



Woodcote

Vol 35 No 2
February 2023

CORRESPONDENT

Delivered free to homes in Woodcote, Exlade Street and Crays Pond

DEFIBRILLATORS SAVE LIVES!

Did you know that there is a defibrillator attached to the outside wall of the Village Hall? This unit is checked every couple of weeks to ensure it is in working order and the battery gets changed periodically in accordance with the guidelines.

There is also a defibrillator outside the front porch at Langtree School. A website worth consulting is www.defibfinder.uk. This enables you to find the nearest public defibrillator by inserting your postcode or location. Some defibrillators are listed as restricted, as for instance the one at the Oratory School. It is interesting to note that Checkendon has three public defibrillators at the Village Hall, the Primary School and near the Bus Shelter, while there are two in Stoke Row and one at the Parish Hall in Whitchurch Hill.

There are many websites giving instructions on how to use a defibrillator. The most important things to know are:

- ▶ **They are easy to use**
- ▶ **You don't need training to use one**
- ▶ **The machine gives clear spoken instructions**
- ▶ **It won't shock someone unless they need it**

As a final note, wherever you are, if you dial 999 and give your location, you will be told where the nearest defibrillator is located.



COMMENT FROM ST LEONARD'S

Well, did you make them, and are you still doing them? I mean of course those New Year's resolutions. Did you wake up on New Year's Day and say "yes, I will"? I'm not suggesting that you over-celebrated the night before or over-indulged over the Christmas period, but yes at New Year you may have said "I will lose some pounds, I will do more exercise, I will get those jobs done on time etc".

But that was a month ago. Have other events overtaken you? Has the weather at this time of year discouraged all those ideas?

For me it's the decluttering of my study. I first started to think of this when the Covid pandemic first started and because of lockdown, we needed a good reason to leave the house. But nothing happened and the study is just the same. Just sorting, filing and recycling this avalanche of paper that overwhelms most of us, but research has shown that those who leave it in disarray spend the equivalent of several days a year searching for lost documents. I still get very annoyed when I have to waste time looking for something I urgently need, and how often do I print off something that I know I've printed already but can't find?

And don't mention my garage. Many of you will know that we run the bookstall at St Leonard's Fair; always at this time of year we are having to sort books. We try to move on books that have been on our stand for two years to make way for fresh material. We work on the assumption that if hasn't sold for two years, we pass it on to a charity who will have a wider clientele. We do however greatly value fresh material from you all to restock and of late our sales have been very strong, so please do continue to pass books on to us.

The same process can happen in our spiritual lives. We can build up spiritual clutter until the only places left for God are the little nooks and crannies between it all. How can he fill us up when there is no space for him in our lives?

Spiritual clutter is anything that comes between us and our relationship with Jesus. Our minds can be cluttered with excessive social media, news, Netflix or screen time. Juggling a busy schedule can lead us to miss out on what God has planned for us. While we participate in our favourite spiritual hustle and bustle at church or in a group, are we taking quality time with him? Jesus lived by the "less is more" motto. He taught his disciples to live uncluttered lives too. He sent his disciples out to preach his gospel with the instructions to "*take nothing for the journey- no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra tunic.*" (Luke 9:3). He wanted his disciples (and us!) to learn to live on God's power and provision in their lives.

As I write this, I am looking around my study, and no I haven't got it right yet!

Brian Turner
Licensed Lay Minister and
PCC Vice-chairman.

Services at St. Leonard's in February

Sunday 5th

8.00 am Holy Communion

9.45 am Parish Communion

Sunday 12th

8.00 am Holy Communion

9.45 am Worshipping Together

Sunday 19th

8.00 am Holy Communion

9.45 am The Open-Door Service

Sunday 26th

8.00 am Holy Communion

9.45 am Parish Communion

Additionally, 22nd February is Ash Wednesday and there will be a Team Service at Stoke Row Church at 7.30pm.

Woodcote church is usually open for private prayer each day between 10am and 4pm.

Online Services

We will continue with our online service of Night Prayer every Tuesday at 8.30 pm.

This follows the ancient monastic pattern of Compline and lasts about 20 minutes.

WOODCOTE WI NEWS

Patricia Solomons welcomed the members to our meeting. Celebrating her birthday this month with her family was Sandra Dickson.

This month we went to Root One for lunch, thank you to everyone who worked hard to make the arrangements and all the staff at Root One for a delicious lunch.

We were entertained by Sun Jester with the history around Christmas Traditions, the sending of Christmas Cards which was started by Sir Henry Cole in 1843, when he commissioned the artist John Callott Horsley, to design a card instead of writing letters. We also heard about engineer Jack Mullin and Bing Crosby demonstrating the Magnetron recorder. We had lots of Christmas songs from Winter Wonderland to Little Jack Frost and also the story behind mince pies. This was followed by tea from the Committee and Secret Santa.

We have had our planning meeting to organise trips for the coming year so we will be playing skittles, visiting Historic Buildings, enjoying lunches and theatre trips.

In March we have our Annual General Meeting followed by a Beetle Drive.

Please come and join us in the Village Hall on the 3rd Wednesday of the Month at 2.30pm.

Judy Williams.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



We've had rather a lot of rain recently, haven't we? I'm sure it won't prevent hosepipe bans later in the year though...but before we focus on summer droughts, let's not forget we have Spring to look forward to, when our woods, gardens and verges will fill with colour once more. Remember to keep sending us your photos and updates; we love to hear from you (wood-co@runbox.com)

In this issue, we celebrate local residents and we also share lots of stories, upcoming events (it's nearly toad patrol time again), photos, fun February facts and much more....don't say we don't spoil you. So grab a cuppa and have a read, especially if it's raining outside!

Until next month.

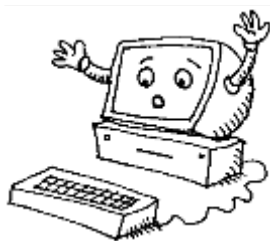
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PUBLISHER INFORMATION

Editor: Yvette Decmar *[via email]*

Articles for inclusion: to the editor by email to: wood-co@runbox.com, or letters may be handed in at the library. To be received by the 12th of the preceding month.

Advertisers: To place an advertisement, please email wood-co@runbox.com for details of prices and how to produce your ad in our house style. The deadline for payment and your finished advertisement is the 12th of the preceding month.

Small Ads and Announcements: £5 for three lines.

Photographs: Photos should be unedited and as high a resolution as possible (at least 500kB). Please email them as attachments to wood-co@runbox.com

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Distribution:	Trevor Back	01491 680617
Printer:	C Z Services	07860 630865
Cover Design:	Rob Spencer	

The Woodcote Correspondent is on the Village website at tinyurl.com/Woodcote-Correspondent

Note: The Woodcote Correspondent is edited, produced and distributed by volunteers.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor

I would like to extend my grateful thanks to the kind people of Woodcote. Just before Christmas my husband had a bad fall in the road on Bridle Path. He was very shaken and was bleeding profusely. A very kind approaching motorist saw what happened, stopped and checked how he was as well as kindly providing a towel from the boot of his car. At a subsequent visit to A&E in Reading they patched him up and thought his nose and arm weren't actually broken but gave him a follow-up appointment to confirm this.

On a separate occasion a kind person found our lost keys (also on Bridle Path) and returned them to the address on the key fob even though it wasn't local.

Many thanks to these kind people; your thoughtfulness and kind actions were very much appreciated.

Patricia Paskins

PARISH COUNCIL

Happy New Year to all Woodcote Residents. 2023 is just getting started, the Parish Council holding its first meeting of the year on 4th January 2023.

Towards the end of 2022 the Parish Council received a small grant from SODC District Council, this was an amount of £2000. This will be used towards funding some swings on Folly Field.

The last Correspondent article covered a lot about what WPC have been doing regarding Traffic initiatives in the village. A resident has volunteered to restart the previous "Traffic Group" and run this group to look at traffic issues in Woodcote and report back to the Parish Council. More volunteers are needed to help with this, if you are interested, please email or telephone the Parish Clerk who will pass your details to the Group.

clerk@woodcote-parish-council.org.uk Tel: 01491 68186 (answerphone service). The Parish Office is open Mondays mornings until 12 noon.

Applications Granted by SODC

P22/S3839/HH Application proposal, including any amendments : House extensions and renovations. Conversion and extension of outbuilding to form annex. Detached car port.

(Amended plan received 20th December 2022, reducing the scale of the front dormer windows) Site Location : Field Cottage Tidmore Lane Woodcote RG8 0PH.

P22/S4108/HH Application proposal, including any amendments : Two storey rear extension, incorporating basement. Site Location : Masseys Fighle Tidmore Lane Woodcote RG8 0PH

VILLAGE HALL NEWS

2022 was a year of new beginnings for the Village Hall. We introduced several new events for the Village (and surrounds) including a Spring Fair and Food Fair, a Kids Movie afternoon (in association with FOWPS), and a Film Night, as well as organising a Jubilee Picnic for the Village. We also rejuvenated the old Gypsy Jazz nights with two successful gigs and we have much more planned for 2023. Here are some key dates already in the diary...

Friday 27th January, Film Night

Ticket to Paradise will be showing. Doors open 7 for 7.30pm. Tickets available online, and on the door.

Saturday 25th February, Gypsy Jazz

The Ducato Piotrowski Trio will be playing. Ducato will be joined by Simon Moore and Nick Pini for a night of authentic Gypsy Jazz. Doors open 7.30 for 8pm.

Tickets available online or call 07929 203096.

Sunday 30th April, Woodcote Spring Fair 11am - 3pm

Plants, Crafts and Food. Celebrating local crafters, producers and the best of Spring.

Saturday 9th September, Woodcote Village Fete 12pm - 5pm

All the usual family fun!

Sunday 29th October, Woodcote Food Fair 10.30am - 2.30pm

A top-quality selection of the very best local food and drink producers, hot food and live music.

Bookings of the Village Hall returned to and exceeded pre-pandemic levels during 2022. If you follow us on social media, you will have seen from our recent competition, a minimum of one private party per week was held at the Hall during the year, in addition to the regular activities, community, sports and special events. So, if you're thinking of making use of the Hall, do make your booking in good time. You can check the live Hall diary and book online. However, if you would like to view the Hall, have any questions, or require assistance with a booking, please don't hesitate to get in touch. Contact Louisa by email, woodcotevillagehall@outlook.com or call 07929 203096.

A big thank you to all of our customers and supporters. Whether it's making use of the Hall or simply coming along to one of our events, your support is greatly appreciated and will enable us to continue to make improvements to the Hall and the facilities we can offer. We look forward to seeing you in 2023!

Find the Village Hall online at
www.woodcotevillagehall.com
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JOHN GANT RIP



With the death of John Gant on December 8th, at the age of 87, Woodcote has lost one of its most colourful and well-loved characters. Indeed, the word 'unique' does not sound an overstatement when applied to John. For the many who knew and loved John, the village, especially the area around the Green, will never be quite the same again.

It was testament to the affection in which he was held that St Leonards was full to capacity to bid him a fond farewell at his memorial service on 30th December and what a send-off he was given! His daughter, Catherine paid a moving tribute to John, to whom family meant everything. He had been also a reluctant but successful businessman taking over one of Reading's largest building firms on the death of his father, though he would have preferred and been more suited to a different career. The service also included a truly exquisite musical tribute, 'The Long Day Closes', sung by John's son Andrew, and his grandsons, James and Harry.

In Woodcote, John, who lived here for over forty years, became a familiar figure walking his German Shepherd dogs around the village and for many miles beyond. Then, of course, there was Humphrey, the parrot who also enjoyed a walk and had plenty to say for himself from his cage. Local people will remember the time when Humphrey made a bid for freedom and was missing for a few months. John covered many miles following up sightings of the errant bird until they were finally reunited.

He was deeply affected by the sudden and tragic death of his wife, Vivien, some thirty years ago, but he sought solace in many other activities including his Broad Street Jazz Band, which performed, with John playing the drums, at many local venues. John's Volvo Estate car became a familiar sight with its JAZ number plate, another indication of his love for Jazz.

John's daughter mentioned how much he had loved reading to his own children and John pursued this passion in later life through his voluntary work, listening to children read, at Woodcote Primary School where he was a Governor for a number of years.

Most of all, John loved people and he always found time to stop and chat. He was very well-read and knowledgeable about any subject you care to mention and, in particular he loved this village and its people. He took a keen interest in all local activities and was a keen follower of cricket on the Green, being elected a Vice-President of the cricket club.

Whenever we met, which was often, he was fulsome in his praise of the Woodcote Correspondent, always thanking everyone involved for what he considered to be a vital element in such an active and caring community. He would have been pleased to know that the future of the Correspondent is now secure and it is entirely fitting that we remember him affectionately on its pages.

(A full and detailed obituary can be found at www.henleystandard.co.uk/news/community-news--all-districts-/177400/john-gant-builder-pilot-and-accomplished-jazz-musician.html)

NEW YEAR, NEW LOCATION!

After much deliberation, Woodcote Craft will be moving to a fantastic new venue in the heart of Goring. Whilst we feel sad that potentially our loyal supporters may not be able to venture out to Goring, we are hopeful that the hustle and bustle of the river's edge and its many passers-by will bring back the much-needed footfall for our fellow makers and crafters.

There will be refreshments available for a much-needed pit stop after you've browsed a unique collection of crafts and gifts and perhaps then enjoy a stroll by the Thames on your Sunday afternoon.

For bookings and enquiries, email woodcotecraft_bookings@hotmail.com

We look forward to welcoming you!

The Team at Woodcote Craft

ARE YOU THINKING OF BECOMING A PARISH COUNCILLOR?

Free online sessions are being run by Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils giving details of the basis, and opportunities to ask questions. The sessions are one hour long and there is no need to book:

24th January 7-8pm

13th February 10-11am

15th March 2-3pm

Zoom joining details:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87125012109?pwd=VzZkYzkwajlqTTJSWEdrbmVxTUUs2QT09>

Meeting ID: 871 2501 2109

Passcode: 386520

GORING HEATH BEAVERS

A cracking end to the year!



Christmas at The 'Eef has a time-honoured rhythm – it may seem like a distant memory, but that's how copy deadlines work. The last two meetings of term are always spent carol-singing around Woodcote, this year in seriously sub-zero temperatures which only added to the festive spirit. We had several new victims as well as our regulars, including a select audience at Mowforth House; all seemed delighted to see us. The Beavers were over the moon to receive the occasional bag of sweets, but sung at their victims anyway. Dormouse's hampers, containing treats and chuckle-worthy home-made cards from the Beavers, were presented by way of compensation. Unusually the carols were mainly traditional, with no pop tunes or accompanying dance routines – none had been learned at school. Our zenith of kitsch was some years ago, when Archie (a bright lad gifted with natural rhythm and an urge to perform) grooved along to Jingle Bell Rock before finishing with a big, jazz-hands finale. Outstanding! The Beavers always LOVE the carol-singing forays, which really do spread festive cheer and absolutely make a difference to many. Alex and Emily 'swam up' to Cubs – we wish them luck and laughs in the next stage of their Scouting.

In a break with tradition, and on very short notice, we entered the Black Horse's Christmas tree decorating competition on 18th December. The Beavers were challenged to "channel the art of the gently naff" and make a decoration out of a loo-roll, to be delivered to Midge or, if

they preferred, they could come with parents to decorate the tree themselves. It's not like our Beavers to pass up an opportunity to go to the pub, but in freezing rain Yaroslav and Zoya ended up decorating the tree (giggling all the time) – nice rocket by the way! The knitting wool and tin-foil exhaust plume was perfect.

Alex and Sam came along later to add a rather natty reindeer and a paperchain (their dog had eaten the loo roll penguin). The first bog roll out of the box looked like a vampire sheep – certainly it seemed to have fangs. One of the Angel Gabriels looked terribly rakish and seemed to be channelling his inner Leslie Phillips – ding dong [merrily on high]! We didn't win, but it was a close-run thing, and certainly our tree made a lot of people laugh. £122 was raised for the Abingdon Stroke Unit.

RG8 BADMINTON



New year, new sport?



The club finished another successful season at the end of 2022 in which we welcomed a number of new members. Our final meeting in December featured a fun and festive Christmas tournament with a number of novelty rounds. The eventual very deserved winners were Julie Drury and Peter Baker. Worthy runners up were Helen Kennard and Martin Page

We play at the Langtree Community Sports Hall in Woodcote on Thursday evenings. So, if you're looking for some fitness, fun and friendship in the new year why not contact us?

We welcome both junior (14 years+) and adult members. All that we ask is that you are not totally new to badminton – that you know the rules and basic shots

(even if they don't always work!). Juniors should have received some form of coaching. Fees are the equivalent to £3 per session – half for juniors. We are fully compliant with Badminton England guidance concerning Covid safety precautions.

If you want to know more, then visit our website www.rg8badminton.co.uk or ring Julie on 07980 413026.

WOODCOTE FOOTBALL CLUB

Unusually, since the last match reported which took place on 3rd December, not a single match has gone ahead. We always have a break between Christmas and the New Year, but this time, the weather has also intervened with the ground either rock-solid with frost or flooded due to incessant rain. This means that the second-half of the season is going to be very busy with matches every Saturday and lots of midweek matches once the clocks change. We keep people updated about fixtures through 'Wonderful Woodcote' and we also have a website, www.woodcotefc.co.uk which provides fixture information, match reports and photos. There is also a Facebook site, 'Woodcote Football Club'. Attendances at matches are generally very good, but if you haven't been to support, why not make it a New Year's resolution?

WOODCOTE IN WINTER

(Photos by Stilehopper)



Board Game Club for adults

at **Woodcote Library**

Tuesday 14th February
at 3.30-4.30 pm



and subsequently on the 2nd Tuesday of the month
We look forward to welcoming you!

*If you need assistance getting to the library you can
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**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

THE SNOW POEM

by PaperWaite

The east wind doth blow,
but exceedingly slow,
so that clouds merely hover above.

One thing I know,
is we're bound to get snow,
unless somehow they're given a shove.

No one's around,
as the snow meets the ground,
for it happens during the night.
It makes not a sound,
as it forms a great mound,
which hides all our gardens from sight.

Come the next morn,
some snowmen are born
and snowballs come into play.
They're treated with scorn,
until tired and worn,
we retreat at the end of the day.

Now we've all had our fun,
next day brings the sun,
and the thaw it is certain to bring.
As the icicles run,
and our feet grow less numb,
through the snow pops first crocus of spring.



Photo by Jackie Comrie

FILLING THE GAP

By Anya Decmar

Hopefully you all had a wonderful Christmas/New Year and have remembered by now to start writing 2023 instead of 2022 on everything...

I always find February to be the gap in the year. Other than Valentine's Day (and Pancake Day of course), the month drags on a bit and is still very cold.

But on doing a little research, I discovered there is more to celebrate in February than I realised. For instance, did you know that February is:

Dog Training Month

Black History Month

National Grapefruit Month and

National Bird Feeding Month.

So why not encourage/feed the birds in your garden...or why not learn to love grapefruits? Many I know hate the fruit because of how bitter it is, however, if you cut it in half and sprinkle a good amount of caster sugar on top, it becomes both sweet and sour and is actually quite delicious!

But if that doesn't tempt you, how about some interesting February facts:

- Mary Queen of Scots was beheaded on the 8th, 1587.
- Margaret Thatcher became the first female leader of the Conservative Party on the 11th, 1975.
- Britain became decimal on the 15th, 1971, meaning pennies, bobs and half-crowns were no longer in use.
- The first ever one-pound note was issued on the 26th, 1797.

Who says February isn't an exciting month? If you're still not convinced, whatever day in February you are reading this on, have a search on the internet for what obscure celebration that day should bring. As a last resort, make some pancakes in Shrove's honour!

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WOODCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

2023 began with the sad news that Mr John Gant had passed away. Mr Gant had been connected with the Primary School for many years. He had been a governor here many years ago and still remained a keen believer in education. In recent years he had visited the school to hear children read. His sense of humour and gentle nature made him a pleasure to chat with. Covid stopped the possibility of him coming in of course, but we still kept in touch with him and he would wave from his garden as the children walked to swimming each week. I spoke with him at length when he joined us at the war memorial in November this year. We walked back together and spoke about him coming over to watch the Nativity this Christmas. I learnt so much more about his colourful life when attending the funeral. The church was packed full of friends and family. We will definitely miss him. The family have kindly donated financial tributes in John's name to the school. We will purchase something in his name for all the children to remember him.



We have only been back in school for a fortnight and January weather has been a little miserable but here we are in full energy mode as usual. The choir trip to London is nearly here and a few other trips are being planned including the trip that year 3 and 4 are taking to Stratford-upon-Avon for a Shakespeare workshop with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Whilst there, they will also visit Shakespeare's School room and soak up the atmosphere of that beautiful building.

This term year 5 are taking on a major playwriting project in association with The Oxford Playhouse Theatre. Each week they will be working with a professional actor and playwright. This week they were working on characterisation through drama.

They are building across the weeks to writing their own scripts. They then have the difficult task of selecting one to be sent to the professional actors at the theatre where they will go to see their play performed live on stage at The Oxford Playhouse. This is a fabulous opportunity for them and we are really looking forward to the final product!

Until then, take care everyone and do come and visit!
Mrs L. Hunt

CABIN PRESCHOOL

A bit belated but a very Happy New Year from everyone at the Cabin Preschool. We welcome Vinnie and Ella this term. They joined us in January and are settling in nicely with their new friends at Cabin.

After the excitement of Christmas, our first job of the new term was to write to Santa to say a huge Thank you for all our lovely presents.

This term we will be celebrating the Chinese New Year, and the Year of the Rabbit. We are excited to teach the children about this festival. It's great to celebrate cultural diversity and the children are fascinated by the music, colours, food and stories. We usually like to talk about all the characters in the Chinese Calendar and look up which animal year the children were born under. We will write some Chinese symbols, learn the Lion Dance and learn to say a few words. There will be lots of messy playing with noodles, chop sticks (a firm favourite), rice and maybe a few prawn crackers. We will learn all about Pandas and hopefully watch some live on a web cam.

We started the term with a jolly song: I am the Music Man, which has proven to be a real hit. Over a two-week period, we focus on musical instruments. We have a small electronic keyboard which the children love, not sure my ears do!!! However, we have been able to focus on lots of rhythm and listening skills, tapping sticks and counting the hits, and recognising different instruments which has helped increase their listening skills. We've been listening to and copying sounds in the environment, making sounds such as drip, bubble, swoosh in the water and exploring shaving foam and noodles. During story time, we have been listening and re-enacting sounds in familiar stories, as well as making our own musical instruments out of recycling to play alongside all those activities. Lots and lots of fun.

A huge Thank you to the Rolfe family for the amazing donation of all their unused playdough equipment. The children have loved it and have been making pizzas, cakes, and ice cream using it all. The Rolfe children came to us many years ago and keep in touch. Once a Cabin child, always part of the family and vice versa in this case.

We are ending the term with a Kindness Week. This is just before Valentine's Day and we'll be making hearts, learning about giving, talking about how we can be kind, what makes us happy, and using the colours, yellow and pink to create some crafts. We'll practise sharing our favourite games to play and think about our friends and what we like best about them. These are all great wellbeing and caring activities which are so important in this crazy fast world we all live in.

Our stories for the term are: One Snowy Night, The Music Man, Goldy Luck and the Three Pandas, Panda Bear What do you hear, and finally The Rainbow Fish to finish and complement our kindness week. Every child should read this book; it's one of my top ten.

Just a reminder:

Closing date for Reception applications for a school place is 15th January 2023.

Cabin has places available for most sessions, for more information please contact Jayne on 01491 680854 or email info@thecabinpreschool.com.

Jayne Cole

Manager of the Cabin Preschool CIO,



ARE YOU HAVING A WARDROBE CLEAR OUT?



Langtree school is putting on a production of Bugsy Malone in March and desperately needs some more dresses and accessories. If you can help in any way, please drop off donations at the school office marked for the attention of Mrs Pimm. Thank you!

TREEHOUSE SCHOOL 5K, 10K AND FAMILY RUN - SUNDAY MARCH 26TH 2023



Looking for a challenge for 2023? Train for the Treehouse School 5k or 10k run, set in and around the village of Cholsey, Oxfordshire. The course is almost entirely off-road. The full 5k and 10k route are shown on the website. We use chip-timing, hand-made wooden medal and offer to plant a tree or to give a t-shirt to all pre-registered runners. Trophies are awarded to the first three male and female in the 10k, as well as the fastest male and female in the 5k. For more details or to book your place, or if you would like to volunteer, visit <https://treehouse10k.org.uk/>

WOODCOTE PRESCHOOL



Everyone at Woodcote Pre-School would like to wish you all a very happy New Year, hopefully everyone had an enjoyable and restful Christmas break! We would also like to welcome our new starters who have joined us too.

The topic this term will be "All Around the World". During this time we will celebrate Chinese New Year and explore different Chinese foods, music and culture. Next, we will celebrate Burns' Night and have a traditional Scottish meal. We will also explore Italy and tie that in with Valentine's Day. We are looking forward to making cards for our loved ones, making pizza and trying some more Italian foods. We will also be exploring how we travel to different countries and taking a very exciting trip on the bus! The children have already been busy with their craft projects that will be used to decorate our "All Around the World" display board.

National Storytelling Week is also coming up and we will be enjoying dressing up, making crafts and listening to and retelling our favourite stories.

We would love for lots of you to join us on 15th February for quiz night at The Red Lion. Please contact The Red Lion to book a table.

We still have a few spaces available for 18 months – school age children. If you would like to book a visit, please contact Wendy Powell on 01491 682300 or email woodcote.pre-school@hotmail.co.uk



WOODCOTE'S PONDS IN EARLY SPRING

Did you know that members of Woodcote Conservation Group have practical work party sessions for a few hours on a Saturday morning once a month to take care of several areas around the village for the benefit of wildlife, including the Greenmoor Ponds and Tidmore Pool? Over the centuries, these ponds were important for the people of the parish and their animals, as well as wildlife, providing an invaluable source of water in the dry, stream-less landscape at the top of the Chiltern hills.

There was once a 'dew pond' (a shallow pond, usually man-made, replenished with water from the dew) in the corner of every field for livestock to drink from and they would be used not only by cows, sheep and horses, but by amphibians, insects, small mammals and birds. Over the winter months, although there are few signs of life in ponds, many birds visit to drink and wash, and mammals like deer and foxes will stop by to drink. During mild weather hedgehogs may even emerge from their sleep to take a drink. Although all appears calm, there is also life beneath the water. The bottom of ponds is full of decaying sticks and leaves and nestled within it all are the larvae of beetles and insects, and even adult water beetles which will occasionally return to the surface briefly to take in air. Nymphs of caddisflies, dragonflies and mayflies create a type of antifreeze that prevents the cells in their bodies from rupturing if they get too cold. Nestled in the mud, dragonfly eggs are in diapause, a type of hibernation that prevents them from hatching until the weather warms.

After a winter of peace and quiet, ponds leap into riotous, libidinous life by the end of February. Plant growth begins and the increasing temperature and day length signal to amphibians (frogs, toads and newts) hibernating in and around the pond that it is time to wake up and begin feeding on grubs and insects to fatten up. Toads are more adapted to life on land than frogs and newts, living much of the year in damp places like piles of leaves, but they must return to their natal pond to breed.

Amphibians begin to move in February, the males starting first, toads walking rather than hopping like frogs. They have incredible homing instincts and will travel for several miles, moving at night to avoid predators, risking their lives negotiating obstacles in their way. Crossing roads at amphibian pace is dangerous so the Woodcote Conservation Group operates a 'toad patrol' near the Greenmoor Ponds, the busiest breeding ponds in the village. If you see our signs when you're driving at dusk on mild, damp evenings, please slow right down, for our sake as well as that of the amphibians.

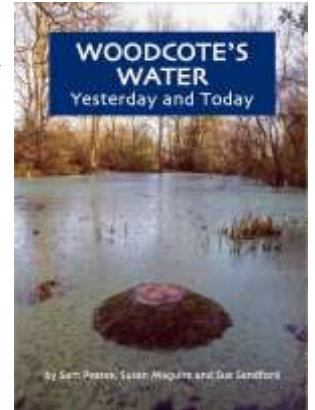
From late February both toads and frogs arrive at ponds. The smaller males climb onto the back of a female for a piggyback and hold her tight in a sexual embrace known as amplexus, his front legs grasped around her to hold on, while he uses his back legs to push away the many competing males. The male does this so that he will be close to her when she lays her eggs into the water, which is when he

deposits his sperm to fertilise them. During the breeding season there is a climax of a few nights, often during the full moon, when the males' night chorus (a sort of purring noise of croaks and whistles) reaches its height.

It's nearly toad patrol time!

The timing of Woodcote's toad migration varies every year depending upon the weather, but this year volunteers will be out at dusk when weather conditions are suitable from *mid-February until the clocks change on Sunday 26th March*. To lend a hand, all you need is a bucket, a good torch and a waterproof coat.

Email info@woodcotecg.org.uk to get involved in toad patrol, help at our monthly conservation work parties, or to join Woodcote Conservation Group or to get a copy of this fascinating account of how local people obtained water



WALLINGFORD PHOTOGRAPHIC CLUB

We continue into 2023 with a mix of online and in-person meetings (the latter at Crowmarsh Pavilion). Our inclusive club allows people of all ages and levels of experience to learn how to improve their photography through conversations with other members, presentations by visiting speakers, practical evenings and competitions. The club meets every Thursday at 7.30pm for an 8pm start (7.45pm start on competition evenings and online sessions).

In February Stephen Ball takes us on a virtual trip to Scotland in a Zoom only session (on 2nd). On the 9th we enjoy a popular members' evening entitled 'you are the judge' where we gather at the Pavilion to appraise a set of members' images, and experience what it's like to be a judge by critiquing and scoring them. Then it's our turn for real on the 16th where the season's themed competition takes place, with the topic for this year being "Action". On 23rd we're online again to learn from J P Stones 'Storytelling for Photographers': how to get narrative into our images.



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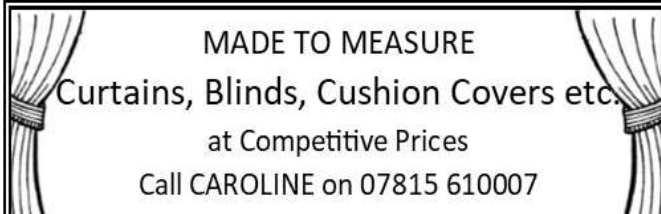
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THE PANCAKE BATTER

By Anya Decmar



I came downstairs and spotted him whisking as fast as he could, tongue sticking out, deep in concentration.

Then the batter was ready and he began to form a careful circle in the pan, swirling it into a thinner smooth pancake. I was called

upon to juice the lemon and prepare the sugar, the maple syrup, the ice cream and the fruit.

The pancake looked ready to flip. He was not ready to flip it. We argued over how many bubbles should form around the pancake and whether that determined the speed at which the pancake cooked. I became frustrated. He refused to flip the pancake, batting me away with his arm, as I watched the smoke cloud around the pancake that I knew was turning black underneath. As we continued to argue, the importance of when to flip the pancake was no longer the subject of our debate and slowly but surely the pancake began to rubberize on top.

He took the spatula out of my grip, slid it under the pancake and flipped it. It was black underneath. I decided it was my turn to take over and so I smugly poured a beautiful circle, swishing it into a larger pancake and turned down the heat. As I monitored the pancake, I decided it was time. It looked ready. It was definitely time. The spatula went under. The pancake was flipped. Somewhat underdone...

WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

It's time for our Annual General Meeting, which will be held in Whitchurch Village Hall on Thursday 16th February at 7.30pm. After the business, there will be a "mystery" presentation by Nick Brazil.

It is an important year for us as by the summer, the society will be thirty years old. During that time we have held exhibitions, published books, heard speakers on all aspects of local and national history, and provided information to enquiries from all over the country. This last year we have heard talks on Oxford castle, Thames Valley artists and writers, the English Civil War, the Romans in Oxfordshire, milestones, South Oxfordshire on canvas, and the Oxford of Inspector Morse as well as looking at local place-names.

We're looking forward to another year of exploring where we live and would like to involve new people in our society. We meet on the third Thursday of the month. Non-members pay £3 to include refreshments, or why not join us for an annual fee of £12?

Do come along for coffee and biscuits from 7pm and give us a try.

LEN PURDY

Fifty years of service with a smile...and plenty of banter!



In 1972 two guys, one named Stan and the other, Rod, came to Woodcote to rent 'a tin shed' from Ryan Hodges at Wards Farm to set up a business for car maintenance and body repairs and so Stanrod Motors was born. With them came a third partner, Len Purdy, whose specialism at the time was bodywork and painting. Over the succeeding years, the business grew, but both Stan and Rod left and Len became sole proprietor. Len has been there ever since, clocking-up fifty years of service to the village of Woodcote and the surrounding area. Indeed, Stanrods has become very much a family business with three generations, son, Graham, and grandson, Chris, now very much a part of the workforce. Chris joined straight from Langtree School, completed his apprenticeship and has been with the family firm for seventeen years.

Len was born in Norfolk, but moved to Pangbourne when he was very young. Educated at Pangbourne School, he left at fifteen, though he admits to not attending much in the last couple of years. In his early years of full-time work, he had a variety of jobs in and around Pangbourne, working in the timber yard, then Wyatt's Builders, delivering coal and at Prestcold in Theale. He began to find his true vocation when he went to drive for Pangbourne Coaches, having achieved his PSV licence. Without prior experience, he managed to rescue and restore a coach destined for the scrap-yard, the future beckoned! In the succeeding years he undertook body repairs for the Reading Borough Council dustcarts. He recalls having to do a complete repaint job because the new Labour Council didn't want their dustcarts blue.

In 1986, Len moved to Woodcote from Upper Basildon and he has resided in the village ever since. Around the same time, it became clear that the success of the business meant that larger premises were needed and in 1988 Len himself built his current unit, jointly owned with Stan. When Stan moved on Len lost half the unit, which was then rented out. He took over the whole unit again in 2007 and has remained ever since.

Then came the age of the computer and Len is quick to pay tribute to the late Ros Clark, his Office Manager, who took it all in her stride and enabled the business to adapt and modernise. In 1995, Ros's son Chris came as an apprentice and is now in his 28th year in the business. Another important advance came in 1993 with Len's decision to become an MOT testing station. The business now has two MOT bays in constant use.

I have always found a visit to Stanrods an uplifting experience. You get a cheery greeting from a skilled workforce at full capacity, but never too busy to stop and listen to your particular tale of mechanical woe. There is always a 'can do' mentality and if there is an immediate solution to the problem it gets done then and there. Of course, all this has been passed on from Len himself. To spend a couple of hours in his company at work, as I did, is to watch something quite unique; a constant flow of smiling clients, to whom time is freely given, explanations provided, the inevitable banter exchanged. Meanwhile, phone calls are immediately answered in the same vein and clients with desperate needs are put at ease with 'bring it in now' even though you sense a work overload. Simultaneously, his workers are back and forth with technical questions, interspersed with cheerful chit chat and more banter, a clear indication they are happy at work. Len's current office staff, Charlynnne and Denise follow the tradition of always welcoming customers with a smile.



Although Len may describe himself as 'retired,' he is anything but. True, he may be missing for a couple of months with his wife visiting relatives in Australia, but when he's in Woodcote there is nowhere he would rather be. I should also mention his prowess at golf, a member and former captain at Goring & Streatley, he plays less now but was once a 'five handicapper'. Len has also shown his interest in the village through his regular sponsorship of both Football and Cricket Clubs, in particular providing the football club with complete team strips on several occasions.

On behalf of local residents, the Woodcote Correspondent is pleased to congratulate and thank Len for fifty years serving our village.

SP

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* Subject to availability of volunteer specialists or equipment on the day.

www.cholseyrepaircafe.com

+ Cholsey Repair Cafe on Facebook

WALLINGFORD & DISTRICT ART CLUB (WADAC)



This month's demo is an illustrated talk, a presentation entitled "Art and the Night", by Robert Kidner, a club member and resident of Woodcote, who has given many illustrated talks to clubs and associations in Oxfordshire.

The presentation is on Tuesday 21st February 2023 and will begin at 8.15pm after the close of the Club's AGM.



Robert will display and discuss a series of famous paintings such as "Silvery Moonlight" by Atkinson Grimshaw, and "The cafe terrace by night" by Van Gogh. He will explain in detail the painting, artist's thoughts, items included in the painting that you may have missed on first viewing and unique techniques the artist has used to highlight certain areas.

The live demonstrations are held at Centre 70. Entry is free to members, £3 for visitors.

Tuesday morning and afternoon art classes: the current term ends on 7th February and Term 2 (6 weeks) starts on 21st February. A few places are available so please contact us if you are interested.

Tuesday social evening and non-tutored workshops at 7-9pm, drop in and have a chat with fellow artists at all levels. Great chance to get back to painting or

starting out. All club members are willing to help new artists.

Workshop on Saturday 11th March is on Landscape, painting Impressionism style, in oil/acrylics with Paul Oakley.

If you are interested in joining us on any of our events or the club, please contact davidbooth7@outlook.com or admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk or tel. 01491 681400.

The club meets at Centre 70, Kinecroft, off Goldsmith's Lane, Wallingford, OX10 0DN.

BRITISH MODERN MILITARY HISTORY SOCIETY

The British Modern Military History Society (BMMHS) based in Woodcote is delighted to confirm the live talk programme for 2023.

All talks take place in the Village Hall in Woodcote starting at 7.30pm. Admission is £8 and includes the talk, light refreshments and snacks. There will also be a raffle. A donation to a military charity of our speaker's choice is made from each talk. To book a place at the talks email us on info@bmmhs.org

Monthly Talks in Woodcote, 2023

Wed 15th February 2023 7.30pm

SBS – Silent Warriors. Speaker Saul David - Historian/author

Wed 15th March 2023 7.30pm

Role of the Medic in Modern Warfare. Speaker David Vassallo, Ret'd Col RAMC

Wed 12th April 2023 7.30pm

History of the Glider Pilot Regiment. Speaker Tony Bray, historian

For all later talks and more details, visit our website: www.bmmhs.org

Monthly Zoom Talks 2023

The programme of monthly Zoom talks for 2023 is currently being finalised. However for the first quarter of 2023, the following Zoom talks are confirmed:

Pearl Harbour. Speaker Jon Parshall author, lecturer

Wed 7th February 2023 7.30pm

Swordfish in the Battle of the Atlantic. Speaker Tudor Rees

Wed 7th March 2023 7.30pm

Operation Freshman – Telemark. Speaker Dr Bruce Tocher

To register for Zoom talks, email us on zoom@bmmhs.org A donation of £5 is requested for each Zoom talk. Details of all Zoom talks and how to make payment can be found on www.bmmhs.org

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WHITCHURCH ON THAMES PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY



We meet on alternate Wednesday evenings from 8pm at Whitchurch Village Hall, Manor Road, Whitchurch. RG8 7EU. On the other alternate Wednesdays, we have Zoom meetings where we feature top level speakers from the world of photography. On the 'Live' evenings in the hall, we also have our own members giving talks on a wide range of subjects. Have a look at our website- www.wotphoto.co.uk

During the season we have battles against other clubs, and internal competitions where there are trophies to be won in the six rounds of ladder competitions for digital images which consist of both open and set subjects, also there are the Natural History and Monochrome trophies up for grabs! Come and visit us to see what we have to offer, you will receive a warm welcome



Now that Christmas is over and we are into 2023, We are well under way and we start our February programme with a meeting at Whitchurch Village Hall on Wednesday 1st of February, with a set subject competition titled The Letter 'H'. which will be judged by Brian Burden LRPS.

The following week on Wednesday the 8th we have a Zoom meeting titled "ASPECTS OF COMPOSITION" presented by Michael Farley LRPS

On Wednesday 15th February, again at village hall, one of our members Nigel Glover-Wright LRPS will present a wildlife talk titled "BOTSWANA – AN AFRICAN JEWEL" this will be in the first half of the evening, and after the coffee break, we stay in Africa with a talk titled "MAASAI MARA – THE GREAT MIGRATION"

On Wednesday 22nd February, we have another zoom meeting titled "A GRAND TOUR OF CHINA" presented by Marilyn and Mike Steward.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Dian Crawford

Not much, according to the Bard. But he did not understand the feelings of some small girls like me, who bitterly resented the one I had been stuck with. I longed to be a Pamela, or a Rosemary, or even a Julie.

Of course nobody could spell or pronounce my name. In letters and school reports, people would add on an a or an e. And my friends simply knocked off the last 2 letters, much to the indignation of my father who corrected them sternly in his schoolmasterly manner, thus frightening them away. And he would take his red pen to any offending reports and cross out the last letter, whichever they had added. He would also correct any mispronunciation. Not DeeAnn, he would say sternly, nor DieAnna. And certainly not Die (which I did not mind at all; indeed I thought it was rather friendly).

Some politicians have rather odd names too. Boris - rather boorish; Rishi - rather dishy. The Royal Family are conventional enough. Charles, William, Elizabeth - all very acceptable. But not really as stately as for example Wenceslas, who really lived up to his regal name, plodding through deep snow to take a Christmas dinner, or even pine logs to a poor man with just a little lad to help him. No wonder we still sing his praises every year! Perhaps it all goes to show that it is really not the name that matters, but what you do.

CITIZENS ADVICE UPDATE

Sign up for low-cost broadband – Citizens Advice tip

Citizens Advice Henley has expressed concern that people in need are not taking advantage of cheap broadband and mobile phone schemes set up specially to help them. Loosely termed "social tariffs" or "essential broadband", these schemes are discounted deals intended for those on Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, and some other benefits.

Statistics show that only 1.2% of those eligible to register for these low tariffs have done so, although they could save over £100 a year.

Social tariffs are provided in the same way as normal phone and Internet packages, but at a lower price. Network providers liaise with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to ascertain customers' eligibility, and the DWP is required to provide only the necessary information, so that personal information remains safe.

At the time of writing, not all telecom companies offer social tariffs but it is possible for those who qualify to switch to a supplier that does provide them. The usual fees for switching contracts, leaving a contract early or terminating them have in many cases been scrapped for those on benefits who qualify for these tariffs – but check with your supplier to make sure.

More information is available on the Citizens Advice website <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk> or you can call Adviceline on 0808 278 7907. You can also go to <https://www.gov.uk> and search for "cheaper broadband" or to <https://www.ofcom.org.uk> (search "social tariffs").

HENLEY AND DISTRICT STAMP CLUB

Spring is starting and the days are getting longer. At the Henley stamp club, we are preparing for our annual auction where you will be able to obtain fantastic material. This year we can proudly announce that we have over 800 lots of excellent quality. Come along to our preview meeting on February 22nd 2023 for what will be auctioned on March 8th.

To learn more about stamps and postal history why not visit us at Bix one Wednesday evening? You can then meet people who find postal history and the story of stamps fascinating too.

Wednesday 8th February – We have a guest speaker to show aspects of "Tasmania"

Wednesday 22nd February – Pre-view evening for the auction on the 8th March evening.

Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at Bix Village Hall at 7.30 p.m.

Visitors and new members are very welcome.

Further details can be obtained by phoning Brian on 01491 681739 or on our website: -

www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk

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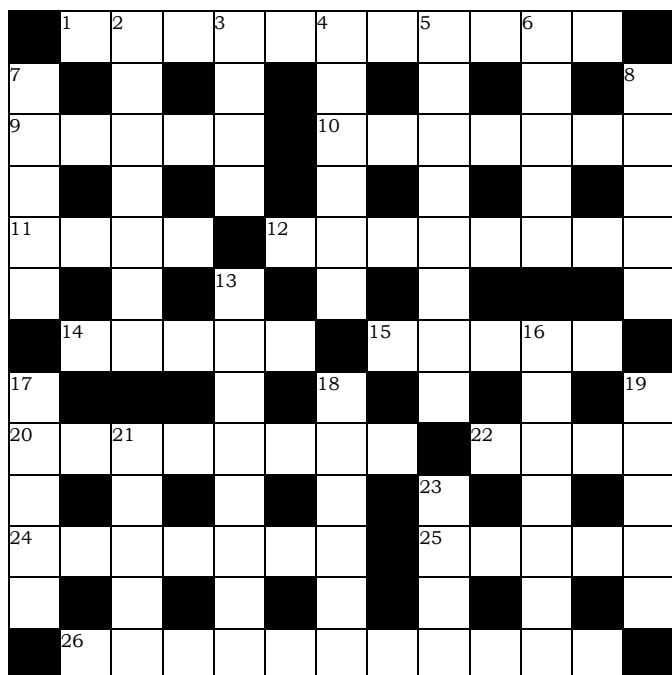
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FEBRUARY CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Give all remodelled and lobby for community centre (7,4)
- 9 Pleasant take on direction of relative (5)
- 10 Calm, impartial judge finally takes opening barrister's letter (7)
- 11 Rain all over the place (4)
- 12 Ben's country (8)
- 14 Game having nothing to do about smell (5)
- 15 Pawnbroker gives endless lunch to back the Spanish (5)
- 20 English agreement rose over blemishes (8)
- 22 Assist with stake (4)
- 24 Principality located in island or Rajasthan? (7)
- 25 Animal also found in Pennsylvania (5)
- 26 Comic, unknown in Home Counties, has opening run on land in country (11)

Down

- 2 Country in charge of antelope (7)
- 3 Rests and tells stories (4)
- 4 Fat, it is said, of the land (6)
- 5 Spooky witch has a French element (8)
- 6 Aye! Bill endlessly goes back there (5)
- 7 Send back help to Northern Ireland here? (5)
- 8 Acts of theologians absorbing 'phone company (6)
- 13 Dictator giving gold to corrupt Croat loses nothing (8)
- 16 The French bar on cedar from here (7)
- 17 State of Geordie friend? (5)
- 18 Discount about club available at last (6)
- 19 Appropriate drink in central Wisley (5)
- 21 Give directions around party
- 23 Not a mate? He's a rock! (4)

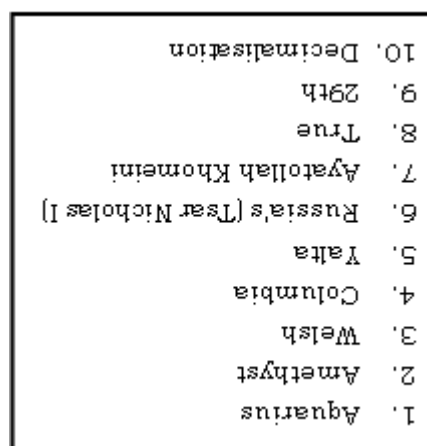
JANUARY CROSSWORD SOLUTION



FEBRUARY QUIZ

1. What star sign are you if you were born in early February?
2. What is the traditional birthstone for February?
3. In which culture is February known as "y mis bach", the "little month"?
4. On February 1, 2003, which Space Shuttle broke apart in flight?
5. In which Black Sea resort city was the Crimea Conference held in February 1945?
6. Which country's leader once said, "I have two generals who will not fail me: Generals January and February"?
7. On February 1, 1979, which leader returned to Iran after 14 years in exile?
8. February is the only month of the year that can pass without a single full moon — true or false?
9. In the DC Comics, on which date in February is Superman's birthday?
10. What happened in Britain on the 15th of February 1971?

QUIZ ANSWERS



DATES FOR THE DIARY

Regular Weekly Events

Every Sunday

** For church services see page 2

Every Monday

** Youth Club – Juniors (year 7's). Woodcote Village Hall. 7.15pm-8.45pm

Every Tuesday

** Youth Club – Seniors (years 8, 9 & 10) Woodcote Village Hall 7.15pm-8.45pm

Every Thursday

** Rhymetime for pre-schoolers. Woodcote Library 10.15am-10.45am

** Chance To Chat. Community Centre Lion's Den 2.30pm-4pm

Every Saturday

** Coffee Shop. Community Centre 10.00-12.30pm

FEBRUARY DATES

Wed 1st	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society: Digital Competition No. 4. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm
Thur 2nd	*	Wallingford Photographic Club Zoom talk: 'Scotland behind the lens'. 7.45pm
Sat 4th	*	Saturday Crafts: Fairy Tale Fun! Woodcote Library. 10.30am-11.30am
Tues 7th	*	BMMHS Zoom Talk: 'Swordfish in the Battle of the Atlantic'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 7.30pm
Wed 8th	*	Henley & District Stamp Club meeting. Bix Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: 'Aspects of Composition'. 8pm
Thur 9th	*	Wallingford Photographic Club members evening: 'You are the judge'. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm
Tues 14th	*	Board Games Club for adults. Woodcote Library. 3pm-4.30pm
Wed 15th	*	Woodcote WI meeting. Woodcote Village Hall. 2.30pm
	*	BMMHS Talk: 'SBS – Silent Warriors'. Woodcote Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society talks: 'Botswana / Maasai Mara'. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm
Thur 16th	*	Wallingford Photographic Club competition: 'Action'. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society AGM. Whitchurch Village Hall. 7.30pm
Tues 21st	*	Wallingford & District Art Club demonstration: 'Art and the Night'. Centre 70, Wallingford. 8.15pm

SMALL ADS

LOCAL HANDYMAN :: No job too small. DIY jobs in and around the home. Kitchen and bathroom renovations undertaken. Call James 07961 882281

FEBRUARY DATES *continued*

Wed 22nd	*	Henley & District Stamp Club meeting. Bix Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: 'A Grand Tour of China'. 8pm
Thur 23rd	*	Wallingford Photographic Club Zoom talk: 'Storytelling for photographers'. 7.45pm
Sat 25th	*	Gypsy Jazz: The Ducato Piotrowski Trio. Woodcote Village Hall. 8pm

FORTHCOMING DATES IN MARCH

Wed 1st	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society: Digital Competition No. 5. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm
Thur 2nd	*	Wallingford Photographic Club interclub competition versus Abingdon. Abingdon. 7.30pm
Sat 4th	*	Saturday Crafts: World Book Day. Woodcote Library. 10.30am-11.30am
Tues 7th	*	BMMHS Zoom Talk: 'Operation Freshman – Telemark'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 7.30pm
Wed 8th	*	Henley & District Stamp Club meeting. Bix Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: 'The Why not the How'. 8pm
Thur 9th	*	Wallingford Photographic Club meeting. TBA. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm

SECONDHAND BIKE SALE

We are looking for any donations for our Massive Second-hand Bike Sale on Sunday May 14th 2023 as part of Wallingford Car Rally. If you have a bike that you would like to donate, then please contact me and I will arrange to have it collected from you. We accept children's and adult bikes, scooters, bike accessories, wheeled toys etc. If you have a bike you would like to sell, then bring it along to the Kincroft on the morning between 9.00am and 10.30am. You will get 75% of the selling price and The Treehouse School will get 25% if it sells. If it doesn't sell it costs you nothing. If you are looking to buy a bike, put the date in your diary! More details from joryman@btinternet.com 07747801264

CLOSING THOUGHT

"After all is said and done, more is said than done"
(Aesop)