

WOODSTOCK & BLADON *news*

July 2025

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Editorial

Nocturne came and went without downpours, and so far we are having a reasonably good summer. We have so much more to look forward to in beautiful Woodstock and Bladon.

This issue is slightly larger than usual - an extra 4 pages. And this is despite there being no letters this month. I hope this is just a temporary summer lull as I believe letters are a really important way to get a message across. Please consider writing in.

However, there is lots of passionate engagement for what is happening around us, and this July issue is full of examples. To start with, we have a very well thought out objection to solar panels being so close to our local airport (London Oxford as it's officially called!). This was written by our eminent local heart surgeon, Professor Stephen Westaby.

We also have a wonderful and amusing article about the Woodstock Carillons by Dom Kingsmill-Stocker, and an eloquent article about the Ardley Energy Recovery Facility by Emma Jay. Thank you to these three - but also to many, many others who take the time to contribute to our local magazine.

I joined Emma and five others for our visit to Ardley ERF. We should be proud in Oxford that we have this facility. There was a lot to take in, but I came away with one hugely important message - DO NOT put vapes and batteries (this includes small electricals that contain batteries - eg singing greeting cards, electric candles, etc) into the general waste. They cause fires and are very hazardous.

Amazingly this is the last publication of the year and it means I have edited 10 issues now. It has been a privilege and a pleasure; thank you everyone for your support.

Nick Manby-Brown, Editor

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

Subscriptions

The magazine costs £2 per issue, or £20 per year, and the price will remain the same for 2025/2026.

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.

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

Please write for our magazine

Send your contributions to: editor@wobl.news

The next issue will be an August/September one, and copy deadline is **Sunday 03 August 2025**.

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

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Front Cover: 'Cafe culture in Woodstock'. Mixed media collage by Louisa Foster

Answers to the June Crossword - The event that happened on 4 May 1945 was 'Danish Liberation'
Across: 1. barbell, 5. mirror, 10. apartment, 11. gasp, 12. Helsinki, 13. rotate, 14. everywhere, 16. atom, 18. safe, 20. suspending, 22. reverb, 24. anarchic, 27. kiwi, 28. spaghetti, 29. yearns, 30. prodigy.
Down: 2. adage, 3. brasserie, 4. Latin, 6. interfere, 7. right, 8. risotto, 9. senile, 12. heels, 15. washbasin, 16. abdicated, 17. magic, 19. amenity, 21. seaman, 23. erica, 25. abhor, 26. icing.



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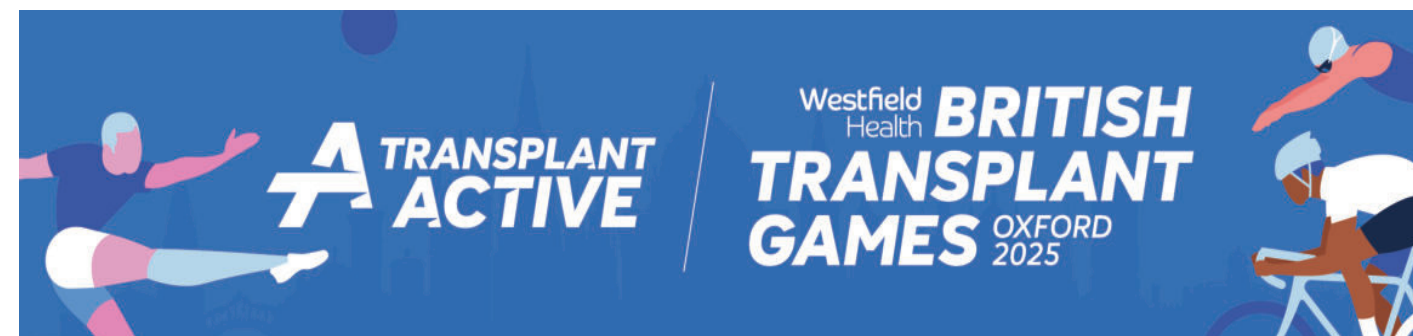
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**Oxford Kidney Unit Trust supports 2025
Westfield Health British Transplant Games
with record entries**



The Oxford Kidney Unit Trust, a leading charity dedicated to supporting kidney patients and advancing renal and transplant research, is proud to announce its support of the 2025 Westfield Health British Transplant Games.

For decades, the Trust has funded initiatives that enhance the lives of kidney dialysis and their families. This year's Games, taking place in Oxford from July 31st to August 3rd, mark a significant moment for the city and the kidney transplant community.

Preparations are well underway to welcome over 1,000 competitors and thousands of supporters to Oxford. More than 2,600 entries have already been registered across 26 sporting events, from athletics and swimming to cycling.

The event will also feature competitions and celebrations at some of the city's most iconic venues, including Blenheim Palace and the University of Oxford. With 54 teams from across the UK and a wide range of transplant types represented, the Games promise to highlight the extraordinary spirit of the transplant community.

As part of the sporting programme for the British Transplant Games, the Games Donor Run - a community 5k fun run to commemorate donors and

raise awareness of organ donation - will take place on the evening of Saturday 2nd August in the beautiful grounds of Blenheim Palace. Sponsored by the Oxford Kidney Trust, the event has already attracted over 2,000 entries, highlighting the strong community support for organ donation and transplant awareness.

Dr. Phil Mason FRCP, Chair of the Oxford Kidney Unit Trust, said:

"We are delighted to support the 2025 British Transplant Games. This event is a powerful celebration of life and resilience, and it reflects the values we hold dear at the Trust - community, compassion, and progress in transplant care. We look forward to welcoming participants and supporters to Oxford for what promises to be an unforgettable event."

Dr. Paul Harden, consultant nephrologist at the Oxford Kidney Unit and Transplant Centre and Chair of Oxford Games and Transplant Active, added:

"The Games celebrate the triumph of transplantation and the indomitable spirit of those who give and receive the gift of life. Oxford, a city known for medical innovation, is honoured to host this inspiring event. Having been a member of the Oxford Kidney Unit since 2002, I've seen firsthand the impact of initiatives like these. The Trust's support reflects our shared commitment to advancing care, supporting patients and families, and building a stronger transplant community."

The Westfield Health British Transplant Games also showcase the breadth of organ transplants performed in the UK, with competitors representing kidney, liver, heart, lung, pancreas, small bowel, uterus and stem cell transplants.

Over 5,500 medals will be awarded during the event, recognising the extraordinary achievements of participants and their supporters. While current figures provide an exciting preview, they are subject to change as final preparations are made closer to the event.

For more information about the 2025 British Transplant Games, please visit:
www.britishtransplantgames.co.uk

VE Day 80 years on

Editors Note: VE Day celebrations were reported in the June issue on Pages 10 and 11, and the Danish Liberation article was beautifully written by local resident Birgit Pedersen. But we ran out of both time and space to fully represent the lovely 2 weekends in Bladon and Woodstock, so here are more reports and photographs.

Bladon



On Sunday 4 May, Bladon, perhaps best known for its connection to Sir Winston Churchill, held its own impressive programme. The day began with parades of local regiments leading to a service at St Martin’s Church, with a moving moment at the resting place of Private Shayler at the lower cemetery.

At 11am a church service was followed by the laying of wreaths at Sir Winston Churchill’s graveside, bringing this very important local connection to the national day of remembrance. A tribute came later on with a Spitfire flypast, which was an emotional and reflective time for those who attended.



Centre Picture: Randolph Leonard Spencer-Churchill (Great grandson) at Sir Winston's grave



Celebrations continued in true Bladon village style with a full afternoon of events hosted around The White House, Bladon’s community-owned pub. With ice creams, BBQs, an outdoor bar, music, and games such as Welly Wanging, Aunt Sally and a village tug of war, there was something for everyone to enjoy.

While traditional cream teas were served in the church rooms, live music by Ann-Marie Warner in the pub, provided a great afternoon of entertainment. The celebrations concluded with a candlelit Danish Liberation Church service at 8pm, to end a day filled with remembrance, community spirit, and celebrations.

The Bladon event was supported by Bladon Parish Council, The White House Community Pub, Project Active’s Ben Scurr, and Nickie Rogan who runs Townhouse Executive Travel and Tours. The communities of Woodstock and Bladon came together in remarkable style in May, to mark the 80th anniversary VE Day. With sunshine, music and plenty of local pride, historical Woodstock and its neighbouring village of Bladon honoured a moment in history that changed Europe forever.

Woodstock



A few days later, on Saturday 10 May in Woodstock, hundreds of visitors filled the town square to enjoy a range of vintage festivities. From dancing to live 1940s music to the impressive vintage military vehicles and living history displays, the atmosphere was one of celebration and reflection. The event was attended by local town councillors and the 12th Duke of Marlborough, James Spencer-Churchill.



Nickie Rogan, Chair of Wake Up to Woodstock (WUTW), the local association that supports and promotes the town’s businesses, praised the community’s spirit: “We’re so pleased with how both celebrations turned out, with people of all generations coming together in Bladon and in Woodstock, to mark and celebrate this important time in history.”



Woodstock’s independent shops, galleries, pubs, cafés, and museums opened their doors, welcoming visitors old and new, which made it not only a time to commemorate the end of World War II, but to also showcased the warm, welcoming charm of the town.



A collaboration between Wake Up to Woodstock, Woodstock Town Council, Blenheim Palace, the Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum and St Mary Magdalene Church, it was a real community effort that celebrated history while supporting local trade.

Together, Woodstock and Bladon reflected true community spirit, which will be remembered for a very long time to come. All the organisers hope you enjoyed the VE Day 80th Anniversary as much as they did and look forward to the next opportunity to bring the community together in such a memorable way.



Woodstock Photographs - Credit: John Scott Blackwell

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Blenheim Park is a unique cricket club and they play locally in Woodstock on the beautiful South Lawn directly in front of the Palace. As a club, we not only welcome all cricket supporters but anyone wanting a fun day out with their family. A perfect place for a family picnic or to enjoy a glass or two in the sunshine.

We are inclusive and thank our VPs and sponsors and would love them to come and watch any of our games, or just come and enjoy the fantastic cricket teas provided by local caterers.

Fixtures

Sun 06 Jul	Home	Steeple Aston CC
Sun 13 Jul	Home	Islip CC
Wed 16 Jul	Home	West Oxon Barbarians
Sun 20 Jul	Home	Cricketers Club
Sun 27 Jul	Home	Isis CC
Wed 30 Jul	Home	Sponsors Match
Sun 03 Aug	Home	South Wales Hunts
Sun 10 Aug	Home	Philosophers' XI
Sun 17 Aug	Away	Littlewick Green CC
Sun 24 Aug	Away	Royal Household CC
Sun 31 Aug	Away	Bibury CC
Sun 07 Sep	Home	Authors XI
Sun 14 Sep	Home	Elmhurst CC

Please see website for latest details and match times



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WOBL visit to Ardley ERF

On a boiling hot day in June, 7 of us from Woodstock arrived at the Ardley Energy Recovery Facility for an eye-opening tour organised by your editor Nick Manby-Brown. (3 who had signed up were off sick with that awful cold that was going round).



The Ardley Energy Recovery Facility

I have long wanted to see Ardley Energy Recovery Facility (ERF), as (according to my sons) I am obsessed with dustbins and where one should put waste.

Ardley ERF is where most of the nonrecyclable muck that goes into our normal, smelly old black sack/grey bins in Oxfordshire, goes for treatment. Things like old tissues, used nappies, thin 'fly away' plastic film, 'crinkly' crisp packets, the food that many of us don't yet put in the brown caddies, tins and ready meal containers we can't be bothered to wash out, broken toys and electrical goods, rags, etc. This all used to go into landfill (in Sutton Courtney but for the last ten years more than 95 percent of non-recyclable rubbish is treated at Ardley ERF. Viridor, an American owned firm, safely recovers energy from all this waste.

Ardley ERF is a rather beautiful, very modern 'building, looking more like an art gallery than a furnace, gleaming in a nicely landscaped setting off the M40. Dinosaurs used to roam here, and in the lobby is a cast of one of their massive footprints, found in the quarry.

Basically, the place operates all day and night, every day of the year. Lorries full of rubbish come to the site, back up and tip it through a slot into a cavernous hangar, where it's all mixed up by 2 enormous remote controlled 'grabbers', then transferred to a vast fiery furnaces. The gases that come out through the tall silvery chimneys have been filtered, cleaned and treated cleaned by various processes. If you can see anything it is only moisture in the plume.

Useful things are produced by all this incineration. The powders used to clean the gases are taken off site and are made into building blocks. Metals are taken out of the ash for recycling and the ash is used in the foundation of roads. The carbon that is captured makes liquid CO₂ gas that the EEC Emissions Trading Scheme says helps get us nearer net zero, is profitable, and perhaps in future can be used to produce 'Blue Hydrogen'. The heat going through the turbine hall makes electricity that is fed into the local Bicester Substation (or as much as it can take as, like all of them, it needs its capacity enlarged). The whole place is powered by the energy it makes itself. There's none of the dangerous methane emission and environmental pollution that results from landfill. 350,000 tons of solid bulky muck a year is reduced down into thin air, or stuff that is useful.



Our group and tour guide in front of the Ardley Dinosaur (made entirely from waste)

Our guide around Ardley ERF was a lovely, informative, enthusiastic woman who would like to see many more groups come to visit and learn about waste management. She could answer all our questions about what goes where, how the rules are going to be changing next year, the latest technological inventions, etc. There were some touching displays of work done by school children who obviously had relished their trip. So do consider emailing her about arranging your own group visit: <https://www.viridor.co.uk/book-a-visit/>.

The thing that I enjoyed most was the view of the 'Mixing Hall' through a huge glass window in the main control room. Everything is remotely controlled by computers - only about 45 people work in this huge place. We watched as far below us, rubbish was tipped from lorries into this massive, deep, concrete-walled silo. We stood behind two young men who were reclining in big armchairs, manipulating joysticks that made the massive 'grabbers' work, like the ones in a funfair, picking up tonnes of stuff from the base of the hall and dropping it onto the top of the teetering pile.

Light filtered down from the roof, like in a cathedral. We could see sacks of old nappies, broken toasters and toys, long strands of orange plastic tape, being churned together, and noticed an old white wedding dress that had got stuck high up on the concrete wall. The pit was only about one tenth full on the day we went, but apparently after Christmas it gets filled to the top in a day.

A new thing I learnt from our wonderful guide is that there is some place in Kent where the stuff that we put in our recycling bins goes. 80 people there have the job of picking through it to take out the stuff that hasn't been cleaned properly, or isn't sortable by the high tech machinery they protect, and the secondary resources may be shipped to Europe. What a job!

Also, I learnt how important it is NOT to put batteries, vapes and electronic things in with our general waste. They cause fires, and their components are harmful but can be recycled. Take the trouble to return them from where you bought them, or drop them off in the supermarkets or, apparently, put them in a clear bag at the top of your household waste bin. Take the trouble to use the small caddies for raw and cooked food, which will be taken to Cassington to make methane and fertiliser ... and be cheered that in 2027 there will be returnable, refundable tins, drink cans, and plastic bottles, like in the old days.

It was a great trip.

Emma Jay

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Council Matters

This issue we have 2 reports from Woodstock Town Council, and a piece from our two District Councillors. I hope to have some copy from Calum Miller next month.

Woodstock Town Council

Town Council Meeting - 27 May 2025

9 councillors and 6 members of the public attended the meeting. The meeting was audio recorded.

Two members of the public spoke. I spoke regarding the possibility of a new surgery for Woodstock. From the Council meeting of 20 May, it was agreed that the Council would be seeking legal advice regarding the use of the old police station site in Hensington Road for a new surgery. I reminded the Council, after hearing from two members of the steering group, that this site has been deemed unsuitable. I urged the Council to speak to the GPs before spending any money on legal fees. The size of the Council fund for this action was not discussed.

Hilary Brown from Sustainable Woodstock spoke to the Council regarding the campaign to highlight the pitiful offering of community benefit from PVDP, the developers of Botley West solar farm. Hilary referred to the recent Planning Inspectorate hearing for the development and asked the Council to sign the petition by Low Carbon Hub to ask Blenheim to use their influence to increase the community benefit sum. Whether for or against the development, the communities should expect fairness and if Botley West was to go ahead they could potentially miss out on millions of pounds over the next 35-40 years.

County Councillor Andy Graham gave his report. Following from the Town Council's decision, in private session at the meeting of 6 May, to remove 4 of the 6 bike stands at the back of the Town Hall to allow for an increase in the outside dining area, Councillor Graham is looking at the possibility of moving the stands to the side of the Town Hall to reduce the damage to the cobbles from illegal parking. The local cycling and walking infrastructure plan (LCWIP) had been approved for the Woodstock area, however funding is now required. The County Council is in discussion with WODC regarding the former library site at Hensington Road, recognising its current state of decay. Councillor Graham mentioned his priority fund of £10K for small local projects with a £500 minimum. The latest on the new doctors' surgery is there will be a meeting in June or July looking at the financial support for the surgery. The site has now been decided but it is certain it will not be on the Hensington Road site. Councillor Parnes enquired about the flooding in Banbury Road. Councillor Graham replied the District Council had done some work and would look into progress. The County Council are funding gully clearance.

From the District Council's report, the planning officers refused the proposed development application of the old police station site to retirement living accommodation for largely the same reasons as the Town Council had given. The Woodstock swimming pool reopened on 24 May with cool water swimming until 22 July and warm water (heating) until 31 August. No closing date has been decided so cold water swimming may continue into September.

From finance, the current balance is £447,927.

Five new benches have been delivered to the Lawn Cemetery and following many requests, brass plaques will be available for purchase in memory of loved ones.

A motion from Councillor Connolly that he and Councillor Melliss become members of the new doctors' surgery working group was proposed and discussed. The Mayor then proposed that this working group be disbanded as the group had gone as far as it could and as money was going to be spent on legal advice then it should be discussed in full Council. Following further discussion and vote it was decided to keep the working group to maintain focus on the new surgery. Councillors Connolly and Melliss were then voted onto the working group and the Mayor then stepped down from this working group saying that there were too many councillors on the working group.

Councillor Parnes reported on dog waste bins and requested for the Samsons Lane one to be reinstated as it was well used. The agreed change to a different company to empty the bins in town to save money has not gone ahead following the resignation of the previous Town Clerk. Following discussion another review of bins was agreed.

Councillor Parnes then requested clarification of the GDPR audit reported in the May issue of Woodstock and Bladon News. During the meeting of 8th April, the Council had stated that it was meeting all their compliance requirements which, according to Councillor Parnes could not be correct as it had only just started. It was agreed to clarify the correct status of the GDPR audit.

Following a motion by Councillor Poskitt, it was agreed to seek estimates to remove old barbed wire entangled in the vegetation at the beginning of the footpath from Hedge End/The Covert beside Park View leading to the A44.

Councillor Wheatley then gave his report from the Environment Working Group. The group had met

with Blenheim Estates to discuss water flow and flooding issues in relation to the Seven Arches bridge and the Water Meadows. Blenheim clarified their responsibilities and said they were happy to help where possible allowing the Council to move forward with the management of the Water Meadows.

A report from the group's meeting on 9 May followed. The Lawn Cemetery lych gate roof is to be repaired and playground maintenance has been reported to the Clerk. Relocation and responsibility of the Old Woodstock playground was discussed and possible S106 funding for future maintenance. A meeting with WODC was requested. Regarding the Water Meadows, the large tree across an internal path would need to be removed and quotes would be sought. A proposed revised management plan was discussed, recognising the current plan needing to be updated to reflect best practices, clarify roles and ensure effective stewardship. It was recommended that the BBOWT plan of 2022 is used as a framework document but adding an annual inspection and a sub-group of the Environment Working Group taking responsibility to produce a detailed workplan every 6 months. It was acknowledged that the Council were not experts and professional advice would be sought. The workplan will include grass cutting, invasive species control, site maintenance, biodiversity enhancement and community engagement.

Regarding flood protection, the group recommended urgent attention to stabilize and repair the banks of the Glyme/Mill Stream to prevent further erosion and protect meadow habitats. The group also recommended obtaining quotes for bunding on the south side of the site to protect Brook Hill properties from flooding. The Mayor asked for the recommendations to be put in priority order with the riverbank repair being the first priority. Councillor Connolly requested the updated management plan be a priority seeking advice from experts, possibly BBOWT to review and update their plan of 2022.

Graham Brown

Town Council Meeting - 24 June 2025

10 councillors and 8 members of the public attended the meeting. The meeting was audio recorded.

Two members of the public spoke. Hilary Brown from Sustainable Woodstock asked the question 'what if the Secretary of State says yes to Botley West Solar Farm?' with respect to community benefit. On June 9th it was announced that community benefit, money given by the developers to those affected by the project, had been increased from £200K to £440K. An improvement but still well short of what is fair considering the size and location, examples of far

larger amounts for other renewable energy projects were given. Hilary encouraged the Council to consider the Government working paper on the subject, deadline of 16th July. A member of the public, living at 31 Oxford Road, then spoke to object to a planning application at 29 Oxford Road, saying it was too large and overlooked her property.

There was a lengthy discussion on the minutes of the Council meeting of 27th May with regard to the doctors' surgery working group, clarifying vote results and proceedings. The Clerk suggested Councillors listen to the recording of the meeting.

In the Mayor's report the staff and especially the Clerk were acknowledged for their work on the recent successful financial audit. From the Clerk's report it was noted that the frosted glass windows of the Town Hall had been replaced and a quote for removal of the barbed wire at the Hedge End entrance to the path leading to Park View was accepted.

County Councillor Andy Graham informed the Council that a Section 19 report on the flooding of Bens Close had recently been released giving recommendations for the various bodies to take action to prevent future flooding. Regarding the new doctors' surgery, meetings are ongoing and funding is being sought, with the District Valuer's approval being needed before location and design can go ahead. Troubles with parking permits for businesses in town have been forwarded to the officer responsible.

The District Councillor's report was not available although an upcoming survey by West Oxfordshire District Council on the use of the Hensington Road car park was mentioned.

For planning, the Council objected to the extension to 29 Oxford Road. No objections to 10 Park Lane, 36 Blackberry Way, the Feathers Hotel or 10 Hensington Close. Comments would be collected for the objection to the 500 house development on land south of Perdiswell Farm and would be submitted by 20th July to Cherwell District Council.

From finance, the current balance is £425,673.

Additional waste and dog waste bins for Woodstock were then discussed following Councillor Poskitt's report. These included Park View bus stop, Sansoms Lane, Hill Rise bus stop, New Road playground and possibly Park View Under Fives. An alternative cheaper firm for collection will also be considered. The Mayor asked for costings for both new bins and collection to then be raised at the next Council meeting.

The Clerk reported on his findings regarding solar panels for the Community Centre, 2 quotes being received but complicated by the roof tiles containing

asbestos. Councillor Cooper requested full detailed quotes for not only solar panel installation but asbestos removal and new tiles so that it could be presented at the next annual town meeting.

Memorial bench plaques, requested by residents, have been priced and standardised. 55 plaques are available at a cost of £100 each.

An oral report from the Deputy Mayor followed. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor recently met with MP Calum Miller and Dr Becker to discuss the current situation on the new doctors’ surgery. Councillors Grant and Williams were told that two proposals on the former Police Station site off of Hensington Road had been rejected. A further meeting with Dr Becker noted that he was strongly against this site. Two sites were being considered, the new Banbury Road development and the proposed Cherwell development. The Council discussed their options: 1) accept this situation 2) pursue the former Police Station site 3) survey Woodstock and surroundings areas. The Town Council had been advised by the District Council legal team that it was within the remit of Woodstock Town Council to pursue the former Police Station site. Following research into appropriate architects, invitations have been sent out for feasibility studies for a new surgery on the Hensington Road site. No costs or budgets were discussed.

A report from Councillor Melliss on disability access in Woodstock found improving access would encourage disabled residents and visitors to use the town more. Councillor Melliss proposed that Woodstock Town Council supported the aim of Woodstock becoming a disabled friendly town. The Clerk added that the Town Council does not have this responsibility and that it was the responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. The Mayor suggested a change in the motion so that the Town Council worked with both County and District Councils to improve disabled access for the town. This motion was carried.

For both reports: 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

Cllr Nick Melliss - Surgery

I have now enjoyed two surgeries and am planning more at the Countryside Gallery in the Woodstock Library on **Tuesday 15 July, and Tuesday 9 September at 2pm**. I’ll be there for one hour so if you want to have a chat then come along.

Nick Melliss, Woodstock Town Councillor

West Oxfordshire District Council

Officers and Councillors at West Oxfordshire are currently very busy with several highly significant matters for which final decisions are in the hands of government not the Council.

Consultation on possible local government changes

The government proposes to replace the two-tier system of local government with new unitary authorities. Oxfordshire County, Oxford City, and the four District Councils have each sent in their proposals for new authorities with suggested populations of around 500,000 residents. WODC’s proposal is for two unitaries: Oxford and the Shires comprising the present areas of Cherwell, West Oxfordshire and Oxford City; and Ridgeway Council involving West Berkshire with South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse Districts.

Botley West Solar Farm Proposal

WODC has submitted an Impact Assessment relating to this huge solar farm proposal. Essentially, for all aspects considered, Council concluded the impact would be either neutral or negative. Disappointingly, the developers appear to have taken more or less no notice of WODC’s earlier suggestions for making the proposal more acceptable. WODC has a group with representatives from the seventeen impacted parishes discussing possible mitigation and how it could be distributed, if government approves the Botley West proposal.

Local Plan 2041

Council is also preparing its next Local Plan. Shortly there is likely to be a public consultation on the policies behind the new Plan. We hope the Plan will present a broad strategy for the future, including climate change control measures and infrastructural needs, although the ‘where’ and ‘what’ of building development plans are the items which impact residents most. An initial consultation, due shortly, on Plan policies will be followed by a public consultation on the development sites submitted to Council. Changes to Government planning policies have delayed progress with the Plan. Meanwhile, the lack of a Five Year Land Supply, leaves Council vulnerable to having to approve developments, which ideally they might not accept, due to national policy for a presumption of sustainable development unless there are very sound planning objections.

Doctors’ surgery

Representatives of the NHS, our doctors, OCC and WODC Officers and our County Cllr Andy Graham, chaired by Calum Miller MP, meet frequently to try to resolve site and funding for a new surgery in Woodstock. There is progress but it is so slow.....

Julian Cooper and Elizabeth Poskitt

Sustainable Woodstock

What If the Secretary of State (SoS) says Yes to Botley West Solar Farm?

Could communities, miss out on £millions over the lifetime of the project?

MP Calum Miller on Question Time recently. “It is incredibly important that we take climate change seriously. I regard it as probably the greatest generational challenge that our generation faces.”

Professor Alex Rogers, Chair Stop Botley West writes in his excellent biography 'The Deep', “Climate change is a global emergency and the results of ignoring it will be nothing short of a calamity on the scale of a world war for humanity and for the environment.”

Last month, I wrote about the Botley West hearings held in Oxford and focused on those who spoke on a fair community benefit. There were of course many representatives from communities who focused their feedback on other equally important aspects of the project.

On 9 June, a media announcement revealed that the community benefit had doubled from £200K to £440K per annum. I was asked - ‘this is good?’ Well, we believe it still falls short of what is fair and proportionate for communities ... given the size, location, the vicinity to communities and other factors. The fund should be 10 times more.

One person commented that we might be unrealistic as we were comparing onshore wind farms in Scotland. Investigate further and you will find the amount applies to solar as well in Scotland. Other countries in Europe have community funds related to renewable energy generation ... so why not England ... why not here?

You may know that we also support an alternative suggestion from those experienced in the industry, Low Carbon Hub. They call for 2% of project revenue to be allocated to deliver 'real and lasting' benefits to local communities. They estimated a figure of around £840,000 to £1.2million per annum but acknowledge, it would be 'difficult' to be precise until the project is up and running.

Needing further explanation, another figure to ponder – Southill Community Energy is in Charlbury and is a community benefit society. It is 4.5MW solar farm (BW is 840MW) and delivers £45,000 per annum as community benefit - that is £10,000 per MW.

So, are we being greedy ... or are the developers on behalf of their investors being greedy?

Developers need to attract investors but given what we have learnt and have experience of, for example

Thames Water, it is important that our communities are not 'sold down the river'.

So why persist? Sustainable Woodstock is unlikely to gain and Woodstock is unlikely to be directly affected ... but we believe in playing fair with communities who are hosting the project during the transition needed to move towards Net Zero.

Finally, of interest, the government have a ‘working paper’ on community benefit and renewables out for consultation (deadline 16th July) and for projects over 5MW, they suggest a figure of £5000 per MW. If BW is approved, it’s unlikely that the UK Parliament will have guidelines in place in time to apply to Botley West. Consequently, it’s crucial that everyone continues to call on the developers to act fairly ... and for those representing the communities must continue to make representations with this in mind. We really don’t want to see the developers sneak an offer 'under the wire'.

Hilary Brown, representing Sustainable Woodstock, at public participation - Woodstock Town Council meeting 24 June 2025



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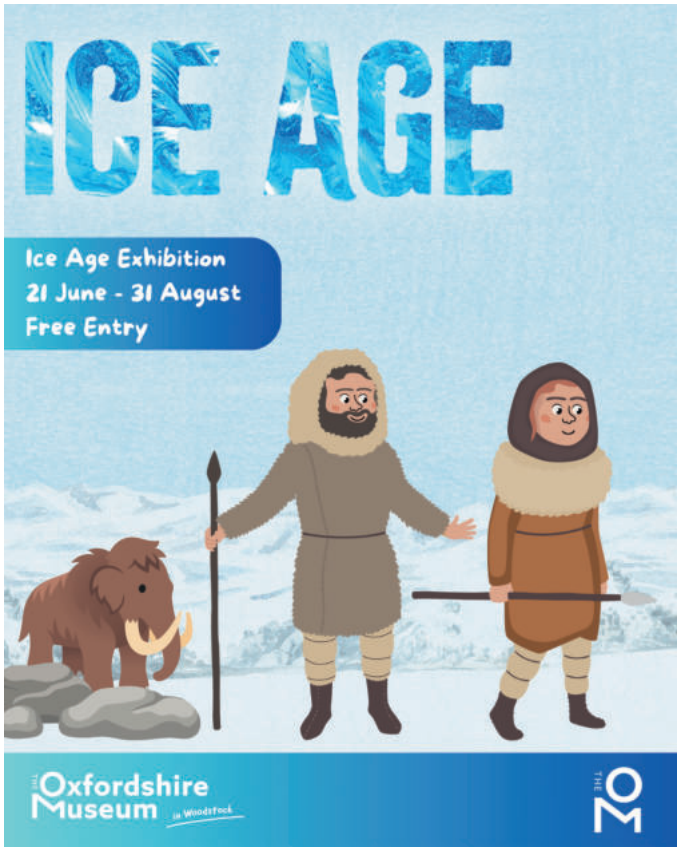
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References supplied on request.

**Please contact:
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The Oxfordshire Museum

Ice Age Exhibition



Learn all about Oxfordshire’s Ice Age. Imagine Oxfordshire 430,000 years ago, covered in a 1,000 metre-thick layer of Ice! This exciting new exhibition offers the opportunity to learn about the landscape, plant & animal species plus offers insights into early human life.

The museum café will be open throughout, and the museum shop will have plenty of Ice Age related toys and books. Why not pop along for what promises to be a fun day out for all the family!

Saturday 21 June to Sunday 31 August. Free Entry

Summer Activities

We will be offering a wide variety of workshops, activities and craft sessions throughout the summer holidays. Many will be Ice Age related, with everything from flint knapping to axe making, there really is something for everyone. We will also be offering an exciting schedule of school holiday activities.

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

We do not meet in August but we look forward to welcoming Members and visitors to our September talk in the Coach House at the Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock at 7.30pm on Wednesday 3 September

Oxfordshire Museum Highlights

Speaker: Nicole Perry-Bradford, Curator of Social History, Oxfordshire Museum Service

This talk offers a wonderful opportunity to learn about the Museum collection in more depth and to meet one of our Curators. Nicole Perry-Bradford joined the Museum Service in 2024 and she will choose several items from the collection as well as giving us an overview.

Membership of The Friends 2025-2026

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

Details of Membership and our 2025-2026 programme are on our website.
www.friendsoftom.org.uk.

Woodstock & District u3a

Our u3a branch is centred in Woodstock and attracts and welcomes members from the town and the surrounding areas.

The association is aimed at those recently retired or even more longer retired as most interest groups take place during the daytime. Members have access to the many and varied groups which take place in members’ homes or local halls depending on the numbers and activity involved - please check out the website for more information. In particular we are currently aiming to grow the new table tennis group at Woodstock Youth Club on Tuesday afternoons.

Monthly members’ speaker meetings are held at St Hugh’s, Hensington Road, Woodstock at 1.45 for 2pm, and last month we were entertained by the magician John Field from The Magic Circle as he talked about 'The Amazing World of Magic' and got our minds working as we tried to figure out how those tricks were done - just magic? On 3 July we have Julie Ann Godson speaking on 'The Free Spirits of Oxfordshire' and on 7 August we have our Annual Summer Social event - a time to talk with interest groups leaders and understand how the association organises itself here, with complimentary tea and cakes. We are a modest sized branch, open to new ideas and keen to see the association develop - do come along.

Visitors are welcome at the speaker meetings at £3. Annual membership is £20.

For all up-to-date information please take a look at our website - www.woodstocku3a.uk.

Sue Blackshaw, Chair

Woodstock and Bladon Churches Together

St Mary Magdalene Church is currently having necessary work carried out on the church roof, to repair the leaks and to have solar panels fitted. This is a major piece of important building work which is the culmination of many months of fund raising and seeking all the necessary permissions from the diocese of Oxford. The church treasurer, Aidan Salter, has devoted hours of his time to preparing specifications and submitting them for approval, whilst others have applied for grants (several of which have resulted in successful applications). Anyone who still wishes to contribute to the roof fund would be most welcome to do so. This has been a huge team effort, and we are delighted that the work is already making good progress.



On the right the last layer of plywood before the tern coated stainless steel is installed. On the left, the old lead roof, which soon will be removed

Inevitably the building work creates a great deal of dust and other debris which lands on the chairs and floor directly below the roof, but we have been very fortunate in our volunteers who have carried out speedy dusting and cleaning immediately before the services and community events which continue to take place in the church. Anyone who has ever had building work done in their own house knows that there will inevitably be disruption and mess created while the improvements are carried out, but ultimately the finished work will be worth the upheaval! We look forward to the completion of the building work and we thank everyone who has been involved in this enormous joint effort.

Sarah Bourne, Rector of Woodstock and Bladon

Panniers

Everyday cycling in Woodstock and Bladon



Secure cycle parking is a vital ingredient in an active travel network

You might have read about the £32m Eynsham park and ride facility which is currently unusable due to a lack of a link road to the A40. I think this goes to show how any travel network can be undone by a missing key component. Take our local Active Travel Network for example.

To get more people walking and cycling we need a few important things, including:

- Safe routes protected from busy traffic
- Secure cycle parking
- Well designed crossings
- Quieter streets
- Improved public transport

In Woodstock we have seen more secure cycle parking and the implementation of 20mph speed limits. But without advancements in other areas, many people will still be reluctant to make short journeys without their car. Another example is the well used cycle route between Woodstock and Oxford. Again great improvements have been made in recent months but there are still a few unpleasant sections that could deter newer cyclists from trying it more than once.

Looking to the future, the county council's LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) for Woodstock and surrounding area should see many of our active travel missing links added, while the Oxford Greenways project aims to tackle shortcomings on the route into Oxford.

In the meantime, whatever the challenges, keep cycling!

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

Mocking Mayors since 1786

The town of Woodstock in Oxfordshire is home to a quirky and little-known tradition (outside our town) of the Old Woodstock Mock Mayor. Although rarely mentioned in books on calendar customs, this event is a classic example of one of the most English pastimes - taking the mickey!

In addition to its humorous origins, the event now also serves a more serious purpose: raising money for the local community. This year the event is supporting Bereavement Café, Singing Together, Woodstock Lunch Club, and Woodstock Primary School.

This tradition dates back to the 1786 and originated in Old Woodstock as a playful response to the nearby New Woodstock and its grand Town Hall. After fading away in the early and late 20th century, the festival was enthusiastically revived in the 1980s.

Each year, candidates give speeches before the community votes for the new Mock Mayor.

After celebrations in front of the Town Hall, the parade returns to ceremonial 'ducking' of the new Mock Mayor in the River Glyme at the traditional sheep wash; and ending the day with laughter, tradition, and strong community spirit.

For more information visit mockmayor.co.uk.

OLD WOODSTOCK MOCK MAYOR 2025

Join us for a day of fun, tradition, and community spirit!

3.30pm-10pm, Saturday, 19th July 2025
Woodstock Town Square

On the day there will be:

- Children's games and face painting
- Sol Samba bringing Rio to Woodstock
- Mock Court with public participation
- The Ceremonial Procession
- Mock Bar and food stalls
- DJ Lucy providing music during the day
- Live bands: The Kokroachez, and 5 O'clock Somewhere

Let's keep Woodstock's oldest tradition alive!
Bring family, friends, everyone's welcome!

Bartholomew Players

Fancy a bit of drama in your life?



If you live in Woodstock or Bladon and would like to try amateur **dramatics**, why not join Bartholomew Players, one of **Oxfordshire's** leading groups, and based just down **the road** in Eynsham? We put on 2 plays a year - in **May** and **November** - over 4 nights. Current members come from **Oxford**, **Witney**, **Hanborough**, **Cassington** as well as **Eynsham** and other villages. This year we are celebrating our 50th anniversary. We are a friendly group who love getting new members involved. We have just had a very successful run of **Present Laughter** by Noel Coward. The **NODA** reviewer commented "This was an accomplished and fitting celebration of fifty years of the Bartholomew Players, a production to impress and amuse in equal measure. It's easy to forget that this is

a community theatre group performing in a village hall, and if the Players continue to produce plays to such a high standard then I think they can look forward with confidence to the next fifty years." We are now planning our next production - **The Government Inspector** by Nikolai Gogol, adapted by Philip Goulding. The classic original was written nearly 200 years ago, satirising greed and corruption in a provincial Russian town, while this adaptation brings it closer to home in a timeless comedy of errors poking fun at human stupidity and petty bureaucracy. There are some wonderful characters and the laughs come thick and fast.

While this play will have been cast, we invite all who are interested in being involved backstage in this show to get in touch now via the contact details below. We always need extra help with costumes, props and set-building. New members are very welcome!

Rehearsals: Monday and Wednesday evenings from the beginning of September 2025

Performance dates: 26 to 29 November at 7.30pm at Eynsham Village Hall OX29 4QW

Please contact Gareth Hammond, the director, at bart.players@gmail.com for more details or check out the website <https://www.bartholomewplayers.co.uk/>

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The Marlborough C of E School

The Marlborough School Expansion

We are delighted to confirm that the long awaited school expansion has now begun. The contractors arrived on the school site to begin the first part of the building works during the May half term. In preparation, a compound was set up in the staff car park on the west side of the school site. The enabling works began on the ponds, starting with the larger pond behind the Design Technology block.



During the clearing of the pond and under the supervision of the ecologist from Natural England, we came across three Great Crested Newts. Great Crested Newts are a protected species and our work has been completed in accordance with our Planning



Permission and Natural England licence. These beautiful creatures were safely relocated to a new home on the school site where they can happily continue to thrive. In addition to the newts, we came across a couple of toads and a hedgehog who had made their home from a crisp packet! Again, new homes within the school woodland area were created, where they can now safely reside.



Pictures show various stages of the pond construction

Once the ground preparation and clearance of the pond was completed, the pond lining was laid and we were all very excited to witness the start of the pond being filled with water! The next stage will involve preparing for the landscaping around the pond.

We will be sharing weekly updates via our school website following the expansion from start to finish and everything in between! Please visit our school website www.marlbrough.oxon.sch.uk, click on the 'Information' tab and select 'Expansion'.

Charity Week update

Charity Week is one of the most important weeks in our school calendar, a week dedicated to raising money for our three chosen charities. As with previous years, this year's Charity Week which ran 24th - 28th March was hugely successful, with students embracing the opportunity to take part in planned activities and events throughout the week, the highlight which is the whole school participation in the 'fun run' around Blenheim Palace! It was delightful to witness students' enjoying other events such as 'Soak the teacher', 'Non-uniform day', 'Morning tuck shops', and the musical extravaganza 'Battle of the Bands', whilst recognising the main focus of the week - to think of others and endeavour to make a difference to people both near and far.

We are incredibly proud and overjoyed to confirm the total amount raised from this year's Charity Week was £14,703 - a phenomenal result! Every single penny raised will make a huge difference to running our community events such as our Senior Citizen Christmas Party, and supporting this year's three chosen charities: New Yatt Riding for the Disabled (local charity), Young Minds (national charity), and SolarAid (international charity).

A huge thank you to our parents, carers and families, who donate and support their children during the year, and to each and every one of our students.

Sarah Fitchett

Woodstock CE Primary School

Summer Term Sporting Achievements

Quad Kids (vortex throwing, long jump, sprint and 600m run)



Children in Key Stage 2 took part in a Quad Kids event competing against schools within the Woodstock Schools Partnership last week. Both teams represented the school brilliantly, with the U11s team making it through to the West Oxfordshire finals at Woodgreen School this week. It was a rather hot afternoon, but this didn't hold the children back. They all showed team spirit, resilience and determination. Some amazing individual achievements within each of the events, but as a team they were supportive of each other and encouraging throughout. Out of 8 school teams within West Oxfordshire, we came 2nd place runners up. This secured a place in the Oxfordshire County finals in a few weeks.

U11s West Oxfordshire Girls Cricket



Some of our girls in Years 5&6 represented the school at a cricket festival last week at Shipton Under Wychwood cricket club. Some of our girls were new to the sport, but this didn't hold them back. They went out strong and with a positive mindset, which paid off. The girls were incredible - winning all their games and going on to winning the final. They will now go on to represent the school at a county event hosted by St Edwards School Oxford in a few weeks' time. Watch this space - we certainly have some talented cricketers.

Reception School Places still available for September 2025 - please do get in touch with us asap, 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

Bladon C of E Primary School

VE Day Celebration



If you walked past Bladon Primary School earlier this month you might have felt like you had stepped back in time to 1945! Land girls, evacuees, pilots and even Winston Churchill himself all came together at school to mark the 80th anniversary of the very first VE Day!

A huge thank you to Bladon Parish Council for their generous grant, which allowed all the children to decorate their own teacup and saucer to commemorate VE Day and to explore a range of World War Two artefacts from a topic box from the Oxfordshire Museum.

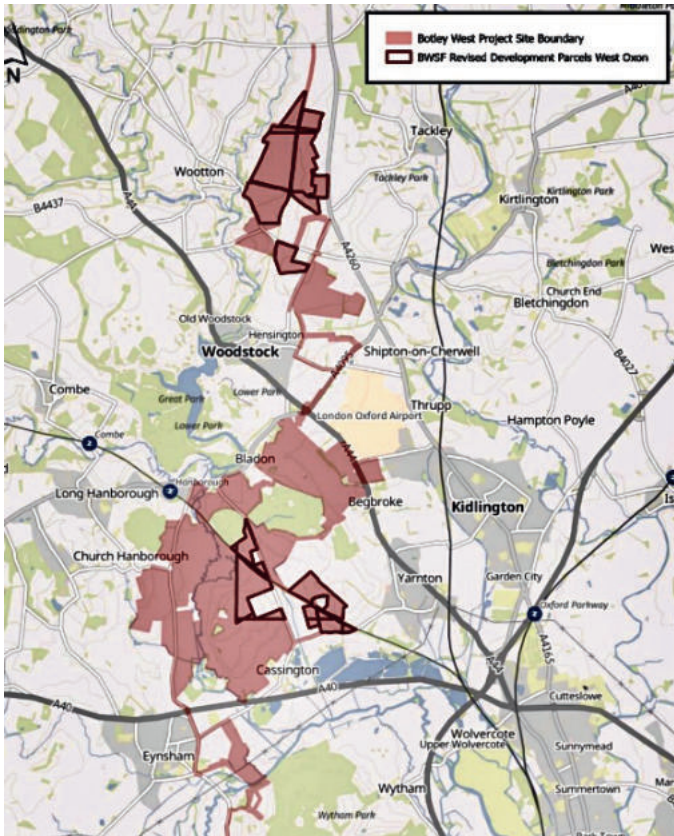
It was wonderful to hear that the event had encouraged families to explore their own war time history, to dig out old photographs and to share stories of grandparents and great grandparents with their children. In the afternoon we gathered to watch Winston Churchill's VE Day speech, before enjoying a range of VE Day style party games and dancing to 1940s music. It was a wonderful sight to see the whole school together celebrating in their costumes! We finished our celebrations by enjoying a tea party and singing some war time songs.

Vickie Cook, Headteacher

Oxford Airport versus Botley West

Lives before Loot

In April, I published a letter in the Woodstock and Bladon News outlining the dangers of a planned solar industrial complex to the safety of Oxford Airport. I decided to write this article on the day that Air India Flight 171 crashed into the city of Ahmedabad with huge loss of life. Since both engines in a commercial airliner failed suddenly a bird strike was considered. Sadly, this has greater relevance for our own community than you might think. In the context of aviation safety, avoidance of risk is common sense and not rocket science. So as a frequent flyer who has fixed upon the vacant stare of shattered corpses following a crash on Bladon Heath, I felt compelled to share my thoughts on this issue.



Proposed layout for the Botley West development around the airport and radical changes proposed by West Oxfordshire District Council (with bold boundaries)

Should a geography teacher quiz his class at Marlborough School "Would you choose to cover terrain between a busy flight training school and a major RAF base with metal, glass and high wire fences?", I anticipate a stony silence. Common sense would prevail in innocent minds that daily register air traffic circling above. Regrettably, if you posed the same question to the Government in distant Westminster, you may well get a different answer.

At a village public consultation event an eminent professor reportedly asked the Photovoltaic

Development Partners representative "why cover thousands of acres of Oxfordshire green belt and agricultural land with solar panels given that there are abundant sites elsewhere?" The response was brief. "Because that's what Blenheim gave us!" Honest but depressing. These meetings were generally perceived as a tick box exercise where those who chose to speak out were immediately labelled NIMBYs. But the NIMBYs had many legitimate concerns. One of mine as a medical man was that countryside recreation plays an economically important part in both physical and mental health. Walking the dogs between high wire fences and security cameras just doesn't cut it. Botley West's claim that the panels would not be visible behind green hedges was met with derision.

As one Buckinghamshire MP stated with regard to a proposal in his own constituency "solar is inefficient technology that trashes the countryside and damages our food security." Moreover our diminutive UK green agenda is wholly redundant given the carbon generation by the US, Russia and China. Even the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change is fully appraised of solar inefficiency. That's why he announced an immediate £14.2 billion investment into new nuclear power in parallel with Donald Trump's flurry of orders to quadruple nuclear energy by 2050. In Britain fewer than 10 nuclear reactors would eliminate fossil fuels from the grid without sacrificing any further agricultural land upon which our food security depends.

It is likely that there were months if not years of 'under the radar' negotiations between Botley West and Blenheim before any degree of public awareness. Photovoltaic Development Partners submitted their proposals to the Government's Planning Inspectorate (PINs) in November 2024 following local negotiations with the relevant district councils. The extent of the development is well known. This sea of metal and glass will involve two million solar panels and 110 kilometres of high wire security fencing. Setting aside the Government's slave labour and security concerns surrounding Chinese technology, panel construction alone will generate vast quantities of carbon. Currently 75% of the site is on green belt land, whilst 45% of the soil is classified 'best and most versatile quality', particularly behind Bladon in proximity to the airport.

The application was accepted for consideration in December 2024 and three months later West Oxfordshire District Council published their 'Local Impact Report'. This provided a forensic examination of the proposal by experts stretching to 180 pages. Negative impacts on the landscape, green belt, local ecology, historic significance, agriculture land and public rights of way were described. More worryingly the Council declared "there has been no meaningful

engagement by the applicant to seek to address problems as they have arisen." They then launch into a catalogue of failures on important issues worsened by lack of dialogue.

Now to the main point of this article. Oxford Airport, which closely abuts onto Woodstock, Bladon, Begbroke and Kidlington, made critical representation to both Botley West and West Oxfordshire District Council. This was well in advance of the PINS process but again it was claimed Botley West did not respond in those preliminary stages. Evidence against the deployment of solar panels close to airports is growing but the risk factors can only be accrued in the light of experience. As stated in my letter, even the Dutch commercial airport Schiphol has been forced to close a runway at certain times of the day through intense glare. But commercial jets are not the main concern locally.

Around Oxford Airport we have continuous traffic from a thousand trainee pilots flying single engine aircraft and practicing engine failure. Added to that there are new helicopters circling under test conditions, a vintage Spitfire and the Children's Air Ambulance crossing terrain over surrounding villages. Birds are already a problem for the Airport. Together, the lakes on the Blenheim Estate and the woods and fields of West Oxfordshire provide an abundance of large species including geese, ducks, gulls, pigeons, rooks and crows. Huge Kites and Buzzards circle the fields searching for prey. Birds that land on water are attracted by acres of glass panels through the so called 'lake effect' described in US academic literature. Just drive north towards Banbury on the A4260 and you will see a shimmering lake away on the left; not water but acres of solar panels.

Our environment is progressively being covered by these industrial developments because they make more money than crops for the land owner. But birds won't land on them. With an ambient temperature of 25 degrees centigrade the panels often register 50 degrees. The dark surfaces absorb most of the sunlight and heat though only 15% is converted into electricity. The rest is returned to the atmosphere as heat. And because the structures are darker than surrounding vegetation, large swathes of solar panels will absorb and emit heat at higher rates producing air turbulence. According to research ecologist Jeffrey Lovich of the US Geological Survey, the heat generated can incinerate insects and burn the feathers of birds that fly above. Such effects are likely to exacerbate Britain's proliferating wild fire problem. So much for the improved biodiversity that solar site developers profess. Instead wildlife could be decimated on an industrial scale by their scheme. Birds will fly over the panels to the safety of airport land and that poses a huge problem.

As the Managing Director Mr William Curtis explains, "we constantly need to clear birds away from our runway. I think it is inevitable that work going on around the solar site will increase the density of birds on the Airport's surface". Residents of Bladon know that flocks of wild geese congregate on the lakes of Blenheim in Autumn before migrating for the winter. They then land and group in the field next to Churchill's grave before heading off over the Airport. Swans do this too. Civil Aviation data documented 1432 episodes of bird strike in the UK in 2022. Remember Captain Sullenberger ditching his Airbus 320 into the Hudson River in 2009 after a flock of birds disabled both engines?

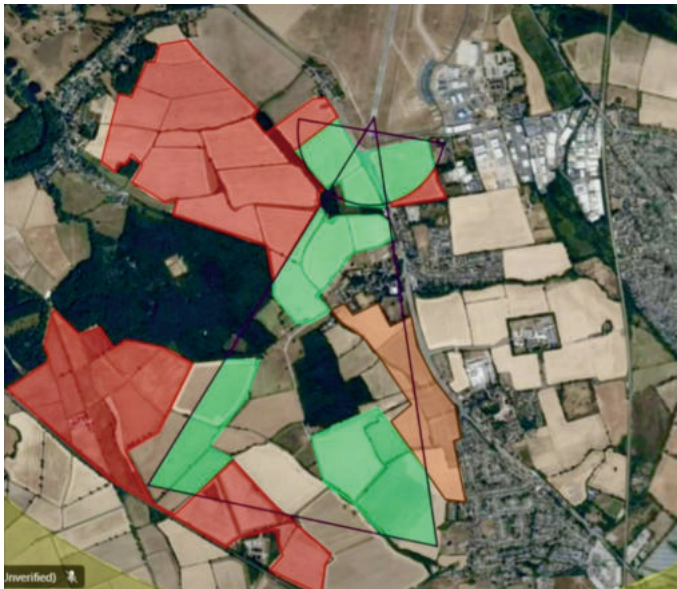
This very problem was aired at the PINS meeting in May when Mr Curtis said "I don't think it's unreasonable to suggest that if you make a crash landing into a solar display your chances of survival are probably nil." He elaborated further. "Last year we had an engine failure after take off and the instructor took control to land in a field. I'm pleased to say everyone got out unscathed and the aircraft was undamaged. I can also say that had solar panels been in place neither of the crew would have survived." Were these problems raised with Botley West before the PINS meeting? Apparently so, but allegedly Botley West did not provide a response. The subsequent statements from Mr Curtis were no more reassuring. "The difficulty for the Airport fire and rescue service is to get to the casualty. Say someone has survived to extinguish a fire, they are now surrounded by live electric panels."

Curtis went on to say "we do have other concerns. We don't consider the (BW) ecology reports have covered the removal of 2,500 acres of countryside and we are the next green area! We think it will encourage more birds. We also believe that on a summer's evening the panels will act as a heat store and the heat will be released as a 'thermal plume'. Questions have been raised by Brize Norton regarding radar performance in these circumstances. We also think that the heat coming off the panels could present turbulence problems for light single engine aircraft with inexperienced pilots on approach or departure."

So back to the school geography class. Why make a deliberate choice to create issues that convey a risk to life both for pilots and the local community. Trainee pilots with little experience are likely to panic and react instinctively when threatened by impending demise. They seek damage limitation and "the scary thing is that could mean heading towards built up areas rather than solar panels". This implies main roads or the grounds of Marlborough School and as Curtis emphasises, "it's not if, but when?"

A face to face meeting between Botley West and the Airport authorities took place the week after the PINS

debacle. Then on 5th June came a BBC News item entitled "Land near airport removed from solar farm plans." In fact just 10 hectares of the full 1000 were withdrawn in a wedge beyond the western end of the runway near Begbroke's Spring Hill. (see figure). Who engaged the press is not clear but Botley West stated "we have agreed to remove panels from areas identified as particularly sensitive in response to local concerns". At the same time they announced that the much criticised community benefit fund would be doubled. One wonders why that might be?



10 hectare segment at the western end of the runway near Begbroke allegedly relinquished by Botley West in case of incidents on takeoff or landing from this direction

The modest revision provides an area for emergency landings beyond the runway but if my recollection is correct, the second crash I experienced was further than that territory. Neither does the concession address bird displacement or bird strike, glare, thermal plume nor Brize Norton's radar issue. This clearly heralds a battle between safety and profit.

As a surgeon with considerable trauma experience together with a doctorate of bioengineering, I would request push back of the panels for at least a mile from the whole periphery of the Airport. Why risk anything in this context? I have no wish to attend a third aviation catastrophe in walking distance from my home. As I see it, laying acres of metal and glass around an airport and expecting it to stay safe is akin to installing a pig sty in my operating theatre and hoping for it to stay clean.

I conclude by emphasising that I love historic Blenheim and have stated that in my books. The chief executive Dominic Hare has done a fantastic job in developing the World Heritage Site, even installing gold toilets. Yet this industrial scheme simply does not sit well with the countryside and community. An increasing number of dignitaries and MP's including

Sir David Davis have joined public demonstrations against the random decimation of the countryside to line the pockets of landowners. What's more there is now a direct alternative for our area.

The Oxford Energy Network (with whom I have no connection) is creating a citywide 'heat network' to cut emissions and fossil fuels. This emerges through the University and the Zero Carbon Oxfordshire Partnership who have already secured £21 million in Government funding. This alongside an initial £100 million of private investment that will enable work to begin in 2026. The total funding is expected to exceed £500 million and will reduce carbon emissions from connected buildings by as much as 80%. It equates with 15,000 tonnes of carbon per year. The credibility of this University project is not contested and there will be no negative impact on Oxfordshire's countryside, health, food chain or aviation.

Finally, and even more exciting for Oxfordshire, the Chancellor's Spending Review on June 18th announced a £2.5 billion investment into fusion energy, the power that lights up the stars. A substantial part of that is destined for Oxford's Culham Laboratories where the nuclear fusion reactor was recently shut down. The Energy Secretary announced that "fusion has the potential to provide an abundant clean energy source whilst attracting new technologies, investment and economic growth for Oxfordshire through our Plan for Change. This will deliver net zero and provide the clean energy of the future." So why would you cover huge swathes of agricultural land with more metal and glass for another 40 years? Why would you create unpredictable hazard around a regional airport and World Heritage Site? Others are tackling climate change with a future oriented scientific approach so inevitably the battle continues.

Botley West versus Stop Botley West, a controversy that should never have happened.

Professor Stephen Westaby



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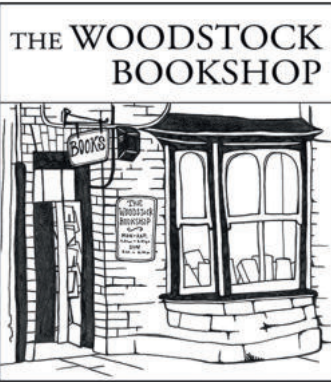
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Singing for Fun

Temporary change of venue

The Singing for Fun sessions for July, August, and September, will be moving to Woodstock Baptist Church, 5A High Street (between Brothertons and Woodstock Opticians). This is while St Mary Magdalene Church is having repairs done to the roof.

All are welcome to come at 2pm on the first Monday of the month as usual.

Woodstock Literature Society

Review of 'MURIEL SPARK' by Peter Kemp

Peter Kemp 's witty and engaging talk was informed both by his long career as chief Fiction Editor for The Sunday Times and his personal friendship with Muriel Spark.



This was a talk about the writer's life and about a particular life in writing. He deeply admired her work and drew an unforgettable picture of a dramatic and unusual talent. In his own journey into fiction, he credited Spark with having unlocked the gateway into the previously unknown fascination of reading, having been immediately enthralled by her novel Memento Mori.

Muriel Spark had an unusual background and education in Edinburgh. Her parents couldn't afford to send her to university so instead she did a commercial correspondence and precis writing course at Herriot Watt, which stood her in good stead, honing her concise style of writing. Her marriage to Sidney Oswald Spark was disastrous; Muriel wryly observed his initials of SOS and commented on his mental instability that he was a border line case, and she didn't like either side. They divorced within a few years, but not before they had emigrated to Africa, whence she had to flee after their separation leaving their only son in the care of nuns.

Muriel considered herself first and foremost as a poet and wrote several volumes of poetry before her first novels were published. She edited 'Poetry Review' for a couple of years before being ousted for poetical radicalism – she later lampooned The Poetry Society in her work.

Overworked, lacking money and constantly wanting to lose weight, Muriel turned to Dexedrine (known to trigger verbal hallucinations) and started to become increasingly paranoid, at one time she was convinced T S Elliot was spying/stalking her and stealing her rations. The 1950s were significant. After winning The Observer's short-story writing competition with 'The Seraph and the Zambesi' she started to be approached by publishers, and the rest is history with many subsequent novels, such as the brilliant 'The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie' Her conversion to Catholicism was a major turning point, her view of the world changed, seeing it as a whole rather than fractured. Growing disillusioned with her London life, she went to New York before moving to Rome where she met her long-time companion Penelope Jardine and they moved to rural Tuscany.

Derek Stanford, her first biographer, wrote a supportive biography of Muriel (published 1963) which didn't please her; she thought it was filled with inaccuracies, and also that he was jealous of her success to the point of having a breakdown.

Muriel felt she wasn't being taken seriously by the critics and developed an obsessive determination to monitor what was written about her.

Martin Stannard, her next biographer, must have rued the day when Muriel agreed to his proposal to write her biography (published 2009) - it took him nine years to work his way through Muriel's extensive archive which in part was due to Muriel's obsessive monitoring of what was written about her.

Muriel's personal style could prove challenging for others. Peter Kemp felt he had been fortunate not to have been 'scorched' by her acerbic wit and sharp observations and valued her friendship. He drew to a close by recounting his first encounter with Muriel Spark whilst he was in his second year at university through a chance remark by his landlady about "that girl Muriel across the road who writes books" and subsequently introducing him to her by her thrusting him into a taxi Muriel had just got into – both being aware the meter was ticking over!

It was a totally absorbing evening, combining insight into the life of a dedicated writer with an excellent critique of her work given with warmth and wit by someone who knew her well.

Julia Johnson

Review of a talk on John Ruskin by Professor John Holmes



Art, architecture, geology, natural history, social science ... where do you start with a polymath like John Ruskin? In his fascinating talk, John Holmes began by encouraging us to look at some of Ruskin's meticulous drawings of everything from a snake's head fritillary to a slab of Scottish rock to part of the Doge's palace in Venice. His belief was that we should observe minutely, "rejecting nothing, selecting nothing, scorning nothing", in order to arrive at the truth. Pre-Raphaelite artists like Holman Hunt, Millais, and Rossetti were all inspired by this almost photographic approach to painting, and Ruskin did much to encourage public appreciation of their art, just as he had previously secured Turner's legacy by acquiring and bequeathing many of his paintings to the nation.

Professor Holmes reminded us that there is evidence of Ruskin's work everywhere in Oxford; not only did he set up the Ruskin School of Art, still going strong in the High, but he gave his lectures in the Natural History Museum, where he had taken a keen interest in the Gothic Revival design and decoration of the building, and the collection of his own drawings used to teach the Art School students can be seen in the Ashmolean Museum.

As he grew older, Ruskin's interests grew ever wider, and he began to formulate ideas on wider social issues, advocating more educational opportunities for

all, including women and ordinary working people. He even made an attempt to set up a utopian community in the midlands countryside, where people could live a simple productive life beyond the cut and thrust world of Victorian capitalism; Professor Holmes told us he takes his students from Birmingham University there to study in natural surroundings. The desire to preserve the natural world, reconnect with nature and live a simpler life is what Professor Holmes believes makes him relevant today. Ruskin coined the phrase "No Wealth but Life"; as he wrote "That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest numbers of noble and happy human beings".

Ruskin's collected books, pamphlets and lectures amount to some 39 volumes, so you would need something of his own energy and dedication to tackle this. It was therefore a delight to be introduced to the great man's ideas by Professor Holmes' inspiring talk, a wonderful end to an evening which began with sparkling wine and sparkling conversation on a beautiful evening in St Mary's churchyard.

Look for details of our Autumn programme and our Open Book Groups on our website at www.woodstockliteraturesociety.co.uk

Anne Handsley



Mandolirium and Flood plain

Two amazing local bands

Editor's Introduction: I have been lucky enough to have known Mandolirium for a number of years - and additionally have known Rod Craig's previous bands. A few months ago, I discovered that we had another local band (Flood plain) who I thought sounded fairly similar - and they certainly played the same sort of instruments. So I thought it would be nice to find out more about both of them, and it was decided that it would be done by a QandA.

Flood plain's questions for Mandolirium

What are the origins of Mandolirium? Though I guess



the band name gives us a clue...

Rod Craig and John Somerscales discovered their mutual love of the mandolin and formed Mandolirium in 2015 as an acoustic duo playing instrumental music based around that instrument, combined with the guitar. In 2024 John Corlett joined them on upright bass to form the current trio.

How would you describe your sound?

We have always said there are no rules and anything we fancy arranging for the instruments that we play goes! At present we play Blues, Bluegrass, Celtic, Pop, Jazz, Classical, Eastern European dance music and some original pieces.

What's your favourite weird or generally-rarely-played stringed instrument?

We do use an Octave Mandolin, which is a larger version of the instrument but tuned an octave lower than the more usual version. John Corlett plays the Concertina (our only non-stringed instrument!)

Mandolirium do great live performances. Do you decide what you're going to play in advance, or see how it goes on the night?

We always work to a long set list but will juggle things around to suit timings and the ambience of the audience.

I've seen you perform in various set-ups, sometimes just the two of you, sometimes upright bass too, sometimes percussion. Do you have a favourite way to present your music? More the merrier, or depends on the gig?

As I say, we are usually a trio now but will sometimes add percussion for the bigger gigs! We can also operate as the original duo if necessary.

What's your absolute favourite song to play?

Dark Eyes is a popular Jazz standard with audiences, but we also love to play the beautiful Irish tune "Sheebeg agus Sheemor" by the 18th century harpist Turlough O'Carolan.

Can people also hear recorded music from you? If so, how and where? And when are you next performing?

We have a couple of things on Soundcloud: https://soundcloud.com/rod_craig/carolans-welcome and more details can be found at www.jdsomerscales.co.uk

And here some forthcoming dates for 2025: The Kings Arms on Thursday 14 August, Friday 22 August, Thursday 4 and 25 September, and Thursday 16 October (all at 6.30pm)

Mandolirium's questions for Flood plain

What are the origins of Flood plain?



Scott and Graeme formed the band in 2018, when they were both quite coincidentally in Whitby, in North Yorkshire, on holiday at the same time. Their very first single, At Whitby Lighthouse, was composed on the cliffs at the monument namechecked in the title, and it later went on to feature on the soundtrack for English Heritage's official audio tour of Whitby Abbey.

You've released two albums, but you don't play live. Do you plan to?

Very nice of you to mention the albums. A Kind of Harbour was released in 2022, and our second album, We Can See the Rocks, came out in March this year. Both are available on Spotify, YouTube, and that sort

of thing. As for playing live, probably not! We record an initial live take using core instruments—usually mandolin and banjo, but it could be acoustic bass and guitar—and then augment that with atmospheric layers of extra instrumentation, which makes our stuff almost impossible to reproduce live without cheating massively.

So is it just you two?

Not always. We collaborate with other local musicians, but should give particular credit to Tom Fuller, who is a wonderful clarinet player, and Alice Robertson, who is bringing depth to our sound with her violin.

How would you describe your sound?

Ah, we've struggled with this a bit for streaming services and so on, because they demand that you summarize your music in words. But 'folk' seems fair, and quite possibly 'acoustic chill', which seems to be a thing now. But really it's just evocative acoustic soundscapes using a variety of instruments to create intertwining melodies.

What's your favourite weird or generally-rarely-played stringed instrument?

For Graeme, it's the Irish Bouzouki, although he also owns a Cittern, which is a Renaissance-era lute-like thing. Scott can play the Portuguese Fado guitar, which is quite a weird-looking instrument but produces a lovely soaring sound if you can keep it in tune.

Where can we find out more?

<https://www.floodplainfolk.com/> will give you links to our albums and singles, and some more info about the band. It does not disclose, though, the whereabouts of our studio, which is hidden somewhere near the water meadow in Woodstock. But you'll never find it.





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Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museums

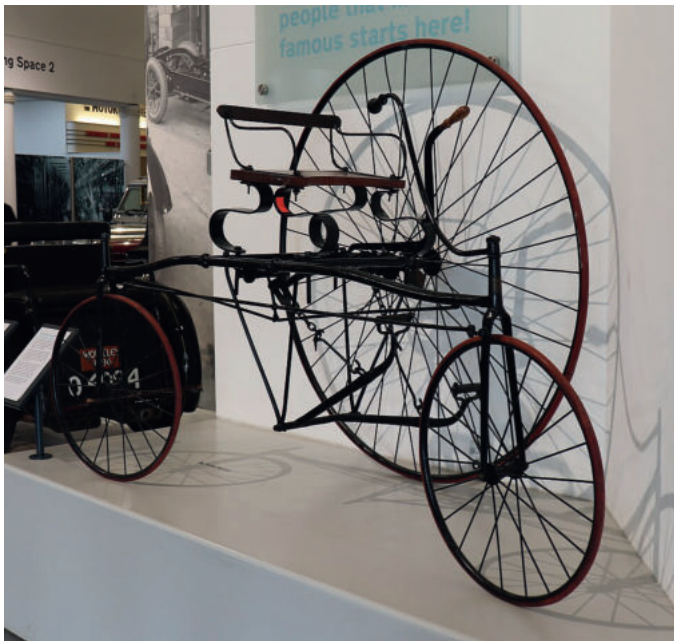
On Sunday 13 July we shall be having a Military Day. Look out for the camouflage man, if you can find him.

There will be displays of weapons, aircraft, Land Rovers, artillery, camouflage, military uniforms, and lorries. A World War I model T Ford with a Vickers machine gun on the back will be attending. One of only two in the country!

There will be a display of aircraft relics from the Battle of Britain, a collection of airships from the 1900s which includes pictures, relics and memorabilia from Zeppelins and the R101. There will also be a cockpit instrument display from WW2 fighter aircraft. The Home Guard will also be demonstrating army drills and will show and talk about Home Guard activities during World War II.

For the children, and possibly adults, there will be paper aeroplane making and then flying them to land on a simulated aircraft carrier.

150 years ago this year the Penny Farthing was at its most popular but not everyone fancied riding one! Inventors had already designed several tricycles, but none had become popular enough to put into production.



In 1876 J.K. Starley of Haynes and Jefferis in Coventry invented a ‘modern’ tricycle which was the first to be put into mass production. It was patented the following year. Tricycles today have developed to have three wheels of equal size. They did not start like that. The pictured Coventry Lever Tricycle had one large 50inch (1.27 metre) driving wheel in the middle of one side and two smaller wheels fore and aft, both of which were steerable via a tiller. The rider propelled the machine forwards using levers.

Later the levers were replaced by rotary cranks, and the tiller was succeeded by rack and pinion steering. It became known as the Coventry Rotary and later the Rudge Rotary.

In 1877 Starley added a second large wheel at the side and, with a second seat and set of pedals, created the Coventry Sociable; the first sociable tricycle for two riders. One of these is on display in the museum. It employed two driving wheels with each rider driving one wheel. If one rider pedalled faster than the other, it became unstable. This led Starley to design and add a balance gear or differential which allowed the two wheels to revolve at different speeds when cornering. Modern cars have differential based on the same concept!

On Bank Holiday Monday 25 August we shall be organising a Heritage Skills day when visitors can take a closer look at what goes on in our workshop. We shall be running Heritage bus rides on 6 and 20 July and 3, 17 and 25 August.

Frank Collingwood

Woodstock Probus Club

Sadly our meeting on 5th of June started with a minute’s silence in remembrance of two of our long-standing members, David Roughton and Trevor Hendy. There is an obituary for Trevor in this issue of the magazine. Trevor was well known in Woodstock and very involved with the Museum.

Our speaker was Dr Bob King, a man of many talents, an accomplished magician, President of the British Magical Society, a nuclear physicist and an engineer on Concorde. It was about the latter that he spoke, emphasising that the technology developed for Concord is largely under appreciated. He discussed the structure of the cockpit windows and nose cone. A plane like Concorde has a high angle of attack for lift which needed a drop nose (droop snoot) so the pilots could see out when taking off and landing, and a short delta wing span to reduce drag at high speed. The glass developed for the cockpit windows was probably the strongest in the world, thin but able to withstand bird strikes. Even rain drops pose a problem at high speed. The window design was sold to Boeing for the Jumbo 747. Boeing also developed a supersonic jet; the first version never got off the ground and the second was cancelled. The Russian rival, sometimes called Concordski or Tuplev Tu-144, did fly but sadly crashed at the Paris airshow in 1973.

Several events have recently taken place such as a Treasure Hunt, and the President’s Dinner. A trip to Rousham House and gardens will happen soon with more events planned for the autumn.

David Anderson, Past President

Having the Builders in Part 2 Managing the job

You’ve found a builder and agreed a formal building contract - the price, duration, payment schedule, and start date are all set. But even with everything in writing, a construction project remains a major challenge. Delays and unexpected problems are almost inevitable. This article looks at ways to help ensure your project is completed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Before work begins, your builder should prepare a construction program - ideally a project management bar chart. Arrange a meeting to go over this in detail, discussing how the job will be managed, including timelines, potential disruptions, and safety protocols. Clarify who is responsible for what to avoid confusion and ensure accountability. Build extra time into the schedule to account for possible weather delays. You should also confirm which areas of your property will be worked on and when, what tasks will be carried out at each stage, and how long they’ll take. Find out if utilities will be disrupted or whether parts of your home will be uninhabitable during the works. Check your home insurance to see whether it covers building work and what types of projects are included.

Good pre-project planning should cover any need for temporary partitions, doors, screens, or barriers to separate construction zones from living areas. These help contain dust and stop children, pets, or guests from accidentally entering potentially dangerous areas. Label off-limits areas clearly and use high-visibility barriers. Make sure builders keep access points to these zones securely closed when not in use.

Take steps to protect your belongings from damage or theft. Move furniture and valuables out of the work area completely - dust sheets alone are not enough. Store small valuables and important documents off-site or in a locked safe. Consider installing security cameras to spot unapproved visitors. Limit access to keys if builders will be working in your home when you’re not there. Once the job is finished, change the locks.

Once building work begins, expect your home to become chaotic - builders, plumbers, electricians and others coming and going, an unbelievable amount of dust which somehow manages to get everywhere, and constant noise. The project will feel endless. For larger jobs, it can be less stressful to move out, perhaps into a rented static caravan if space allows. Builders can then work more efficiently, and you won’t be constantly trying to get out of the way by 8am or spending all evening tidying up. Help the job run smoothly by removing any potential barriers to

progress. Set aside a designated area for material storage, make space for delivery vehicles to unload, and allow room for the skip.

You have every right to expect your builder to arrive on time, dress appropriately, and keep the site clean. Tradespeople should show up as scheduled and complete work within the agreed timeframe and budget. A good builder minimises mess and leaves the area clean and tidy at the end of each day. If problems arise, and they will, a good builder identifies and resolves them quickly and professionally, ideally face to face. Hold regular progress meetings, weekly or bi-weekly, to track progress, adjust schedules, and deal with issues early. Your project timeline should be a living document, flexible enough to adapt but clear enough to keep things on track. When milestones are reached, recognise the builder’s hard work and efforts - it helps keep morale up and motivation high.

On completion of the building work, take time to inspect the finished project thoroughly. Ensure all work meets the agreed standards and specifications. Address any snags promptly. Once satisfied, make the final payment, update your home insurance, and enjoy your transformed home, ready for you to settle back in.

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Helping You Create a Better Home

Quite the Carillon (but not up the Khyber)!

Eh, what, what's a Carillon when it's at home I hear you ask, (that is unless you have been listening to the roving editor drumming up interest down the local hosteleries)? It isn't anything to do with 'National Treasures' Barbara Windsor, Hattie Jacques and Sid James, in case my opening pun wasn't evident, I was quite pleased with that one, but I digress.

In actual fact the Woodstock Carillon is closer to home than you might think, perhaps in fact something with which you are very familiar in a passive way but it lurks behind an innocuous cupboard so it's unlikely you have ever seen it.



The Woodstock Carillon in its box!

Let's start with the technical definition according to AI - a Carillon is a musical instrument that consists of a set of at least 23 bells that have been precisely tuned to produce the notes of a western scale. It is played using a keyboard or by an automatic mechanism similar to a piano roll.

Still none the wiser? Well maybe Wikipedia, the font of all knowledge, can help:

"A carillon is a pitched percussion instrument that is played with a keyboard and consists of at least 23 bells. The bells are cast in bronze, hung in fixed suspension, and tuned in chromatic order so that they can be sounded harmoniously together. They are struck with clappers connected to a keyboard of wooden batons played with the hands and pedals played with the feet. Often housed in bell towers, carillons are usually owned by churches, universities, or municipalities. They can include an automatic system through which the time is announced and simple tunes are played throughout the day."

Becoming a little clearer perhaps? Well the tunes that ring out over Woodstock at 9am; 1pm; 5pm and 9pm coming from the church are generated in fact by a Carillon, of sorts.

The origins of the carillon can be traced to the Low Countries - present-day Belgium, the Netherlands, and the French Netherlands - in the 16th century. The modern carillon was invented in 1644. If you've been to Northern Europe you may be familiar with bell towers and town halls that play tunes at various points, some even having figures emerge from within to symbolically hammer the gongs before returning whence they came. I hate to break it to you but not only are these figures more a sort of symbolic teutonic Trumpton but they serve only as the jaunty showpieces of a carillon within. Think of them as a sort of mildly disturbing fashion catwalk whilst that which does the work remains behind the scenes. The Milli Vanilli of the bell-chiming world if you will!



The war memorial Carillon in Queen's Park, Loughborough

In reality to be formally designated a Carillon there has to be the aforementioned minimum of 23 bells which we don't have in the tower at St Mary Magdalene, nevertheless ours is the campanological equivalent of an old Pianola mechanical playing its different tunes on different days. Those of a religious bent will know it always plays a hymn on a Sunday for example but it has a variety of tunes one of which starts off like 'For he's a Jolly Good Fellow' and another which has a bit of Robin Hood Robin Hood riding through the Glen. Or that might just be me thinking of them that way!

So, whilst ours may not be a 'genuine' Carillon in terms of the official definition, the Woodstock carillon is nevertheless an integral part of the charm

of 'New' Woodstock marking out the sections of the day and as a special, often unexpected, audio attraction for tourists, many of whom have never come across one before. It is also a unique carillon in terms of its specific tunes and the order in which they are played. As you can see from the picture below ours does indeed function like a pianola, it has an electromechanical mechanism that operates the chiming action using the mechanical roll.

Locally I am aware of St. Mary's Witney which also has a mechanical carillon in its spire but as it is not quite so in the centre of town you may not have heard it. Woodstock's rings out clear for all to hear, for some distance, and if it should be well cared for there is no reason why it should not continue to delight locals and tourists alike, even if, as this week, it is chiming some 10 minutes early! Ok maybe it isn't everyone's cup of tea, but neither is a glass of rosé and many of you would be disappointed if they stopped serving that in Woodstock pubs.

On a serious note though were the carillon to fall into disrepair you aren't going to be able to ring a hotline and get an engineer out next day to fix it. In fact you are more likely to find a pub called the Bell Foundry than an actual one. Taylor's Bell Foundry in Loughborough, makers of Big Ben is the only major bell foundry left in the UK and Commonwealth and

even its future remains uncertain. When considering its upkeep, the validity and the cost of it we should remember that a carillon is for life, not just for Christmas.

The carillon and its bells are a piece of quite rare history, a link to a forgotten world and our area's Northern European heritage which still draws your attention to it in a benign manner. You can even enjoy said glass of rosé or whatever tippie takes your fancy whilst you listen to it's chosen tune sat outside your preferred hostelry. Now you won't find that on your smart speaker.

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Some Garden! Some Party!

How we celebrated 80 years of Christian Aid in Bladon

On Saurday 17 May at 2 pm Helen and John Stevenson's beautiful Garden was ready for the Party to begin.



There were home made cakes, plants, and a fabulous Tombola, a tempting raffle, and attractions for every age.

Soon the garden was full of people enjoying themselves with tea and cake, chatting to friends, neighbours and perfect strangers. People came to spend their money, and this they certainly did.



We have a lot of ‘thank you’s to make:

A huge thank you to John And Helen for the use of their beautiful garden, and to David Mostyn for his amazing poster.

For the raffle prizes we thank The Woodstock Bookshop, The Bear Woodstock, Freeland Nursery, Blenheim Palace and the White House pub. Thanks also for the many donated raffle prizes from you all.

Thanks to the ladies making tea and coffee, as well as the strong men who turned up early on Saturday

morning to put up gazebos and carry heavy furniture around. To the three handsome men on the raffle and all the stall holders - great fun was had hooking ducks and binning beanbags.

David Mostyn created wonderful caricatures from photographs, with the help of JS.

Most of all thanks to those of you who came and joined in the fun and spent your cash.

And the sun shone!

Happy Birthday Christian Aid!

We delivered the familiar red envelopes to each house - thank you to all the volunteers, especially Bladon Junior Church. Without them we would not have raised £472.21 from the donations.

Lucy continued to raise money for Christian Aid with her curb-side plant sales, and made £220.00, which was added to the Garden Party money to make £1438.84.

Now we can tell you the grand total ... (drum roll) ... is £1911.05.

A big thank-you to everyone

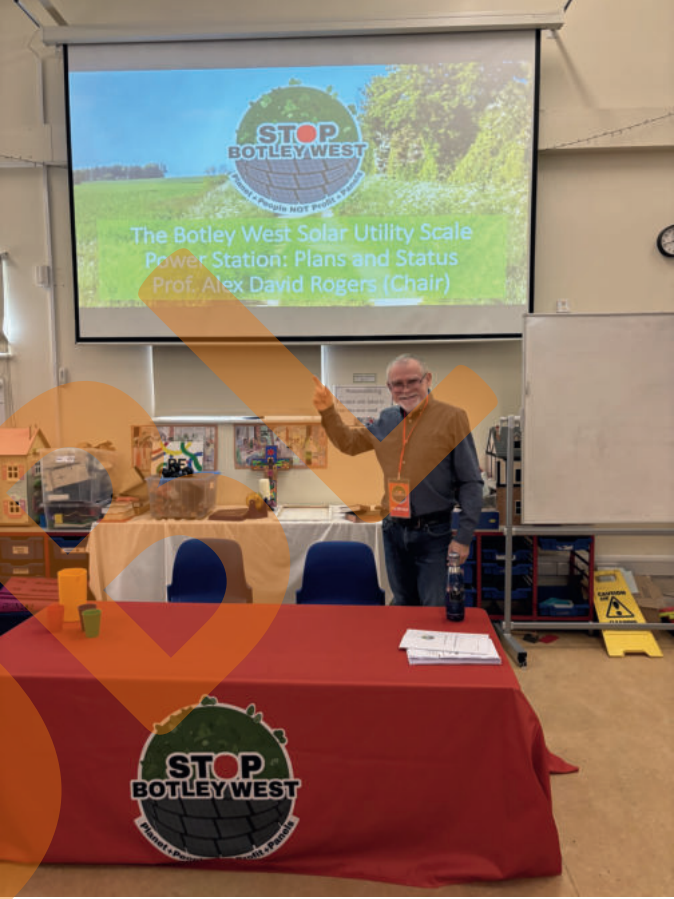
Chris Corser and Lucy Norton



Updates on 'Botley West'



West Oxfordshire District Council Calls for Significant Reduction in Solar Power Station Site



Stop Botley West chair, Prof Alex Rogers, presenting at our Public Information Events in June

There’s been a significant development in the campaign against the proposed Botley West Solar Farm (BWSF). In a key moment for residents, West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) formally submitted its Written Representation to the Government’s Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on 4th June, calling for a substantial reduction in the scale of the proposed scheme. **Stop Botley West are very pleased to see WODC’s position.**

This marks a positive step forward for many who have felt their concerns overlooked. BWSF is no ordinary solar proposal - it’s sheer size and sprawl would dominate vast swathes of valued countryside, threaten public rights of way, impact local heritage, and alter the landscape that defines our community.

The Council especially considered impact on the Historic Environment, Landscape and Visual Amenity, Flooding and Aviation Safety and concluded that 1,750 acres should be removed from the scheme on land that falls within WODC jurisdiction, leaving 740 acres suitable to contain panels.

In its representation, WODC provided a thorough fact-based critique of the proposal, backing the view that the scheme, in its current form, is unacceptable.

In addition, Vale of White Horse District Council have said "We remain of the view that the BWSF is not acceptable, and the proposed Southern Site in the Vale of White Horse District should be removed from the application".

Now, we must build on this momentum. If you share these concerns, **please submit your own comments to PINS in support of the council’s position.** Local voices do matter and together, they are being heard.

Joint Local Impact Report

WODC have joined forces with Cherwell and Vale of White Horse District Councils and Oxfordshire County Council to produce a Joint Local Impact Report (LIR). This important document examines the impacts of proposal in a number of areas from a local point of view, how it affects people they represent and whether it is compatible with or contrary to local planning policies. The conclusion was that of the 20 issues considered; 11 showed a negative impact, 9 a neutral impact and none a positive impact.

Supporters Walk

Campaigners across England and Wales held a nationwide day of action on Sunday 8 June to challenge Labour’s plans to green light large-scale solar farms on productive farmland. Stop Botley West supporters walked together from Bladon on footpaths due to be impacted by Botley West.

Co-ordinated walks were held at 25 venues - from Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, to Kent and Wales - which saw hundreds gather together. The message was clear: solar energy should not come at the expense of valuable farmland and rural landscapes.

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.

Visit stopbotleywest.com for more details.



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Trevor Hendy

3 February 1936 to 19 May 2025

Trevor Hendy will long be remembered for his public service to the community of Woodstock and beyond. Most of all, his crucial role in preserving Fletcher’s House as the location of the Oxfordshire Museum has shaped the fabric of the town centre, as well as its social heart.



How many current residents of Woodstock know that In 1991 Oxfordshire County Council announced that it had taken the decision to close the Oxfordshire County Museum located in Fletcher’s House, Woodstock? Woodstock residents protested immediately. A petition against the closure attracted two thousand four hundred and four signatures. In the face of this strong expression of public opinion, the County Council reversed its decision. The Museum was saved. However, it was clear that it would need strong local support and here Trevor Hendy with John Banbury and others stepped up to create the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum. Over the years Trevor was twice Chair of the Friends, generating many profitable schemes and always working in close harmony with the museum director, Carol Anderson. The Friends contributed time, energy and crucial funding for important acquisitions such as the Stonesfield embroidery, the West Hanney brooch, and the Iron Age mirror as well as major improvements to the building such as the conversion of the Coach House, and the creation of the dinosaur garden, the

latter much-loved by generations of junior visitors. The vibrant and child-friendly museum we know today at the heart of Woodstock with its special exhibitions, children’s holiday craft workshops, and lovely garden and café would not exist at all without Trevor and his colleagues, and Fletcher’s House would these days no doubt be a boutique hotel or luxury apartments.

His impact on the fabric and life of the Woodstock we know today was great, but where did his profound sense of public duty come from? His career as an architect and in public housing provides the clues.

Trevor Hendy trained as an architect in Newcastle before moving to London. When he was called up for National Service he was sent to the NATO headquarters of the Allied Air Forces Central Europe at Fontainebleau as he could speak French. This was a time of high international tension with the building of the Berlin Wall, but his posting was a personally rewarding experience as it allowed him to develop his love of France and travel in general.

After leaving the army he resumed his career as an architect. He met and married Evelyn, and they had two children, Juliet and Nicholas. On applying for for a job with Oxfordshire County Council, they discovered Woodstock and immediately decided that this is where they wished to settle down. Luckily, Trevor was offered the council job, and in 1973 he realised every architect’s dream and was able to build his own house in Brook Hill backing the Watermeadows.

As his career developed Trevor became ever more interested in the world of public housing. This started with establishing an in-house architect’s department within a London housing association. Then in 1988 he joined a colleague Peter Chapman in founding the housing consultancy Chapman Hendy Associates. They offered vital advice and support to dozens of housing association clients, and played a key role in setting up many new associations. He continued his passion for housing as a Board member of the Housing Associations Charitable Trust for over twenty years, and in addition served on the committee of the Cherwell Housing Trust for twenty five years.

In the meantime, Evelyn worked for the BBC in children’s programmes, then at Radio Oxford, and finally at Oxford University Press. Trevor and Evelyn shared a love of music which led them to found the Woodstock Music Society in 1975 with a group of friends. The society gave its first concert in December 1975 and has developed and grown remarkably over the years into the highly successful society we know today. Trevor was not a musician himself but supported the society in an administrative role, and enjoyed organising the choir on its many foreign tours

to places such as Venice, Copenhagen and Rouen. It is pleasant to reflect that the name of ‘Woodstock’ has been carried abroad to all these locations and more by our musical ambassadors.

The golden thread running through his entire life was public service, and in retirement he became a governor of the Woodstock Primary School and Chair of the Marlborough School Parents’ Association. He served on the committee of the Woodstock Society and as mentioned above was twice an energetic Chair of the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum. Merging with all these roles was his personality: charming, friendly and always ready to meet people and talk. Those visitors to the museum who chanced to encounter Trevor when he was on duty as a volunteer at the reception desk were greeted with huge warmth and enthusiasm. He was a great asset to Woodstock in so many ways.

A final thought inspired by Trevor is how the life of a town, its buildings and its societies, its energy in the present and its continuity with its past, is preserved by the dedication and imagination of citizens such as Trevor Hendy.

Linda Glees

Trevor would have welcomed this link to the website of the Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum: www.friendsoftom.org.uk

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Woodstock in Bloom

Our plant holders became powder dry in the drought of March and April. A few years ago we never needed to water in tulip time but that has changed. Never mind Dry January. Our struggle is with a whole dry Spring. The tulip bulbs at the North West edge of Old Woodstock were carefully protected from squirrels through the Winter using chicken wire but when growth accelerated they were devoured by a hungry muntjak. Andy Mills, the Head Gardener at Blenheim, advises that we should plant daffodils this Autumn because the local wildlife knows that they are poisonous.



Our Summer bedding in the plant holders is made up of white cosmos and golden lysimachia, aka Creeping Jenny, which should give us a sea of yellow flowers very soon. We are grateful to the Blenheim Estate for these plants.

Please help us by dead heading the cosmos as you pass by.

Robert Edwards

Bladon and Woodstock Flower Club

Hello everyone - how mixed the weather is but at last we have had some lovely rain for the gardens so that has saved us all a job. The gardens are all beginning to look colourful and will soon be giving us plenty of flowers to cut and arrange.

Our meeting on 9 June was an inhouse workshop with our chairperson Ann showing us how to make Hand Tied arrangements two different ways. After which we were all given flowers and foliage to make our own. We used Sweet Williams, and Roses in red, pink and white and the result was beautiful. We were all very chuffed with our efforts. Next month our meeting is on 14 July, and we have Erica Cunningham demonstrating with her title 'We're all going on a summer holiday'.

Five members attended the Area Day at Benson with ABBA as the theme throughout the day with a quiz, demonstration, and floral arrangement competition plus a delicious lunch. Some members will be entering the floral art competitions at the Flower Show, Blenheim so we would like to wish them Good Luck.

We continue to have a full programme for the rest of the year so should you be interested to know more about us please contact Ann 01865 2000050 and she will only be too delighted to tell you more. We meet on the second Monday of the month at the Bowls and Tennis Clubhouse, Cadogan Park Woodstock at 7 pm. Visitors are always welcome with a charge of £10 which includes a raffle ticket

Margaret Lang

Girlguiding Woodstock

What do you call a wet Guide camp? A damp! Or 2nd Woodstock Guides unit camp at the beginning of June.

We spent the weekend at Jubilee House, Oxfordshire - any former Brownies and Guides will have happy memories of JH. The Guides did really well in the almost constant rain on Saturday, cooking on open fires under an umbrella, dodging showers to manage to play games, using their knotting skills to make gadgets and keep smiling all the way through.

They earned the Backwoods cooking, Guiding History, Camp Skills builder and knot challenge badges.

A huge thank you to Kate Bandicoot for organising the camp and for all the volunteer leaders who gave up their weekend to give the Guides this experience.

Term is almost at an end being celebrated with a Rainbow, Brownie and Guide trip to Blenheim Adventure Play.

We will return in September, there are places at Brownies and Guides while Rainbows has a waiting list. Please register at www.girlguiding.org.uk/joinus

Trefoil have been trying out their pyrography skills with varying success but a lot of fun. We danced the night away at Nocturne in the park, we love you Gary! Never Forget!

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
Young Leaders age 14-18 can work with any units.
Trefoil for anyone age 18+ you don't have to be in Girlguiding or ever have been to join us. Meet monthly.

Girlguidingwoodstock@hotmail.co.uk

Lorraine Wing

STOP PRESS

Council Matters: There is a proposal to merge two tiers of government, and WODC would like to hear your views on this at <https://twocouncils.org>, or at drop-ins listed on that site including one at: Unit 14a, Marriotts Walk Witney OX28 6GW on **Thursday 10 July** between 3 and 7pm.

More Housing: Blenheim/Pye have put in a revised planning application for 500 houses on land South Of Perdiswell Farm, Shipton Road, Shipton On Cherwell.

The Black Prince: Following the letter in last month's issue, the editor has been told that progress is definitely being made on the reopening - there is a video available on <https://www.blackprincewoodstock.co.uk/>

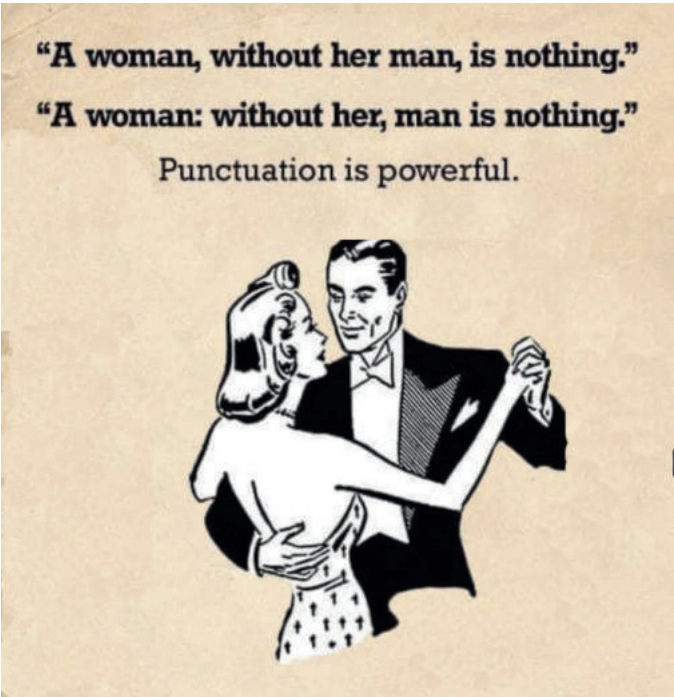
The OWL Railway Line: Sadly, the entrance to this 10-year old footpath has been closed from Verania Court. More details on this next month

Transplant Games Opening Ceremony: Please come and support this event on **Thursday 31 July 2025**. The games themselves last for 4 days, and many events are happening at Blenheim Palace

WOBL: The next magazine will be an August/September issue and will be published on **Friday 15 August 2025**.

Woodstock Cobblers: Sadly Graham has had some illness and the shop is now closed, after many years of service. He will be missed by us all.

Meme of the Month



Fitness What's On

Exercise and movement classes in and around Woodstock. If you know of other classes please let us know and we'll add it to the list.

- Monday**
9am - Strength and Stretch with Rachel at St Hugh's Church Hall, Hensington Road (engergitraining.co.uk)
9.30am - Cardio Tennis at Woodstock Tennis Club
12pm - Age UK Stretch and Balance Class (open to all) at Woodstock Community Centre (01235 849403)
7pm - Boot Camp at Tackley Playing Field with Energi Training
- Tuesday**
6pm - Hatha Yoga Flow with Inspire Studio at Woodstock Community Centre
6pm - Strength and Stretch with Rachel at St Hugh's Church Hall, Hensington Road (engergitraining.co.uk)
6pm - Jim's Fitness Bootcamp in Tackley (Jim Brown PT)
7.30pm - Zumba with Rhonda at Woodstock Youth Centre, New Road
- Wednesday**
9am - Boot Camp at Tackley Playing Field with Energi Training.
7pm - Pilates for Sport and Functional Activities at Woodstock Community Centre
8pm - Hatha Yoga with Kira at Pilates Studio on Hensington Road (07887 512523)
- Thursday**
6.15pm - Mountain Bike Club with Project Active
6pm - Strength and Stretch with Rachel at Woodstock Town Hall (engergitraining.co.uk)
7pm - Beginner Pilates Reformer class at Woodstock Pilates Studio, Hensington Road
8pm - Vinyasa Yoga with Kira at Woodstock Pilates Studio, Hensington Road
- Friday**
10am - Zumba with Rhonda at Woodstock Youth Centre, New Road
10am - SOMA Breathing Energised Meditation at St Hugh's Church Hall, Hensington Road
- Saturday**
8.15am - Blenheim Bootcamp with Project Active (more info 07940 733102)
9am - Bazza's Bootcamp at Kirtlington Village Hall

Bladon Snippets from the Past

Times were bad and two brothers walked away from Wales in search of work and a future. Well, they reached Bladon and did not have to walk any further. Both spent the rest of their lives in this lovely village with wives and children.

Mary F. Sitch

Regular Events

This section tries to list regular events. If you would like your event included here, please email editor@wobl.news.

- Bereavement Cafe**
The 3rd Friday of every month between 3 and 5pm at St Mary Magdalene Church
- Bladon Garden Society**
The 3rd Thursday of every month at 7.30pm, usually in the Church Room in Bladon
- 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 date 24 July
- 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**
For July, August, and September, this takes place at the Woodstock Baptist Church at 2pm on the 1st Monday of the month
- 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 other Wednesday at 12 noon. Next dates 16 and 30 July
- Woodstock 50+ Cinema Club**
Monthly films hopefully starting again
- Woodstock Jazz**
Usually on the last Friday of the month at St Hughs
- 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 email editor@wobl.news.

- Friday 04 Jul 2025, 19:00 (and Sat 05 July)**
Woodstock Music Society - Concert
Joseph Haydn: 'The Creation' with Choir and Chamber Orchestra. Also on 5 July
St Mary Magdalene Church
- Thursday 17 Jul 2025, 17:30**
Bladon Gardens Society - Talk
Plants in the Asteraceae family - Oliver Wheeler, garden designer
The Church Rooms, Church Street, Bladon
- Saturday 19 Jul 2025, 15:30**
The Annual Mock Mayor Elections
Woodstock Town Square
- Friday 25 Jul 2025, 18:00**
Oxfordshire Museum - Theatre
440 presents Much ado about Nothing and Macbeth
Oxfordshire Museum
- Friday 25 Jul 2025, 19:30**
Woodstock Jazz - Music
Jake McMurchie Quartet
St Hugh's Centre
- Thursday 31 Jul 2025, 16:00**
British Transplant Games - Opening Ceremony
Blenheim Palace
- Friday 22 Aug 2025, 19:30**
Woodstock Jazz - Music
David Newton
St Hugh's Centre
- Wednesday 03 Sep 2025, 19:30**
Oxfordshire Museum - Talk
'Oxfordshire Museum Highlights'
Oxfordshire Museum
- Thursday 04 Sep 2025, 14:00**
Woodstock and District u3a - Talk
Liz Woolley: Beer, Sausages and Marmalade
St Hugh's Centre
- Thursday 18 Sep 2025, 20:00**
Woodstock Literature Society - Talk
'The Spy, the Novel and Ourselves': Philip Gooden
Woodstock Town Hall
- Friday 26 Sep 2025, 19:30**
Woodstock Jazz - Music
Andy Panayi Quartet: Multi award winning saxophonist plays 'Cannonball' & More
St Hugh's Centre

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The Woodstock and Bladon News Golf Day

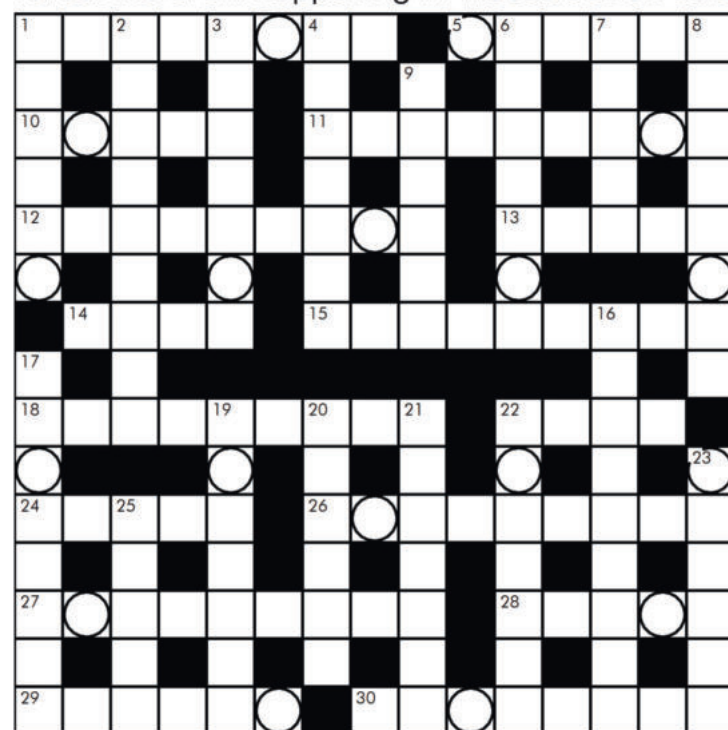
Witney Lakes Golf Club
Friday 5 Sept 2025

Programme:
10.30 onwards - Coffee and Bacon Roll
12 noon - First Tee-off
4pm onwards - 1 course meal
Cost £45 per player

Miscellaneous prizes to be presented after dinner

Please EMail editor@wobl.news if you are interested and have not already registered

Solve the clues to this straight crossword. Read through the letters in the marked squares to reveal the event happening in Woodstock on Saturday 19 July.



- Across**

 - Grass cutter
 - Paddling, rowing
 - Fruit of the oak
 - European nobleman (5,4)
 - Trio
 - Greek letter
 - Burden
 - Flight of steps
 - Lively, alert
 - Destitute
 - Spiral-horned antelope
 - Dock worker
 - Dizziness
 - Moron
 - Comeback
 - Fine, soft wool
- Down**

 - Ancient Greek city
 - North American river (3,6)
 - Primates
 - Engage, occupy
 - Financial inspector
 - Occupied (2,3)
 - Ill-defined situation (4,4)
 - Shanty town
 - Say sorry
 - Adolescent
 - Glass-cutter
 - Threw lightly
 - London football club
 - Irritable, petulant
 - Core
 - Examination of accounts

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WHAT'S ON

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JUNE

The Conference of Birds: Bridget McCrum 27th April - 17th September
Standing with Giants Installation 1st May - 30th June
Pip and Posy at Adventure Play 23rd May Onwards
Formal Gardens Painting Classes May - September
Blenheim Palace Triathlon..... 7th - 8th June
Nocturne Live 18th - 22nd June
Blenheim Palace Flower Show 27th - 29th June

JULY

Battle Proms 5th July
DogFest..... 12th - 13th July
British Transplant Games..... 31st July - 3rd August

AUGUST

Salon Privé 27th - 31st August



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