



Woodcote

Vol 36 No 1
January 2024

CORRESPONDENT

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

A KILLER WADS PERFORMANCE

The WADS Autumn Production, *The Amateur Killer*, was advertised as a 'chiller thriller' and it certainly lived up to the description.

The cast included most of the Society's experienced performers directed by debutante Producer, Chloe Spiers. Chloe first joined the WADS when she was six and has been a member for twenty years. She must have gained a good deal of her dramatic knowledge from those she found herself directing. She carried it off with aplomb and the actors rose to the challenge and perhaps gained extra incentive from wishing to perform well for their protégé.



The play presented many challenges and was described by Chloe as a 'meta' play, a sort of Russian doll with plots inserted inside each other, each one mirroring the other, which served somehow to create and maintain a tense atmosphere. We, the audience, were there to watch a play; they, the WADS were

there to perform, but the characters were also members of an am-dram group rehearsing a murder play called, *Adieu*. It soon became clear that the 'real lives' of the am-dram players mirrored the *Adieu* characters so that the lines between the two plots became blurred and we became invested in the second plot, the sordid seemingly 'real-life' passions and prejudices of the actors, leading to blackmail and death.

Does the death result from a car accident, or is it murder? Is the dead man the intended victim or is it the result of mistaken identity? Is it significant that two suspects belong to the same running club? Is there something suspicious and sinister about one of the investigating detectives? All these questions need to be answered before the murderer is revealed.

Continued on page 5



WOODCOTE PARISH COUNCIL

Most importantly, best wishes for a happy New Year to everyone. 2024 shows great promise for our community, and the Council is looking forward to the coming year.

We want to welcome two new Councillors. Cllrs Simon Pritchard and Tim Over joined the Council and have immediately got stuck in to helping the council to meet the needs of the parish. We still have three seats open. One individual has expressed interest, and we are looking to have two more people put their name forward to join. If anyone is interested, please ask the Clerk for an Expression of Interest form or contact the Clerk or any Councillor to raise any questions about what being a Councillor is about. Contact details are on the website, or feel free to email clerk@woodcoteparishcouncil.org.uk.

There is other news. Jenny Welham is no longer serving as the Clerk, and as a result, the Council is looking for someone to fill that role. If you would like details of the position and how to apply, please contact clerk@woodcoteparishcouncil.org.uk. Cllr Bryan Urbick has agreed to be the Proper Officer of the Council (an unpaid position that serves as Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer) until such time as the new Clerk/RFO is in place. It is likely that interviews for the role will take place early in the new year.

COMMENT FROM ST. LEONARD'S

The New Year has come upon us.

My family and I have entered the new year by moving into Woodcote. A big thank you to all who have helped us, particularly to our St Leonard's church family for all of your help and support in this move. We also extend a big thank you to the church wardens, Sue and Martin, for all you have done to help us as a family. Additionally, thanks go to our incredible painter and decorator Joe Baker, who went the extra mile to help us out in a move and did a wonderful job in painting our house.

We all experience new things in different way: some of us may welcome them, whereas others try and avoid it if we can. Something can turn our world upside down. For example, a new baby can bring great joy and challenges, as we try to adapt the lack of sleep and baby can bring. Moving house is a very different type of new beginnings. Saying goodbye to the people you knew around your old house, and then packing everything up into box and moving can be a stressful time, as well as exciting.

Everything has a beginning; everyone has a beginning:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness."

Genesis 1:1-5 (NIV)

In the beginning there was nothing, no sound, no substance, no light. There was not a chance set of circumstances. Instead, there was a personal God who, for personal reasons which are mysterious us. He was love, and out of that love chose to utter the cosmos into existence.

As well as being a description that is breathtakingly simple and beautiful, the first chapter of the Bible is notable for revealing to us how the world came into existence. Most of all God saw all the world and said that it "was very good". God looks at his world today, with you and me in it, and he still says those words to us, "very good". "Well done my good and trusted servants".

In all our new beginnings, in this new year that we have started and with all of the new things that this year will bring us, may you know that God is with you. He says how proud he is of you. May you hear the words that he has spoken over you: that he made you and is saying that you are perfectly and wonderfully made.

God bless,

Reverend David Benskin
Team vicar for the Langtree Team

Services at St. Leonard's

We are delighted to offer the following services over January. You are most welcome to attend any or all of them. Please know you are welcome also to bring people with you.

Sunday 7th January

8.00 am Holy Communion

9.45 am Parish Communion

Sunday 14th January

8.00 am Holy Communion

9:45 am Worshipping together

Sunday 21st January

8.00 am Holy Communion

9:45 Open doors

Sunday 28th January

8.00 am Holy Communion

9.45 am Parish Communion

Online Services

We continue with our online service of Night Prayer every Tuesday at 8.30 pm on Zoom. This follows the ancient monastic pattern of Compline and lasts for about 20 minutes. Join us from the comfort of your home with a hot drink as we finish the day with prayer. A warm welcome awaits.

If you would like to join us, please email me:

Rev'd David Benskin: revdbenskin@gmail.com for the contact details.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



This month's issue was edited in bursts around looking after a newborn who arrived at the end of November. Thank you to all the contributors who provided articles early in the hope of getting the

issue sorted before the expected due date. If only babies arrived (or did anything) on schedule...

I enjoyed the opening night of WADS' production of *An Amateur Killer*. I was happy to hear that their audiences are growing with each performance and look forward to the next one.

I'd like to welcome the new Parish Councillors. There are still a few open seats, and I'd encourage all members of the community to consider joining in the effort.

Happy New Year,

Nick

PUBLISHER INFORMATION

Editor: Nick Kolpin *[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

Advertising:	Claire Jones	07789 190463
Treasurer:	Helen Baker	07047 097787
Production:	Dan Oldfield	01491 681962
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.

Woodcote Village Hall

Private Hire

Flexible spaces & facilities suitable for events, parties, meetings, film, music, education, workshops, sports, exercise, regular classes...

Regular Events

Spring Fair, Food Fair, Music, Film...

Woodcotevillagehall@outlook.com
Woodcotevillagehall.com

YOUR LOCAL DESIGN & PRINT SERVICE
WHILE-YOU-WAIT COPYING / PRINT FROM USB

5 mins from Goring centre + we can deliver

Copying - Printing - Laminating - Binding - Stationery
Booklets - Brochures - Cards - Flyers - Leaflets - Pads
Manuals - Conference & Training Materials - Theses
Bespoke Ring Binders - Tabbed Divider Sets + more...

>Design >Print >Finishing >Fulfilment >Mailing

01491 871555 a1sovereign.co.uk

PILATES, WELLNESS & COMMUNITY

NEW COURSE
Monday 10am
Stoke Row Village Hall
8/01-12/02
Free trial class

Vanessa Mansergh m.07906 186912
GORING, STOKE ROW, NETTLEBED
www.threepillarsofhealth.co.uk

THAMES

Building Solutions Limited.

- ▼ Extensions
- ▼ Alterations
- ▼ Refurbishment
- ▼ Patios
- ▼ Brickwork
- ▼ Carpentry
- ▼ Floor & wall finishes

The complete building service

TEL. 01491 680 389 / 07956 966 089

Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of information printed in this paper, the Editor and Committee cannot accept responsibility for the contents of advertisements or any errors that may occur. Opinions expressed are those of the contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or Committee.



Beacon Flooring

A Family Run Business

**Carpet Wood
Karndean Vinyl**

Free fitting on carpet orders over £150

16 High Street, Goring. 01491 454095

beaconflooring@aol.co.uk

www.beaconflooring.co.uk



Rosie Care

TEL: 01491 682437 MOB. 07966509908.

PUBLIC LIABILITY, OWN CAR, TRAINED, DBS,

EXPERIENCED, DEMENTIA, PALLIATIVE.

Local Professional Cleaner

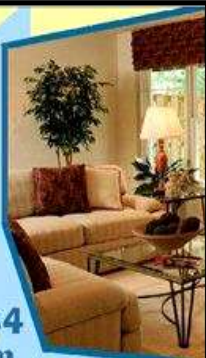


Come home to a

**CLEAN
HOUSE!**

Call Carol: 07782-373-434

Email: infocarol@mail.com



Honest, Reliable, Trustworthy, Competitive & Friendly
Fixed Weekly Hourly Rates.

Computer Problems?

Free quote – No fix no fee

Michael Harper

Over 500 happy customers
in Sonning Common
and Woodcote.



www.MiloTechnicalSupport.com

0118 972 4905



secure
pest management

- WASPS & ALL INSECTS
- RATS, MICE, MOLES & SQUIRRELS
- **PROMPT SERVICE**

MARK DEARLOVE
(01491) 833282
07446 377816



BONNER LOCKSMITHS

**INSURANCE APPROVED
DOOR & WINDOW LOCKS
SUPPLIED & FITTED (BS3621)**

DOMESTIC & COMMERCIAL PREMISES
DIGITAL LOCKS GRILLES BARS
ALL AREAS COVERED

CALL OUT
SERVICE

**01491
680216**

**FULL MEMBER
OF BRITISH
LOCKSMITH
INSTITUTE**

Crestwell House, Beech Lane
WOODCOTE, READING

LITHO & DIGITAL PRINTING

- STATIONERY • FLYERS
- LEAFLETS • NEWSLETTERS
- POSTERS • MULTI-PART INVOICE SETS
- BROCHURES • COMPLETE FINISHING SERVICE

CZ SERVICES

Call: 07860 630 865

cz.services3@outlook.com

WOODCOTE VOLUNTEERS

A Happy New Year to all!

2023 Roundup

2023 was a year of development for us. We started 2023 with 34 drivers and we now have 46, which is a huge improvement for us as the number of requests for help has increased significantly during the year. Thank you to everyone who has stepped forward to offer their time to help others in our community. We welcome our new drivers this month: David and Rosemary, Jo, Jon and Robin. They have already started in their role and will enjoy getting to know our clients. We have also been fortunate to secure a new office helper, Carol, so clients might speak to her if they call on a Friday morning. We thank all our new volunteers who have joined us this year, your help means so much.

We celebrated our 40th anniversary with a party at the Village Hall in February. It was a wonderful evening enjoyed by volunteers, clients and guests with some moving talks from various speakers. Our drivers benefitted from St John's Ambulance emergency first aid awareness training. We circulated useful info sheets to all clients who requested them, which tell them about what's on in the villages, what help is available and how to access further support. We have also circulated Age UK Winter Wellbeing Packs to clients. We operated stalls at Whitchurch Hill and Woodcote Fetes (the latter on the hottest day of the year – phew!), helped at the Woodcote Rally and held two fundraising coffee mornings. We ended the year in style, putting the finishing touches to our new bookings website and we purchased a computer for our office. The office team and drivers will benefit hugely from the new system which makes finding a driver much quicker. To request a driver phone the office as usual, giving us as much notice as possible, please.

Looking forward to 2024

We are hoping for stability in 2024 but will be as busy as ever, no doubt. We have a good complement of drivers but can always use more, so if you are reading this and thinking of joining us, please don't hesitate, we need you! As last year, we will be holding our AGM in April, two coffee mornings in June and October, will be helping at the Rally and will run stalls at local village fetes.

To finish...

As usual, if you need a driver, please don't hesitate to call our office on 01491 681171. We collect from Woodcote and immediately surrounding villages.

Please give us as much notice as possible before the date you need us. One of our friendly office workers will answer the phone between 9.30 and 11am on weekdays (excluding public holidays) and you can leave a message on the answerphone at other times.

Find out more about us by looking at our website at www.woodcotevolunteers.org.uk or visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/woodcotevolunteers.

WADS KILLER PERFORMANCE

Continued from page 1

James Peedell as Lucas Thompson, the leading man, portrayed the complexities and contradictions of Thompson's character with growing confidence. His affair with Natalie Prescott formed the central theme of the plot. Natalie, played effectively by Hellen Coyne, failed to persuade Thompson to leave his wife. Daniel Healey, *Adieu's* director, an employee made redundant by Thompson, set-out to blackmail him over the affair. James Mathers was wholly credible as the amoral, arrogant womaniser, a man with a grudge, but with his own frailties, owing money to criminal elements.

Heather Simpson was well-suited to the part of Audrey Critchley the general dogsbody of the society, fiercely protective of her daughter and anxious about her relationship with Healey. Gillian Fowmes performed well as the naïve Lauren Critchley, besotted with Daniel Healey, but also devoted to her mother. Terry Sopp as the very dubious drama critic, asking too many of the wrong questions, and a blackmail accomplice, used his experience well in an uncharacteristic role. Natalia Ruiz-Moreno gave a top-rate performance as Lucas Thompson's wife, Rosie. She brought passion and pathos to the role and won both the sympathy and the empathy of the audience as the injured party driven to the end of her tether. The rather plodding Detective Gregson was a good part for Patrick Thomas, and Sue Clark as the 'bent' detective sounded the right enigmatic notes.

Finally, after all the twists and turns, all the loose ends appeared to have been tied, but we couldn't be sure which play we had been watching – it didn't matter! Had we stumbled into a den of vice and intrigue in the shape of the Novershell Amateur Dramatic Society? Thankfully not! They were real people performing a play! Or were they? Of course! They were the Woodcote Amateur Dramatic Society performing *The Amateur Killer* and, as ever, doing a great job! Ah well! 'All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players,' (William Shakespeare, 'As You Like It').

SP



ADVANCED PEST CONTROL

of Ewelme
Established 1970



HOUSEHOLD, GARDEN & FARM PESTS
wasps, rats, mice, rabbits, cluster flies
and all other insects
dealt with promptly

Lee Carrington

Field View, 97 The Street
Crowmarsh Gifford
Wallingford

Tel: 01491 835610
Mobile: 07970 010214

Heating, Plumbing and Bathroom Installations

Neil McDougall

- ◀ Local plumber
- ◀ Over 30 years experience
- ◀ Gas Safe Registered
- ◀ Free estimates

Phone 01491 680141

mcdougallneil@yahoo.com



R Hazell Recycling Waste

Licence Waste Carrier - CB/QP3698MJ

Waste Management Licence No. WML86315

4yd skip - £170 + VAT

6yd skip - £240 + VAT

8yd skip - £290 + VAT

12yd skip - £390 + VAT

Roll On/Roll Off Skips Also Available

Ring 01491 699101

Shaun Guard TV & WIFI SERVICES

- Aerials - supplied, repaired & poor reception solved
- Satellite - Sky Q dish upgrades, discreet dish installation
- Internet / WiFi - blackspots cured, internal & external data cabling
- TVs - hung on your wall or set up and tuned



OXFORD AERIALS

www.oxfordaerials.co.uk

shaun@oxfordaerials.co.uk

Call Wallingford 01491 833282

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I want to say a big thank you to Jenny and Ernie who helped me when I had my mobility scooter accident at the beginning of September. An ambulance was called, and I was taken to RBH (where it was found that I'd broken 2 bones in my left ankle). Jenny and Ernie also looked after my scooter, and charged it up so that Linda's son, Alexander, could drive it back for me.

It is so nice to know the elderly are looked after. We are so lucky in Woodcote.

Thank you again,

David Jennings

Dear Editor,

I was both sad and angry when reading the recently announced proposed changes to the UK visa requirements. This is an issue I care about because my family has been through the UK immigration system. It is easy for me to imagine the impact the new rules would have had on us, and it horrifies me. In short, I would have been kicked out of my own country to keep my family together.

My wife is a US citizen. We first met and began dating during our undergraduate degrees when she was here on a one-year student visa. The next year our relationship became long distance as she returned to the US. We were married when she returned, on another student visa while we were both DPhil students at Oxford.

My wife was able to stay in the UK with me after she graduated, on a family visa. One of the requirements was that I was employed and earning enough to support the two of us. At the time, the salary requirement was only slightly above a full-time minimum wage. My wife required three family visas before she was able to apply for her permanent right to remain, and then finally citizenship. She is now a dual UK/US citizen, and we are very relieved that she successfully navigated the complex, expensive process to allow us to stay here together.

The proposed new visa legislation which more than doubles the salary requirement (from £18,600 to £38,700) for a spouse to be admitted would have meant, at the time, that she wouldn't have been eligible for a visa. The new threshold is set so that only the top 25% of families with a single earner would be allowed to sponsor a family visa. Under the new system, my wife and I would not have been able to remain as a family in the UK.

The new threshold has been announced to come into effect with less than six months' notice. Unless they already met the new requirement, anyone preparing to apply or renew a family visa within the last six months will have had their hopes dashed and future plans devastated. The message this sends is clear. Migrants can never consider themselves or their families to be secure. They can expect the government to change the rules to kick them out whenever their visa needs renewing. Had we been going through the process now, I would have to leave the country of my birth to keep my family together.

Yours sincerely,

Name and address withheld.

WOODCOTE FOOTBALL CLUB

Two hundred up for Toby Nowell

Woodcote striker, Toby Nowell reached the milestone of two hundred goals for the club when he scored in the game against Thame United on November 11th. That game saw the first team progress to the quarter-final of the Oxfordshire Intermediate Cup with a 2-1 win. The other goal came from Archie Clark. Toby's first goal for Woodcote came in 2009, but this is only his eighth full season with the club after he spent a couple of seasons at Abingdon United and Thatcham Town and then lived in Australia for five years.

The next time Toby took to the field he scored four goals in the Oxford Charity Cup as Woodcote beat Hailey, from the Witney area, 7-4 to progress to the quarter-final in that competition. The other goal scorers were, George Scoffham, Ben Rusher and Joe Webber.

On 2nd December, the first team got to play a league game at last and an 8-1 win at Compton saw that man, Toby Nowell, score an astonishing six times with the additional goals coming from Rhys Gray and Joe Webber. Woodcote are now fifth in the league but with games in hand on most of the other teams in the North Berks League Division One.

North Berks League, Division One

		Played	Points
1	Abingdon Utd Dev.	7	19
2	Dorchester	8	14
3	Compton	9	14
4	Berinsfield	7	13
5	Woodcote	5	10
6	Drayton	8	7
7	Steventon	6	6
8	East Hendred	8	6
9	Long Wittenham	6	3

The young Development team, usually with up to ten teenagers in the squad, have not experienced the success of their seniors and despite some good performances they have been on a losing streak. They lost away at Kingston Colts by 2-1 (goal scored by Tommy Brownlow), 2-0 away at Drayton and 3-2 at home to Benson Lions (goals by Ben Morgan and Jasem Ferjani). This leaves them just above the relegation zone in Division 2 of the North Berks League. We are fortunate to have a good number of young players starting out in adult football and we are confident that the future is bright for the club.



North Berks League, Division Two

		Played	Points
1	Frilsham	9	20
2	Benson Lions	9	18
3	Kingston Colts	10	17
4	Lambourn	7	16
5	Letcombe	9	16
6	Abingdon Abbots	5	13
7	Drayton	9	13
8	Sutton Courtenay	8	10
9	Woodcote Dev.	9	6
10	Burghclere	10	6
11	Grove	7	0

SP



J Roxborough Services

Tel: 01235 203881 Mob: 07909931601

Providing Commercial & Residential Maintenance Services
All building maintenance & small building works undertaken.

- } Full property renovations
 - } All aspects of plastering & rendering undertaken
 - } Floor & wall tiling
 - } Painting & decorating
 - } Brickwork repointing
 - } Roof repairs
 - } Bathroom & kitchen fitment
 - } Fascia & gutter replacement
 - } Free quotes, fully insured, recommendations freely available.
- johnroxborough@hotmail.co.uk

T&S Tomalin & Son Funeral Directors

24 hours service | Private client parking | Private chapel of rest
Free home visits | Pre-paid funeral plans | Full written estimate
Woodland funerals | Religious & non-religious services | Competitive prices

Call Bruce Jones or Claire Jones

01491 573370

www.tomalins.co.uk office@tomalins.co.uk
Anderson House, 38 Reading Road, Henley-On-Thames, RG9 1AG



A Family Run Independent Funeral Service

BOUCHIER BOUCHIER FENCING LIMITED

www.bouchierfencing.co.uk



Bouchier Fencing Ltd
Goring Road
Woodcote
Reading
RG8 0QD



- Quality Fencing
- Handcrafted Gates
- Landscaping Timbers
- Oak Framed Buildings
- Garden Structures
- Porches & Trusses
- Timber Cladding
- Fencing Panels
- Pergolas
- Decking & Sleepers

Tel: 01491 681265 Email: sales@bouchierfencing.co.uk

Vehicle Air Conditioning Re-Gas and Repairs

N.J Car Services
Crays Pond Garage

☎ 01491 681975
☎ 07989 983381



WOODCOTE CONSERVATION GROUP

The wonder of trees

Spending time outside in our gardens or the countryside is good for our health and Woodcote Conservation Group wishes everyone a happy and healthy new year. Woodcote, which was first documented in 1109, means "cottage in the wood" and we are still surrounded by trees. Trees matter. Since the dawn of time humans have lived alongside them, using trees to aid our survival and now their importance for wildlife, our mental health and as a means of sequestering carbon are well recognised. Each month this year we will share some facts about one of our native tree species. Associated with the Chiltern hills for centuries, we start with common beech.

Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

Beech is native to southern England where it is second only to oak in importance as a broadleaved woodland tree. Beech will grow on poor, extremely acid, sandy soils as well as on shallow, chalky and even slightly alkaline soils.

Beech is a shade-tolerant tree able to regenerate under the shade of other trees, though seldom under other beeches. The dense green deciduous foliage casts deep shade under which little else grows, leaving a carpet of beech mast and leaf litter. Did you know that some trees produce tannins to make leaves less palatable to invertebrates and herbivores, and to protect leaves from microbial decay? The tannin content also slows the breakdown of the leaves on the ground with tough, bitter leaves such as beech taking a year to decompose which is why there are so many leaves to scuff in beech woods when you are a child! The leaf litter tends to acidify woodland soils over a long time which may also inhibit other growth.

As well as being an impressive tree and the dominant species in woods around the village, beech is also used in hedges. In the village of Meikleour, near Perth in Scotland, is the longest hedge in Britain. Recognised by the Guinness Book of Records as the highest hedge in the world, it was planted in 1745 and is a third of a mile long (530m) and 100ft (30m)

THE BLACK LION

Freehold Public House



John & Maggie
welcome you

Tel: 01491 680625

high. The story goes that the men who planted it were called to fight in the Jacobite Rebellion and none of them survived. In tribute, the trees were allowed to grow and the hedge acts as a living landmark to them.

Normally reaching 30 - 40 metres when mature, beech trees live for around 250 years, much longer if they have been pollarded. A form of traditional tree management, to pollard a tree is to cut it above the browsing height of large animals (at least 2 m above ground level). The tree re-grows with a multiple stemmed crown and would traditionally be cut on short rotations, typically every 7-15 years, to produce crops of poles. You can often find ancient, pollarded beech trees on boundary banks in woods. They make unmissable landmarks and were used like signposts by travellers.



Beech trees in College Wood on a frosty morning.

Beech wood bends beautifully and can be turned easily, making it an ideal material for furniture, particularly chairs. It is fine grained and knot free and its light red brown colour with darker flecks polishes to a superb natural finish. Beech chairs have been made in the Chilterns for centuries. The chairmakers, or 'bodgers', once worked in the woods using pole lathes to turn chair legs and stretchers.

We hope you enjoy our articles in the Correspondent. Woodcote Conservation Group run events throughout the year about the wildlife and green spaces around the village including guided walks. We also meet on the third Saturday of most months to care for Greenmoor Ponds and Tidmore Pool. Why not make lending a hand at one of these 'green gym' sessions your new year's resolution? For more information about our activities and how to become a member, see our website <https://woodcotecg.org.uk/>

Woodcote Conservation Group

WOODCOTE & GORING HEATH POPPY APPEAL 2023

Just wanted to say a huge thank you for the donations towards this year's Poppy Appeal. In cash, we raised £2,327 which is comparable to 2 years ago, (last year was £2,894). However, we are still to find out from RBL Head Office of any donations paid via credit card using the QR code link. So, we could have a higher final total in due course. But thank you all for your generous support.

A big thank you, also, to all our wonderful local businesses, pubs, schools and house-to-house collectors who happily have a Collecting tin across Woodcote, Goring Heath and Whitchurch Hill. We just couldn't do it without you. Every penny counts so every collecting tin on show really is very important.

With that in mind, we wish you all a Very Happy and Healthy 2024. And we will start all over again in November!

Kind regards

Linda Burton and David Jennings
Joint Poppy Appeal Organisers for Woodcote & Goring Heath

U-Connect Electrical

ALL ASPECTS OF ELECTRICAL WORK UNDERTAKEN

- EMERGENCY CALL-OUTS
- INSTALLATIONS & MAINTENANCE
- NEW BUILDS, EXTENSIONS & GARDEN ROOMS
- EXTRA LIGHTING & SOCKETS
- INSPECTION & TESTING
- CONSUMER UNIT UPGRADES
- CENTRAL HEATING & BOILER WIRING

FAMILY RUN SINCE. 2008 WITH OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE

FREE OF CHARGE - NO OBLIGATION QUOTATIONS

07933 366 866

www.u-connectelectrical.co.uk

mortimer burnett

Chartered Accountants & Business Consultants

New business? We can help you grow!

01491 874332

admin@mortimerburnett.co.uk

www.mortimerburnett.co.uk

The White House, Mill Road, Goring on Thames, RG8 9DD

Woodcote Pre-School

01491 682300
 woodcotepreschool.co.uk
 fb: @woodcotepreschoolcio

Located in Woodcote Village Hall overlooking the Green, we offer a **relaxed and happy environment for playful and creative learning for children 18 months to 5 years.**

- Varied curriculum of activities
- Large indoor and outdoor area
- Fresh homecooked meals
- Holiday Clubs for children 2-8 years
- Flexible choice of sessions

Open Mon-Fri, 8:30am-3:30pm

Arrange a free trial session for your child now
 Registered charity number: 1180657 • Ofsted URN: 2558022



D J SCOTT ELECTRICAL SERVICES

Your Local Electrician

- All aspects of Electrical work undertaken
- Free no obligation quotes
- NICEIC Part P Registered

Call Daniel on – 07834365331

www.djscottelectrical.com

Email- info@djscottelectrical.com



GARAGE

LONG ESTABLISHED QUALITY

Family Run Garage in Woodcote Since 1979

All Makes of Cars & Small Vans:

- Serviced
- Repaired,
- Painted
- MOT-Tested.
- Including JAGUAR Cars.

LOAN CAR AVAILABLE IF REQUIRED

Contact Terry * Lee or Janet. on 01491-680286

Email tscars@live.co.uk

Web Address tscars-woodcote.co.uk

VILLAGE HALL NEWS

And just like that 2023 is over. Another busy year which has seen a lot of improvements at the hall. With a new booking system, key-less access, online calendar, booking and payment in place, we have moved another step closer to our goal of the hall becoming quicker and easier to access, with an expanded range of facilities.

Our regular Film Nights have become a firm favourite with audiences. New surround sound speakers combined with the big screen, comfortable chairs, a cosy atmosphere, reasonably priced bar and a very reasonable ticket price mean the Village Hall Cinema experience is not to be missed. It's also a great opportunity to catch up with friends and neighbours and all within walking distance!

We've held several sold-out nights of Gypsy Jazz in the hall during 2023 with top-class musicians attracting audiences from far and wide, cementing the village hall's status as a premier Gypsy Jazz venue.

The Spring Fair and Food Fair drew a great selection of authentic artisan makers and producers to the village once again and both events were very well attended.

The support for the Village Fete was also unwavering in the year which will go down as 'the one with heat wave'. Despite the conditions, the fete committee ploughed on and delivered another fantastic day which was enjoyed by all, not least the ice cream man!

Once again, we must thank the volunteer committee who organise the Village Fete, and the Woodcote Rally for their very generous donations to the hall, both of which will enable us to continue the rolling programme of improvements into 2024.

We already have some exciting events planned for the new year which include a brand-new comedy night with Laughter Craft Comedy on Friday 1st March. Three TV comedians will be coming to the village to entertain us, these include Mike Gunn – Michael McIntyre's Road Show, Laura Lexx – Live at the Apollo and Mock the Week and Award Winning Comedian Keefy Jewell. All held together by Laughter Craft's own Jonathan Elston.

We are very lucky to have The Remi Harris Hot Club Trio joining us on Saturday 13th April for a night of the very best Gypsy Jazz. Acclaimed guitarist Remi Harris will be joined by double bassist Tom Moore and rhythm guitarist Chris Nesbitt, they present an evening of music ranging from the acoustic jazz of the 30s and 40s to the electric blues of the 60s and 70s; influenced by such greats as Django Reinhardt, Peter Green, Wes Montgomery, Jimi Hendrix and more. The show is not to be missed!

We also have two more Film Nights planned for the evenings of Friday 26th January and Friday 22nd March. Further information and tickets for the village hall events can be found at www.woodcotevillagehall.com. Alternatively, please feel free to call Louisa on 07929 203096.

Don't forget to check out the huge range of regular clubs, meetings and activities which take place at the hall. Join us on social media to keep up to date with everything happening at www.facebook.com/woodcotevillagehall/.

BOARD GAMES GROUP GOING STRONG INTO ITS SECOND YEAR

It's just over a year now since the Board Games Group started meeting once a month in Woodcote Library. A wide range of board games are available and sometimes members bring along their own favourites - anyone for Triominos (a triangular version of dominoes)? Pictured are members enjoying games of Scrabble, Othello and Blokus at our November meeting.

We are always keen to welcome new members (adults only, sorry) and anyone who has difficulty with transport can get in touch with Woodcote Volunteers (01491 681171), who will do their best to help. Tea, coffee and biscuits are provided and there is no charge. Meetings are held in the library on the second Tuesday of the month at 3.30 – 4.45 pm - and the next meeting will be on Tuesday 9th January. Please contact Brian Forde (b.g.forde@gmail.com) or the Librarian, Lisa Trood (Lisa.trood@oxfordshire.gov.uk), if you need any further information.



THE CASE OF THE DISHWASHER DEBATE

Lately, on account of my wife having a painfully arthritic wrist, I have been entrusted with unloading the dishwasher. (Needless to say, it will be a long while before I am judged competent enough to load the dishwasher.) It has struck me that this operation is made quite needlessly hazardous by my wife's insistence on loading the knives and forks with handles down and blades/tines up, in a manner perfectly designed to lacerate and impale the groping hand. Now, as a mere man, it strikes me as a no-brainer that it should be the other way round. I mean, if you were offering someone a knife, surely you would present it handle-first? I tackled her about this.

'I've always done it that way' was her first response.

This struck me as an insufficient argument. You can justify anything by an appeal to historical precedent. 'But we've always sacrificed a virgin on the first of May. But we've always stoned adulterers to death. But we've always burned wives on their husband's funeral pyre. But we've always eaten members of the next tribe'.

My wife shifts ground a little. 'Well, the book says do it that way.'

I am deeply suspicious. Does she mean that there is a sort of Dishwasher's Bible? 'The Lord said unto Moses, and I command you this also: that your womenfolk load their dishwashers with the sharp bits of their cutlery pointing up, such that their menfolk when asked to help impale their tender digits upon these, for is it not written that in blood and pain shall man labour all the days of his life?'

'What book?', I ask.

'Oh, I don't know. Anyway, everyone knows that that's the way you do it.'

'Do they really?' I say. I have an inspiration. 'Let's ask Google'.

Alas, Google proves to be a miserable compromiser, a pusillanimous fence-sitter. Site after site returns the same message: 'Load your forks and spoons handle down to make sure the dirtiest parts get cleaned the most thoroughly. For knives, however, you're going to want to load them blade down, handle up to prevent you from cutting yourselves when unloading.'

Google, you are an idiot. Have you ever actually unloaded a dishwasher? It's not the knives that are the main problem. I mean, we're not talking Samurai swords here; most table knives are fairly blunt. Whereas the forks are specifically designed to attack the tender fingertips.

I feel I have won this debate, but alas, as many a husband has found out, what use are logic, moral force and simply being *right* when arguing with a wife armoured in her domestic certainties? One might as well deploy a peashooter against cannon. 'Well', she says, 'I've always done it that way and that's the way I do it'.

So that was the end of that debate. I wonder if one can get special fingertip protectors for use when unloading dishwashers. I know, I'll ask Google...

David Sutton

REGISTERED OSTEOPATH

KAREN L. PHILLIPS D.O.

WOODCOTE PRACTICE 01491 684060

Flexible appointment times
Private Health Insurance Provider

The Boathouse
Dental Surgery

Tel: 01491 872394
www.boathousedental.co.uk

Show off **your** smile
with straighter teeth!

Enhance your appearance,
ask us about Invisalign®
clear braces.

"Amazing service and care from start to finish"
Brenda Butcher

High Street, Goring on Thames,
Oxfordshire RG8 9AB

Call 01491 872394
to book a consultation
Email reception@boathousedental.co.uk

Licenced Waste Carrier

CB/TM3389SD
Not just a man with a van!
I'm Brian, call for a free quote!

 **01491 682346**
07729 968753

I recycle as much as I can!
also offered!

Local collection/delivery of large items including
eBay purchases, fridges, cookers, motorcycles etc

email **bft.services@yahoo.com**

J & R Collier

 **BUILDERS** 

- Building & Property Maintenance
- Listed Building Work
- Extensions
- Roofing
- Plastering
- Decorating
- Plumbing

01491 680779 or 0118 9451518

November Financial Services
INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVISERS

We offer a comprehensive range of financial services

To arrange a **FREE consultation** please call
01491 683777 or email **jp@novfin.co.uk**

November Financial Services Ltd. is authorised and
regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority

 Investments • Life Assurance • Pensions

Computer Problems?

PC misbehaving?

Fault diagnosis, Maintenance & Upgrades, Networking,
Data Recovery, Virus Cleaning, Broadband,
Telephone Cabling & Extensions, TV, Mobiles,
Website Design, Development & Hosting, and much more.
Home and Business Support.
Windows and Mac.

01491 680036 or 07961 476664
mail@influentialcomputers.com
www.InfluentialComputers.com
Robin, Henry and Angus Piercey
Influential Computers Ltd - A Family Run Business Since 1984

Fireplace Magic

Fires, Stoves & Fireplaces

- Installation
- HETAS registered
- Woodburner servicing
- Chimney sweeping

10% DISCOUNT
ON CHIMNEY SWEEPING
IF QUOTE "CORRESPONDENT"

Showroom at: 45 Prospect Street, Caversham RG4 8JB
Telephone: 0118 9463060
www.fireplacemagic.co.uk

LOCKSMITH **ACG SERVICES**

Locks changed, fitted, repaired & opened.
Yale locks, five lever mortice locks, digital locks,
UPVC door locks & handles, UPVC window locks.

Emergency callout service

Over thirty years of experience. Free quotations
Tel: **01491 682050** or **07710 409216**
www.acgservices.co.uk

Office: 3 Wayside Green, Woodcote, Oxon RG8 0PR. Proprietor Richard Hornden

J & L LANDSCAPING

FENCING, PATIOS and DRIVES, ROOF REPAIRS
GENERAL BUILDING, TURFING, REPLACEMENT
OF FACIA BOARDS, SOFITS and GUTTERING

PHONE: 01491-681367 or 07961-882281
Email: jimmyhearn69@hotmail.com

Free Quotations
FAST and FRIENDLY SERVICE



SATURDAY MORNING COMMUNITY COFFEE SHOP

Firstly, a big thank you to all the groups and customers who helped to relaunch the Coffee Shop in 2023.

The Saturday Morning Community Coffee Shop at Woodcote Community Centre was set up in 2002. Since then, it has been used by over 50 different local groups. An estimated 6000 cakes have been baked and devoured during 800 plus Coffee Shops, raising a grand total of over £80,000 in the process! These days it is usual to raise at least £250 at a Coffee Shop morning.

For customers, it's the perfect opportunity to relax, pick up a book from the library next door, catch up with friends and neighbours, meet new people and keep up to date with everything happening in the village.

Prices are kept at a reasonable, affordable level and there is usually a raffle or tombola to make the visit even more enjoyable.

2024 Slots Now Available

The Community Centre is now taking bookings from any local groups or individuals wishing to raise funds for their chosen cause. Please email coffeeshop@woodcotecc.org.uk.

Slots are filling up fast, but we do need to try to fill all slots so that no-one is left disappointed if they find the Coffee Shop closed on a Saturday!

If you are new to running a coffee shop, we have a help sheet with all the information you need and one of the Community Centre Committee can be on hand if needed when setting up.

Finally, we are very pleased to welcome Terry Sopp ('Jester Jiggles') back to run a Coffee Shop on January 20 for The Six Counties Kidney Patients Association. Readers may remember when Terry's mother, Joyce, used to run regular Coffee Shops with Dot Tyler, raising hundreds of pounds for the charity over the years. We hope you can come along and support Terry!

Frances Cork
Coffee Shop Coordinator, Woodcote Community
Centre Committee
coffeeshop@woodcotecc.org.uk

WOODCOTE PRIMARY SCHOOL

As the year comes to a close, we reflect on all the blessings we have here at Woodcote Primary. This is a wonderful school, and we are all proud to be part of the Woodcote family. 2023 has been a good year.

December is, of course, nativity time. This year we have been delighted by a performance of *Angel Express* from Year 2, Year 1, Reception and Cabin children altogether on the stage. It was a perfect treat and seeing them portray the Christmas story and its message to us all, really brought Christmas in with a cheer.

At this time, our KS2 children are preparing for their Christmas Carol Sing-along with parents at the end of term, which will be followed by our whole school Christmas Dinner Extravaganza. We hope you all enjoyed your Christmas as much as we did!

Other learning still takes place at this time of year: our Year 6 children held their Greek Museum. This was visited by every child in school and parents came for an open event to learn more about the topic. It was very impressive and extremely informative. Thank you, Year 6!

The winter series of Oxfordshire Primary Schools' Cross-Country races has drawn to a close. We were delighted that Martha came 1st overall for year 4 girls and the year 4 girls team races were also won by our Woodcote girls. Will N won the year 4 boys' races. A huge well done to all our runners.

In early December the parents of Woodcote School donated presents to The Oxford Hospital School. RAF Benson arranged their annual Santa drop to the hospital and we were pleased to support them. The presents were taken over by Santa himself who landed in a Puma and spent time with the children. We were lucky enough to see Santa on his way, as he stopped over the school to wish the children a merry Christmas.

We are currently recruiting for a Lunchtime Supervisor. If you would be interested in the role, please give us a call on 01491 680454 or fill out the form on our website.

Wishing you all a very happy 2024!

Mrs L. Hunt

WOODCOTE WI

Sally Lambert welcomed the members to our November meeting.

Sally thanked everyone who had made cakes, helped and given tombola prizes for the coffee morning in the community coffee shop and thank you to everyone in the village who supported us.

Celebrating her birthday this month was Betty Thomas, we hope she had a good day.

Debbie Emmett showed us how to make Christmas trees out of old paperback books, who knew, everyone enjoyed themselves!

This was followed by an amazing tea, thank you to Betty Thomas and Hazel Tagg.

In January we will have our Homes and Gardens AGM on the first Wednesday in the function room, village hall, followed by lunch at the Miller of Mansfield.

The speaker at our meeting in January will be John Paine, who will talk on *Tigers and Maharajahs*. The competition will be for a photograph of a wild animal.

Judy Williams

CABIN PRESCHOOL

A very happy New Year to all our friends, old and new.

Our Cabin children say the cutest things! Here are some of the children's quotes to start the new year.

Adult: "That's magnificent." Child: "NO! IT'S MY HOUSE!". At lunch time, child 1: "I don't want to eat this." Child 2 (hands on hips and head to the side, looking at friend): "Oh, just eat it!"

We'd like to take the opportunity to say thank you to the Woodcote Rally for a very generous donation this year. We have replaced our mud kitchen and have purchased a few other bits to enhance our outdoor learning space. The children were so excited to receive the new equipment. There's still enough left over from the donation to make a huge contribution to our annual summer outing.

We made Pudsey hats for Children in Need, and talked about how it is good to help others by giving time as well as money to help people and children less fortunate than themselves.

The Woodcote Garden centre again allowed us to come over to look at the Christmas trees. Mike and Gill were, as ever, very accommodating, allowing us to decorate the trees and "mess up" all their lovely displays. Thank you.

We held a Christingle service with our friends from Woodcote Preschool and Oak class, at St Leonard's Church. This helped to start the Christmas celebrations right! Thank you to Revd David for sharing the Christmas story with us and for a fun morning. All the Cabin children made and brought a Christingle to the service. We had already talked about what each part of these represents and were very proud of one of the children who stood up and told everyone that the ribbon was for love.



Open Monday to Friday 8:30am-3:30pm

The CABIN Pre-School

Situated within Woodcote Primary School, The Cabin is a caring preschool that encourages a passion for education, artistic expression, and discovery in a warm and secure setting designed for children aged 2 to 5 years.

- Safe and Secure Environment.
- Sensory Outdoor Play Area including a Mud Kitchen, Wildlife garden, Water Play, and a sit-in Sandpit.
- Hot Lunch available to order.
- Play-Based Learning with Enrichment Activities.
- Monster Phonics Foundation for EYFS.
- Makaton trained staff.
- Grant funded 2 and 3 year old places available.

01491 680 854
www.thecabinpreschool.co.uk
info@thecabinpreschool.co.uk
@friendsofthecabinpreschool

FREE settling in sessions

The Cabin Pre-School is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered in England and Wales - 1164578.

At the Woodcote Primary Christmas Fair, we joined with FOWPS to run a Water or Wine stall. Everyone had lots of fun guessing which bottle contained wine or which contained water. Thanks to everyone who contributed bottles, attended the event and played our game. All the money raised will pay for a Christmas party for our children.

As a thank you for donating toys to the RAF toy drive, we enjoyed a RAF fly past with a real-Life Santa waving back from inside the helicopter! It was such a treat. All the children (Woodcote Primary and Cabin) wore Santa hats which made it even more festive.

Thank you to everyone that attended our AGM in December. I can confirm the positions of the fantastic committee for the coming year:

- Treasurer and administrator - Helen Baker
- Chair - Caroline Gibson
- Secretary - Nicola Baker

Thank you all so much for taking on these essential roles.

During the AGM, I took the time to say how proud I am to work with such a professional team, staff especially, who put so much of their own time into Cabin, which makes it a lovely place to work and learn.

We had a fantastic time joining Woodcote Primary by participating in their Christmas Production for the first time. The children sang their hearts out and looked so special in their star costumes. We aren't at all biased to say they were real little stars!

The staff did some training on resilience earlier in the school year, and I want to highlight the importance of resilience in young children, something as it seems to be rather topical now:

Children thrive on routine, predictability and boundaries - when they lose these factors in the long-term, it can be a difficult time for parent and child. However, as parents, there are ways to help them not only cope, but thrive during these times.

1. Help them manage uncertainty

Parents can help their children feel safe and secure during uncertain times by helping them recognise that life is less certain than they think, but this is okay. In fact, it can be exciting not knowing exactly what will happen. Surprises can sometimes be nice!



MADE TO MEASURE
Curtains, Blinds, Cushion Covers etc.
at Competitive Prices
Call CAROLINE on 07815 610007

2. How to cope with setbacks

Not all unexpected events are good of course, and building resilience is about helping children cope with disappointment and things going wrong. Encourage your kids to talk about feelings and emotions so that they can recognise and label the feelings of disappointment and frustration that are normal reactions to setbacks. Help them to name these feelings when they notice them.

3. Embrace mistakes

Resilient children are less afraid of making mistakes and more prepared to take risks, because they can cope with having got it wrong. Explain how we don't always know the answers or the right way to behave, but we can make the best choices we can and accept if we get it wrong. This means showing them that mistakes are great ways to learn and are part of what makes us human.

4. Empower your child

Resilient children can make age-appropriate decisions about the things that affect them. All parents want to protect their kids, it's part of the job description, but when we try too hard to protect them from life's bumps, we can do more harm than good to their developing resilience.

5. Challenge their beliefs

Finally, resilient children develop helpful, rather than unhelpful, ways of thinking. Examples of unhelpful thinking styles include catastrophising (assuming the very worst will happen), black and white thinking (seeing things only as either good or bad), ignoring the positives (dismissing when good things happen and only focusing on when bad things happen), fortune-telling (assuming they know what is going to happen) and over-generalisation (assuming that because something happened once, it will always be that way).

Looking ahead, please save the date for our Annual BINGO night on the 15th of March 2024. We'd love you to come and enjoy an evening with friends.

From April 2024, the government will be extending the funding for 15 hours of free childcare for all 2 two-year-olds. This means that you can receive free childcare at The Cabin Preschool, for all two-year-olds. They need to be 2 years old before the 31st of March 2024. You could receive 15 free hours which you can top up if needed. You will need to meet the criteria for eligibility. To find out more and to see if you qualify, search online on Childcare Choices. Alternatively, Call Jayne on 01491 680854 and she will be able to advise you.

You can find The Cabin Preschool in the Woodcote Primary school grounds, and at just £5.75 per hour, we have got to be worth a visit! We do have some spaces available this year and are getting lots of interest at the moment. Please register your interest with us via email: info@thecabinpreschool.co.uk or call 01491 680854 to book a visit.

You can also follow on Facebook and see what we get up each week. Search for Friends of the Cabin Preschool.



Taking part in the Primary school Nativity show



At the Woodcote Garden centre



Helping Children in Need

WOODCOTE PRE-SCHOOL

First of all, we would like to welcome Tate, Morganna, Lockie and their families.

We have been extremely busy with all our Christmas preparations and celebrations. We have made some lovely crafts to display around our room and to take home, we have decorated our Christmas trees, been on wintery walks and made some Christmas treats.

We enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner, prepared by our own cook, Tanya, whilst wearing our Christmas jumpers. Thank you, Tanya, for another fantastic Christmas lunch!

Thank you to the Reverend David Benskin for welcoming us into St Leonard's for our Christingle Service. We were joined by The Cabin and Oak class from Woodcote Primary. We sang festive songs, heard the nativity story and enjoyed making Christingles to take with us. Thank you to all the families who came and helped us walk over or who came to support us at the church.

Our annual nativity was another great success. We chose *Born In Bethlehem* and the children worked hard to learn all the songs and actions. Thank you to all the families who came along to watch. All the children did so well and made us so proud, as they do each year.

On the last day of term, we celebrated by holding a Christmas party. The children all enjoyed dancing to Christmas songs, playing games, getting glitter tattoos and having a party lunch. We were very lucky to receive a visit from Santa and his elf who brought presents for the children!

Thank you to M.D Read, Bouchier Fencing, John and Maggie at The Black Lion and the Booker family at Church Farm for sponsoring our Quiz Night. We had a full house, and everyone had a great time helping us raise money to go towards new resources for the children. We raised £795 from this event.

On the 6th of December we held our live raffle draw. We would like to thank DP Gate Solutions, Birdsong Osteopathy, Odds Farm Park, Beale Park, Clip 'n Climb, Fairytale Farm, Experience Days, Winter Wonderland Reading, Hadden Hill Golf Club, Kimberley's Hair and Beauty Studio, The Packhorse, Oxford United, Alto Lounge, Blue Tin Produce, The Box Baker, Checkendon Equestrian Centre, Cornerstone Arts Centre, Albert Fields, Corn Exchange Wallingford, Cotswold Wildlife Park, Crocodiles of the World, Dance Connection, Goring Village Butcher, The Goring Grocer, The Highwayman, Inspirations, Jessie's Coffee Truck, Masooms Tandoori, Sprouts Play Barn at Millets Farm, Virtue Gymnastics, SOX Brewery, Stanrod Motors, The Tree Barn, Perch & Pike, Village Chocolate Café, Co-Op, Goring and Woodcote Medical Practice, Spin Master Toys, The Black Lion, Ella's Kitchen, Rosie's Chocolate Factory, The Woofy Washy Cabin, Lorna Tappern, Johnny Aldridge, The Cherry Tree, Christmas Tree World, Alternate Salon, Newbury Racecourse, The Plaice and anyone else who donated, bought tickets or supported us in any way. We raised an amazing £1,600 for pre-school!

From next April, we will be accepting children who qualify for the new 2-year-old funding. To find out if you qualify, please check on the government website or feel free to pop in and we can support you with accessing the information. We have some spaces available so if you are interested in your child joining us, please phone on 01491 682300 or email us on woodcote.pre-school@hotmail.co.uk.

Please come along to our open morning on 22nd January, we look forward to seeing you there.

Merry Christmas and a happy new year from all of us at Woodcote Pre-School CIO!



GORING HEATH BEAVERS

Our practice for Remembrance Sunday paid off: the Beavers were brilliant. Even those who ordinarily have bullet ants in their pants stayed completely quiet during the minute's silence. This was a real achievement for the Beavers (and Leaders!) and perhaps demonstrates that they had reflected on what they had learned at the previous meeting. Little Ern, despite his nickname, is the longest serving Beaver so carried the flag whilst Rosaline, as oldest, laid the wreath.

The following week Dragon[fly] presented Isaac with his Chief Scout's Bronze Award, the highest award a Beaver can earn. The rest of the meeting was devoted to 'space'. We started with a game: the Beavers were space debris/shooting stars zooming about the solar system (they do a convincing zoom) with all the planets set out on the floor. When the whistle blew, they landed on a planet and, if their planet's name was called, they were out. This led to a round robin of three activities: blindfold picking-up of 'space materials' with a robotic arm (a litter-picker: the Beavers struggled to suspend their disbelief); astronaut fitness training (much jumping about and puffing) and junk modelling an International Space Station, with each group adding to the previous team's efforts and resulting in a superbly huge and wobbly confection of bog rolls, plastic bits, old foil and masking tape. Space-worthy it was not.

Alas Space Night had been cloudy, so there had been no opportunity for stargazing. Thus, with views of open sky in mind, Otter planned the route for our night hike on 24th November to go through open fields rather than our usual woodland routes. Tradition was not entirely thrown to the winds, however: we finished at a pub, the Sun in Whitchurch Hill, where the Beavers were treated to the most magnificent chips. Alas, even Otter cannot control the weather and the sky cleared only very briefly so stargazing wasn't possible. Nevertheless, the Beavers admired the Moon through clouds, looked at the lights of Reading and were very impressed when Otter pointed out the lights of planes spiralling over Heathrow occasionally appearing to line up when they became stacked in just the right position.

As this is being written (very early with an about-to-have-a-baby editor in mind) our usual Christmas carol-singing expeditions are being planned, by which we mean willing victims short-listed for our enthusiastic, yet often wayward, renditions of seasonal classics. More next month.

WALLINGFORD CORN EXCHANGE

All regular performances normally start at 7:30pm unless stated otherwise. The bar and auditorium will open from 7pm so there's plenty of time to collect drinks beforehand. Films with subtitles will be shown on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons at 2:30pm. Please look at the website (www.cornexchange.org.uk) for updates. Tickets £10 for adults and £5 for under 15s unless otherwise stated.

Cinema

Priscilla (15)

Sunday 28th January, 7.30 pm

Monday 29th January, 7.30 pm

Wednesday 31st January, 2.30 pm

Wednesday 31st January, 7.30 pm

Live on Stage

The Adventures of Sinbad

12 – 27th January

The Sinodun Players present their annual Pantomime *The Adventures of Sinbad* in a new modern telling written by Marilyn Johnstone, directed by Julie Utley & Caroline Malnick with Musical Direction by Rob Alderton. A new exotic stage design by Jason Atomic and a colourful atmospheric lighting design by Poul Alexander will heighten your enjoyment of this time-honoured story.

This brand-new production has all the magic and fun of a traditional pantomime so come along and follow Sinbad on his epic journey across the seas with Captain Kippa, Fatima, his Mum, Prince Kassim, Sheikh Ya Booty and his beautiful daughter Soraya. Marvel as Sinbad endeavours to rescue Princess Jade from the evil clutches of Bulbus Noza! You will be enchanted by the sparkling diamond cave, wonder at the magic carpet and the myriad of characters that make up this exciting story. Laugh at Fatima's antics and fall in love with Ballerina, the baby elephant.

Live Screening

The Royal Opera - *Rusalka*

30th January, 6.45 pm

Adults £18, Seniors £15, Under 18s £10

A poetic, contemporary new staging of Dvořák's lyric fairytale opera filmed live at the Royal Opera House in 2022 and starring Asmik Grigorian as Rusalka.

CHOLSEY REPAIR CAFÉ

Following the Festive Season, Cholsey Repair Café will be back on Saturday 20th January at the Cholsey Pavilion, hoping to help even more local residents to repair their broken items instead of buying new. Doors open at 11.00 and the session ends at 13.45.

There is a charge for any spare parts needed but repair help is given free by volunteers, although a donation towards running costs is always appreciated. The fixing crew can look at electrical faults, PAT testing, sharpening, bicycle repairs, small woodwork jobs, needlework, general gluing and even ultrasonic cleaning of small items. Advice is freely available if a repair isn't possible on the day.

More information can be found at www.cholseyrepaircafe.com.

WALLINGFORD & DISTRICT ART CLUB (WADAC)

This month's demonstration, on Tuesday 16 January, is entitled "Animal Portrait in acrylic" and is given by Claire Cross, live in Centre 70, Wallingford.

January's live demo sees artist, Claire Cross, create a portrait in acrylics of a badger from a photo she took at a wildlife centre. Claire will demonstrate how to block in colour and refine it; how to represent fur and how to give the animal a bit of character.

Claire is an Oxfordshire-based artist who works in many different media, creating wildlife art and quirky townscapes, among other things. She tutors art groups across Oxfordshire on a weekly basis (including WADAC) and regularly sells at arts and craft fairs and online.
<http://shop.giantmousie.com/>.

Tuesday morning and afternoon art classes: the first term of 2024 (6 weeks) runs from 2 January to 6 February. We then have a break and the second term commences on 20 February. A few places are still available so please contact us if you are interested.

Tuesday social evening and non-tutored workshops at 7-9pm continue to be open every Tuesday. 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.

Our next workshop is on 30 March, and after many requests by members the tutor returning is Paul Oakley with "Landscapes in oils and acrylics".

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.

GORING CHAMBER CHOIR

Gifts of the Magi, a concert for Epiphany

St Thomas' Church, Goring

Saturday 6th January, 2024 at 3pm

Tickets £15, free for under 18s

When Christmas and New Year festivities are over it is a good time to 'find the star within our hearts', as Bob Chilcott says in his carol *Epiphany*. Goring Chamber Choir will sing both familiar and some new carols reflecting on the bringing of gifts today. Atmospheric pieces by Canadian Stephanie Martin and Thomas Allain describe modern journeys 'to learn and to believe'. Steve Bowey will perform Gaston Litaize's organ piece *Epiphanie* on the wonderfully restored organ, and there will be familiar carols for the audience to join in.

- Music director: Frances Brewitt-Taylor
- Accompanist: Steve Bowey

Tickets obtainable from Inspiration, Goring, or from a choir member, or on the door.

<http://www.goringchamberchoir.org.uk/>

HENLEY AND DISTRICT STAMP CLUB

We are now at the start of a New Year, and some are thinking about a new start with new resolutions. The one that you may consider is starting a new hobby; could it be stamp collecting?

The Henley Stamp Club is a friendly group, and we would be delighted to see new visitors or members. If you are interested in facts concerning stamps or postal history, why not come along and explore how you can promote your interest?

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

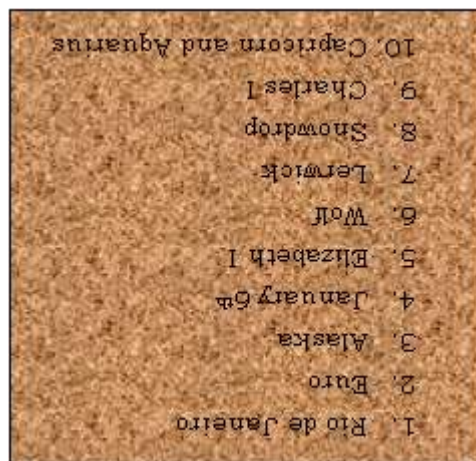
Meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month in Bix Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. Wednesday 10th January is a Members Evening showing practical solutions to philatelic problems. On Wednesday 24th January we have a talk by Ian King showing the Definitive Stamps of Argentina.

Visitors and new members are very welcome. Further details can be obtained by phoning Steve on 07767 251670 or on our website: www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk

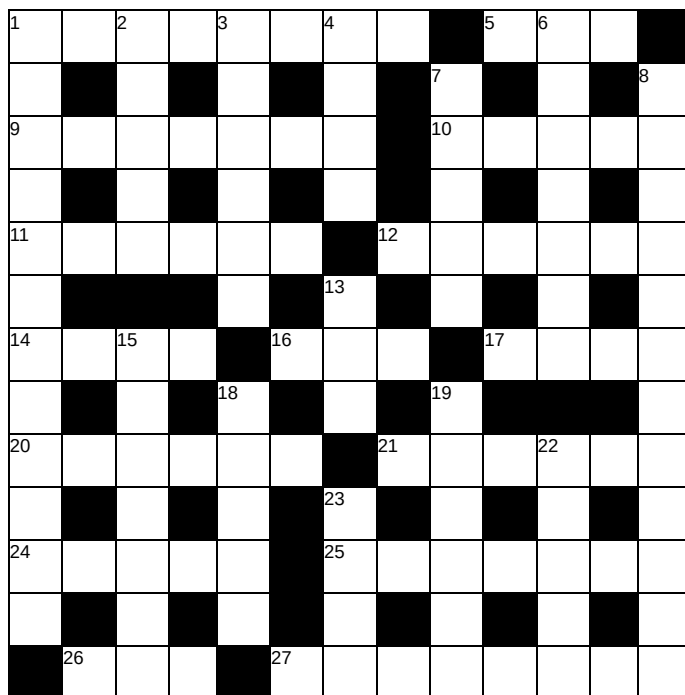
WHITCHURCH & GORING HEATH HISTORY SOCIETY

We move to Whitchurch Village Hall for our meetings in the New Year, starting on Thursday 18th January with a members' evening. We'll look at some interesting documents from our archives and hear about research on local topics. Coffee from 7pm, the meeting starts at 7.30pm and all are welcome.

QUIZ ANSWERS (Quiz on p 90)



JANUARY CROSSWORD



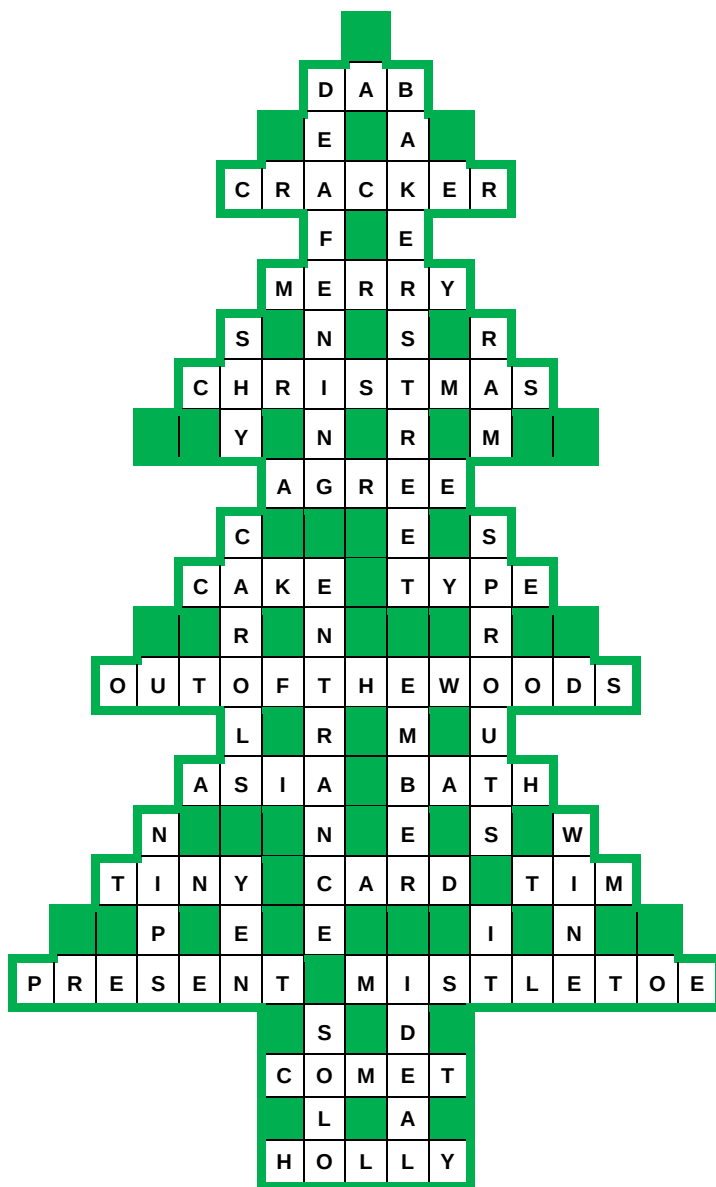
Across

1. After effect of Afghan government's inclusion (8)
5. That is about a hundred diamonds (3)
9. Quietly encouraging cleansing (7)
10. With two degrees I make a film (5)
11. Poet has small fungi 6)
12. Protect disorderly sector (6)
14. Shared rest of deceased appeasers (4)
16. Even friends become embarrassed (3)
17. Extremely smart amateur celebrity (4)
20. Shout down middling colour (6)
21. Recall a doctor with a backward dog (4,2)
24. Cancel girl having endless sulk (5)
25. Heavy drinker loses head for Papa. You? (7)
26. Stage support (3)
27. Tears when girls surround revolutionary leader (8)

Down

1. Pay when payer messes up greeting (5,3,4)
2. Opera usually missing closing trio (5)
3. Corsair loses right after taking no drug (6)
4. So, Queen to leave? (4)
6. Almost come for some tea and sympathy (7)
7. Shy at a party (5)
8. Two sprinters crashed when curling (6,6)
13. Bird chap takes north (3)
15. Hush! Science gains 50 but loses 100 (7)
18. Little Josephine takes Uranium to the French energy unit (5)
19. Stiff & cold from endless Buddhist meditation (6)
22. Party has last laugh at bird down under (5)
23. Fight and return hits (4)

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD SOLUTION



JANUARY QUIZ (Solution on p18)

1. What South American city is named for January?
2. What currency was introduced on the 1st January 1991?
3. What became the 49th state of the United States on the 3rd January 1959?
4. What day in January is the traditional epiphany?
5. Which English monarch was crowned on 15th January 1559?
6. After what predator did the Anglo-Saxons name January?
7. Up Helly Aa is held on the last Tuesday in January in which town?
8. What is the common name for the *Galanthus nivalis*?
9. Who lost his head on 30th January 1649?
10. What are the two zodiac signs for January?

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Regular Weekly Events

Every Monday

** Youth Club – Juniors (year 7's). Woodcote Village Hall. 7.15pm-8.45pm. From Jan 15th

Every Tuesday

** Youth Club – Seniors (years 8, 9 & 10). Woodcote Village Hall 7.15pm-8.45pm. From Jan 16th.

Every Thursday

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

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

JANUARY DATES

Wed 3rd	*	Wallingford U3A meeting. Crowmarsh Village Hall. 2pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society meeting. Digital Competition 2. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm
Sat 6th	*	Goring Chamber Choir presents: 'Gifts of the Magi - a concert for Epiphany'. St. Thomas' Church, Goring. 3pm
Tues 9th	*	Board Games Club for adults. Woodcote Library. 3.30pm-4.45pm
Wed 10th	*	BMMHS Talk: 'Stalingrad'. Woodcote Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Henley & District Stamp Club meeting. Bix Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: 'The Dragon beside the Seaside'. 8pm
Thur 11th	*	Wallingford Photographic Club members' evening. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm-10pm
Tues 16th	*	Wallingford & District Art Club demonstration: 'Animals in Acrylics'. Centre 70, The Kincroft, Wallingford. 7.30pm
Wed 17th	*	Woodcote WI meeting. Woodcote Village Hall. 2.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society meeting: 'Wild Scotland'. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm
Thur 18th	*	Whitchurch & Goring Heath History Society members' evening. Whitchurch Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Wallingford Photographic Club talk: 'The Greater Picture'. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm-10pm
Sat 20th	*	Coffee Shop in aid of The Six Counties Kidney Patients Association (cash only). Woodcote Community Centre. 10am-12.30pm

SMALL ADS

AVON CALLING :: I'm your local AVON representative, would you like a brochure?

Kerry 01491 682437/07966 509908

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

JANUARY DATES *Continued*

Sat 20th	*	Cholsey Repair Café. Cholsey Pavilion. 11am-1.45pm
Wed 24th	*	Henley & District Stamp Club meeting. Bix Village Hall. 7.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: 'Now You See It - Now You Dont'. 8pm
Thur 25th	*	Wallingford Photographic Club Competition: NSS3. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm-10pm
Fri 26th	*	Film Night: TBA. Woodcote Village Hall. 7.30pm
Sat 27th	*	Coffee Shop in aid of Woodcote Primary School (FOWPS). Woodcote Community Centre. 10am-12.30pm
Mon 29th	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: Rosebowl Competition - Round 2. 8pm
Wed 31st	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society meeting: 'An evening with David Probert'. Whitchurch Village Hall. 8pm

FORTHCOMING DATES IN FEBRUARY

Thur 1st	*	Wallingford Photographic Club members' evening: You are the judge. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm-10pm
Sat 3rd	*	Coffee Shop in aid of St. Leonard's Church (cash only). Woodcote Community Centre. 10am-12.30pm
	*	Goring Repair Café. Goring Village Hall. 10am-12.30pm
Tues 6th	*	LEGO Club. Woodcote Library. 3.30pm-4.30pm
	*	Whitchurch Photographic Society Zoom meeting: Rosebowl Competition - Round 3. 8pm
	*	BMMHS Zoom talk: 'Warsaw Uprising'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 7.30pm
Wed 7th	*	Wallingford U3A meeting. Crowmarsh Village Hall. 2pm
Thur 8th	*	Wallingford Photographic Club talk: 'The prints and the paper'. Crowmarsh Pavilion. 7.30pm-10pm