

# WOODSTOCK & BLADON *news*

October 2026

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## Editorial

And the hot summer went on and on...! Because of the lovely weather, I've had plenty of occasion to sit outside one of Woodstock's many lovely pubs, hotels, or coffee shops and observe our beautiful town. To me, it seems to be changing - but then I suppose it always has. At nighttime, the town seems quieter, probably due to the relentless increase in the cost of living.

Events at Blenheim have a huge impact on the town. There is no doubt that Woodstock would be a very different place without our illustrious neighbour. It is easy to find fault when large events lead to traffic and noise problems, but we do need to work with our nearest, important neighbour to ensure prosperity for all of us. Recently, for example, it was wonderful to see so many of the Macmillan Cancer runners having coffee in town.

There are certainly more changes coming to the town centre. Sadly, our florist is closing. The Post Office is looking vulnerable. The doctor's surgery will be moving in a few years; I do wonder whether that means the chemist will move as well. We are lucky that none of our shops are boarded up as they are in so many other towns. I hope that healthy, local discussion about these issues will help safeguard Woodstock's future.

This issue of WOBL sees a couple of changes. Our Portrait of the Month goes to a full-page illustration with a half-page interview. What's On is very much easier for me to produce now with the advent of the Town Diary and organisers being able to add and amend their own events. I hope readers are taking advantage of using the online diary.

We are planning to update our website in the next few weeks ('at last!' I hear you all cry). And I am always looking for new ways to improve the magazine. In this regard, I am excited to announce the launch of WOBL Short Talks, the first to take place on the evening of Wednesday 28 October - see Page 36 for more details.

Thank you again to everyone who contributes copy to this magazine, and to all those who help with production and distribution.

**Nick Manby-Brown, Editor**

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

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## Subscriptions

The magazine cover price is £2.50, or £25 annually.

It can be purchased at Blenheim Palace, Mary and Martin's Newsagent, Oxfordshire Museum, Woodstock Bookshop, Woodstock Grocers, and Wootton Stores. It can also be delivered - please contact Nick ([editor@wobl.news](mailto:editor@wobl.news)) for Woodstock, or Lucy for Bladon.

For bank transfer, please pay to Woodstock and Bladon News Limited - 04-29-09 - 81754981, and use the first line of your address as the reference. We are unable to accept payment by cheque.

For those 20 or so kind folk who have already paid £20 for this upcoming year's subscription, please pay the extra £5 if you want - but rest assured, your delivery is guaranteed whatever.

## Please write for our magazine

Send your contributions to: [editor@wobl.news](mailto:editor@wobl.news)

If you have an interest that is not currently being followed by this magazine, please contact me.

The next issue will be a November one, and copy deadline is **Sunday 18 October 2026**, for publication on Friday 30 October.

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

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

Front Cover: Photograph of Blenheim Clock Tower taken by Trisha Marie

Woodstock Live 2026

This years' Woodstock Live can only be described as unbelievable: from how unbelievably wet it was on Saturday morning, to the quality of performances throughout the whole weekend! Record attendees flocked to the town square once the rain subsided, with special mentions to all the Woodstockians who braved the weather and supported us and the acts through some of the worst bouts of rain experienced all summer!



Starting off the long weekend, Friday night in the pubs kicked off with Victoria Roskhams in the Woodstock Arms with beautiful melodies and enchanting vocals. The Feathers Hotel joined the fray this year, with DJ Kaiz and Michael Lynn putting on a great improvisation of Saxophone and DJing.

Saturday opened with the brilliant three winners of the Marlborough Schools' Battle of the Bands. It's been wonderful to work with the Marlborough School on this front over the past couple of years, and we look forward to their event next year and continuing this relationship with the school further. A huge congratulations to the Violet Magnolias, Purple Nebs, and Maya - this year's winners, and excellent performances on our big stage!

It was fantastic to celebrate our twentieth anniversary with our dear friends, The Ponderosa, who played at the very first Woodstock Live, and brought joy to the crowd. Our penultimate act of Saturday evening was the brilliant Boneyard Jukebox. Bringing rock & roll and rhythm & blues, they certainly got everyone up and dancing.



Ulysses Wells at Woodstock Live

Counterfeit Hit had the whole square singing along to favourites from Queen, Oasis and The Killers. The square's dance floor was rammed full with attendees dancing to their classic bangers. Former Woodstock Live Chair, and one of the bands' frontman, Greg Hooper, fulfilling a fantasy of playing an AC/DC number onstage at Woodstock Live!

Sunday went from strength to strength with my co-chair, Jack Walker, and Steve Webb bringing blues to the stage with amazing guitar and harmonica solos through brilliant songs. Another high point of the weekend was welcoming The Louis Speller Gillot Bandstand to the stage. These guys were one of last year's winners of the Marlborough school bands, and we were so impressed we had to have them back. Their brilliant rock and roll set did not disappoint!

Tom Rogers and friends took the stage mid afternoon, delivering great songs fantastically sung by one of Woodstock's favourite singers. Bringing a great set mix of chilled out and upbeat songs, it's always a pleasure to hear such incredible vocals.



Headlining Sunday, and closing off our weekend, was Ulysses Wells. Woodstock Live was honoured to have this scintillating artist with incredible originals and a huge rock sound grace our stage. The whole square was engrossed by Ulysses' songwriting, musical ability and stage prowess, combining in a spellbinding set from the formidable frontman, and incredible band. It truly was a privilege to have them as our headliners.

How will we out-do ourselves next year?! For a full review of each band, please visit our website!

With feedback from our event last year, it was clear that you, the public, wanted a larger variation in food vendors. We delivered your wishes this year with The Crock Pot and The Back Lane Tavern joining Alex Crêpes on the front line, as well as The Star Inn all there to provide delectable food options all weekend. We hope you enjoyed these additions, as we will look to continue this variety over forthcoming years.

Looking internally now, our committee increased by three new members this year with Nick Hawker,

Rhonda Hague & Alex Douglas all joining the team and bringing enthusiasm and passion to make this year's festival a great success. Myself, Jack Walker, Claudia Stephenson & Abigail Saks could not be more pleased with your additions, so thank you ever so much from us for putting your names forward!

Continuing with thank-you's, this year's festival would not have been possible without the wider network of volunteers throughout the weekend. Each year, our merry band of volunteers help bring this wonderful weekend into reality. From set up, to long shifts on the festival bar, and the inevitable close-down; you all allow this event to work seamlessly. A special thank you also to Rachel Peters, who every year helps us out immensely at every turn.

All in all, we hope you thoroughly enjoyed the weekend! We, as a committee, are dedicated to bringing you a wonderful weekend and a celebration of music for years to come. Foolishly, we have already started planning 2027's event, so watch this space!

Personally, I feel very fortunate to be a part of a community which interacts so positively with each other. It is brilliant that events like Woodstock Live, Old Woodstock Mock Mayor, Night of a Thousand Candles & Feaststock are able to be comprehensively organised, and enjoyed by the members of the public.

Thank you everyone for coming. See you next year!

Harry Moseley,  
Woodstock Live Co-Chairman

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2026

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Bladon Gardens Society

Guest Speaker Event

The Church Rooms, Church Street, Bladon

15th October 2026 7.30 pm

Alex Dye

Public Engagement Coordinator FarmED

"FarmED-Can Regenerative Farming

Feed The World?"

£3.00 entry for non members. Doors open at 7.00pm for Tea and Coffee

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

Access to this is from Grove Road.

Bladon Gardens Society Membership details

Annual Subscription: £15 Visitors to monthly meetings £3

OXFORD BUS MUSEUM

This Boneshaker from the 1860s is one of our 50 historic cycles showing the development of the bicycle since its invention in 1817. The rider sat on a spring, hence the name. Come and see some of the inventions that failed the test of time.

Next to Hanborough Station OX29 8LA 01296 925797

info@oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk

Café / Children's area / Shop

For events information: www.oxfordbusmuseum.org.uk

# Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

## Netball

I read the article by Sue Blackshaw in the last issue about Netball, and it inspired me to go along to Yarnton one Tuesday evening to see what was happening, as I have long wanted to take up Netball again, a sport I really enjoyed at school, along with Lacrosse.

Although, I've played tennis more recently, I have missed the camaraderie and joy of playing in a team!

Unfortunately, I discovered that the Yarnton Netball adult team was far too young for me, and the session started at 7pm not 7.30pm, but I sat and watched their warm up routines with interest and admiration. It was rather lovely to see a large number of adult women, of all ages, under 50 it seemed, having fun together!

I am writing because I just want your readers to know that apparently there is now 'Walking Netball' for women of a certain age, both at Kidlington Leisure Centre at 6.30pm on Monday evenings, run by the WI; and at Charlbury Community Centre on Thursdays 3-4pm for £4 pounds a session. There is also a session for a real mixture of ages, including mine, I think, on Witney's brand new courts, behind their rather nice brand new café on the Lees, behind St. Mary's church, next to the skatepark on Thursday mornings at 9.30am. I am planning to investigate all those options...

Siân Godwin

Dear Editor,

## Hedges

Woodstock's garden hedges are great for the environment - they soften our urban landscape and provide crucial habitats and corridors for all manner of wildlife. They are something we should protect against the encroachment of ugly fencing.

However, untrimmed hedges are making our streets look neglected and uncared for. When a hedge overgrows a footpath it forces parents with prams, wheelchair users, and elderly residents off the pavement and into traffic.

Overgrown hedges also block views at corners, making them much more dangerous for drivers.

Please take a look at your garden from the outside. If your hedge is reaching over the boundary line, please grab the shears and trim it back.

Keeping our pavements and roads safe and clear is a small effort that makes a massive difference for everyone.

David Walker

Dear Editor,

## Town Council Minutes

At the Town Council meeting on 21 July, instead of discussing the pressing issue of the Post Office which everyone had come to hear, 60 of us had to sit through a discussion of 11 amendments to the 9 June meeting. This was due to 11 typos that surely should have been picked up before going to full Council.

It reminds me of a Woodstock Council meeting I attended many many years ago when the Council pointlessly and at length discussed the plural of Leylandii.

Sadly it would appear that attention to priorities and efficient use of time has not changed.

Michael Farley

# Bladon Lunch Club

I think it would be a good thing if the existence of the Bladon Lunch Club was more widely known. I have been a member of the congregation of St Martin's Bladon for more years than I can remember but I know that there was a Bladon Lunch Club years before I set foot in the Church.

The Lunch Club does not operate under the auspices of the Church but since the beginning of this century has been an offshoot of the Friends of St Martin's Bladon. The aim of the Club is to provide the opportunity for people living in the area to socialise and enjoy a meal together. Just that.

The unpaid cooks and dishwashers volunteer their services and mostly come from the Bladon community but some, like myself are Church goers and live elsewhere. The point is that you certainly do not have to be either a Bladon resident or a Churchgoer to be a cook.

At the moment we have 2 cooks each month in a team and each team cooks twice per year. Numbers of diners have gone up recently and we would like to have slightly larger teams, so if you think you could help, please contact me, Mollie Hance on 01993 811354.

Lunches are held every month of the year on the first Tuesday. Because the Church allows us to use the Church Room free of charge and the cooks are not paid, we are able to provide the lunch for just £5, which you could pay for a coffee in some places. Lunch includes a main course, either a pudding or a piece of home made cake and a cup of coffee.

You do not need to book for the lunch and all are welcome.

Mollie Hance

# An interview with Simon Parker

## Travel writer and film-maker



The Woodstock based travel writer Simon Parker presents as a fascinating and paradoxical figure: he is a passionate enthusiast for the town of Woodstock where he has lived for the past decade, but also a dedicated traveller always excited and energised by his next travel project. By his own estimate, he has visited half the countries in the world.

His third book of travel adventures, *The Wild Road Home: 15 National Parks, One remarkable Adventure* (2026) in which he tells the tales of his journeys on his bicycle through each one of the UK's National Parks will be released in October. Did he have a favourite among our National Parks? After some thought he nominated the Yorkshire Dales: beautiful and largely unspoilt by tourism.

His previous two books were *Riding out* (2022) and *A Ride Across America* (2024). These journeys all take him far from home and have their challenges as well as rewards: he recalls with a shudder the experience of a mid-Pacific storm while on a round the world yacht race, as well as the beauties of places like the island of St Helena. Wherever he travels with his gravel bike (with thicker tyres and no suspension, apparently) he looks out for connections with communities, and enjoys making connections with people. However, he noted many dead or dying towns



while cycling across America, and hopes that the number of their counterparts in the UK is not on the increase.

This enjoyment of communities lies at the heart of his enthusiasm for Woodstock. He finds it a richly rewarding town, full of activities and opportunities. For example, he is the opening batsman for the Blenheim Park Cricket Club and enjoys the weekly sessions of Monkey Music with his toddler daughter Orla at the St Hugh's Centre. He loves Woodstock's numerous pubs and coffee shops and can't get over the fact that our small town has not just one but two good bookshops. Simon clearly loves communicating his passion for travel and journalism not just in films and books but also in talks to travel industry events, literary festivals, local societies and to young people at schools and universities around the country.

Simon grew up in the Oxfordshire village of Gaginwell, and attended school in Chipping Norton. After studying English and Film at Liverpool University where he gained a first class degree he was given a traineeship by the BBC. He was trained initially as a sports journalist, then moved to ITN. He has made travel documentaries for The Times and The Telegraph, and also for Amazon. As a film-maker he also makes promotional films for international commercial clients such as tourist boards, safari lodges and hotels. His film production work is expanding, but he will still find time for the essentials of his life and work: travel and home. Soon he will be off to South Africa with his wife Alana and daughter Orla for two months after a nationwide book tour. And then back home to Woodstock - presumably for the start of the next cricket season!

Linda Gleys

Simon Parker's new book, *The Wild Road Home: Fifteen National Parks, One Remarkable Adventure*, is published on 15 October. For more information visit [www.simonwparker.co.uk](http://www.simonwparker.co.uk).

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## Oxford Bus and Morris Motors Museum



Come to the museum on Sunday 25 or Wednesday 28 October for a thrill or a shock. During October we shall be decorating the museum ready for Hallowe'en. Each year we introduce new devices to entertain and scare. As usual we shall dress up one of our buses, which will take visitors out for rides at 12.15 and 2.15pm on each day.

At 6pm on the Wednesday the bus will emerge from our eerie running shed into the dark yard to pick up passengers for a night ride through the dark countryside. You are invited to come dressed up appropriately. Last year a skeleton turned up!

Buses are built for a specific role but sometimes how they get used is quite different.



CXX 171 visited the museum recently. It was built for London Transport's Green Line services and entered service at Hitchen garage in June 1936 as T448. It still carries the brackets for the destination boards which all Green Line coaches had attached to their sides. However, the coach was under-powered so within two years it was relegated to bus work in the country area. It carried the same green livery into which it was restored 18 months ago as shown in the photograph.

In 1939 the coach was converted into an ambulance for the duration of the Second World War. At the end of the war, it returned to country bus services in

Surrey, probably from Addlestone garage. It was withdrawn in 1952 and is now on permanent display at the London Bus Museum.

Three things struck me about T448. The first was the immaculate interior and exterior paintwork. The second was an original bell push inside the coach and the third was the working trafficator arm. The latter two are trivial things, but they appealed to me.

Frank Collingwood

## Wake up to Woodstock



Wake Up to Woodstock was delighted to visit Salon Privé at Blenheim Palace recently, as one of the UK's most prestigious automotive and luxury lifestyle events once again brought thousands of visitors to Woodstock.

Taking place from 2 to 6 September, Salon Privé transformed the grounds of Blenheim Palace with an impressive programme of classic and supercars, luxury brands, hospitality and entertainment, attracting visitors from across the UK and further afield.



Committee members Ema Murphy and Alex Sopilnik

For WUTW, it was a great opportunity to experience the event first-hand, capture content and help promote Woodstock as part of the wider visitor experience.

Events at Blenheim bring significant numbers of people to our town, creating valuable opportunities for our shops, pubs, restaurants, cafés, accommodation providers and other businesses and we want to encourage this as much as possible.

Our town has an exceptional combination of heritage, independent businesses, hospitality and location, and such events provide another opportunity to introduce it to new audiences.

We look forward to welcoming the event back next year and, hopefully, even more of its visitors into Woodstock.

# Council Matters

Woodstock and Bladon News has reported on Council meetings since at least 2022. All reports are available to view on our website: [wobl.news/council-matters](http://wobl.news/council-matters). Policy for the magazine, as always, is to endeavour to remain professional, balanced, and accurate.

This month we report on one Town Council meeting and two Urgent Planning Committee meetings.

For over a year now, at the end of the regular reports from Town Council meetings, space has consistently been offered to OCC, WODC, our MP, and our own WTC to communicate with our readers in the magazine. This month, for whatever reason, we have been unable to fill this space.

### Recordings of Town Council Meetings

As reported in the July issue, recordings of Town Council meetings since November 2024 are now publicly viewable on YouTube. They can be viewed (some are audio only) at <https://www.youtube.com/@WoodstockCouncilMatters>

## Woodstock Town Council

### Urgent Planning Committee Meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 11 August 2026

The magazine was unable to report on this meeting.

Approved minutes can be viewed on the Town Council website.

Nick Manby-Brown

### Town Council Meeting at 7pm on Tuesday 1 September 2026

9 councillors and about 40 members of the public attended the meeting, standing room only, with some public sitting on the floor.

The OWL recording system was in operation for audio only.

**Public Participation:** Hilary Brown, representing Sustainable Woodstock, spoke to the Council proposing a **Community Emergency and Resilience Plan** for Woodstock. The Plan is a local volunteer-driven document that outlines how a neighbourhood can prepare for, respond to and recover from crises such as severe weather, flooding or power cuts. Hilary encouraged the Council to involve the local community. Chris Coe then asked the Mayor and Deputy Mayor how items are included on the meeting agenda as there were many members of the public present but no mention of the **Post Office** or the lack of a **Community Centre caretaker** on the agenda. Chris questioned some agenda items and urged the

Mayor to take control of the agenda and that items on the agenda reflect community interest and not those of individual councillors. Jo Lamb then spoke about the **Post Office** stating that 1725 residents had signed a petition calling the Town Council to ‘ensure, by every means, that Woodstock continues to have a post office in the present premises with affordable, integrated and subsidised living accommodation in the town centre for the long term benefit of all our residents and businesses’. Jo said that the 88% increase in the rent was an attempt by the Council to get the flat back from the Lallys. It appears this evaluation was based on the assumption that the flat is on a separate lease but it is in fact not. The current lease is clear that the flat cannot be separated from the business. Jo finished by saying the responsibility going forward was that of the Council.

### Planning: There were no objections to a planning application from 105 Manor Road.

**Mayor and Clerk Reports:** The Mayor read a statement regarding the **Post Office**. The Mayor acknowledged the petition and the feeling behind it and referred to a Council meeting of 16th June which considered a proposal from the tenant to relinquish the tenancy of the flat but continue to occupy the retail space until 2028. The Council agreed to this proposal unanimously. This was approved as record at the meeting of 21st July and is available on the Council’s website. The Mayor then referred to the **conduct** of some at the meeting of 21st July and that business could not be concluded because of interruptions from the public. **Public participation is not a debate** and is not intended to be one. The Mayor thanked Rachel, the office administrator for all the hard work she had done over the summer, particularly on Green Lane near the cemetery.

The Clerk requested 3 more councillors join the Urgent Planning Committee to avoid a situation where the Council are unable to comment on planning applications.

**County and District Councillors reports:** County Councillor Andy Graham spoke on the up and coming devolution plans for the area including Oxfordshire, Berkshire and possibly Swindon and Buckinghamshire forming a strategic mayoral authority which should bring in investment for strategic issues such as highways and railways. Councillor Graham is maintaining his **objection** to the development on land south of Perdiswell Farm on the grounds of highways impact. The Mayor asked about possible alternative traffic routes when the **A44 will be closed on the Causeway** for cable works for the Hill Rise development. Councillor Graham said this was to be confirmed. Speed indicators, requested by Woodstock Town Council, are supported by the County Council. Councillor Wheatley asked about the

former **library site on Hensington Road** and if the Council could assist in any way. Councillor Graham said he had raised this with officers, it was high on the agenda and that it has been far too long for nothing to have been done.

Councillor Poskitt reported on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council also describing the impact of the local government re-organisation. West Oxfordshire and much of Cherwell will form North Oxfordshire and Oxford City will become Greater Oxford coming north as far, but excluding Bladon, up to the boundary of ParkView and also including Kidlington. In April 2028 County and District Councils will disappear and **Woodstock will be in North Oxfordshire unitary authority**. The swimming pool has had a great summer with 8436 visits in June/July and over 9000 by mid-August. Cold water swimming will be available until 27th September.

**Councillor Cooper** has been recognised for his long service to the District Council by being made **Honorary Alderman**, one of only two people to be given this honour.

**Finance:** The current balance is £336,672.22

**Community Centre:** With permission of the Clerk, another motion was proposed by Councillor Grant to determine if there is asbestos in the Community Centre roof. The motion was again passed.

**Pothole Safety:** A letter from County Councillor Liz Leffman was acknowledged. Councillor Poskitt referred to FixMyStreet and Councillor Cripps added she would be receiving training as a ‘super user’ (as a resident). The Clerk reiterated that lighting and potholes were not the responsibility of the Town Council.

**A44 – Oxford Street:** The Mayor proposed a letter be sent to Oxfordshire County Council requesting a casualty-reduction assessment of the road around the Upper Brook Hill and Brook Hill junctions following the fatal collision of 30 June 2025. The motion was passed.

**New Doctors’ Surgery:** The Mayor asked the Council to note her report on the work of the Surgery Working Group and asked them to vote on the Group’s terms of reference. The motion was passed.

**Newsletter:** The Mayor offered to edit a twice yearly newsletter from the Town Council that would inform the town of events and their work. The motion was passed.

**Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner Fund:** Councillor Poskitt suggested the Council applied to this Community Fund to contribute toward the cost of the agreed speed warning signs for the 20 mph zones. The motion was passed.

**Removal of debris from the Flood Channel on Brook Hill:** Councillor Grant proposed a motion to write to West Oxfordshire County Council to ask them to complete their work by removing debris from the channel. The motion was passed.

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

Graham Brown

### Urgent Planning Committee Meeting at 6pm on 7 September 2026

3 Councillors and 1 member of the public attended the meeting.

The OWL recording system was in operation for audio only.

Four Councillors sent their **apologies** for absence, and there were no Declarations of Interest.

The **Minutes** from the previous meeting were discussed, amended, and approved.

**Planning:** There was only one item - an application for a pavement licence for a shop in Park View. After a brief discussion, the Council objected to the application on the grounds that there was not enough information on WODC's planning website to make a decision.

The meeting closed at 6.04pm

Nick Manby-Brown

## A local glimpse



**Public Participation at the Town Council Meeting on Tuesday 1 September 2026**

*Editors Note: The Council allows five members of the public to speak before Town Council meetings in a section called 'Public Participation'. The procedure is for the meeting to be suspended at the start of this section and resumed after it finishes. The Council only gives the most cursory summary of what was discussed in their published Minutes. We publish our reporter's understanding of what was said, and - since the 21 July 2026 meeting - we are also giving a platform for our readers to read what was said in full.*

**Speaker 1 - Hilary Brown**  
**A Plan for Woodstock Resilience and Emergencies**

I'm Hilary Brown, I'm a resident and I'm here also representing Sustainable Woodstock this evening. For those who don't know Sustainable Woodstock, we support climate and nature action through practical ideas, information and activities in Woodstock. We were established in 2008, we're all volunteers and one of 117+ Community Action Groups (CAGs) that make up the OCC supported Oxfordshire CAG Network.

I wish to use my 3 mins this evening to talk briefly on a subject that's important to all communities. I am here to ask if the Woodstock Town Council would add as an agenda item a motion to create a Community Resilience and Emergency Plan for the next full council meeting so that discussions can commence and move forward.

The community resilience and emergency plan is a local, volunteer-driven document that outlines how a community can prepare for, respond to, and recover from crises like severe weather, flooding, or power cuts. Local parish / town councils should play a vital frontline role in identifying our vulnerable residents, utilising local assets (like the Town Hall and Community Centre), and keeping people informed during the first crucial hours of a crisis. The plans would not replace our professional emergency services who do an incredible job. Instead, they help local residents work safely together while waiting for official help to arrive.

Advice suggests encouraging involvement with local community groups. We and other groups may be able to work alongside councillors to help the Council write the plan. The whole community can help by sharing their knowledge about flood risks, etc, finding out which neighbours are vulnerable and may need extra help ... and review the plan before it is finished. Some neighbouring parishes are already working with residents and instigating their plans using the free guidance and templates provided via OCC resilience teams.

The core elements of a plan include:

- Local Risk Assessment: Identifying specific local threats, such as flood-prone areas, power and water failures.
- Resource Inventory: Cataloguing local skills, equipment, 4x4 vehicles, and safe gathering places like the community centre.
- Vulnerable Register: Identifying elderly, disabled, or isolated residents who may need extra help during an evacuation or utility loss.
- Emergency Contact Tree: Key phone numbers for local coordinators, volunteers, the local council, and emergency services.
- Activation Triggers: Clear rules on who decides when to activate the plan and the first actions volunteers should take.

How we cope with the effects of climate change to protect people and nature from current and future damage is called climate adaptation. Woodstock community would benefit greatly from a local emergency and resilience plan and with changing weather patterns increasing the frequency of extreme events - such as heatwaves, drought, severe storms, local flooding, fires and utility failures such as our recent water and electricity outages and the major gas outage that affected over 2000 Woodstock properties back in 2024 (although not climate related) is an example of when a resilience plan could help.

**Speaker 2 - Chris Coe**  
Thank you Councillor Williams.

I want to address this to you Councillor Williams and also to Councillor Wheatley as Mayor and Deputy Mayor respectively. It's about the subject of how items find their way onto the Council agenda.

Despite the huge levels of concern about the risk of losing our Post Office, this subject is not on the agenda to be discussed tonight. Likewise, the apparent Council decision not to appoint a Caretaker for the Community Centre, and the impact that will inevitably have on members of your community who use the building in the evenings, is not being discussed. Conversely, two of Councillor Grant's agenda submissions are on the agenda.

At item 9 Councillor Grant's submission reads - 'to receive a report with a motion for solar panels' which, interestingly, relates to the Community Centre. This could involve expenditure worth tens of thousands of pounds of your taxpayers' money. What, we as residents might ask, is the merit of such an agenda item if the building cannot now be hired in the evenings and the subject of not having a Caretaker is deemed unworthy of discussion?

Later, at item 17, Councillor Grant provides a comprehensive document on the failings of WODC with regards to the water meadows. What I don't recall, is Councillor Connolly's persistent attempts to table a motion that Woodstock Town Council undertakes its own duties of care to the water meadows being given such consideration.

I would urge you as Mayor and Deputy Mayor to take control of the agenda and to ensure that items selected for consideration genuinely represent your community's interests and not those of individual Councillors.

Thank you

**Speaker 3 - Jo Lamb**  
**Woodstock Post Office and integrated flat**

Councillors will know by now, that a Petition, signed by 1725 local people, called on the Town Council to "ensure, by every means, that Woodstock continues to have a post office in the present premises, with affordable, integrated and subsidised living accommodation in the town centre, for the long term benefit of all our residents and businesses."

Our current post office tenants, Mr and Mrs Lally, have run the Post Office and lived in the flat above the shop since their first lease was granted in 2010. That lease contained provisions for regular rent reviews which operated without difficulty.

The Lallys entered into a new lease with the town council in December 2023. The rent at that time was £9332 per annum (plus VAT) for the shop and £11,168 for the flat. Total: £20,500. Once again, there was provision for rent reviews, the first one due this year.

As has been said before, in May this year following a rent review of the lease, the Council's agents required an 88% increase in rent overall to a total £38700. There was no detailed explanation given in justification of this assessment which came as a bombshell to the Lallys. This level of proposed rent increase was unaffordable. It also came at a time when the Lallys were experiencing a family tragedy with the serious illness which culminated in the death of their son. Yet right at such a time of huge personal loss, whilst the Lallys were at their son's bedside in a hospital in India, the town council's agents were still requiring them to decide on rent levels for their home and livelihood in Woodstock.

Think about it! That's almost inhumane.

Evidently, the town council wanted to get the flat back from the Lallys. It sought to do this by increasing the rent to an extortionate level so that the Lallys felt they would have to leave the flat before the lease required them to do so.

However, having considered the current lease as a whole, and furthermore taken the advice of a local chartered surveyor, it is abundantly clear to both of us that the agents' valuation of the property has been made on the basis that the flat is governed by a separate residential lease. It is not!

In fact, the current lease makes it clear that the flat cannot be separated off from the business. There is just the one lease which explicitly states this. It is a business lease.

The flat above the post office shop is governed by the Landlord and Tenant Acts. It is a business flat. It is not a residential flat governed by totally different laws. The lease in December 2023 to the Lallys includes the flat within its demise. This lowers its rental level. The flat is integral to the shop.

It follows from this, that the extortionate rent increase currently proposed by the Council's agents in this case is incorrect, because the valuation itself is based on the wrong legislation. Whilst the new rent for the shop has been agreed between the Council and the Lallys, the rental for the flat has not even been negotiated. It cannot have been, because the whole basis of the negotiation was incorrect.

It also follows that there is no reason any more, for the Lallys to be forced to vacate their home because of the huge rent increase being demanded for the flat. The local community hopes that they would choose to remain in Woodstock and I am hopeful and indeed, optimistic, that given these revised circumstances, they will decide to do so.

Councillors..... If you don't stop squeezing the proverbial 'lemon', which is our post office AND its flat, you will find that there are only 'the pips' left. Woodstock will lose its post office - with all the implications that there would be for our business economy as well as for our residents and those living in surrounding villages.

This would be a DISASTER. The responsibility is yours.

Thank you.



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## Portrait of the Month - Caroline Parkes

Eleven years ago this week, Caroline Parkes drove into Woodstock and never really left. She and her family had first fallen for the town back in the late 90s, at a wedding at the Feathers, joking then that it was "the kind of place you move to when you're middle-aged." Sure enough, once middle age arrived, so did they, drawn by a photo of a house on the hill that a friend spotted and declared "your perfect house."

Within six weeks of arriving neighbours were on her doorstep with croissants and homemade biscuits, and a newcomer had found her people. That instinct for connection led her to start up and co-found a myriad of community initiatives over the years, including Artists in Woodstock, a creative group connecting neighbours through art, which grew out of a coffee with fellow artist Rod Craig in The Crown and now brings the town together every year for Oxfordshire Art Weeks.

Colour runs through everything Caroline touches. Her house is filled with vintage glassware from a beloved local shop, her canvases are bold and saturated and her warmth is impossible to miss. It's tempting to think she should spell her name Colour-ine. Art came almost by accident: a fiftieth-birthday wish to own a painting turned into a wish to make one, and soon she was learning oils under local mentor Carrie Stanley.

By day, Caroline draws on decades in advertising, most recently as a Chief Strategy Officer nicknamed the "Chief Storytelling Officer," a knack for narrative she now brings to her portraits, each paired with a written account of her sitter's story.

Her latest chapter is her most personal. The Optimists opens at Blenheim's Stables Gallery this October and pairs her work with fellow artist MM Plumm. The two met at a time of grief, each mourning a loss, and found their way to each other through walks and talks round the lake, discovering that the brightest colours can hold the quietest sorrows. "Painting things that seem joyful but are actually quite painful," Caroline says, "was something we really shared."

One of her proudest Woodstock moments came during lockdown, when she helped organise a town-wide VE Day celebration of front-garden parties, filmed by the BBC. Woodstock is, quite simply, where she belongs. As she puts it: "What a great place to come home to."

*Portrait of Caroline Parkes taken by fine art portrait photographer, Pippa Hetherington.*

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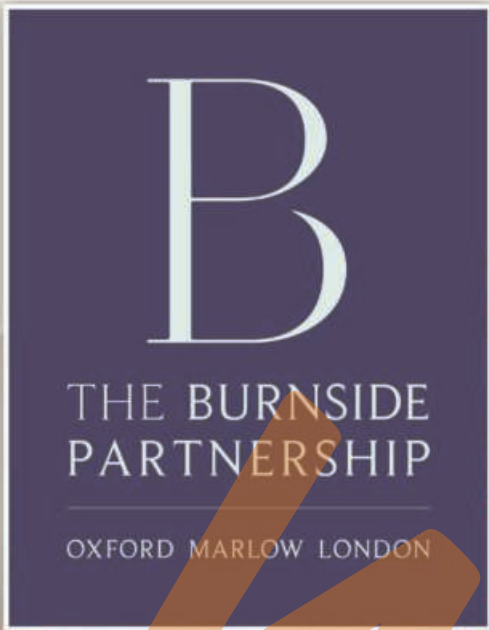
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## Nature Matters

### October

October can seem a month poised between two seasons. There may still be warmth in the afternoon sun, particularly in a sheltered corner, yet mornings increasingly begin with mist lying across fields and along the valley bottoms. Grass is heavy with dew, cobwebs become briefly visible, and the first fallen leaves gather beneath hedges and along woodland paths.



*The Glyme Valley in October. Photograph © Bill Boaden (CC BY-SA 2.0)*

There is a change in the air too, harder to describe than autumn colour but just as distinctive. The scents of summer have faded and on cool mornings the air can seem cleaner and clearer, even when the landscape itself is veiled in mist. After rain there is the smell of damp earth, wet bark and fallen leaves beginning to soften into the ground; after a cold night, perhaps with the first touch of frost, the air has a sharper edge. It is one of those subtle changes that tells us the season has turned before we have quite noticed it with our eyes.

As the month advances, the familiar greens of the countryside begin to loosen into autumn. Field maples glow yellow, oaks take on warmer bronze and russet tones, while beech can hold its copper leaves long after others have fallen. After a breezy night the change may seem surprisingly sudden, with lanes and paths newly scattered with leaves and that earthy autumn scent rising again from damp woodland and hedgerow.

This is also the season when fungi quietly appear. Some push through the leaf litter beneath trees; others emerge almost overnight from old grassland or decaying wood. Their variety can be remarkable, from tiny inkcaps to the unmistakable red and white of a fly agaric. They are a reminder that much of what is happening in an autumn wood lies unseen beneath our feet.

There are changes overhead too. Redwings and fieldfares begin arriving from northern Europe, sometimes first noticed as a thin call passing through the autumn sky. Later they may settle into the hedgerows and fields, joining resident blackbirds and thrushes wherever hawthorn berries and other fruits remain. Jays become conspicuous as they carry acorns away from the oaks, burying some for later and inevitably forgetting others — an ancient partnership that has helped oaks spread through the landscape.

On a mild day, a flowering ivy can still be surprisingly alive. Its small green flowers are easily overlooked, yet around them may gather hoverflies, bees and one of the year's last butterflies, taking advantage of this late source of nectar before colder weather closes in.

October has its sounds as well, and perhaps some of the most characteristic come as the day closes. As the afternoon light fades there can be a particular stillness in the air, and the calls of blackbirds suddenly seem unusually clear. From a hedge, shrub or woodland edge comes a short, almost clucking note; another answers from somewhere further away, followed perhaps by a sharper 'chink', call. In the gathering dusk these scattered calls can seem almost conversational, passing quietly through the landscape as the birds settle towards their evening roosts. A robin may add its thinner autumn song, leaves occasionally rustle along a lane, and from larger woods and parkland the distant call of a rutting deer may carry through the evening air.

Perhaps that is October's particular character. It is not quite the quiet of winter, nor has autumn entirely spent itself. There is still movement everywhere — birds arriving, seeds and fruits being gathered, leaves turning and falling - while the landscape itself seems gradually to be settling towards the shorter days ahead. The mist, the cooler scent of damp earth and leaves, and those last clear calls in the fading light all belong to a countryside gently drawing in upon itself as autumn deepens.

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## Woodstock Natural History Society

Woodstock Natural History Society constitutes, from my (ahem) unbiased perspective, a wonderful institution. Most people have an interest in, even an enthusiasm for, one aspect of the natural world or another. The society, with its tripartite offering of social events, presentations and walks, sometimes addresses a member's specific interests, and sometimes awakens in them a new one. Our Summer has been a dizzy social round encompassing, inter alia, a Summer picnic at Perdiswell Farm, by kind permission of Margaret and Malcolm Price, a coffee morning and a few strolls in the country.

As the nights draw in, our enthusiasm for wildlife moves indoors. Our 8 September meeting provided a breathtaking tour, in glorious technicolour, through the expertise and observation of ecologist Dr Judy Webb, Dr Webb is a biological polymath, with two particular favourite fields, Oxfordshire's lowland fen and fungi. Her talk was entitled 'Fascinating Fungi', and she drew our attention to the Fungus Survey of Oxfordshire, the compilation of which in no small part is a credit to her own work.

So far as fungi are concerned I am the biggest Phillistine since Goliath, so this report is highly subjective. Judy listed all the main groups of fungus extant in the British Isles, and the variety is stunning. The main bodies of many fungi are merely white filaments, it is the fruiting bodies which protrude beyond the growing medium, and are recognisable to the human expert.

The variations are astonishing across a range of criteria. They vary immensely in size from very large to very tiny, the largest known organism in the world is a fungus which ranges for some kilometres across the Pacific Northwest. they differ in their means of delivering spores for reproduction – some rely on passing or browsing animals, others 'explode' and throw spores into the air. Their food also varies immensely; many live on dead wood, others parasitise nematodes or other creatures. The structures of their fruiting bodies vary immensely. The Cage Fungus resembles a latticework; others are half-moon shaped and grow off the sides of trees, and there is every shape in between. The traditional "toadstool" or mushroom is very much in a minority.

It is anthropocentric of us to ask the Monty Python question, "What have fungi done for us?", yet the sheer number of species suggests that penicillin and the veins in blue cheese will not be the only benefits we will derive from an analysis of these beings. So far as eating is concerned, I learned two things: don't pick your own mushrooms, and don't accept a lunch

invitation from your Australian in-laws!

We were all left wanting to know more about fungi, as well as realising their role in moving nutrients around between plants. Given that they are so varied, there is much to be discovered, and the volunteer can play a good part. See the website [www.fungusoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.fungusoxfordshire.org.uk) and/or participate in the county's fungus survey.

Next month's meeting will be held on 13 October, when Hugh Warwick will talk on 'Cull of the Wild'. Hugh is among other things a great advocate for the hedgehog.

We would love to see you at one of our events, and very much hope that you will want to become a member (£18 pa). For a copy of our programme please email [contactwnhs@gmail.com](mailto:contactwnhs@gmail.com). We are also keen to help young people appreciate nature, and will do what we can to assist schoolteachers wishing to embark on relevant projects.

Monthly meetings, to which all are welcome, are held at St Hugh's Hall, Hensington Road, Woodstock, from 7.30 pm until 9.00 pm on the second Tuesday of each month. That constant provides a backdrop for a bewildering variety of fascinating subjects, and the Society still looks remarkably sprightly despite having passed its first half-century.

**Stephen Vickers (Dr), Meetings correspondent, WNHS**

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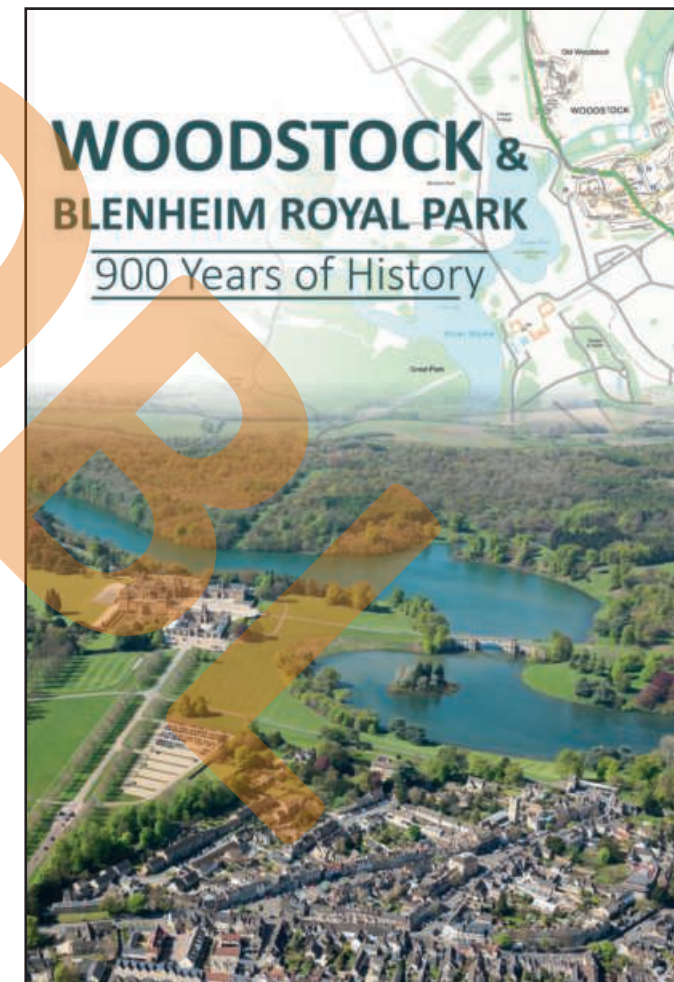
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## Woodstock and Blenheim Royal Park: 900 Years of History

**A review by Ashley Jackson**

Woodstock and Blenheim Royal Park: 900 Years of History, meaning the town of Woodstock, the ancient royal estate that largely begot it, and its Blenheim palace and estate successor, is a republication of a 2010 book written by distinguished townspeople, with a few amendments and a new chapter. As such, it keeps a valuable and accessible resource on the shelves (the first edition sold out), for undoubtedly this is the 'go to' book for those wishing for a sweeping historical account of both park and town (the work's 'key selling point') that also offers more contemporary context and a range of photographs and illustrations. Its important final chapter, on the 'demesne' villages of Bladon, Combe, Hanborough, Hordley, Old Woodstock, Stonesfield and Wootton, renders the book unique in its coverage.



Chapters successively examine the royal manor and park during the Norman, Plantagenet, Tudor and Stuart periods, before 'the fall', represented by the Civil War, the park's relative abandonment by monarch and court, and the crumbling of its fabric. Then we have 'the coming of the Churchills' and the creation of the fabled palace and landscaped parkland.

Following the account of this definitive period of Woodstock's history, chapters focus in upon the town and surrounding region's crafts and trades, and the political history that once, given the august status of the estate's masters, splendidly featured two members of parliament, before the coming of the corporation and then the town council under West Oxfordshire District Council. Social history is embraced in this and other chapters (for example, the evolution of town and palace fire brigades, established charities, the railway, the workhouse, and the impact of the world wars). We then have two chapters devoted to the town and park's natural history past and present, one of them new, which includes consideration of areas such as the museum grounds, the Old Woodstock Line nature reserve, the community woodland, and the watermeadows, as well as the broad acres behind the wall.

Woodstock and Royal Blenheim Park, proceeds to registered charity, is an engaging and well written history of this place of ours, pitched perfectly for readers of all levels of interest. It allows us to 'see' the panorama of history within which the area and its inhabitants are set. Envisioning it, one cannot help but contemplate the epochal change to the setting of park and town now taking place courtesy of various forms of development, and be reminded that the present and the future is even more important than the past so elegantly captured in this volume.

The book is available from the Woodstock Bookshop (Oxford Street), and the Oxfordshire Museum (Park Street) for £19.95. All proceeds go to 'The Woodstock Exhibition foundation' Charity number 309554. A wonderful Christmas present.

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# In the Garden

At last, some rain! The lawn is showing a hint of green after the long summer months of yellow ochre and the pyracantha is coming out; a sure sign of autumn.

I have been hacking back the shrubs that have died in the summer. I have two euonymus which seem to have fared rather well, but my choisya has died a death befitting of an opera - I took the shears to it and am hoping that the growth at the bottom will sustain it to new life.

Climate change can be expensive, and I am delighted to report that the lavatera cutting I took several months ago from my old house is showing roots. It has double rather than single flowers and I was loathe to leave it. In the dynamism of moving house, I just cut a stem and bunged it in water, thinking it looked like a geranium, so would probably act the same way.

I bought a small greenhouse from Amazon and have taken lavender cuttings, and some hydrangea cuttings from a friend, which are now proudly sitting in water. I chose water rather than soil for the hydrangea, as not only did my friend and Google suggest it, but I like to see the roots come through. It gives me an inordinate sense of pleasure!

I would like to plant new shrubs in the garden. I was thinking of Cyprus trees and other Mediterranean plants that would cope with the long, hot summers. My cousin suggested that these might rot with the wet winters that we are now having. She did a lot of planting six years ago, and they all now have deep roots and did reasonably well over the summer. I found the roses did well. One buddleia died completely, and I was hacking back the dead growth in a weigelia before realising that some of the stems were green, that the plant is deciduous and the leaves would fall off naturally!

I think we are all getting used to these new weather conditions. Rather than throw money at the garden, which I did in my last house with limited success, I am going to ask neighbours if I can take cuttings from their gardens, which already show a capacity to survive the hot weather. I have enquired if any excess can go to the Horatio's Charity plant sale held every May in Oxford Road, and they are happy to take them.

I have asked my cousin to bring me 4-5 cuttings of her David Austin climbing roses when she comes to visit me later in the month. This will save me hundreds of pounds and will be a lovely way to think of her - she is bringing The Generous Gardener and Gertrude Jekyll. She did say that if they all took, David Austin would be out of business so not to expect too much. Luckily, I have other sources too!

Sophie McCallum

# Hodmedods

## Heads Up - Let's back this one!

Good news stories often slip under the radar but this one deserves your personal attention. It's about a dynamic online company offering high-quality pulses grown in the UK, food that would otherwise have been imported. Hodmedods is their name.



Pretty hum-drum eh? But what's exciting about a pulse (assuming you already have one)? Displacing imports is what originally caught my eye but these guys are also side-stepping the stranglehold that supermarkets have on British farmers. They are offering an example to other agricultural enterprises to create their own markets for produce and in doing so breaking free from the relentless downward pressure on prices forced on them by a very few large buyers. They seem to be saying "you don't have to grow wheat, barley and rape for the big buyers" who will then dictate punitively low prices.

Hodmedods follows the example of Farmers' markets in finding independent outlets for their produce but their approach is different. They are targeting the pulses market: certain lentils, peas & beans that can grow in this country perfectly well but have come to be imported for obscure reasons. Breaking down the barriers, they have re-invented harvesting & sorting machinery for use in UK conditions and are building their online presence. Personally I'm a satisfied buyer of their produce and happy to be associated with their success (however small my purchases might be).

More recently Hodmedods has re-introduced traditional British pulses such as Carlin peas (turns out, I'm not a fan) and Fava beans, showing that they are prepared to underwrite the re-introduction of these ancient staples for a more sophisticated market looking for authenticity and flavour.

Hodmedods does not sell you the health kick, they assume that you're aware of the high-fibre, high protein benefits. Nor does it mention that protein-rich plant foods will help feed a nation in crisis, be it war, pestilence or... climate change.

If its political or social change you're after there are few better ways than voting with your pocket. Please consider giving Hodmedods (and their like) your custom, look them up online.

David Rees (has no affiliation with Hodmedods)

# Woodstock & District u3a

The speaker in September was Angie Bolton, who is the Curator of Archaeology at our local Museum in Woodstock. Angie explained how the Museum curates its social history collections and included references to our local archaeology. Local groups, historical societies and regional volunteers identify everyday objects and narratives that reflect the lived Experiences of Oxfordshire residents. She also detailed the evaluation of potential artifacts for their local significance and ability to fill gaps in the existing county records. We were shown some fascinating slides of some of local treasures housed in the museum.

Our next speaker will be on Thursday 1 October. Professor Roger Davies who is the Philip Wetton Professor of Astrophysics at Oxford University. His presentation is entitled 'The Vastness of Space' starting with a model of the Solar System based on the Earth as a peppercorn, we'll voyage to the distant Universe using the speed of light as our yardstick. Followed by a glance into what to see in the night sky this Autumn.

November's speaker on the 5th is Graham Twemlow who will talk about the golden age of posters in Britain during the 1920s and 1930s. This was a thriving industry enabled and enlightened by clients such as Shell-Mex, the London Underground and the four railways.

The Theatre Group Went to see Ruby Wax being interviewed by Clive Tulloh at The Playhouse. This was an unscripted evening sharing behind the scenes stories and viewing some of the classical clips from 'Ruby Wax Meets' and 'Full Wax'.

The Needlework Group Continue to knit blankets for the Hamblin Fistula Charity who treat women who due to lack of maternity health care in Ethiopia are suffering from appalling childbirth injuries. Each woman in given a homemade blanket upon arrival in hospital. These become a treasured source of comfort to the women. More blankets and some baby blankets will be sent to Ethiopia in October.

Our monthly meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at St Hugh's Centre, Hensington Road, Woodstock, at 2.15pm for a 2.30 pm speaker. Our U3a branch is centred in Woodstock but welcomes people from the surrounding areas. Are you recently retired and looking for local social activities around interests you have? Our interest groups develop when someone is willing to run them - maybe you have something that you can offer? If so, please make contact with us through the website: [www.woodstocku3a.uk](http://www.woodstocku3a.uk). We would be delighted to hear from you.

Sian Wallworth



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## Curate's Log

### Walking through Creation



This August, Nick and I set off on our honeymoon with rather an ambitious plan: to walk the Tour du Mont Blanc. Over nine days, we walked around 175km, crossing through France, Italy, and Switzerland, and staying in mountain refuges along the way.

Walking for hours each day gave us the chance to really notice the landscape around us, the different shapes and colours of the mountains, the valleys carved by water and ice, the changing vegetation as we climbed higher, and the wildlife we encountered along the way.

One of the most striking things was seeing the evidence left by glaciers. We could see where ice had shaped the landscape, and where glaciers had once reached but have now retreated. Glaciers have always advanced and receded, of course, but seeing these changes so clearly brought home to us how much our climate is changing within our own lifetime.

There was something humbling about walking through such an ancient landscape and, at the same time, seeing evidence of how quickly it is changing. It made us think about how temporary our own lives are, and yet how much our choices can affect the world around us.

There was a beautiful simplicity walking between countries, barely noticing as we crossed borders. Meeting people from all over the world, sharing the same paths, refuges, meals and spectacular views.

At this time of year in the Church's calendar, we are invited to pay particular attention to God's presence in creation - to notice the world around us and to recognise that creation is not simply something we look at, but something of which we are part.

Our time in the Alps made that invitation feel very real. The mountains reminded us that we are small, and connected to something much bigger than ourselves. Crossing borders reminded us that the divisions we create can sometimes be less substantial than we imagine. And the changing glaciers reminded us that the way we live matters.

Perhaps we don't always need to go to the Alps to find this. A walk through our own countryside, watching the seasons change, listening to birdsong or noticing the first autumn leaves can offer the same invitation: to pause, to look around us, and to remember that we are part of something much bigger than ourselves.

With every blessing, Gemma



We're starting a new group for parents and carers with babies under One and those who are pregnant. This will be a soft start, so come and be part of deciding how the group will take shape and what equipment we'll need. Please note that the group will begin gently while we listen to what families would find most useful.

For more information - phone 07971529242 or email [curate@woodstockandbladon.com](mailto:curate@woodstockandbladon.com)

- Friday 2 October, then weekly every Friday
- 9-10.30am
- The Upper Room, St Mary Magdalene Church, Woodstock
- Buggies can be left in the Church
- Refreshments provided
- £1 £1 per session

Come along and help shape the group

Everyone welcome.





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# Woodstock in Bloom

## A long hot Summer

The silver cinerarias and the red pelargoniums, aka geraniums, very kindly provided by Blenheim Palace Gardens brightened our lives. They were faithfully watered by our loyal team of volunteers: Ruth Sutherland, Elizabeth Poskitt, Susan Ilsen, Jane Carin, David Carrington and Tony McHugh. Special thanks are due to Ian Leslie who watered our display of flowers on Market Square with our hose until the ban. The regulations decree that an employee of a Council may use a hose but a volunteer may not.

Ian, undaunted, continued to care for the plants with water brought from home by car. Water in 25 litre containers is heavy. As the world gets warmer the Summer gets longer and my gratitude to these volunteers increases.

Robert Edwards

# Woodstock Probus Club

Our Speaker at the meeting in July was Stanley Hart, a director at Princess Risborough Railway Society.

We heard a detailed account of the line, a standard-gauge railway running between Chinnor and Princes Risborough. The talk covered its history, from the original Act of Parliament in 1869 to the Society's purchase of the line and rolling stock in 1994. Today, the operation mainly uses diesel locomotives, supported by track maintenance equipment. It also includes the historic 1904 signal box at Princes Risborough, which is currently being restored. This Grade II-listed GWR signal box is intended, once complete, to control locomotive movements.

Our social event was a cycle ride by a small group of members. Because of the extremely hot weather a meeting took place in the Kings Arms to decide on the route. After a hearty meal and some fluid intake we cycled through Blenheim to Long Hanborough via the community path and onto Combe, cycling back via Ditchley Gate.

Our speaker in August was David Baskerville, a volunteer with the Thames Valley Air Ambulance. David talked about the high level of care provided with the help of paramedics, medical equipment and ambulance-car follow through.

He went on to talk about the highly trained team members who are always ready for any eventuality, giving the best possible to protect, save and revive lives with critical care at the scene and beyond. David explained that the Air Ambulance operates from 7 am to 2 am, 365 days a year, and was called out 3,302 times last year to help people needing urgent care.

**Alan Holder, Past President**



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**St Laurence Church, Combe,**  
**7.15pm, 16 October.** To book, email:  
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or go to  
<https://www.ticketsource.com/combe-community-cinema/t-glylyko> or scan the QR Code.

A square QR code with a black and white pixelated pattern, used for quick access to the event information.

# Yarnton Netball Club

Yarnton Netball Club is well into the winter league playing season with three teams out on Wednesday evenings - a commitment relying heavily on those willing to manage the teams. We then also have the U15, U13 and U11 playing competitive junior league on Sundays. The club supports and needs help from senior players and parents in running the junior and youth sections, especially our club umpires, congratulating Charlotte this month for achieving her Into Officiating award.

With the emphasis always on enjoyment outdoors with growing skills and fitness, club sessions run on Tuesdays at Rutten Lane, Yarnton. Seniors 7.30pm until 9pm, with school years 10-13 preceding at 6.15pm to 7.15pm. The younger age groups meet on Wednesday evenings - school years 4-6 are 3.30-4.30pm, with years 7-9 at 4.40-5.40pm. For updated information on all age-groups, please make contact via [yarntonnetballclub@outlook.com](mailto:yarntonnetballclub@outlook.com) or [yarntonyouthnetball@gmail.com](mailto:yarntonyouthnetball@gmail.com) or Facebook. Local recreational and league netball is just fun and brilliant to be involved in. New members very welcome.

The Annual Club Tournament (postponed from June due to the intense heat) was held on 6 September with the theme this year of 250th Anniversary of the American Declaration of Independence, and a great day was enjoyed with perfect weather. Four creatively named senior teams and four mixed junior teams participated, with Netballers in Black winning the Seniors over Shots & Spurs, Net Ninjas and (best dressed) Tropic Like its Hot. Junior team True Blue Patriots won over Liberty Stars, Striped Commanders and Red Admirals. Congratulations to Players' Player of the tournament Tilly (Jnrs) and Laura (Snrs); and Coaches' Player, Holly (Jnrs), and Sophie (Snrs).

Netball was actually first played in the USA as BasketBall in 1891, modified for women to 'maintain etiquette', it then transitioned to Dartmouth College, England in 1897 and was called NetBall with rules set by the Physical Education Association here in 1900. The USA did not pursue the women's game as netball during those early years but now plays and their national team holds 40th place in the world rankings.

For further netball inspiration look no further than the Vitality Horizon series on 21 & 22 November when Jamaica come over to play the England Roses at the Copper Box Arena, London. Tickets via England Netball website, televised by Sky and Youtube. World Netball and Australia are leading the bid to get netball included in the Olympics to be hosted by Brisbane in 2032 - please link to <https://netball.sport/back-the-bid/> to pledge your vote to the bid. Better still come along to the club and get involved.

**Sue Blackshaw**

## Panniers

I recently had an interesting conversation with someone who had been sent on a speed awareness course by the police.

Of all the advice that they had received, the nugget that stuck most in their minds was that cyclists are allowed to ride two abreast.

"It came as a surprise to the majority in the room," they said.

The Highway Code says riding side by side, especially in a group, makes cyclists more visible and therefore safer. It also prevents drivers coming too close to a cyclist by trying to squeeze past in the same lane.

In Bikeability training, the second most important skill we teach children (after 'looking') is road positioning. Never cycle closer to the kerb than an arm's length and move into the middle of the lane if the road narrows or if you are at a junction.

The mantra we pass on to them is "boss the space".  
Safe cycling, everyone!

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

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# The Marlborough C of E School

## A Level success at The Marlborough School 2026

We are delighted to announce another year of impressive A Level results, which have remained really strong, confirming our Sixth Form as one of the highest achieving in the country. Once again, the vast majority of our students have secured their first choice University place or other high-quality destination.

We are so proud of them and all they have achieved. Their resilience, perseverance and positivity are amazing, and they deserve to enjoy their success today and in the future. All of the success enjoyed by our students has been down to their hard work, determination and dedication, ably supported and guided by our brilliant teachers. We also thank parents and families who do so much to support their children and the school - thank you so much - what a team!

Our pupils are heading off to start the next stage of their educational journey across the country, to a wide range of destinations. Five of our students this year secured their place at Oxbridge, but alongside Oxford and Cambridge, Marlborough students are heading off to Liverpool, Loughborough, Exeter, Warwick, Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, York, Sheffield, Birmingham, Lancaster and Edinburgh - and lots of other places as well.

We are immensely proud of what they have achieved and also proud of the young people they have become. The future of our country looks bright, as our future leaders are such well-rounded, lovely people. We wish them every success as they leave Marlborough and begin their exciting next steps.

## GCSE Success at The Marlborough School

The pupils of The Marlborough School have once again shown unbelievable commitment in what was a really demanding exam season this year - our pupils really stepped up and have been richly rewarded for their efforts with a brilliant set of results in their GCSE examinations. These results show, once again, and a week after our outstanding A Level results, that Marlborough is a school where you can fulfil all your ambitions and that we can compete academically with any school in the country.

Overall, the school is well above all national benchmarks in every measure, but it is the individual stories of commitment and perseverance that are so special. We know the barriers that our young people have had to work to overcome and it is inspiring and affirming to see so many of them achieving so well.

We are also delighted and proud to welcome so many of our current year 11s back into the Sixth Form next year - along with a significant group of external applicants.

We are equally as proud of our students who are going on to study at College or to take up a high-quality Apprenticeship. You go into the world with all our best wishes and the promise that you will always be a member of The Marlborough family.

A massive thank you to our parents and carers who have lived these past few months with us and their children and to the highly skilled and expert staff who always go the extra mile to help and support our students. You have all worked incredibly hard, and these results are a testimony to your ambition and perseverance.

## School Expansion Completion

We are thrilled to announce that our school expansion project is now complete - marking a major milestone in the history of our school!

The newly opened two-storey, six classroom block was ready to welcome students back for the new academic year and is now home to our English department. Along with the new building, additional works included an extension and refurbishment of our changing rooms, internal remodelling of the Art block and an update to the front entrance and layout. We are absolutely delighted with the finished result and extend our heartfelt thanks to our students, parents, and the local community for your patience, support, and understanding throughout the build.

If you wish to read about our journey from start to completion, please visit [www.marlborough.oxon.sch.uk](http://www.marlborough.oxon.sch.uk), and navigate to the 'Information' tab, followed by 'Expansion', where you will find weekly progress updates.

**Sarah Fitchett, PA to the School Business Manager**

## Woodstock CE Primary School

### Letter from the Headteacher

Dear Parents and Carers,

A very warm welcome back to the start of another exciting school year. I hope you and your families have enjoyed a restful and enjoyable summer break, and I am delighted to welcome both returning and new families to our school community.

As we begin this new academic year, our commitment remains the same: to continue strengthening the partnership between school and home, ensuring that together we provide every child with the support they need to flourish. By working closely with our families and wider community, we can help our children grow into resilient, confident, and courageous young people who are ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

At our school, we are proud to offer a wide range of experiences that inspire curiosity, build character, and develop lifelong skills. Whether children are facing new challenges, sharing their ideas, taking on responsibilities, trying something for the first time, or learning about the wider world, we design every opportunity to help them grow both academically and personally. Please contact the school office if you are looking for a place in our Reception Class in September 2027. We have a number of tour dates available.

An important part of our vision is developing courageous advocates. We want our children to understand that their voices matter and that they have the power to make a positive difference in the lives of others. By encouraging empathy, kindness, and a sense of responsibility, we help our pupils recognise the significant role they play in their local community and the wider world.

Throughout the year, we look forward to sharing many exciting learning opportunities, celebrations, and achievements with you. Please keep an eye on the 'Dates for the Term' section on our website as there will be Phonics and Reading Cafe sessions coming up. These sessions offer opportunities to meet staff and understand how school and home can work together to support the strong development of phonics/reading skills.

Thank you for your continued support, encouragement, and partnership. Together, we can ensure that every child feels valued, inspired and empowered to achieve their very best.

I wish all our children and families a happy, successful, and rewarding year ahead.

**Anne Hipwell, Headteacher**

## Bladon Primary School

Thanks to the Tesco stronger starts scheme, Bladon Primary School were awarded £500 to enable our Well Being Ambassadors to create a Peace garden within our grounds. They wanted to create a quiet space in school, for pupils to use, during playtimes and lesson times when they needed a calm place away from the busyness of school.

Our Wellbeing Ambassadors have done an amazing job of not only designing the garden but developing it at every step from trimming back the trees, putting up fencing, planting an array of wildflower seeds, bulbs, flowers, herbs and even vegetables and painting an old bench, to give it a new lease of life! They have worked tirelessly, even giving up their break times to work on the garden!

One of the highlights of the project, is how it has brought the whole school together. The project has not

only promoted collaboration amongst the children, but we have also been very grateful for the input and support from parents and the wider community.



It was lovely meeting with Reverend Katie and Reverend Sarah from the Woodstock and Bladon Diocese, along with Reverend Mary Taylor from the Morningside United Church in Edinburgh, who gave us so many great ideas on how we could develop the Peace Garden. Reverend Katie also led an assembly, to discuss the importance of Peace and what it may mean for different people. The pupils painted pebbles to represent what Peace means to them. These pebbles form the borders of the flower beds within the garden, ensuring the garden really is representative of all the pupils in the school.

We also spoke to a gardener from Blenheim, who was able to give us advice on design, planting and fencing and even managed a trip to Bunkers Hill Garden Centre, where the Wellbeing Ambassadors had a great time choosing the plants for the garden, with the advice of the lovely team there. They have since been kept extremely busy, not only planting them out, but constantly watering them, to help them grow in the recent heatwave!

What started out as an application of funding from Tesco, has led to so much more, enabling us to develop an unused space into a truly special garden, that represents the school and the children who have created it. Although the garden was inspired as a Wellbeing Ambassador project, there have been so many pupils who have helped. It has been wonderful to see the pupils so happy, relaxed and engaged, working together to bring their vision to life. What this project has given to the children, and the school, is so much more than a Peace garden. It has given it a sense of community, belonging and a legacy that we hope will continue to grow.

A very special thank you to Mrs Horn, who has dedicated so much time, energy and care while overseeing the Peace Garden project!

**Ellie Jenkins**

# The Oxfordshire Museum

## Open Art Exhibition 2026

Our annual art exhibition is back and features an eclectic collection of artworks by artists from across Oxfordshire. As this year is Oxfordshire Museum's 60th anniversary the theme is 'Celebration' and our entries all meet the criteria in their own way! The exhibition is free and on display in our garden gallery from Saturday 19 September to Sunday 11 October.

## The OM Curiosity Club

We've launched a brand-new wellbeing group for people aged 50+ who are living in the local area. The group is ideal for those who want to connect with others, share stories and enjoy reminiscence and creative activities. The group is free and light refreshments are provided. If you'd like to come along the club meets at the museum on the following Wednesdays between 2.30-4pm: 7 & 21 October, 4 & 18 November, and 2 & 16 December.

# Friends of The Oxfordshire Museum

## Members' Events this Autumn

Our Monthly talks are free to Members and take place in the Coach House at the Oxfordshire Museum.

## Wednesday 7 October at 7.30pm

Celebrating 60 years of the Oxfordshire Museum

**Speaker:** Jemma Davey, Museum Services Manager

An evening celebrating the six decades of our museum. Jemma will give a short talk on the history of the Oxfordshire Museum, the changes, successes and challenges over the years. After the talk, there will be the première screening of a specially commissioned film about the museum, generously funded by the Friends and featuring memories from staff, volunteers and supporters past and present.

## Wednesday 4th November at 7.30pm

Everyday Life at North Leigh Roman Villa, 300AD

**Speaker:** Byron Russell, English Heritage volunteer explainer, North Leigh Roman villa

This talk covers recent developments at the villa (re-roofing the mosaic house, re-capping the wall fragments etc) and then puts the villa in its historical perspective, before taking a brief look at the life of its inhabitants in the last century of the Roman occupation.

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum Annual Membership: £20 (single) £30 (double)

For an application form and full details of all our activities and benefits, see our website: [www.friendsoftom.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftom.org.uk)



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# Keep It Local

## The Woodstock Brewery

Stephen Oke wears two very distinct hats. By day, he runs a cybersecurity business called Woodstock Advisory where he conducts reviews, assesses risk and carries out incident responses. When he's not protecting our computers from digital attacks, he's doing something completely different: brewing beer.

Stephen discovered his passion for crafting ale during Covid, after being inspired by a neighbour's hobby. He spent time experimenting and exploring techniques and flavours inspired by his time living in Belgium. Soon, his modest starter equipment that had fitted neatly into the kitchen, had expanded into the garage and now takes up space equivalent to a small caravan.

On the advice of a friend, Stephen started selling his beer and the Woodstock Brewery was born. He sold out of beer at his first stall at the Farmers' Market and from this experience, the names of his three, hand-crafted ales came into being. While at the market, he was struck by the friendly ducks wandering around the town square and decided to call one of them Dave leading to the names of his beers: Dave the Duck, Pete the Partridge and Harry the Hare.

It's worth noting, here, that as well as creating excellent beers, Stephen is also detailed about the legislation required to run a beverage manufacturer. For example, Woodstock Brewery is a registered brewery with a hygiene rating of 5/5.

In the months leading up to December's Festive Fayre, Stephen is busy brewing away for the holiday season. He'll be selling his three bottled beers individually or in gift boxes of three. If you can't wait that long, you can buy online (at [www.woodstockbrewery.co.uk](http://www.woodstockbrewery.co.uk)) and Stephen will personally deliver your order to you. He's also in talks with the local shop in Kirtlington to sell his beers there.

If you already know and enjoy Woodstock Brewery beverages, a new product is soon to launch. Stephen has mastered the art of distilling and plans to sell his own, unaged whiskey or moonshine.

Vanessa Ayres

# Wootton Talks

Our next speaker at 7.30 pm on Friday 9 October October is **Ian Firth**, one of the world's leading bridge engineers and has been involved with many ground-breaking projects, including some of the world's longest spans - plus several winners of international design competitions.

Ian worked on the complex strengthening and upgrading of the Wye Bridge, a steel box girder cable-stayed bridge and part of the M48 Severn Crossing. He has also directed several similar projects involving strengthening structures, including the Erskine Bridge, in Scotland, and the West Gate Bridge in Melbourne, Australia. His other work on major long-span bridges includes independent design checks and investigations for the Tsing Ma Bridge, Kap Shui Mun Bridge and the Ting Kau Bridge - all in Hong Kong.

Ian was also appointed as special advisor for the proposed Strait of Messina Bridge linking mainland Italy with Sicily. When built, at a current cost of 13.5 Billion Euros, it would have a main span of 3,300 metres with 399-metre towers, making it the longest single-span suspension bridge in the world

Ian also led the team which won the Poole Harbour Crossing Bridge design competition, working with Danish architects Dissing+Weitling - and he has won other design competitions, including Lockmeadow Bridge in Maidstone, the Bridge of Aspiration for the Royal Ballet School in London; the River Oise Bridge in Compiègne, France; the Pont Schuman in Lyon; as well as Inderhavnsbroen in Copenhagen.

Ian has been President of the Institution of Structural Engineers and chairman of the British Group of the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering. He is also a trustee of bridge-building charity Bridges to Prosperity.

To reserve seats please go to our website [www.woottontalks.co.uk](http://www.woottontalks.co.uk)

Entry at St Mary's Church is £10 in cash - and includes free food. Children over 16 welcome. Modest donation for drinks. (Upgraded sound-system plus toilet facilities available)

Andy Morgan (01993 813016)

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# Harvest Home 2026

We need to value our fresh seasonal produce - It is likely to be in short supply



When most are fast asleep, this summer, I have seen ‘first hand’ the seasonal workers get up at 4am to tend to the crops grown for our eating pleasure. Getting up early to tend to our fresh seasonal produce, throughout the year they have met with many climatic challenges, have worked in blistering heat - some in the open fields, whilst others have toiled away in unbearably hot polytunnels. Thank goodness most tractors have airconditioned cabs these days - not though all. Sun beats down, water is in short supply, the earth, the plants and the people have struggled. I am privy to the concerns that those at one with the elements must navigate, those that the majority of the general public have little to no concept about.

Some of you will have heard of The People’s Emergency Briefing, which is being screened at St Mary Magdalen Church, Park Street, Woodstock on Sunday September 27th at 7pm. If reading this prior to the date you may still have time to get a ticket. There is a petition to get this shown on national television so that everyone can see it. There have been, and continues to be, many screenings around the country. Contributors are made up of environmentalists and scientists alike, both sides of the fence in agreement that we need seismic change of behaviour if we wish to avoid the consequences of our inaction to bring about a balance with regards to our natural environment - as a whole.

We need to understand that we are a part ‘of’ rather than apart ‘from’ nature, whilst many continue to behave as if we are. At the very basic level we need

air, water and food to survive. How fortunate we are today to live in a way that affords us lots of creature comforts, beautiful homes, furnishings to adorn our living and working spaces, clothing cut from cloth of varying fabrics and colours that enable us to emphasise our shape, style and personality. Holidays in far away and exotic places are expected and partaken in as a normal occurrence. Cars are status symbols, as is being able to dine on fine cuisine and partake in the drinking of exquisite wine. It is accepted that an item of clothing, cigar perhaps, shoes handbags and furnishings come with a high value price tag all of which consume a great deal of resources to produce and have no true health-giving benefit. On the other hand, fresh seasonal produce does, and yet, it is highly undervalued on every level.

Nature is supposed to simply keep on giving, which it has for a very long time without showing signs of the struggle that we are witnessing today. In respect to many crops, yields are way down, which indicates shortages at our door rather than those shortages being on the horizon. With many farmers at retirement age, we need to give their sons and daughters’ good reason to keep going. If we do not back British Farmers, who will feed us? Bringing this to a local level, what can we do? We can change our mindset when it comes to the purchasing and value of food. We need to value it in the way that we have come to value trinkets that do not sustain us. It is known that we will pay a fair price for things that we value. Shopping in our local butcher, greengrocers and delicatessen helps support local artisan producers. Woodstock is fortunate to still have all three of these essential businesses. Frequent your local Farmers Market and purchase direct from your local Farm shop and/or box scheme.

We can stop expecting food to be ‘cheap’ because this is undervaluing something that is of enormous value. Seeing the harvest figures both locally and around the world I believe we are going to come to realise the value of our food the hard way. Community Orchards and allotments are a great way to connect us with the land. Nature is a great teacher. Our natural environment is showing us signs of the errors of our ways. Are we listening? Whether we are talking grains, blackberries, fruit and vegetables, this harvest home is going to be shorter in supply of seasonal offerings than in previous years. We can go on as we are believing that everything will go on as usual, shops will be full, climate is not a problem, and no change is required from any of us. We can pretend that the wildfires are normal and that the problems happen elsewhere and not here. We can also choose to listen to the earth, hear her call, change our ways and do what needs to be done to help in returning balance in our lives. Our individual words, actions and deeds affect the collective. Woodstock has a history as a



market town. It has individual boutiques, pubs, restaurants, tea and coffee shops. We have seen a demise in banks nationwide, post office closures (the town's post office currently under threat), cobblers closed, ironmongers (thankfully still trading) and other essential services struggling to keep the doors open. We all breath air, hydrate with water and replenish ourselves with fresh seasonal food. We also need companionship and a sense of comradeship in purpose. Let us make the things mentioned here become a spark in keeping the flame alive for all that sustains us. Without this, there is no life.

We live in times of great change - who would have thought that we would see the day when our seasonal produce would be shrivelling on bushes and dead in the ground, riverbeds dry and our earth on fire.

Here is to as full a basket of produce as is possible this harvest festival and beyond. Here is to local seasonal produce and all those who work so tirelessly to bring it to our table. Here is to our natural environment that is begging us to become more informed 'and at one' with the earth that is our home and very life support system. Here is to the readers of these lines making a pact to do their bit.

Change begins with us. If you have not already done so do watch 'The People’s Emergency Briefing' and in any way that you can educate yourself on the matters that are of the greatest importance to our time.

I end my piece with two sayings:  
“There are those who make things happen, those who watch things happen and those who wondered what happened.”  
Let us be the former - for if we continue ever on without care, the second quote applies:  
“Those who don’t care will be made to care”.

## Susanne Austin

Susanne will be speaking about local food and drink at our WOBL Evening of Talks on Wednesday 28 October 2026 - see page 36.

Susanne writes and speaks on Personal and Environmental Wellbeing, covering natural health and wellbeing, Eco build, sustainable, green and 'one planet' living as a business and daily lifestyle choice for all.





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# Bladon and Woodstock Flower Club

Hello everyone I do hope that you have all enjoyed your summer be it too hot for some of us. I am sure that now the grass and plants are glad the very severe heat is over and they can breathe a sigh of relief and slowly recover, we hope!

We had our first meeting for the new term on 14 September when we welcomed Elaine Hale to the Club for the first time. Her title was *Rhythm and Roots* and Elaine's arrangements interpreted songs between 1960 and 1980. As she was working on the arrangement she gave us clues as to the title of the song and we had to guess which song it was. Two of the titles were - *Tie a Yellow Ribbon round the old Oak Tree*, and *I never promised you a Rose Garden*. They were beautifully arranged and members were able to guess all of them - great fun.

We are looking forward to our other meetings over the next few months with a workshop on 12 October when we have Chris Pearce returning to the Club. Chris is a very experienced flower arranger, and we look forward once again to learning something new.

On 9 November we have Linda Smith with her title *Found in Italy*. Linda is also a first time demonstrator to us, so we look forward to meeting her.

On 2 December is our big event of the year when we are holding our meeting at Exeter Hall, Kidlington. It is an open meeting for anyone who would like to see a wonderful Christmas demonstration by Lee Berrill with the title *Christmas All Wrapped Up*. Tickets will be available from 1 October and can be purchased on either of these numbers 07974 573305 or 07754 043233. The cost is £15 in advance or £17 on the night.

We welcome guests to our meetings which are held in the Bowls and Tennis Clubhouse in Cadogan Park, Woodstock, with a charge of £10. If you would like to know more about us, please contact me on 01865 376587.

Margaret Lang

# Bladon Snippets from the Past

Two single-decker buses, Olivers and Hardings, collected us for market days in Oxford.

This market was held at the Oxpens...it was a big affair, lots of stalls covering goods galore. I even saw a fur coat being tried on before purchase!

Mary F. Sith





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# Woodstock and Bladon Churches Together

## A Message of Welcome and A New Beginning in Ministry

It is with great joy and sincere gratitude that I introduce myself as I begin my ministry in this historic town of Woodstock. Having recently arrived, I am deeply aware that I am not simply taking up a new role, but entering into a living and vibrant community of faith, one that is shaped by a rich history, a strong sense of identity, and a deep devotion to God. It is a privilege to be among you, and I am grateful for the opportunity to serve in such a welcoming and meaningful place.

Woodstock is a truly remarkable town, blessed with a unique heritage, beautiful surroundings, and a strong connection to its past while continuing to look towards the future. It is also home to world-renowned landmarks such as Blenheim Palace and other historic features that draw visitors from across the globe. People travel from many countries to experience its beauty, history, and cultural significance, making Woodstock a place of encounter, welcome, and shared human experience. Its traditions, community spirit, and historic character give it a special identity that continues to inspire both residents and visitors alike.

I would also like to express my heartfelt and sincere gratitude to all the ministers, clergy, and church members who attended my induction ceremony. Your presence, support, and prayers were a great encouragement to me, and I deeply appreciate the warm welcome I have received from all of you. It was a true sign of unity and shared faith, which I will always cherish. I extend my warm greetings to the members of our Catholic community and to our brothers and sisters in the Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, and other Christian traditions. Each of our traditions reflects the richness of the Christian faith in its own unique and valuable way. Yet, despite our differences, we are united by the same Lord and by our common baptism. Together, we are called to proclaim the love of God revealed in Jesus Christ and to serve our neighbours with compassion, humility, and faithfulness.

As I begin this journey among you, I come with an open heart and a willingness to listen, to learn, and to walk alongside you in faith. I am grateful for the kindness and welcome already shown to me, and I look forward to meeting many more of you in the days ahead, in prayer, worship, fellowship, and community life. My hope is that we will continue to grow together in friendship, understanding, and shared faith. In a world often marked by uncertainty, division, and change, our united Christian witness is

more important than ever. Our calling is to be signs of hope, reconciliation, and peace within this historic community of Woodstock. Though our traditions may differ in expression, we remain united in faith, prayer, and service, seeking to reflect the love of Christ in all that we do.

I pray that our time together will be filled with mutual encouragement, spiritual growth, and a deeper commitment to Christ. May we support one another in ministry, celebrate together in moments of joy, and stand together through times of challenge and difficulty.

May God bless each of your communities, and may He guide us as we journey forward together in faith, hope, and love, building up Woodstock as one family united in Christ.

Fr Damian Nwankwo  
St Hugh of Lincoln Catholic Church, Woodstock

# The Arts Society Cotswolds

## Lecture on Wednesday 14 October 2026 Shopping on the Rialto in Renaissance Venice

A wealthy Venetian shopping in the Rialto area had access to goods from far and wide. Luxury goods were entering Venice both from the Islamic East and Northern Europe. This lecture vividly evokes a day on the Rialto, its surrounding buildings and its merchants. We will examine the wares that were on offer and how Venetians displayed them after purchase.

**About the speaker:**  
Dr Antonia Gatward Cevizli is an independent art historian specialising in both Italian Renaissance art and Ottoman art. She gained her PhD from the University of Warwick. Her publications focus on cultural and diplomatic exchange between the Italian city-states and the Ottomans. Antonia has lectured for a number of institutions including Sabancı University, Istanbul; Sotheby's Institute of Art; the National Gallery; the V&A Academy and The Courtauld summer school. Her interests are wide-ranging and she also worked across the collections of both Tate Modern and Tate Britain as a professional guide. She has lived in Siena, Venice and Istanbul.

This hybrid lecture will be held at the Warwick Hall, Church Green, Burford, OX18 4RZ at 11am and via Zoom. Please be seated by 10.50 for notices of upcoming events. Booking is recommended: to reserve a place book online ([www.theartsocietycotswolds.org.uk](http://www.theartsocietycotswolds.org.uk)) or contact Lisa Etheridge on 07918 180895 for a booking form. Non-members are welcome (space permitting) at a charge of £10.

WOBL News

Short Talks

Wednesday 28 October, 7pm at The Kings Arms

We ae planning to start an evening of 'Short Talks', consisting of 5 very varied talks on a miscellany of subjects, yet to be decided. Each talk will last no more than 10 minutes, and will be followed by 5 minutes of Q and A. There will be a total of 5 talks, with a 30 minute break between the third and fourth one.

The cost will be £10, to include a glass of wine on arrival.

Please EMail editor@wobl.news to reserve a place.

The Town Diary

It is now one month since the Town Diary was launched, and it seems to be going well. Organisers are adding their own events, and the result can be immediately seen in the online diary - https://wobl.news/events/

WOBL Website

Keep your eye out for the launch of our new website - very exciting and VERY colourful. Hopefully it will be live before the next issue, and we will be announcing it on social media.

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Oxfordshire & Home Counties

The answers to the Crossword on Page 38 of this issue are:

The possible Brittonic derivation of the Glyme (in the GLEAM article last month) is 'bright stream'.

Across: 1. mosaic, 5. displace, 9. jury duty, 10. unmask, 11. newspapers, 12. reel, 13. spotless, 16. yachts, 17. prunes, 19. crossest, 21. cede, 22. exercising, 25. jetsam, 26. traduced, 27. research, 28. dishes.

Down: 2. ovule, 3. abyss, 4. courage, 5. dryness, 6. squishy, 7. limericks, 8. cassettes, 14. persevere, 15. Tennessee, 18. steamer, 19. cheetah, 20. orchard, 23. slums, 24. niece.

STOP PRESS

Botley West: The final decision on the Botley West Solar Farm has been delayed again, with the new deadline now set for 10 November 2026.

Burgaries: There have been two house burglaries recently in the town, and residents are urged to be aware of suspicious activity.

Local Council Reorganisation: Plans for a major shake-up of local government are on hold, after the government launched a review in light of new legal advice.

Next Woodstock Town Council Monthly Meeting: This will take place at 7pm on Tuesday 13 October 2026. (Just before going to press, an Extraordinary Meeting has been called for Tuesday 22 September).

Shops: One closure and one new shop - sadly, the Woodstock florist, Wild Grace, is closing its doors in September, but The Village Refill & Zero Waste Shop will be opening in Park View.)

Town Fair: Just to remind everyone that the Town will be closed to traffic from 10am on Sunday 4th until 3am on Wednesday 7th October.

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The answers to the Environment Quiz on Page 38 of this issue are:

- 1. Dolly Parton
- 2. El Niño
- 3. Hawaii
- 4. Beavers
- 5. Mercy Mercy Me
- 6. The Orangery
- 7. Earth Song
- 8. Oaks
- 9. Emerson, Lake and Palmer
- 10. Regenerative

Regular Events

Culture

Bladon Garden Society

The 3rd Thursday of every month at 7.30pm, usually in the Church Room in Bladon.

Friends of the Oxfordshire Museum

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

Woodstock Literature Society

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

Woodstock Natural History Society

Second Tuesday of the month at St Hughs.

Woodstock and District u3a

All events are listed in What's On.

Wootton Village Hall Talks

These take place monthly.

Music

Kings Arms / Mandolirium

Listen to our local group in our local pub, usually every third Thursday at 6.30pm.

The Crown

Live music every Friday night from 7.30pm

Woodstock Jazz

Usually on the last Friday of the month at St Hughs

Social

Bereavement Cafe

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

Bumps to One

Every Friday from 2 October, 9 to 10:30am, at St Mary Magdalene Church.

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.

Singing for Fun

In Woodstock Baptist Church, at 2pm on the 1st Friday of the month. Note new venue and day of month.

St Mary Magdalene Church coffee morning

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

Veterans' Coffee & Chat at the Museum

Between 10am and 12 noon every fourth Thursday of the month at SOFO.

Woodstock Lunch Club

Lunches are held in the Community Centre every other Wednesday at 12 noon.

Woodstock Stroke Club

Every other Tuesday between 10.15am and 1pm at the Community Centre.

Sport

Woodstock Bowls Club

The outdoor season runs from April to September and the indoor season from October to March.

Yarnton Netball Club

Netball outdoors at Rutten Lane, Yarnton - Seniors on Tuesday evenings, Juniors on Wednesdays.

What's On

The following events are correct at the time of going to press. In order to see a fuller and more up-to-date listing, please visit https://wobl.news/events/

Friday 25 Sept 2026, 19:30

St Hughs Centre  
Woodstock Jazz (Bryan Corbett Quartet)

Saturday 26 September, 19:00

St Mary Magdalene Church  
Last Night of the Proms

Sunday 27 September, 19:00

St Mary Magdalene Church  
Climate Change Film Screening

Thursday 01 October, 14:15

St Hughs Centre  
U3a Speaker Meeting The Vastness of Space - Roger Davies

Saturday 03 Oct 2026

Blenheim Palace DogFest

Sunday 4 to Tuesday 6 October

Town Fair in Woodstock Town Centre

Thursday 15 October, 19:30

Bladon Church Room  
Talk: Alex Dye 'FarmED - Can Regenerative Farming Feed the World?'

Saturday 17 Oct 2026, 19:00

St Mary Magdalene Church  
CJ Ensemble Concert

Saturday 24 October, 15:00

St Hughs Centre  
WLS Talk by Jane Thynne - Tales from Trent Park: How Life Becomes Fiction

Tuesday 27 October, 19:30

St Hughs Centre  
Talk - Bishop William Kenney: 'Artificial Intelligence and the universal human family'

Friday 30 October, 19:30

St Hughs Centre  
Woodstock Jazz (Rob Fowler Quartet)

Tuesday 03 November, 19:30

St Mary Magdalene Church  
Folk Music Concert at St Mary Magdalene Church Woodstock

Thursday 05 November, 14:15

St Hughs Centre  
U3a Speaker Meeting The Great British Poster Artists - Graham Twemlow

Saturday 07 November, 14:00

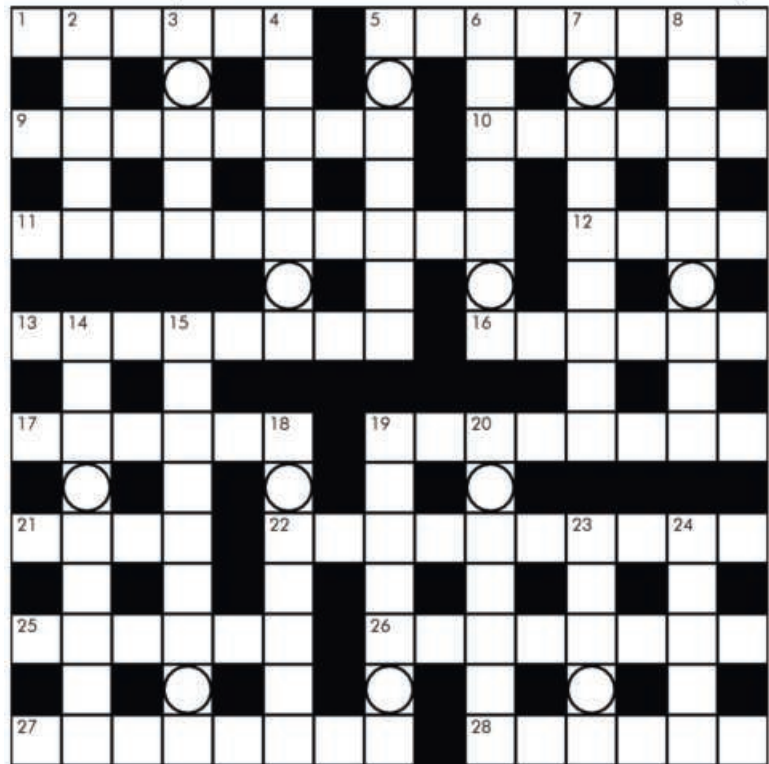
Soldiers of Oxfordshire Museum  
SOFO: The Origins of the Schlieffen Plan - Talk with Ross Beadle

QUIZ - Compiled by Richard Stockwell

This month the quiz is all about the Environment.

- 1. *After The Gold Rush* is a 1970 Neil Young song, highlighting environmental destruction in California, predicting an apocalyptic exodus to another planet. Which Country legend covered this, alongside Emmy-Lou Harris and Linda Rondstadt?
- 2. For those who refuse to acknowledge mankind’s contribution to Climate Change, which phenomenon, related to winds in the Pacific Ocean, do they blame for Britain’s record breaking hot summer?
- 3. “They paved paradise and put up a parking lot.” This line, from Joni Mitchell’s Big Yellow Taxi, was inspired by the view from a hotel window in which Island State?
- 4. Which new residents of Paradise Fields in Ealing, the first of their kind in London for 400 years, are held responsible for the cessation of flooding at Greenford Tube station?
- 5. Marvin Gaye, in a 1971 lyric, lamented “Where have all the blue skies gone?” Motown felt the song was controversial, but relented and found which hit on their hands, later covered by Robert Palmer?
- 6. Which exclusive part of Blenheim Palace now has a slate, rather than glass roof, as an energy saving measure?
- 7. “Did you ever stop to notice, all the children dead from war? Did you ever stop to notice, this crying earth, these weeping shores?” Which Michael Jackson song, referencing the environmental costs of war, are these lines taken from?
- 8. Forestfactory is a project pioneered by Blenheim Estate, using vertical farming techniques to help safeguard the future of which ancient trees within The Park?
- 9. “Right there behind the glass, stands a real blade of grass, be careful as you pass, move along, move along.” Another apocalyptic lyric, from 1973. The song, *Karn Evil Nine*, who were the band?
- 10. Farming led by Biology, not Chemistry, as championed by by former Groove Armada pop star Andy Cato, which featured on Clarkson’s Farm, is known as what type of farming?

Solve the clues to this straight crossword. Read through the letters in the marked squares to reveal the possible Brittonic derivation of the 'Glyme'.



- Across
- 1. Tiled pattern
  - 5. Force out
  - 9. Court service (4,4)
  - 10. Expose, uncover
  - 11. Daily publications
  - 12. Scottish dance
  - 13. Immaculate
  - 16. Sailing vessels
  - 17. Dried plums
  - 19. Angriest
  - 21. Surrender
  - 22. Working out
  - 25. Jettisoned cargo
  - 26. Badmouthed
  - 27. Find information on
  - 28. Plates
- Down
- 2. Plant germ cell
  - 3. Deep chasm
  - 4. Bravery
  - 5. Aridity
  - 6. Soft and sponge-like
  - 7. Five-line verses
  - 8. Audio tapes
  - 14. Persist
  - 15. US state
  - 18. Cooking utensil
  - 19. Big cat
  - 20. Fruit grove
  - 23. Shanty towns
  - 24. Relative

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