley will now incorporate before submitting the full report on behalf of the Council.

Civic Budget - A photo of the late Nigel Clifford in his mayoral regalia, is to be displayed in the assembly room mantelpiece to the mark the significant role he played in expediting the wall hangings in that room. The presentation will be marked with a small reception for his family and others involved.

OCC have grants available for flooding relief projects. Cllr Connolly is intending to submit applications for funds to relieve potential local areas.

Botley West - Pre examination stage of the application will take in the region of three months. Karen Howe to be asked again to represent WTC on the Botley West hearing regarding negotiations on the level of Community Benefit available.

West Oxfordshire Community Infrastructure Levy - no objection to be noted.

Housing Supply targets - a Planning Reform Conference to be held on-line on 23 September titled Unlocking Sustainable Growth. Three councillors registered a desire to attend at a cost of £300 each.

The public and press were then excluded.

146 pages of Agenda papers supporting these discussions are available on the WTC website.

Annie Cripps

16 April 2025 (ETC)

7 councillors and 2 members of the public attended the meeting. The audio of the meeting was recorded.

No members of the public spoke in the Public Participation section.

There was a lot of talk about the planning on the land north of Hill Rise, but as this was just amending the details of the plan that had already been approved, the Council agreed to mention that their objections to the plan still stand, but that they would ask the Clerk to add their concerns about the lack of doctors surgery and the recent flooding issues and lack of infrastructure.

There were two other planning issues which were approved, but there was talk about the lack of energy conservation in the plans.

The finances for March 2025 were approved. Whilst these figures were for the year-end, the actual year-end accounts won't be presented until June 2025. The Cash In Hand stands at £404,000. An invoice for extra work done in the Hensington Road Cemetery was approved.

The meeting closed at 7.14pm.

For other details, please refer to the Town Council website for agendas, documents and minutes.

Nick Manby-Brown

Updates on 'Botley West'



Latest News & Diary Dates

Preliminary Meeting Announcement

The Examining Authority (ExA) have announced that the Preliminary Meeting (PA) will take place on Tue 13th May at 10:00am.

The Meeting will discuss Timetable, Topics and Procedures for the Examination of the Application for Botley West Solar Farm. You may comment, attend and/or speak if you have registered as an Interested Party and received an email invitation.

The ExA have issued a 40 page "Rule 6 letter" outlining some key dates, deadlines and guidelines. We have added many of these dates to our Events Calendar at stopbotleywest.com

You can also read the full "Rule 6 letter" by going to stopbotleywest.com for full information and links to the Planning Inspectorate website.

SBW Supporters Walk

Join SBW Supporters Walk - on footpaths impacted by Botley West on Sun 8th June.

Join Stop Botley West supporters walking on footpaths impacted by Botley West, while other Campaigns against Large Solar walk in their area for a coordinated National Campaign event that may be covered by BBC and other news media.

A provisional date for your diary - Details to follow - Sunday 8th June.

Please help with a Donation

Please join us and make a donation to our fighting fund via stopbotleywest.com If you are in a position to make a significant donation please contact our Chair: alex.rogers@stopbotleywest.com to arrange a personal meeting.

Thank you for your support.

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How to make sure your pets will be OK after you die

Right. We Brits adore our pets. And if we're being honest, we often like them a lot more than actual people. So, it's only natural to think about what will happen to them when we're no longer around.

Now, you might assume that, given how much we dote on our pets, the law treats them with the same respect as, say, a distant relative. But no. Under the law, your beloved pooch is treated as ... a possession. Like a rusty old lawnmower or that ridiculous ceramic gnome collection you keep insisting is 'vintage'.

With pets having no legal personality, you can't leave them money in your Will, nor can you name a 'guardian' for them like you would for your kids. In the eyes of the law, they're assets - things to be handed over, like a watch or an old armchair. Charming, isn't it?

But before you start ranting about how outrageous this is, fear not! You can make provisions to ensure your furry friend isn't just tossed aside like an old teapot. Here's some of them.

Giving Your Pet Away (Yes, Really)

One of the simplest ways to make sure your pet is looked after is to gift it to someone in your Will. But before you start scribbling down names, ask them first. Nobody wants to wake up one day to find they've suddenly inherited a Great Dane that eats more than they do.

It's also worth naming a backup in case your first choice is unavailable (read: has realized the financial black hole they're stepping into). Speaking of which, looking after an animal isn't cheap - dogs alone can cost over £1,500 a year. So, unless your chosen recipient is a millionaire, you might want to leave some cash to help them out.

That said, money left in a Will is a gift, not a binding contract. So if the recipient decides to use it for a holiday in the Maldives instead of dog food, tough luck. Bottom line: choose the candidate wisely.

Letters of Wishes: The Pet Owner's Manifesto

Wills are set in stone. Letters of Wishes? Not so much. These are handy little documents that let you provide extensive instructions on how you'd like your pet to be cared for - without having to rewrite your Will every time you adopt a new cat.

Some people take this very seriously, drafting full-blown pet care manuals. Dietary preferences, favourite toys, bedtime routines - it can all go in. And why not? If we're going to be that person who only buys the expensive organic dog treats, we might as well make sure it continues after we're gone.

It's also smart to jot down practical details somewhere: vet contacts, insurance policies, microchip numbers -

basically, everything someone would need to step in and take over smoothly.

Animal Charity Schemes: Because Not Everyone Wants Your Parrot

If you don't have a willing human volunteer, don't panic. Plenty of animal charities offer schemes to rehome pets after their owners pass away.

The idea is simple: you register your pet, include the necessary wording in your Will, and when the time comes, they take over and find your pet a loving new home. Best of all? It's free. Though, let's be honest, it wouldn't hurt to leave a donation as a thank-you.

Don't Forget About Your Pet While You're Still Alive

Wills cover what happens when you die. But what if you're still here, just ... incapacitated? A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) can ensure your pet is looked after if, say, you end up in a coma after a particularly unfortunate skydiving accident.

And crucially, don't forget the temporary arrangements. If something happens suddenly, who's going to feed the cat while all the legal stuff gets sorted? Let your loved ones and executors know in advance.

Final Thought

Nobody likes thinking about death. But if you want to make sure your pet isn't left homeless - or worse - sent to live with your least favourite relative, plan ahead. A few simple steps now will ensure that your four-legged, winged, or scaly best friend is cared for long after you've gone.

At The Burnside Partnership, we love our pets as much as you do. So if you need help getting your affairs in order, give us a shout.



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.

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

Next Monthly Talks at The Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock

at 7.30pm on Wednesday 7th May

St Frideswide and the Early History of Christ Church

Speaker: Ruth Buckley, Local Historian and volunteer Guide, Christ Church

This illustrated talk will cover the authenticity of St Frideswide as the founder of Oxford, plus the history of the Saxon monastery and of the Norman priory on the site of Christ Church.

at 7.30pm on Wednesday 4th June

A 'Mammoth' Task: highlights from the Conservation Laboratory

Speaker: Naomi Bergmans, Curatorial Assistant and Conservator, Oxfordshire Museum Service

This talk will spotlight some of the more interesting and challenging projects undertaken by the conservator this year, including the conservation of a Viking sword, and a sneak preview into the behind-the-scenes preparations for our upcoming Ice Age exhibition in the summer,

This Talk will be preceded by the AGM at 7pm

Membership of The Friends 2025-2026

Single £20; Double £30

Membership details and our full 2025-2026 programme are on our website.

www.friendsoftom.org.uk.

Membership gives you free access all our talks which take place in the Museum in Woodstock but are also available on ZOOM. Non-members are very welcome at these events for a fee of £5, payable on the evening.



People who live near enough and visitors to Woodstock must not forget to go to the County Museum. Now the sun is at last here, we are able to sit outside and are very well cared for by the staff!

Margie McGregor

The Oxfordshire Museum

Michael Black: Chisel, Wood, Stone

MICHAEL BLACK | CHISEL WOOD STONE

There is still time to catch our current exhibition which is all about the life and works of sculptor Michael Black.

Michael Black, who carved the Emperors' Heads outside the Sheldonian Theatre in Broad Street, lived and worked from Oxford throughout his career. As a talented sculptor he received notable public commissions, exhibited artwork at prestigious galleries, and restored the stonework of churches, colleges and other buildings across Oxford.

Saturday 15 March to Sunday 1 June: Free Entry

Springtime at the Museum



Our wonderful garden has been looking especially vibrant this year. First, we had an abundance of Crocus and Snowdrops which were swiftly followed by a sea of yellow as our Daffodils put on an impressive display. A variety of containers and planters have added an extra splash of colour thanks to some stunning Tulips.

We are very fortunate to have an extremely talented team of volunteer gardeners who turn up every Monday - whatever the weather. Their dedication and knowledge help to make our garden a real asset to the museum.

If you are interested in joining the gardening team, then do drop us an email – we would love to hear from you! oxfordshire.museum@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Coming Soon ... Opens Saturday 21 June 2025

It's not long until our Ice Age Exhibition opens in June! The final details are being put together and the museum shop has already taken delivery of its first shipment of Mammoths and Sabre-toothed tigers in anticipation of the launch of this exciting exhibition!

Panniers

Everyday cycling in Woodstock and Bladon

Do you find cycling a pain in the neck? Are your knees up round your ears as you are cycling to the Co-op? If so, you definitely need to think about 'bike fit'.

I recently helped a friend get his bike back on the road after it had spent many years at the back of a shed. But after an inaugural ride to Yarnton and back, he reported pain in his shoulders and neck. The problem was that his handlebars were too straight and too far away, and he was stretched out with his head at an awkward angle. The fix involves new, swept back, handlebars, and a new stem to raise and shorten his reach and make the whole "cockpit" of the bike tighter.

Lots of bike shops offer a fitting service, but there is one simple thing we can all do to increase riding comfort - setting the saddle height.

One rule of thumb is that your heel should barely scrape the pedal at the bottom of the pedal stroke with your knee fully extended. I use the following calculation. Measure your inside leg and multiply it by 0.883. That should give you the correct distance from the top of your saddle to the middle of the bottom bracket.

Providing you have the correct frame size for your height, everything else on your bike can be fine-tuned to suit your riding style. Let's face it - if cycling is uncomfortable, we are simply not going to do it. Happy everyday cycling!



Have you checked that your saddle is at the correct height?

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



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The Marlborough C of E School

The Marlborough School Charity Week



March 24th-28th saw our annual Charity Week, with the whole school coming together to fundraise for three worthy charities: New Yatt Riding for Disabled our chosen local charity, Young Minds our national charity, and SolarAid our international charity.

Students took part in lots of fun activities over the week, from our ever-popular tuck shop, to the return of soak the teacher. The highlight of the week, as it is every year, was the traditional Fun Run to Blenheim Palace and back. We were lucky to have glorious weather on the day, and it was incredibly inspiring to see all our students participating, and cheering each other on. It was moving to see the Marlborough community taking part in an event so unique to our school, whilst being motivated and inspired by the work of our three charities.

Battle of the Bands



The grand finale to our Charity Week took place Friday 28th March, as we hosted our annual Battle of the Bands event. Students, friends and families, gathered in the MEC for what promised to be a spectacular evening of musical talent delivered by our

gifted music students, and we were certainly in for a treat!

As the lights dimmed and the audience fell silent, the buzz of excitement could be felt throughout the audience and performers. Mr Smith, Curriculum Leader of Music, began by introducing the judging panel for the evening - Mr Hanlon (Principal), Ms Phipps (Music teacher), and our guest judge Jack Walker from 'Woodstock Live'. The stakes were higher than ever this year, with the top three bands winning the opportunity to play at this year's popular 'Woodstock Live' event.

Over the next few hours, we were witness to the phenomenal talent of our music students, as the eight bands took to the stage to perform their choice of song. The audience were captivated with music chosen from legendary artists including The Cure, The Beatles, The Eagles and Abba, with some very challenging vocals and instrument playing delivered perfectly. Each band performed with such confidence and passion, truly living out our school vision of 'let your light shine'.

A huge congratulations to all of our bands who entered, it was a memorable, magical evening that showcased the very best of our school. More to follow on the final amount raised!

Sarah Fitchett



Woodstock CE Primary School

Celebrating the Success of Our School



Pupil Parliament and SLT Celebrating Outstanding Ofsted

We are thrilled to be celebrating the outcome of our latest Ofsted inspection, which has once again confirmed Woodstock CE Primary School as Outstanding across all areas. Since 2013, we've proudly maintained this prestigious grading - a true reflection of the dedication of our incredible staff, the passion of our pupils, and the strength of our vibrant school community.

The inspectors praised our 'highly ambitious curriculum', which they said inspires our children to become curious, independent learners. Our pupils consistently demonstrate a genuine interest in the world around them, often engaging in thoughtful, mature discussions about global issues. It was deeply

Woodstock and Bladon Churches Together

A Message from Rev Fr (Dr) Prem J Fernando, Parish Priest of St Thomas More, Kidlington and St Hugh of Lincoln, Woodstock

Oh goodness Lent in the church is almost over, and the Holy Week a week fortunately. Is there an Easter for us to see! Happy Easter! It's all yours.

This year we celebrated the 5th Anniversary of the Covid pandemic. We prayed for the many a people who were the victims, their pain, the suffering and the loss untold. Humanity was at its best in many a people; doctors, nurses, paramedics, carers, volunteers, those who ran food banks with a door-to-door supply and the care offered putting one's own at risk, gave a touch and feel of heaven. Lest were those

rewarding to hear the inspectors acknowledge the impressive depth of knowledge our children display across a broad range of subjects. They saw first-hand how immersed our pupils are in their learning and how well-prepared they are for the next steps in their academic journey.

Our headteacher, Anne Hipwell, expressed the pride we all feel in this continued success: "This remarkable achievement is a testament to our entire school community. Our children's enthusiasm for learning and their kindness toward one another shine through in everything they do. We are incredibly proud of them, and deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our staff, parents, volunteers, and governors, who work together to make Woodstock CE Primary such a special place."

Our vision - to 'let your light shine' - is woven into everything we do. It guides and inspires us daily as we strive to help every child reach their full potential. Ofsted also highlighted our approach to personal development, noting that our pupils show strong, inclusive values and a deep respect for one another. As one of our pupils beautifully put it, this is a school where 'you can be yourself and where it is good to be different.'

We couldn't be prouder of what we've achieved together.

We still have Reception Class places available for September 2025 start, so please do get in touch with us, we would love to hear from you. Contact the school office by calling 01993 812209 or email office@woodstock.oxon.sch.uk

Anna Poole, Deputy Headteacher

hopefully a tiny tiny minority that made it the opportune time to earn, steal, rob and thrive, running their own if not the headline grabbing PPE company and distributions, surely the storage of the supermarkets at the homes or fighting for the packet of pasta at a store isle. We were there at the lives touch and miss, defining who we were, and we are, at its best. We know it all ourselves. It does not need to be the day of the Lord!

Besides the heart throbbing political headlines that gives shockwaves, and those leaders thirst and long to monger war or their best bargain, what touches us deeply possibly, the death of Aemen, 15-year-old, an Eritrean until recently, but now citizen of this country. Wasn't good enough a citizen, does it change! Unfortunately, he did not live to tell the tale, but does it matter, when many still live it day in day out, not oblivious, possibly not yet seeing their back, nor taken out. Count down! Sadly, Easter is still a longing!



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Old Woodstock Mock Mayor Supports Local Community Singing Group



Tessa Hall and Paul Ralph from 'Singing for Fun' receive a cheque from Nick Tonks, Old Woodstock Mock Mayor

During their monthly gathering at Woodstock church, the Old Woodstock Mock Mayor recently presented a cheque for £360 to Tessa and Paul's 'Singing for Fun'.

The donation will cover the rental costs of the church venue, ensuring this popular community activity can continue to thrive. The singing group brings together locals of all ages and abilities to enjoy the benefits of collective music-making in a welcoming environment.

Tessa and Paul's situation was highlighted to the Mock Mayor committee by Kate Bennett as a worthy cause to support (thank you, Kate!) The Singing Group had previously been able to use the Social Club for free. After it closed, the church had kindly subsidised the cost of rental, but Tessa and Paul were still paying nearly £400 a year out of their own pockets to keep the group running.

During the visit, the Mock Mayor team joined participants in singing several songs, including a spirited rendition of 'The Hills Are Alive with The Sound of Music', creating a particularly memorable moment for everyone present. Tessa Hall, from 'Singing for Fun', said of the donation "A big thank you from us and all our singers for Mock Mayor's

support and the cheque presentation. Your support means we can carry on enjoying singing together."

"Supporting grassroots community initiatives like this singing group is exactly what the Mock Mayor tradition is all about," said Nick Tonks, Old Woodstock Mock Mayor. "The joy and connection this group creates through music is wonderful to witness, and singing the Sound of Music with Ed Creasey was an experience I will never forget."

The Old Woodstock Mock Mayor continues its centuries-old tradition of supporting local charities and community organizations through fundraising activities throughout the year. If you have any suggestions for deserving charities, please contact the team on owmm1786@outlook.com.

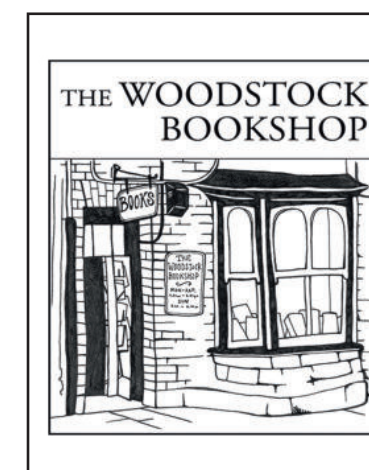
A date for your calendars: the Old Woodstock Mock Mayor Elections will take place on 19th July 2025 from 3.30 pm on the Town Square, New Woodstock.

Join the Mock Mayor Tradition - Volunteers Needed

The Old Woodstock Mock Mayor Elections can only continue its 238-year tradition with the support of our wonderful community. We're currently seeking enthusiastic volunteers to help make the event on 19th July 2025 another resounding success! Whether you can spare a few hours on the day to assist with setting up and breaking down equipment, marshalling the procession, selling raffle tickets, or staffing the charity bar, your help would be invaluable.

We're also looking for dedicated individuals to join our organising committee to help plan this historic celebration. Committee members meet a couple of times a month before the event, so it's not a huge time commitment. All you need is passion for our community, appreciation for local history, a good sense of humour, and a willingness to contribute to this beloved Woodstock tradition that raises funds for worthy local causes.

Interested in being part of Woodstock's most eccentric event? Please contact us at owmm1786@outlook.com.



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Artweeks in Woodstock 2025

17-26 May 2025

For the third consecutive year, this May will again see nineteen artists exhibiting in various venues around the town.

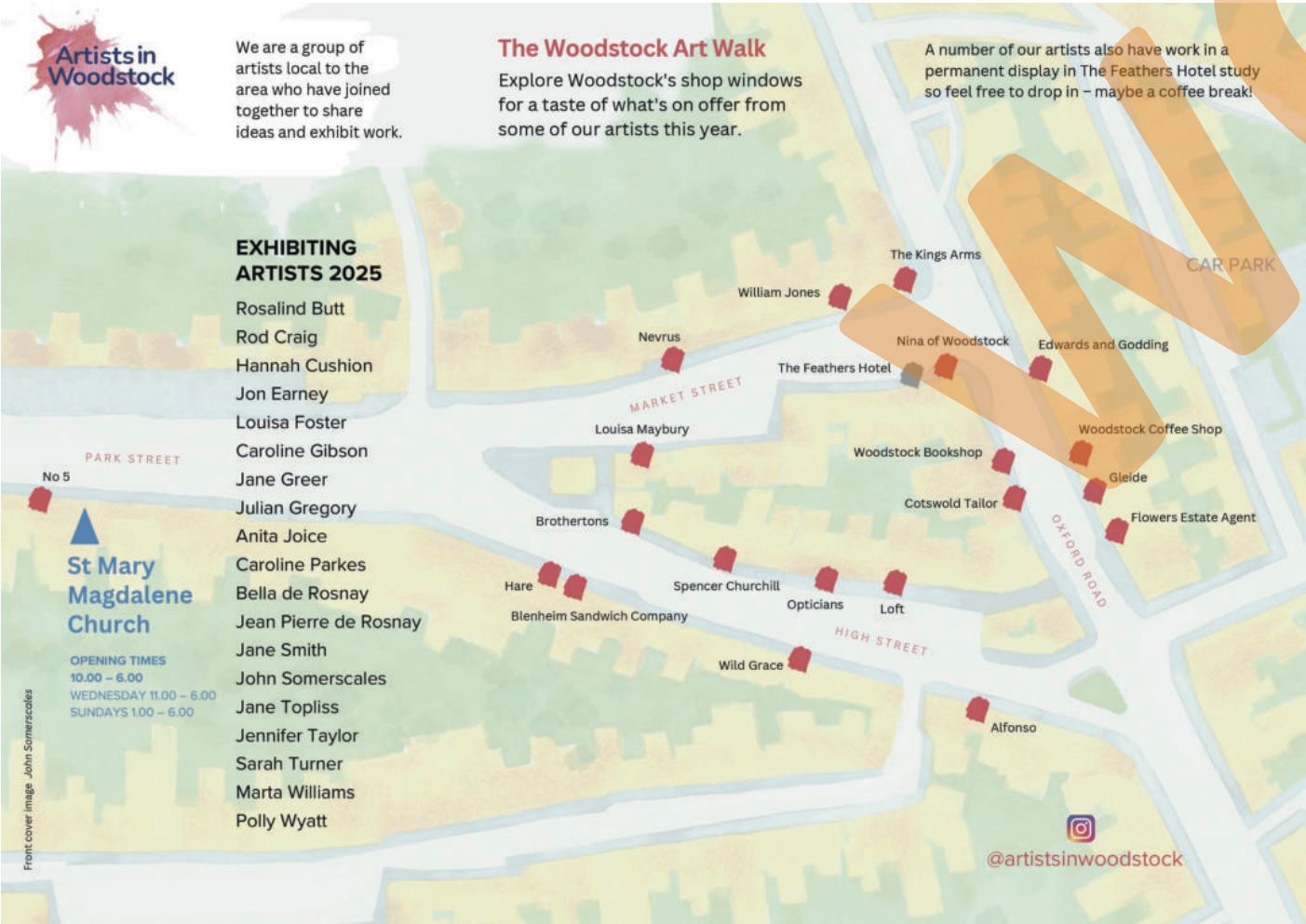
There will be several different mediums for people to enjoy including painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, ceramics, floristry and litho printing. A town trail is available below, and a printed version will be available for locating the artworks which can be found in shop windows, the Oxford Museum and St. Mary Magdalene church.

The artists are also planning to stage workshops, demonstrations and live music!

Artweeks in Woodstock runs from May 17th to 26th, 10am-6pm daily, Wednesday 11am-6pm and 1-6pm on Sundays in the church.

Oxfordshire Artweeks in Charlbury

There will be 15 artists exhibiting at 10 venues around Charlbury as part of the Oxfordshire Artweeks Festival. They offer a diverse selection of artwork, textiles, jewellery, sculpture and ceramics in studios, gardens, cottages, and St Mary’s Church. Trail maps are available and plenty of places to eat and drink in the town. See www.artweeks.org for more details.



Woodstock Exhibition Foundation

(Grants for Woodstock young people)

450 years ago: Elizabeth I Progress

Elizabeth I arrived on 28 August 1575 and stayed until 3 October at Woodstock Palace, which was one of her four Great Houses.

The Palace was managed by Sir Henry Lee, who was about three years older than Elizabeth and had been one of her favourites and leading courtiers. For many years he was her jousting champion and undertook many duties for her both at home and abroad. He was appointed Master of the Ordnance in 1580. From 1571 he organised Elizabeth’s tournaments and, particularly on the Accession Day tournaments, turned them into major theatrical spectacle.

During Elizabeth’s visit to Kenilworth Castle earlier in the summer, she had been courted by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who was trying to persuade Elizabeth to marry him. Some historians think that Elizabeth extended her stay in Woodstock in the hope that Leicester would pursue her. Rumours in the Court were rife.

Sir Henry Lee and Lord Burghley, Elizabeth’s Principal Secretary of State, were against any marriage to Dudley and favoured a match with the French Duke of Alençon to improve relations with France and form an alliance against catholic Spain.

As well as the usual feasting and hunting, Sir Henry wrote allegorical plays for Elizabeth’s entertainment. In one, The Hermit’s Tale, two mythical knights fought for the hand of Claudina, a thinly disguised Elizabeth. They were stopped by Hermes, a hermit, who urged her to choose for herself. The story went on for two days and became increasingly complicated. A Fayry Queen was introduced into the play to advise and direct. At the end of the play, a noble knight chooses to work for the good of all rather than to succumb to his instincts and propose to his fair lady.

The entertainment demonstrated the dangers of marriage for a female monarch and the need for wisdom and statesmanship. The subsequent negotiations with Alençon petered out. Elizabeth chose her career as queen over romance. Shortly



Sir Henry Lee 1530-1610

afterwards the concept of ‘the Virgin Queen’ was promoted.

What happened to Dudley? He had had a son by Lady Sheffield in 1574 and was said to have married her secretly the previous year. However, the marriage was denied and in September 1578 he secretly married the widowed Countess of Essex. When Elizabeth found out the following year, she was furious.

Dudley’s magnificent entertainments at Kenilworth had dazzled contemporaries. However, the innovations in the plays performed at Woodstock provided the major themes for the courtly literary discourse for the next decade and the cult language of the Queen for the rest of her reign. The Fayry Queen became a regular character in plays written during the rest of Elizabeth’s reign.

Frank Collingwood

Elizabeth I on Progress: Performance, Politics and Popularity

Dr Alexandra Gajda, John Walsh Fellow in History at Jesus College and Associate Professor of History at the University of Oxford

Monday 30 June 2025 in St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock at 7pm

A fund raising talk for the Woodstock Exhibition Foundation

Woodstock Natural History Society

Our 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.

That constant provides a backdrop for a bewildering variety of fascinating subjects. After contemplating Oxon's rich dinosaur past in March, we moved this month further beyond our everyday experience. On Tuesday 8 April, we had the privilege of meeting Dr Lorenzo Fornasari, who, as well as being a staff member at the European Institute of Oncology, is also a distinguished ornithologist and conservationist, serving among many other things as Chair of the Italian Breeding Bird Monitoring Programme.

That our obscure and scarcely known backwater in the English countryside can attract such a speaker is a tribute to forty years of friendship and academic collaboration between Lorenzo and our WNHS chair, Dr Adrian Delnevo. His presentation was breathtaking, and wonderfully underlined by empiricism and numerical data. Moreover, there were interesting revelations about unique Italian bird populations. I had completely missed the Italian Sparrow, ostensibly a cross between the Middle Eastern but now globally ubiquitous House Sparrow and the Spanish Sparrow so familiar to visitors to Malta or Gibraltar. Nor had I realised that the Red-legged Partridge has a plethora of subspecies, or the importance of the peninsula to migrating flamingos.

Dr Fornasari also provided other interesting insights. He was clearly pained by the irksome and childish propensity of much of the rural male populations of Southern Italy or the Alto Adige to shoot rare migratory birds for 'sport', although he has faith that this culture will pass away. The final part of his talk focused upon birds in art, and the extent to which we can derive information about past avian behaviour from pictures. We know for instance that peregrines now often live in city centres; Lorenzo showed us good evidence that the hobby did the same in the sixteenth century. Perhaps most impressive was the accuracy with which many Renaissance artists depicted bird species. This was a wonderful talk, and there are many other enticing presentations on our schedule.

Our Tuesday meetings are augmented by a wonderful programme of guided walks, social events and visits; contact us for details. We are looking for a new Walks Organiser, who could be an individual, a couple, or two friends, and would welcome volunteers. Our next three walks are around 'green' places of interest around Woodstock. Please join us.

The next meeting is on 13 May, when Dr. Sue Burge will speak on "Medicine and Magic".

We would love to see you at one of our events, and very much hope that you will want to become a member (£15pa). For a copy of our programme please email contactwnhs@gmail.com. Please also check this column regularly, and come to one of our Tuesday evenings.

We are also keen to help young people appreciate nature, and will do what we can to assist schoolteachers wishing to embark on relevant projects.

Stephen Vickers (Dr), Meetings correspondent

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Building Regs and Home Extensions - Part 2

In my last article, I discussed the issues around the Building Regulations, which is to do with the safety of the building. There are two ways to comply with the requirements of the Building Regs - the first is a Full Plans application and the second is a Building Notice application.

With a Full Plans application, a full set of construction drawings is submitted to the local Building Control authority, and the drawings are checked and if there are any construction details that need to changing or specification notes adding then that is done at that stage, at the end of which a Conditional Approval is given. These approved drawings then form the documentation along with the schedule of works that builders will quote from, and forms the basis of the contract you will have with the builder. The builder then constructs the job with regular inspections by the Building Control Officer who checks that the work has been done according to the drawings, and at the completion of the job issues a Final Certificate which says that the work has been constructed to Building Regs requirements.

The Building Notice procedure was introduced in the UK as a quicker and more flexible alternative to the Full Plans procedure for obtaining Building Regulations. A building notice does not require drawings but requires the builder to inform the Building Control Officer at specific stages of the work to come and inspect the work. The builder has to be confident that the work will meet the requirements, and if it does not then the work will have to be re-done. For this reason, Building Control departments favour a Full Plans submission, which is also my position. Building Regs application fees are not standard and vary with local authorities, but the fee for a Building Notice application is higher than that for a Full Plans application.

The Building Notice procedure has been associated with several common problems.

One of the main issues with the Building Notice process is that no formal plans are submitted or approved beforehand, increasing the risk of non-compliant construction. Without prior scrutiny, a builder may inadvertently breach regulations, leading to costly on-site corrections or even enforcement action. Since compliance is assessed during construction, work may need to be altered or demolished if it does not meet the regulations. This reactive approach can be expensive and time-consuming compared to the Full Plans procedure, where issues are identified in advance. Builders using the Building Notice process must have an established knowledge of Building Regulations and ensure that

local authority building control officers are notified at key inspection stages.

A lack of pre-approved plans and detailed compliance records can create problems when selling a property. Mortgage lenders and solicitors often require clear documentation to confirm work was carried out legally, and properties with Building Notice approvals may face delays or additional checks. Homeowners, assuming that Building Notice approval guarantees compliance, may later discover their work is substandard or illegal, requiring further work.

The Building Notice procedure was primarily driven by the need for administrative efficiency and economic practicality, and was influenced by increasing post-war construction demands, urban expansion, and the growing complexity of Building Regulations. While the Building Notice procedure can provide a faster and more flexible route to compliance, it carries significant risks. The lack of pre-approved plans can result in delays, enforcement actions, and additional costs. While a Building Notice avoids the initial expense of preparing detailed plans, it can become more expensive in the long run if non-compliant work needs to be corrected. It is best suited to experienced builders. The Full Plans procedure remains the preferred and more reliable method.

Jan Liberadzki BA Arch (Hons), MSc

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The work and expense of restoring our buses often gets forgotten. As well as restorations in our own workshops we have two buses being restored offsite by a professional company.



Exterior of OWB. Credit: Frank Collingwood

Our Bedford OWB, BBW 291, was made of steel in 1942, because any available aluminium was requisitioned for the repair and manufacture of aircraft. This makes restoration more difficult as steel sheets are more difficult to bend into the required shape than pliable aluminium. There was also a shortage of skilled labour, as wartime priorities were the munitions and aircraft production factories.

BBW 291 had a single shell apart from the cove panels for lights. The interior roof will be painted with a cream gloss when it is finished. The outside is to be painted in chocolate brown, as it was in 1942.

The interior wood capping is being made specially because the original capping had woodworm. It will be varnished as was the original. New glass is needed for the windows. Originally plate glass would have been used, but today toughened glass will have to be used for safety reasons. Wooden slatted seats, with no padding, will be installed as they were in 1942. After the war the bus's operator, Houses of Watlington, would have upgraded the seats to be padded.

Ashley Blackman has stripped off the bulkhead in the cab area and the engine has been brought to Long Hanborough for a complete overhaul.

A problem is to get new parts. We are currently seeking period tungsten bulbs to fit in the roof. Modern LED lighting does not give the same warm effect.

New tyres were ordered before Christmas from a specialist firm making vintage tyres, Camac Tyres.



Interior of OWB. Credit: Kirstin Blackman

Unfortunately, the company has been taken over by Avon Tyres, who do not know when they will be producing more vintage tyres. If we go to another supplier each tyre will cost an extra £90. This is holding up work as Ashley needs to turn the bus round to get access to the other side.

Three other OWBs exist, but they may not be 100% correct. Ashley is working from an original specification sheet so our bus will be exactly right. It is thought to be the only wartime Oxfordshire bus to have survived.

May will be a busy month for the museum. On Sunday 4 and Bank Holiday Monday 5 May, The Oxford & District Model Railway Club will be bringing their displays to the museum. Visitors will be allowed to control some models. On Sunday 25 May, we have visiting preserved buses coming to the museum, including London buses of the 1950s. The following day, Bank Holiday Monday 26 May, we are hosting a display of classic cars.

Frank Collingwood

Meme of the Month



Wake Up To Woodstock

The Benefits of joining Wake Up to Woodstock.

Wake Up to Woodstock (WUTW) is more than just a business association; it's an award-winning, non-profit network designed to support local enterprises and promote Woodstock as a leading destination in Oxfordshire and the Cotswolds.

At its core, WUTW is about collaboration, visibility, and community. Whether you run a retail shop, manage a local service, or operate from home, the association offers a supportive platform for your business. Members benefit from exposure through marketing, sponsorship opportunities and a website directory, including a personalised profile with images, links, and personal content.

WUTW's key strength is its partnerships, with Blenheim Palace, Experience Oxfordshire, and OxLEP. These open doors for members, such as Blenheim's e-shots to 30,000+ subscribers and other campaigns.

Signature events like the 'Night of a Thousand Candles' and the 'Woodstock Festive Fayre' attract visitors from across the region and further afield, boosting footfall and economic activity for local businesses.



Mixer evening: Credit Cyrus Mower - Cyrusoxford.co.uk

The other key feature is that members are invited to enjoy regular networking opportunities through quarterly 'Mixer' evenings and social media. With flexible membership tiers (Bronze, Silver, and Gold), WUTW ensures that there's a membership for all business types, from work-from-home professionals to high street retailers.

Together, we're stronger. Join Wake Up to Woodstock and help shape a future for your business and your community. For membership enquiries email: info@wutw.co.uk or complete a form via wutw.co.uk.



Woodstock Probus Club

At our April meeting we heard from Dr Jonathan Hiscock on Net Zero. Sparks may fly. He showed us a number of graphs illustrating the international path to Net Zero and progress being made. The UK seemed to be doing better than most but was a very small contributor compared to larger nations such as China and India. His own company is directly involved in the industry providing automatic voltage control which is crucial for the growing wind power and solar contributions to the National Grid. There was plenty to think about from his talk.

Our visit to the RAF Museum Hendon took place earlier in the month which was well supported and included guided tours of The Battle of Britain Hanger and the Bomber Command Hanger. The Flight Simulators were left for another day. One plane that you can go on board is the Sunderland Mark V Flying Boat which was very impressive. The Museum has an excellent collection with plenty to see; for although we covered a lot of exhibits, it would take 2-3 days to see and experience it all.

For our next outing we have a visit to the Ardley Waste Recovery Site coming up complete with hard hats, yellow jackets and steel capped boots. Although our AGM takes place before that on May Day. This will also mark the hand over from this correspondent to our new Past President. Hope you have enjoyed my small contribution to the Wonderful WOBL News.

Michael Bowles, Past President

Thank You



The repainted bus stop with Alice and William King

Many thanks to local resident Stan Scott, who has used his own time and resources, to repaint the Manor Road bus stop at Westland Way. Stan said "This was a Woodstock Town Council initiative and they provided the paint, I just offered to help."

Ed King

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Bladon Gardens Society

Guest Speaker Event

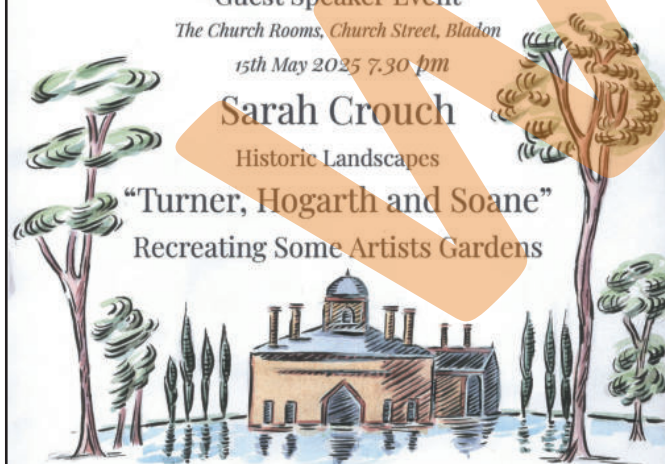
The Church Rooms, Church Street, Bladon

15th May 2025 7.30 pm

Sarah Crouch

Historic Landscapes

"Turner, Hogarth and Soane"
Recreating Some Artists Gardens



£2.00 entry for non members

Doors open at 7.00pm for Tea and Coffee

Parking is difficult in Church Street and we must leave space for the Speaker. The school
has given permission to park in the playground for meetings.

Access to this is from Grove Road.

Bladon Gardens Society Membership details

Annual Subscription: £12 Visitors to monthly meetings £2



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Oxfordshire & Home Counties

Travelling Memories

In search of Cherry Blossom in Japan

We arrived in Tokyo on 19 March, just as a freezing blizzard struck, and persisted for most of the day. The



following day however was bright and sunny, just right for a couple of elderly tourists to explore the city, with map in hand and an all day underground pass. I thought we would never master the metro system, but it was easy and super clean, very modern and a great way to get around.

We explored Buddhist temples, and Shinto shrines, tranquil gardens hidden between office blocks, and the National Museum in Ueno Park which turned out to be one of the highlights of the entire trip. In the Park we had our first glimpse of the famous cherry blossom which sparked a desire to find better and better blossom as our journey around the country unfolded. In Tokyo we “people watched”. Families picnicking under the cherry trees in the Park, vast numbers of people crossing the enormous road junction in Shibuya, wedding parties in full Japanese kimono dress in iconic places (we didn’t realise at the time but it was a public holiday), huge sky scrapers, traffic, and much more.

We travelled to see Mount Fuji and were blessed with glorious weather and great views. We rode on the famous bullet train, and watched other bullet trains zap past at over 200 mph. We visited Osaka and Kanazawa, Fukuoka in the far south and Hiroshima, which has left lasting memories of both horror and beauty. The museum is very hard, the Peace Park with all it’s memorials is

thought provoking, but the setting is beautiful and the blossom was glorious. How do you capture such horror still 80 years on? The huge castle, which was destroyed, has been reconstructed and provides panoramic views over the area which was almost totally destroyed in 1945. We left both Hiroshima, and Busan in South Korea, with sombre thoughts and prayers for those who died, and those who suffer now from conflict.

In the north of the country we visited Aomori and Hakodate, where the weather was freezing and the blossom was not even in bud. The flowering unfolds over several weeks, starting in the far south, but not hitting the north of the country for another six to eight weeks. Progress of flowering is reported every day, and sometimes we just missed it whilst in other places we were weeks too soon, but where we did catch it, it was beautiful, particularly in the stunning gardens everywhere, packed with immaculately cropped trees and shrubs, stones, goldfish, turtles and tea houses.

Lasting memories? Huge crowds but no litter bins and yet absolutely no litter anywhere, no shoving and pushing, lots of queueing. Amazing public toilets which were all spotless, computer controlled with heated seats, water flushing everywhere, simulated waterfalls or music (you get to choose). Amazing fish markets, and supermarkets with beautiful displays but vast amounts of plastic wrapping. Funny little rectangular cars, and lots of them, quite unlike the Japanese cars we see everywhere here. Discipline of driving, parking, walking, eating, and smart dressing. Lots of public worship at shrines. Lots of spectacular high rise buildings, observation towers, castles (but not like European castles), amazing sculpted roofs on old buildings, but nothing at all like our beautiful palaces, cathedrals, or castles. A very different culture. It was great to see so much of Japan, but it was good to get back to spring sunshine and the blossom here, and our own Blenheim Palace!

Zandra Houston



The Arts Society Cotswolds

Lecture on Wednesday 14th May 2025

Lecture: Sicilian Splendours

This lecture will look at the rich art, architecture and history of Sicily - the largest island of the ancient Mediterranean and, in the ancient world, the wealthiest.

First we will see the Carthaginians, Hannibal's people and the first major invaders of Sicily, with their distinctive, enigmatic culture, still visible on the small island of Motya. Afterwards come the Greeks, with beautiful cities such as Agrigento, and Syracuse and Segesta, filled with theatres and temples to the gods.

Then we will see Roman Sicily, peaceful and prosperous, with cities such as Syracuse and Taormina, and the sumptuous ‘mosaic villa’ of Piazza Armerina. After Rome, and the new Rome of Constantinople, comes the invasion of the Arabs with their revolution in society and agriculture, and then Norman Sicily - an extraordinary artistic flourishing, culminating in the mosaics of the magnificent Norman basilicas.

About the speaker: Dr Paul Roberts is Research Keeper in the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford University. Paul has been a lecturer with the Arts Society/NADFAS for over twenty years, has travelled extensively to societies across the UK, and has also lectured on numerous cruises in and around the Mediterranean. He studied Classics at the University of Cambridge, and Classical Archaeology at the Universities of Sheffield and Oxford. He then lived in Italy for several years, teaching and researching. He has travelled throughout the former lands of the Roman Empire, from Britain to Syria, and has excavated in Britain, Greece, Libya, Turkey and particularly Italy, where he is currently working on a Roman Villa in the Molise region of the Central Apennines. His research focuses on the daily life of ordinary people in the Greek and Roman worlds, and he has written books and articles on Greek and Roman daily life, Pompeii and Herculaneum, Sicily, Roman Emperors, mummy portraits, and Greek and Roman ceramics and glass. From 1994 to 2015 he was Senior Roman Curator in the Greek and Roman Department at the British Museum, where he curated the exhibition Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum (2013). Arriving in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford in 2015, in 2019/20 he curated Last Supper in Pompeii, a tribute to the Roman love affair with food and wine.

This hybrid lecture will be held at the Warwick Hall, Church Green, Burford, at 11am and via Zoom. Bookings can be made via the website or by contacting Lisa Etheridge on 07918 180895. Non-members are welcome (space permitting) at a charge of £10.

Bladon Snippets from the Past

A major construction taking ages: the huge reservoir atop of Bladon Heath - not visible and guarded by a secure fence. The view now is a well-kept grass area.

A great need was met when water from Farmoor came via Bladon to provide mains water to Steeple Aston, where some residents were dependent on springs and wells.

Mary F. Sitch



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GOLF DAY

The Woodstock and Bladon News
GOLF DAY has been booked
at Witney Lakes Golf Club
on Friday 5 Sept 2025

Please EMail editor@wobl.news to
register an interest

WOBL Visit to the Ardley Energy Recovery Facility

10am on Thursday 19 June 2025

The facility began operation in 2014 and is permitted to treat 378,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste each year. It diverts at least 95% of Oxfordshire’s residual municipal waste away from landfill and generates enough electricity to power the equivalent of over 80 thousand homes.

This will be a very interesting visit, which we will write up for those who are unable to come. Over half the spaces have now been allocated so we have room for another five. It is a walking visit, and there are some restrictions - for example everyone has to wear a boiler suit and steel capped shoes (supplied by ERF).

Please send me your request to come via an EMail to editor@wobl.news

March blossom

Through the cold march days despite
frosts and hiding sun, an urge,
pushes blossoms through the wind
anchored firm to stay their ground
catching intermittent sun,
parasols unfurled now shout.
Blazing pink breaks through the grey
burning off the morning mist,
colour rages, springtime kissed.

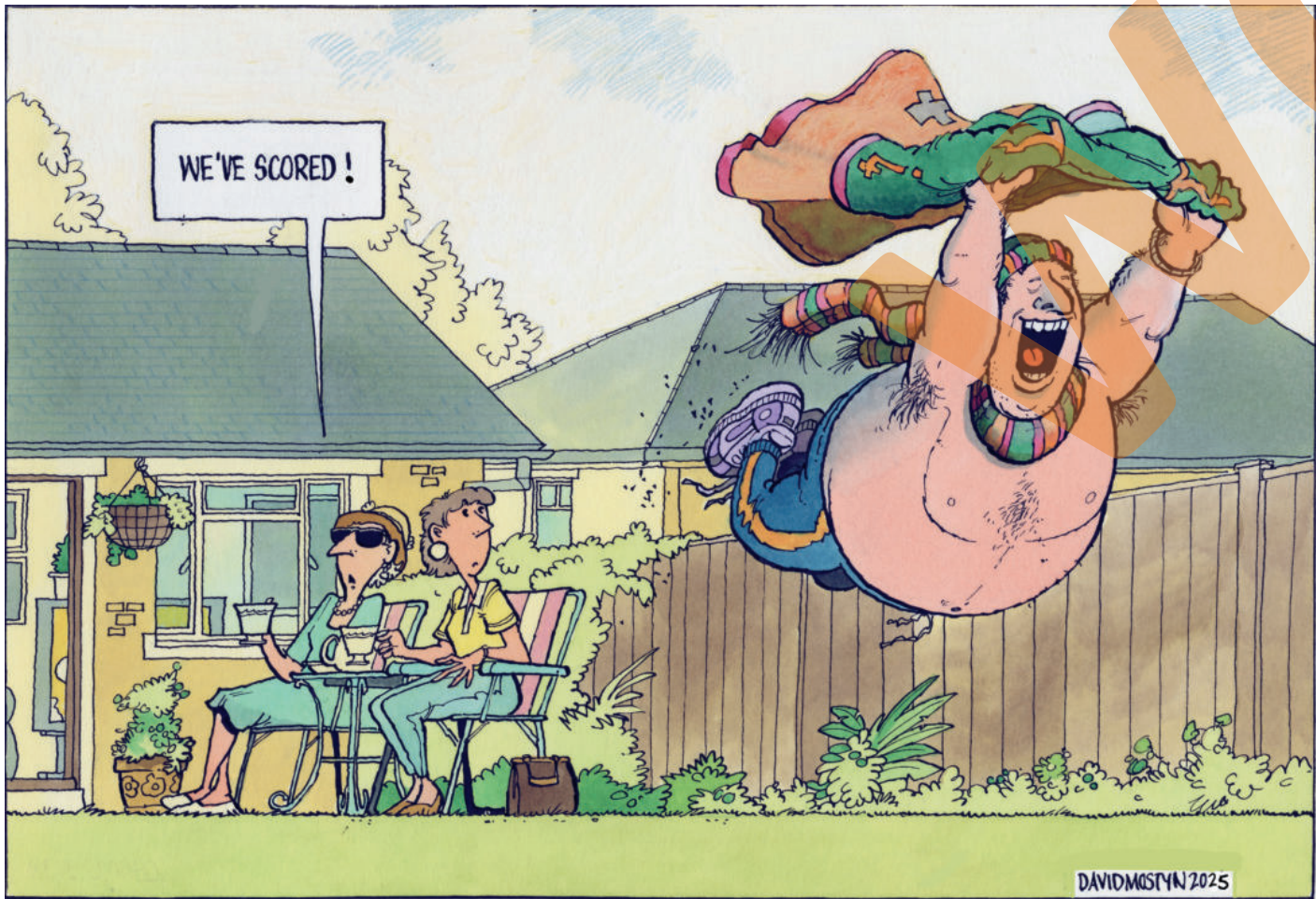
Walking slow along the path
humming forces its way through,
background traffic, buzzing planes.
Endless bees arrive from round
garden walls, their cracks, the lawn,
picking up spring nectar now
from the cherry's tight packed bough.
Three weeks, then the blossom falls,
pink beneath the limestone walls.

Mason Beah

Photos courtesy of Trisha Maria



Karatoon Korner



Regular Events

*This section tries to liist regular events, and it is
very much in its infancy. If you would like your event
included here, please send an email to
editor@wobl.news.*

Bereavement Cafe

The 3rd Friday of every month between 3 and 5pm
at St Mary Magdalene Church

Cricket at Blenheim Palace

The local team play on the South Lawn at Blenheim
Palace most Sundays, and they are at home for the
whole of May (starting on the 4th)

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

The Friends hold regular talks and events, which
will all be listed in What's On

Kings Arms / Mandolirium

Listen to our local group in our local pub, usually
every third Thursday at 6.30pm
Next dates - April 10th and May 1st and 22nd.

Ladies Coffee Morning

The last Tuesday of every month between 10am
and 12noon at 10 High Street, Woodstock.

Methodist Coffee Club

The Coffee Club meets every Thursday morning
10.30am to 12 noon in Woodstock Methodist Hall -
all welcome.

Singing for Fun

This takes place at St Mary Magdalene Church
every 1st Monday of the month at 2pm

St Mary Magdalene Church coffee morning

First Saturday of the month between 10am and
12noon. All proceeds to our local food bank.

The Crown

Live music every Friday nights from 7.30pm

Woodstock Lunch Club

Lunches are held in the Community Centre every
2nd Wednesday

Woodstock 50+ Cinema Club

Monthly films used to be at the Methodist Church,
but sadly this has now stopped as of May 2025.
They are hoping to reorganise.

Woodstock Jazz

These events are usually monthly, on the last Friday
of each month. The actual events will be listed in
the What's On section.

Woodstock Literature Society

This well established society hold regular talks and
events, which will all be listed in What's On.

Woodstock and District u3a

All events are listed in What's On

Wootton Village Hall Talks

These take place monthly.

What's On

*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.*

Friday 02 May 2025

The Woodstock Bookshop - Festival
6 events over 3 days
Various Venues

Wednesday 07 May 2025, 19:30

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
St Frideswide and the Early History of Christ
Church. Speaker: Ruth Buckley, Local Historian
and volunteer Guide, Christ Church
Oxfordshire Museum

Tuesday 13 May 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Natural History Society - Talk
Sue Burge: Medicinal plants and magic
St Hugh's Centre

Monday 19 May 2025, 20:00

The Woodstock Society - Talk
Michael Parker: Psychoanalytic Thinking in the NHS
& Prison Service
St Mary Magdalene

Thursday 22 May 2025, 20:00

Woodstock Literature Society - Talk
'Muriel Spark': Peter Kemp
Woodstock Town Hall

Friday 30 May 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music
Simon Spillett: Fast, Furious AND full of melody
St Hugh's Centre

Wednesday 04 Jun 2025, 19:30

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
A 'Mammoth' Task: highlights from the Conservation
Laboratory. Speaker: Naomi Bergmans
Oxfordshire Museum

Thursday 05 Jun 2025, 14:00

Woodstock and District u3a - Talk
John Field: The Amazing World of Magic
St Hugh's Centre

Wednesday 18 Jun 2025, 20:00

Woodstock Literature Society - Talk
'John Ruskin: A Victorian for our Times': Professor
John Holmes
St Mary Magdalen

Friday 27 Jun 2025, 19:30

Woodstock Jazz - Music
Lily Dior in Concert: One of the finest voices in
British Jazz Today
St Hugh's Centre

Thursday 31 Jul 2025, 16:00

British Transplant Games - Opening Ceremony

STOP PRESS

Council Matters: Woodstock and Bladon News has been reporting on Council meetings since at least 2022, and they are now all available to view on our website - wob1.news.

Cricket at Blenheim Palace: Our local team are playing on the South Lawn every Sunday in May.

Ducks: Whilst there are fewer ducks than a few months ago, they are still very much in evidence, and it is requested that they are not fed.

Transplant Games Opening Ceremony: This is not taking place in Woodstock now, mainly for H&S reasons. The games are taking place from Thursday 31 July until Sunday 3 August, and the opening ceremony will take place inside Blenheim Palace. All our welcome. We will publish the program of events in the next issue.

WOBL: The next magazine will be a June issue and will be published on Friday 30 May 2025.

Woodstock Bookshop: The Arts Festival takes place as this issue is published - there are lots of activities throughout the town on Friday and over the weekend.

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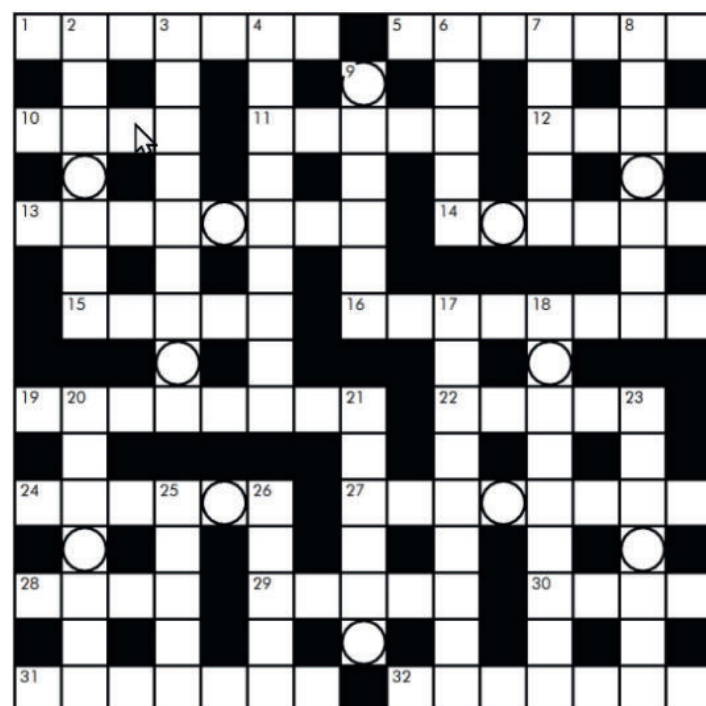
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Solve the clues to this straight crossword. Read through the letters in the marked squares to reveal the policeman's name who was on duty when Sir Winston Churchill was buried (article in next issue)



Across

- Pays a visit (5,2)
- Garden bird
- Daze
- Tropical vine
- Follow
- Safeguards
- Worldwide
- Triangular river mouth
- Lawless
- Intensify; step up
- Spanish dishes
- Movie theatre
- Empowering
- Rope fastening
- Profundity
- Dry; desiccated
- Best wishes
- Chemical catalysts

Down

- No longer working
- Long thin cigar
- Woollen mask
- Car crash
- Proportion
- Paper folding art
- Queasiness
- Fur of young lambs
- Minute blood vessel
- Chemistry or Biology e.g.
- Nontaxable
- Break of day
- Minor crowd actor
- Assisted

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– WHAT’S ON –

Experience a whole year of unforgettable memories in 2025

APRIL

Life Below Stairs A new experience All Month
Stables Art Exhibition (By Cai Yuan) All Month
Easter Eggstravaganza and Easter Weekend 5th - 21st April

MAY

Roof Top Tours A new experience All Month
Jousting 3rd - 5th May
Dogs allowed in May 6th - 31st May
Blenheim 7k 18th May
Giffords Circus 22nd May - 2nd June
Blenheim Palace Food Festival 24th - 25th May
May Half Term - ‘Pip and Posy’ in Adventure Play 24th May - 1st June
Armchair talks (Stables Café) 27th May

JUNE

Blenheim Palace Triathlon 7th - 8th June
Nocturne Live 18th - 22nd June
Blenheim Palace Flower Show 27th - 29th



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