



Woodcote CORRESPONDENT

Vol 32 No 3
May 2021

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

“BRINGING THE OUTDOORS INSIDE”

Oxfordshire Artweeks return!

As we finally start to move out of lockdown, what better way to lift the spirits than to explore the creativity of local artists and craftspeople, many of whom drew inspiration from nature during lockdown.

There will be much to explore, something for everyone. Put the dates in your diary!

The feast of creativity takes place in South Oxfordshire from **15th-23rd May** and includes work by painters, photographers, performers, sculptors, ceramicists, upholsterers, textile artists and jewellery makers.

Over 60 artists will be showcasing their work at a range of venues from large public spaces to intimate studio environments. *Entry to all venues is free* and they offer you the opportunity to enjoy and buy unique art and craft in a Covid secure environment.



**Kate Pullan Upholstery,
Ayers House Studio**

In Wallingford town centre, you can discover the work of 11 artists in Ayres House Studios – a former Rectory turned into a multi-disciplinary artists' studio.

Then head to nearby Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Village Hall where the artists invite you to enjoy their displays of diverse colour and design.

Art radiates out from there, with venues to the North in Shillingford, Dorchester and the picturesque Wittenhams. You can meet a further 15 artists in Chalgrove and Ewelme.



Barry Kelly South Stoke

More information, including maps showing all of the events, can be found on the *Wallingford Area Artweeks Facebook and Instagram pages* or look out for signs and posters in the local area. You can also find information at www.artweeks.org and find art in the rest of the county and online.

South of the town, stop off at Denny Webb's studio in Ipsden, to see her new body of work 'Bringing the Outdoors Inside', inspired by her response to the pandemic and her love of the local landscape and its inhabitants. Other venues taking part include South Stoke, Little Stoke, Kidmore End and Henley.



**Lin Kerr: Rosehips
at Brightwell Village Hall**

COMMENT FROM THE VICARAGE

I've been to the hairdressers today. 'So what?' I hear you say! I was lucky enough to have an appointment on the very first day that hairdressers could open again after the lockdown and I was so pleased to get a haircut and also to see my hairdresser, as due to her maternity leave, I hadn't seen her for over a year. 'Oh, for goodness' sake', I hear you thinking – 'why do I need to know this?'

Well, the thing is I really didn't know what to write about this month. I haven't been anywhere much, the weather hasn't been great, life has gone on in its strange lockdown way and well, there's just not much to say is there? But today – well I've been out and talked to people, I've been into several shops and bought things other than groceries and, if I'd booked in advance, I could even go out for a drink and some food tonight; it's more excitement than I can cope with to be honest!

What have you missed most in these last weeks and months? We probably all have a list of things that we can't wait to get back to or places we want to visit again. But I would confidently predict that what we have missed most is being with other people. We've missed our loved ones who live a distance away or who have been shielding for sure, and Skype and Zoom have helped but it's not the same; but we have also missed friends and work mates, the bar staff and servers at our favourite pub, and yes, our hairdressers. I'd go as far as to say that we've missed just being in the vicinity of people we don't know. It's all those little bits of our lives that we share with other people, the connections that are made, the news that is shared, the feeling of being known and belonging somewhere. We've taken it all for granted for so long; we wouldn't have given any of it a passing thought a year ago. But now we know differently, normal doesn't count for much anymore and we've realised how diminished we are when we are deprived of all those moments when someone asks how we are, and we ask them the same question and we smile and move on. For months now we have been limited in the number of people that we are likely to meet and talk to. I talk to quite a lot of people, but mostly on Zoom which can be strangely intense, or on the phone which always feels so limiting. Even as I am writing this, I am feeling a little emotional remembering what it has been like not to be with people. I'm reminded of when as a child I was told to be brave and not cry or make a fuss, and the feeling of trying to hold in all the hurt and indignation.

That is what many of us have been doing: holding in the hurt and fear. There is a lot to be glad about and so much that we have learnt, for example, there has been a real positivity in the way people have come together to help and support one another, as well as a groundswell of gratitude for our NHS staff and all the other services on which we have relied. We have a new-found respect for teachers and support staff, for care workers and retail staff. At least in the short term, we have discovered a real appreciation of one another. As lockdown eases further we will have lots to enjoy once more and many celebrations to catch up on but I hope that as we move forward, we will

allow one another the space to crumble a little and, if we need to, to cry. The biblical word for this is 'lament'; a time to weep and shake your fist a bit at any sense of injustice and grief that you carry. It's a necessary part of processing difficult experiences. Even in the midst of managing to be resilient, we have been acutely aware of our vulnerability, and it would be a shame to lose that awareness as I think it makes us more honest and more caring people. Not being afraid to wear our hearts on our sleeves at times means that we let other people really see us, and we allow ourselves to be helped or to be the helper to others; both of which are good for the soul.

With all blessings and prayers for your safekeeping,

Linda

Revd. Linda Smith, Tel. 01491 680979

Email: woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com

There is a short service of Holy Communion every Sunday at 8.30 am.

Face masks should be worn and social distancing rules are in place.

We are also open for private prayer on Wednesday afternoons from 2pm – 4pm.

Online Services

We continue with our online services every Sunday at 10am and Night Prayer every Wednesday at 8.30pm.

We'd love people to feel that they can join us at any time – we are a very friendly and relaxed bunch! So please do email me if you would like details of how to join an online service.

We use the Zoom app for our services which is free for you to use. If you are not on the internet, it is possible to phone into a service. We are happy to advise you on how to access this.

LOOKING FOR NEW WALKS IN THE AREA?

Then check out this website for inspiration as the weather starts to warm up:
www.walkinginengland.co.uk/oxfordshire

With hundreds of walks to download and print (for free), it also has books of walks, contact details for all the walking groups in the county and much more. Whether you want to walk on your own or with a group, all the information is there in one place. The whole website was created by local, John Harris, who has spent hours researching walks from different websites. So he has done all the hard work for you (except the walking of course!)

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.

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR



The weather is warming up; sports, schools, shops and pubs are opening up and the Correspondent has gone back to monthly issues again!

As you know, The Woodcote Correspondent reflects all that is happening in village life. Over lockdown, many of you have been enjoying Sam Peates' *All our Yesterdays* articles which allow us to look back on earlier Woodcote life. Imagine if we looked back at 2020 in a few years' time! Would we even want to?

Moving on, we have part two of *How to become a hedgehog expert*, thanks to the Woodcote Conservation Group. We also see how lots of things have been happening 'behind the scenes' during lockdown: a book has been written; plants propagated for us all to enjoy and lots more opportunities to get outside now that spring has finally sprung.

And if you're itching to get more involved in village life, there are volunteering opportunities in this issue for you to consider.

Have a good month!

Yvette

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

Advertising:	Claire Jones	07789 190463
Treasurer:	Helen Baker	01491 682240
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.

THAMES •Building Solutions Limited.

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

**The complete
building service**

TEL. 01491 680 389 / 07956 966 089

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

mb mortimer burnett

Chartered Accountants & Business Consultants

**We can help with:
Saving Money**

Ensuring value for every £ spent

Saving Time

Automate processes using cloud based accounting

Contact Us For A Free Consultation

01491 874332

Lisa@mortimerburnett.co.uk
www.mortimerburnett.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 tomalin@btconnect.com

Anderson House, 38 Reading Road, Henley-On-Thames, RG9 1AG



A Family Run Independent Funeral Service



**Caversham Heights
Dental Practice**

15% off
new patient
examinations
with this advert

We provide the highest quality
private dental work for all the
family in a relaxed, friendly
environment, ideal for nervous
and anxious patients.

**FREE DENPLAN
TRANSFERS**

Children
can join our
'kids club' and gain
rewards and prizes
for healthy teeth.



Telephone: 01189 474848
www.cavershamheightsdentalpractice.co.uk

VILLAGE GREEN COMMITTEE

It is pleasing to note that the new pitch on the Folly Field is getting quite well-used for both football and basketball. We have been hoping for some years that the Folly Field would become popular for people to take exercise and the new pitch certainly seems to be helping with this. We look forward to the time when we can afford to have a hard surface on the whole pitch so that a wider range of games can be played there. On the Green, it has been great to see the dry weather during the Easter holidays attracting lots of families both to the Play Area and the Green itself. Most people use the facilities considerably, but there are still a few examples of anti-social behaviour such as setting fire to litter bins and lighting fires on the grass. The practice goal continues to be incredibly busy most days, another reason why it is good to have an alternative on the Folly Field. We would like to thank Ned Lloyd for spending a long time clearing the brambles at the top of the Green. The section of fence brought down by the wind, mainly because it was covered in ivy, belongs to a housing association house and we have asked them to undertake this work, which we hope will soon be carried out. The new trees which were planted in the winter all seem to be doing well. Finally, we have let the Parish Council know that we are concerned about the state of the car park fence, where the posts have rotted through in several places, and we hope to hear from them soon about what can be done to rectify the situation.

SP

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

FRIENDS OF ST LEONARD'S CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2020



I would like to thank everyone who has generously supported the Friends of St Leonard's (FOSLs) throughout 2020.

St Leonard's is a grade II listed building, rebuilt in 1846, with some of its features dating back to Norman times. It is built on the site of a 12th century church and has been an integral part of the history of Woodcote for over 900 years. The cost of maintaining St Leonard's and the churchyard is expensive. FOSLs' purpose is to raise money via regular subscriptions and donations to assist in maintaining the church building and the churchyard to ensure St Leonard's remains an attractive feature of the village. The funds are not used to support the religious activities of the church.

Your subscriptions and donations make a huge difference and during 2020 FOSLs were able to contribute towards necessary roof repairs and the ongoing maintenance of the churchyard and the Garden of Remembrance. The Christmas tree, kindly donated by Mike Hill of the Woodcote Garden Centre, lit by lights donated by FOSLs, was placed outside in the churchyard for everyone to enjoy.

**1st CLASS
TREE SURGEONS**

 **07889 881 525**

 quote@firstclasstreesurgeons.co.uk

 www.firstclasstreesurgeons.co.uk

Tree Surgery	Tree Thinning
Tree Reductions	Hedge Trimming
Tree Removal	Tree Felling
Landscaping	Stump Grinding

**City & Guilds NPTC
Qualified and Insured**

Last autumn FOSLs asked you for donations of spring flowering bulbs which we planted in the churchyard. The snowdrops and primroses began flowering in January, followed by the crocuses, with the daffodils and tulips continuing the display through spring. So, thank you to everyone who donated bulbs and we hope that you enjoy the flowers as they appear in the churchyard.

If you would like to know more about FOSLs, the committee of volunteers who run FOSLs or would like to make a regular subscription or a donation, then please contact either Marcia Spiers - 07776 298754 or Julie Turner - 07980 520039.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Diana Davies – March 2021

PETER SOLOMONS: A LIFE WELL LIVED.



Peter Solomons
(picture page 12)

A popular Woodcote resident and stalwart of the Woodcote Rally has sadly died after a short illness, aged 77.

Peter Solomons and his wife, Pat, visited Woodcote in 1976 in search of a new house, saw the Rally in progress and decided to relocate to the village because it looked interesting. Before long, they were helping at this

popular annual show and Pete went on to play a key role in its development and in the wider Woodcote community.

Pete was born in 1943, the first child of Gladys and Arthur Solomons, who was an officer in the Royal Engineers. After the war, Arthur was appointed as a surveyor to Ealing Council and the family moved to Neasden in North London, where Pete attended the local schools.

As a teenager, he had many interests. He was active in the sea scouts and the Youth Hostel Association, and had a love of motor sport, something he shared with his father and stayed with him throughout his life.

Later the family were to move to Harrow and, on leaving school, Pete started a course on photography at the local technical college. This led him to his first job, working in a photography agency in London.

He was 17 years old when he met Pat at a church youth club. Six years later, they were to marry in that same church.

By then, he had joined the in-house film and media department of the Metal Box company at its headquarters in Baker Street. This gave him the opportunity to travel widely through Europe and America making films to support Metal Box products. This company did a great deal more than just produce tins for baked beans. Their industrial products meant that Pete would sometimes find himself on an oil rig in the North Sea, filming a new piece of machinery.

The relocation of Metal Box to Reading in 1976 brought Pete and Pat to Woodcote. They have lived in the same bungalow in Beech Lane ever since.

Pete's involvement in the Rally started in 1977, driven by his desire to contribute to his community and by his love of all things mechanical, particularly if they were old! Before long, he had joined the Rally committee and his contribution continued to grow until in 1989 he was elected Chair of the committee and thus became the Rally Director.

Under his leadership, the Rally prospered. Bigger crowds meant more profit, all of which was donated towards good causes in the village. Pete was an ambassador for the Rally, working with many organisations in the village to deliver projects ranging from the children's playground to the community centre. As the leader of the Rally, he was much admired for his ability to keep calm, find a solution and carry on, always with a smile. It was important to have fun. His hard work and dedication were respected by all who knew him.

In 2015, he was elected Chair of the Woodcote Charitable Association, the company and registered charity that administers the Rally. He led a project to modernise the constitution of the company and focused on safety and financial stability, all aimed at ensuring the Rally can continue to prosper well into the future.

Others have continued his work as Rally Director, allowing Pete to focus on the things he enjoyed most. For the last few years, he was a fixture in the commentary box, organising the programme of events in the main ring, keeping the commentary team in order, and enjoying the best view on the field of the countless old cars, motorbikes, tractors, lorries and steam engines that passed in front of him. He still found time to visit the beer tent – socialising was important to Pete!

Those who knew him will remember him for his friendship, his sense of humour, and his passion to live a good life well. He was kind, considerate and always smiling. Nothing was too much for him.

He is survived by his wife, Pat, and his brother, Clive. His funeral was held at Reading Crematorium on 26th March. Donations in Pete's memory in aid of Cancer Research may be made through the undertakers, Tomalin & Son of Henley.



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

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

JOIN OUR TEAM!



We need more volunteers to join the Woodcote Volunteers once lockdown ends. Could you spare an hour or two a week or help out ad-hoc?

The pandemic has had its effect on our group and some of our committee and drivers have decided that they are unable to continue being volunteers.

Volunteering is such a fantastic way to get involved with your local community. Perhaps you are a stay-at-home parent who could spare an hour a week while the children are at school? Or perhaps you are retired and looking for a bit of structure to your week?

Either way, we urgently need new volunteers to spread the load for our office staff and drivers, once we are out of lockdown.

Since 1983 Woodcote Volunteers have been providing a service to the people of Woodcote, Crays Pond, Whitchurch Hill, Goring Heath, Checkendon and Ipsden.

The service is for the ill or elderly, for those without other means of transport, for journeys to and from doctors, hospitals, dentists and other care/ service providers including local shopping. We will also consider any other relevant special requests for help.

Our office in Woodcote Village Hall will be manned and taking bookings every weekday morning 09.30 to 11.00. All you need to do is call 01491 681171 to take advantage of this service.

Normally a charge of 45p per mile (with trips within Woodcote charged at £1.50) is made. This is to go towards the cost of the driver's fuel costs. Free transport is provided for journeys to Day Centres in Goring and Cholsey.

The group has full insurance cover including no claim bonus protection for drivers.

Please consider joining us, it is very rewarding work.

For more information, please contact Ken Groom on 07950 082856 or Ken Ison on 07713-401400 or ken.ison@btinternet.com.

November Financial Services Ltd

Independent Financial Advisers

We offer a comprehensive range of financial services.

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

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

KINGS FLOORING

**CARPETS, VINYL, LAMINATES,
ENGINEERED WOOD AND KARNDEN
FOR A FREE QUOTE AND SAMPLES DIRECT
TO YOUR DOOR CALL**

01491 681489 07799471648

Proud members of

Checkatrade.com
Where reputation matters

WOODCOTE VOLUNTEERS' AGM



At the recent virtual Woodcote Volunteers AGM, we welcomed a new chairman Helena McBride, a new secretary Ken Groom and new committee members Jon Hatt and Dave Allen.

Amanda Gemmill, our former chairman, reluctantly had to retire.

We thank her for her great support and work she has done in promoting the volunteers. She is very willing to continue to provide volunteers with close links to the medical centre.

The Boathouse
Dental Surgery

Tel: 01491 872394
www.boathousedental.co.uk

Are Dental
Implants for you?

If you have missing teeth or loose fitting
dentures, the answer is **YES!**

“Cost, sales and efficient with latest
technology, great place for an implant”
Dr Anthony Gray

High Street, Goring on Thames,
Oxfordshire RG9 9AB

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

Sadly, our secretary Elizabeth Harrap is also standing down from her role. We thank her for all the great work she has done since she started the role in 2014. She has agreed to continue as a committee member, where her expertise will be invaluable.

We look forward to starting up again as soon as it is safe to do so.

WANT TO SEE MORE HEDGEHOGS IN YOUR GARDEN?

Follow these top tips, courtesy of the Woodcote Conservation Group...

Link your garden by making a CD case-sized hole (13 x 13cm or 5 x 5") at the bottom of your garden fence or wall to let hedgehogs through. If you'd like some help making a hole, the Woodcote Conservation Group can lend a hand – just email info@woodcotecg.org.uk.



Make your pond safe. Hedgehogs are adept swimmers, but if they can't climb out of steep-sided ponds or pools they will drown. Make a pebble beach, or use a piece of wood or some chicken wire to create a simple

ramp.

Create a wild corner. Let the plants go mad in a corner of your garden, and don't cut them back in winter as hedgehogs might nest here. They'll also benefit from the abundant insects. Use branches to add structure.

Garden safety. Hedgehogs are prone to getting tangled in loose netting so ensure it is kept taut or stored inside when not in use. Avoid leaving sheds open as hedgehogs may wander inside and become trapped. Ensure drains are safely covered. Hedgehogs are rather prone to getting stuck down holes!

Put out food and water. Hedgehogs really benefit from extra food, using it as a supplement to their natural diet. Meaty cat or dog food and hedgehog food are both suitable. Water can also be scarce at certain times of the year and is the only thing you should give them to drink.

Stop using chemicals. Hedgehogs are a free and sustainable way of controlling garden pests! Pesticides, lawn treatments, insecticides and slug pellets are all toxic and kill the creepy crawlies hedgehogs eat.

Check before strimming. Please be careful when using any cutting equipment in your garden. Strimmers are particularly dangerous as these can wound or kill hedgehogs hiding or nesting in long vegetation. Unlike other animals, hedgehogs don't

run away if they hear the noise of machinery so, before strimming, check in long patches of grass, along rough edges and under hedges. If you do discover a hedgehog, either postpone your work or carefully move it (using thick gloves!) to a safer place in the garden.

Be careful with bonfires. Piles of debris are irresistible to a hedgehog looking for somewhere to hibernate or nest at any time of year – build it on the day of burning or move the pile on the day of burning to avoid trapping a hedgehog inside.

Make a home for hedgehogs. A log pile is one of the best features for encouraging all kinds of wildlife into your garden. They're so easy to make and will encourage insects and provide hedgehog nesting opportunities all year around.

Become a hedgehog champion! Register on www.hedgehogstreet.org for more information about hedgehogs and resources to transform your street into hedgehog heaven.



How to make a hedgehog café

Spring is a critical period for providing hedgehogs with supplementary food. If you're worried about foxes or pets getting at the food, you can make a simple feeding station that is difficult for anything larger than a hedgehog to access.

You could use a piece of piping into a box, or build a shelter out of bricks and paving stones. If you use a plastic storage box, you might see a hedgehog feasting in the café in your garden from out of your window. Placing a shallow dish of water at the entrance, and/or a 'brick maze' inside a feeding station which should also prevent cats getting to the food.

You'll find inspiring ideas and instructions online, for example go to:

www.hedgehogstreet.org/help-hedgehogs/feed-hedgehogs/ or

<https://hedgehogcabin.info/making-a-feeder> or

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/give-nature-a-home-in-your-garden/garden-activities/openahedgehogcafe/>

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

**FREE QUICK
ONLINE QUOTE**

specialist
floor sanding

floor2restore.co.uk

- ◆ Wood Floor Restoration
- ◆ Gap Filling & Sealing
- ◆ Staining & Varnishing
- ◆ No dust, mess or odours
- ◆ FREE site survey and quotation
- ◆ Professional, reliable service

01491 682 550



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

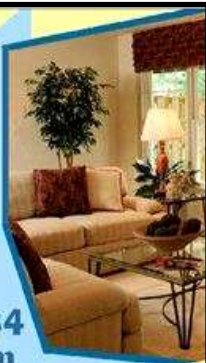


Local Professional Cleaner



Come home to a
**CLEAN
HOUSE!**

Call Carol: 07782-373-434
Email: infocarol@mail.com



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

WOODCOTE CO-OP CHARITY FOOTBALL MATCH

Your local Co-op has arranged for a charity football match to take place on the village green on *Sunday 23rd May, kick off at 10.30am*. Over the past year, the Co-op has been raising money for our national partnership MIND which provides support and advice to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. MIND campaigns to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding.

May 17th – 23rd is mental health awareness week and we would like to reach our goal of £1000 raised as a store by the end of the year. The football match teams will be Co-op employees versus the local men's team. It would be great to see as many supporters as possible and raise awareness for mental health.

Throughout May, we plan to hold raffles and fundraisers in store and on the day, we will have a stand offering a selection of refreshments in return for a donation.

Woodcote Co-op.

WOODCOTE CRICKET CLUB



The Berkshire League Premier Division season begins on 1st May with a home match against Farley Hill. The South Oxon Midweek season starts on Wednesday 12th May with an away match at Clifton Hampden.

Home Fixtures in May/June

Sat 1st May Woodcote v Farley Hill 1.00pm (League)

Sun 2nd May BBC v Lower Earley (Friendly) 1.30pm

Sat 8th May Purley v Theale & Tilehurst 1.00pm (League)

Sun 9th May BBC v Astons (Friendly) 1.30

Sat 15th May Woodcote v Sandhurst 1.00pm (League)

Wed 19th May Woodcote v Dorchester 6.00 pm (League)

Sat 22nd May Purley v Welford Park 1.00pm League

Wed 26th May Woodcote v Watlington 6.00pm (League)

Sun 23rd May Woodcote Occasionals v BBC (Friendly) 1.30

Sat 29th May Woodcote v Crowthorne 1.00pm (League)

Sun 30th May BBC v Sonning Common (Friendly) 1.30pm

Wed 2nd June Woodcote v Moreton 6.00pm (League)

Sat 5th June Purley v Reading United

Sat 12th June Woodcote v Woodley 1.00pm (League)

As always, we will be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to become involved in the club either as a player or in some other capacity. If you would

like any more information, please contact me:
sampeates@gmail.com; 07710 858366.

SP

FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL



A nostalgic snapshot by David Sutton

Even though it's now over seventy-one years ago I still remember my first day at school quite vividly, in a way that I suspect people of a younger generation may tend not to. These days there are preschool nurseries and playgroups, liaising closely with the local primary schools, and starting school seems to be no great ordeal for children: I have seen confident small girls stroll in on their first day as if they owned the place. But in those days, there were no such preliminary institutions, or none for the likes of us, and I was not much socialised up to the age of five ('so what's changed?', I hear my wife say). In short, children went straight from home to school, relying on information from those who had gone before for any idea of what awaited them. This tended not to be encouraging, with reports of terrible food and terrifying teachers, but to school one had to go regardless of any butterflies in the stomach on the first day.

My father took me on my first morning and left me at the gate. 'You'll be all right, old chap, won't you?' I didn't know it at the time, but he had other worries that day. I said yes, I'd be all right, though other children were going in, just for that first day, accompanied by their mothers. I went in through the gates and followed a number of other children up the playground and into a classroom. Many of the children were crying and not wanting their mothers to leave them, till the teacher ushered the mothers out briskly, allotted us small desks with slots for pencils and chalks and an inkwell, and generally got things organised. What we did till the first break I don't recall, but I think it involved crayons and plasticine.

At playtime we were each given a small bottle of milk, a third of a pint, to be sucked up through a straw. I discovered that if you blew into the milk through the straw, you could make it frothy. We went out into the playground. There was a sandpit and I sat at that, playing with another boy who had brought a toy car to school. Suddenly I noticed that he had gone and so had all the other children, leaving me alone in the playground. This was rather odd, but I played on in the sand happily enough till a man came out whom I thought might be the headmaster. 'What are you doing?' he asked. 'I'm playing in the sand' I answered, wondering why grown-ups needed to ask such questions when it was quite obvious what I was doing. 'Didn't you hear the bell go?' he asked. 'Yes', I said. 'Well, that means you have to go in'. 'I did not know that', I said reasonably. 'Well, come along now' he said, and ushered me back into the classroom.

At lunchtime I followed the other children up some steps into a large flat building with a corrugated roof. The building smelt of boiled cabbage, and there were a lot of long tables with benches. There were several ladies around who told us to line up and collect our food. I collected a plate that held a scoop of mashed potato, a slice of beetroot oozing pink juice like blood, and a slice of meat with a fatty edge and a round disc of white fat in the middle. 'They get the food from the pig farm up the road', confided the boy next to me. 'It's what the pigs won't eat.' I did not like beetroot and I loathed fat, but I was hungry, so I ate the potato, most of the beetroot and as much of the meat as I could stomach. 'You have to eat all the meat', whispered the helpful boy. I felt I could not do this so pushed the fatty bits under what remained of the beetroot. 'Don't try to hide that' said one of the dinner ladies, coming up and standing behind me. 'Just eat it up!'. I tried and promptly heaved and let the slobbery bits of gristle fall on to the plate. 'Oh, all right, leave it now' she snapped. 'Go and get your pudding'. I went and got my pudding, which was a disgusting slimy stuff. 'That's frogspawn, that is,' said the same helpful boy. 'They get it up the ponds'. I tried to eat it and retched. 'Are you leaving your tapioca too?' snapped the dinner lady. 'Well, serve you right if you're hungry.'

After lunch we were told to put our heads down on our arms for a sleep. I could not sleep, the seats were uncomfortable and my forehead didn't feel comfortable on the sleeve of my cardigan, so I was glad when the sleep time was over and the teacher read us a story. After what seemed a long while it was time to go home, and my father met me at the gate. 'How did you get on?', he asked. 'All right', I said. He took me along to the toy shop. 'You can choose a toy if you like', he said. I was surprised; I didn't usually get to choose a toy. I chose a wooden yacht with a white sail that I thought I would sail in the bath. We walked up the railway bridge and started up the hill towards my home. 'I've got something to tell you', he said. 'Your mother has had to go into hospital today for an operation and you won't be seeing her for a while'. 'Oh', I said. I was thinking about my new boat and didn't really take it in. We went in and he made boiled eggs for tea.

And that was the end of my first day at school.



R Hazell Recycling Waste

Licence Waste Carrier - CB/QP3698MJ

Waste Management Licence No. WML86315

4yd skip - £155 + VAT

6yd skip - £215 + VAT

8yd skip - £255 + VAT

12yd skip - £340 + VAT

Roll On/Roll Off Skips Also Available

Ring 01491 699101



WOODCOTE PRESCHOOL



We would like to welcome Matilda, Enid & Mason who have joined us after the Easter holidays, we hope you enjoy your time with us. We would also like to welcome Sophie back who has been on maternity leave for the last ten months.

Sophie is now our new Deputy Manager.

Celebrations

We celebrated St David's Day with lots of castles, knights, princesses and dragons. The children sampled some welsh rarebit for snack. They made some beautiful daffodils.

For Mother's Day they planted a flower for their mums and decorated the pot. We took photos of the children which they stuck on a flower card they made and they baked and decorated cupcakes.

We celebrated St Patrick's Day with everything green and the children baked some soda bread and ate it with a homemade Irish Stew for their lunch, which they thoroughly enjoyed. We listened to some Irish music and tried some Irish dancing.

Birthdays

Since February we have had quite a few lockdown birthdays. The children's parents asked us if we could hold their party at Preschool with their friends. The parents provided a cake and party bags; we provided the food, games and a party! We have played Musical Chairs, Musical Statues, Musical Bumps and even had a Pinata! The children have enjoyed it so much so it is something we will continue to do out of lockdown.

Countries of the World

The children have been looking at different countries, where people live, what they eat, different languages. They have been making dens, going camping and sampling different foods.



Space & Sea

The children turned the interactive cube into a spaceship on some days and a boat on others. They dressed up in the space outfits, created various rockets and aliens for crafts and made their own moon dough. There was a lot of water play and experimenting with boats to see if they would float or sink depending on what they were filled up with.

Easter

We had two Easter Egg Hunts inside and outside of Preschool and the children had great fun searching for all the eggs. We made Chocolate Nests, lots of Easter Crafts and games. The children made Easter Bonnets at home and brought them into Preschool where we had our Easter Bonnet Parade and the children sang Easter songs and actions they have been learning. Due to covid restrictions unfortunately the parents weren't allowed in to watch them, so we sent them all a video.

Next term we will be focusing on Spring and Minibeasts. We have ordered a *grow your own butterfly* kit. This gives children an unforgettable opportunity to learn about metamorphosis to watch the caterpillars grow, change into chrysalides and emerge as beautiful Painted Lady Butterflies. When they are transformed, we will be releasing them at our allotment. We will be visiting our allotment and planting potatoes and some other vegetables.

We still have some spaces available so if you are interested in your child joining Woodcote Preschool, please contact Wendy Powell on 01491 682300 or email woodcote.pre-school@hotmail.co.uk

You can also find us on our website www.woodcotepreschool.co.uk or take a look at our Facebook page.

CABIN PRESCHOOL



Spring is here finally! We have been looking for signs of Spring around the village, and the children have been bringing in photos of items they have found with their families as well.

New children

We are very pleased to welcome Rowen, Ava and Freya who are all starting after Easter. I am sure our families, staff and children will give you a very warm welcome.

Smarties challenge

I am overwhelmed at the response from our children and families who have managed to raise over £230 this month. The children were all given a tube of smarties and the idea was that the children were paid with Smarties for completing little jobs around the house, then the parent exchanged these for coins that were put into the empty Smarties tube. Once they filled the Smarties tube, they brought it back to Cabin. There were a few challenges – mainly that no-one has change anymore so some very generous parents BACS transferred their money over to us!

Parents were frantically searching for coins under car seats and under the sofa as the children became very helpful.

A huge thank you to Daisy Boutique for giving us a child's designed t-shirt for the child raising the most money.

With our money, we bought some new books and a Tuff tray and paid for Easter egg treats for our egg hunt.

Easter Hat Parade



Slightly different this year, every child made a hat at Cabin which we paraded around the school field on Tuesday morning. I suggested to the children that whilst wearing a hat, they should do so in a very refined way. They had to speak nicely and kindly to their friend and had to walk with a straight back and slowly to show off their hats. This we called The Rule of the Hat!

Easter Egg Village Trail

Thank you to Charlie and Sarah from the committee for organising this. The words HAPPY EASTER were put up around the village for anyone to join in, a trail map was given out with a funky pencil for a small donation to Cabin, hope you all had fun.

Chicks

We have been given a fantastic opportunity to repeat the chick experience. We will be given another seven eggs to hatch as we return in April. We are so looking forward to watching the chicks hatch and become cheeky friends.

September

If you interested in enrolling your child with us, we are now taking bookings.

This year we are expecting settling children to be a little bit different. We at Cabin have many different strategies to help with settling or separation. A lot of children might not have left their families due to the pandemic, when normally they might have spent days with grandparents, aunts or family friends.

We would highly recommend you go and visit different settings to see what you are happy with, take your child with you, watch how they interact with the staff, watch if they are happy to go and investigate the new surroundings. At Cabin we love

to meet new families and are really keen to get the first few weeks right. Every child is an individual and will present different challenges at different times. Some children will skip in for the first few weeks and then decide it's all a bit much. Others take longer and might come to us for half an hour every day for a few weeks. Once we have their trust, they never look back. Here at Cabin, we are dedicated professionals that understand the needs of a young family. Communication is the tool.

Please book in an individual meeting/tour of Cabin. At the moment we are offering meetings after school hours. We have a lot of children leaving to move onto big school this year so it is a perfect time to be able to offer gentle, quieter sessions to help settle your little ones.

Book a visit call Jayne on 01491 680854 for an informal chat and look around Cabin Preschool, this will be out of school hours. Or email us on info@thecabinpreschool.co.uk. Cabin is a committee run preschool with charitable status.

Local Pressure Washing Service

ENHANCE YOUR PROPERTY
CLEAN THE EXTERIOR!
Roofs / Driveways / Paths
Patios / Fences / Walls
Cedar Boards / Etc.
Free site visit and quotation.
Call Tim on 07970 480 529

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

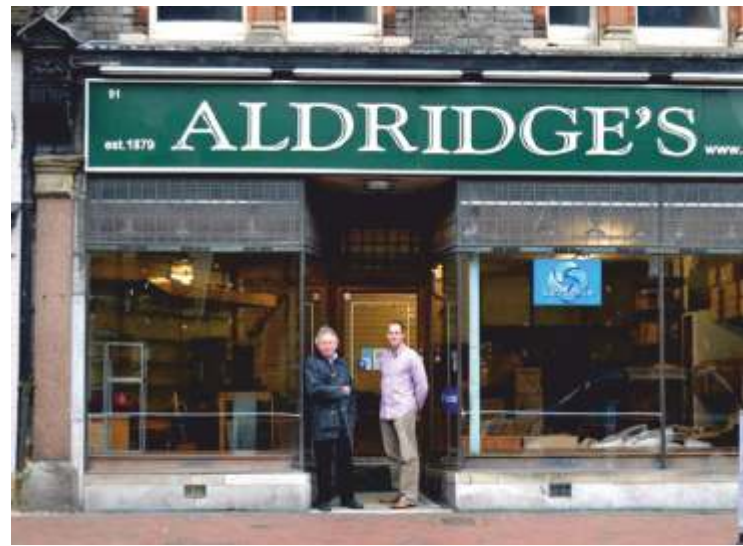
Shaun Guard
TV & WIFI SERVICES

- Aerials - supplied, repaired & poor reception solved
- Satellite - Sky Q dish upgrades, discreet dish installation also foreign TV
- Internet - blackspots cured, data cables to your TVs / computer
- TVs - hung on your wall or set up and tuned
- CCTV & Door Entry - domestic installations

OXFORD AERIALS
www.oxfordaerials.co.uk
Call Wallingford 01491 833282



Peter Solomans



Jonny Aldridge and his Dad outside the current



How to enjoy a heatwave in April!



Wind damage on the Village Green



Some of the Fairy Doors that have appeared in Woodcote



ent shop



Snow in April! A snow-family waiting for the Red Lion to open; and an igloo being built on the green



Cabin Preschool Pictures



Woodcote Preschool Activities

250 varieties and colours of basket & patio plants all grown on the nursery

Purely Plants

Seasonal Opening:
April-July & September-November
7 days a week - See website for details

HANGING BASKET SPECIALISTS

BEDDING & CONTAINER PLANTS

VEGETABLES & HERBS

PERENNIALS, CLIMBERS & SHRUBS

e: andy@purelyplants.co.uk 01491 833 831 w: www.purelyplants.co.uk
Purely Plants Nursery, 142a Wantage Road, Wallingford, Oxfordshire OX10 0LU

The Landscape Group Oxford

GARDEN, GROUNDS & PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

We have maintained the village for the Parish Council and also provide the following for local residents:

- Garden and Grounds Maintenance
- Fencing and Turfing
- Hedge Cutting and Tree Work
- Drives, Patios and Landscaping
- House and Garden Clearance

£10 million Public Liability Insurance. Trading Standards Approved.
Safecontractor Accredited, NPTC & Lantra Qualified.

Tel: 01865 341750 e: lee@tlgo.co.uk w: www.tlgo.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

Checkatrade.com Where reputation matters

Which Trusted Traders

Office: 3 Wayside Green, Woodcote, Oxon RG8 6PR. Proprietor Richard Hornden

Heating, Plumbing and Bathroom Installations

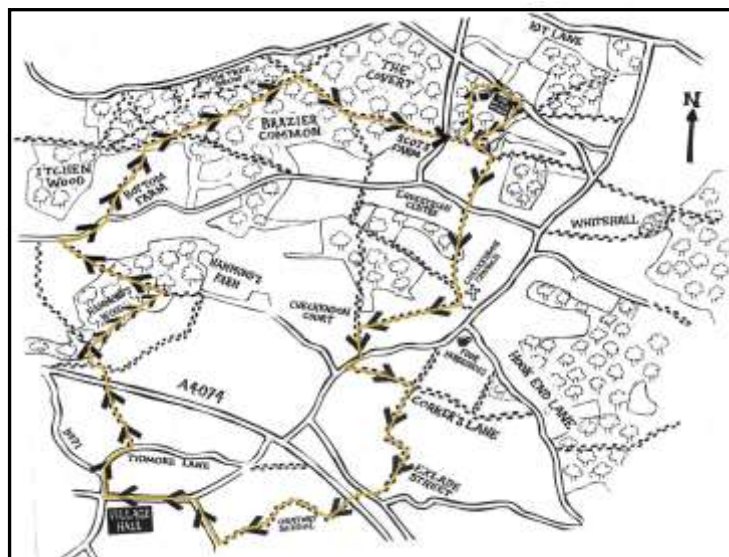
Neil McDougall

- ◁ Local plumber
- ◁ Over 20 years experience
- ◁ Gas Safe Registered
- ◁ Free estimates

Phone 01491 680141
neilandkathmcdougall@tiscali.co.uk

WOODCOTE WALKS: PART 11

The Black Horse Pub, Checkendon. Distance. 6.2 miles. Easy with some short climbs (including steps) and some muddy stretches. A map is advised and you need to follow the directions carefully as there are some points at which you could go wrong. Allow 3 – 4 hours depending on how long you want to stay in the pub. This is a wonderful walk encompassing some gloriously characteristic Chilterns scenery and an olde worlde pub in a land that time forgot.



Start at the Village Hall. Turn right at the War Memorial and walk down Red Lane (Oxford Road), turning right into Tidmore Lane.

Turn left on Tidmore Lane at the footpath sign (Chiltern Way Extension). The footpath goes through the grounds of Massey's Pightle (not the broad track). Take the narrow footpath near Field Cottage.

At the end of this path, cross the A4074 to a footpath opposite. Go over two stiles in quick succession and when you come to a narrow road turn left.

In 200 yards turn right on the Chiltern Way Extension, entering the Woodland Trust site, Grove Wood.

100 yards further on enter the woods and walk straight ahead on the broad path which follows the right-hand edge of the wood.

After about 600 yards go through a gap to leave Grove Wood and turn left on a broad gravel track, which after half a mile brings you to a road.

Turn right and after 300 yards turn left to take a footpath over a stile next to the entrance to Bottom Farm House. Walk past the pond on your left and look for the yellow arrow in the corner of the field.

Follow the yellow arrow through a man-made arch of trees. On this stretch you get wonderful views of the farm house and its grounds.

Pass through a gate and into a field and then through another gate into the next field to enter a wood through the only kissing gate I know which has

its own name, 'John's Gate'. Before entering the wood, look back to enjoy one of the most unspoilt views I have come across anywhere in the Chilterns.

On entering the wood there are 43 steps to climb at the top of which, turn right on a narrow path.

This path descends gradually and after about 300 yards in a small clearing, take the left fork. At first this path is narrow and overgrown, but then becomes a broad track.

After about half a mile at a clearly defined crossroads of paths, turn right uphill on a broad track. Stay on this track, ignoring a right fork until you emerge from the woods with a house ahead.

Walk past the house and several others to reach the road at Scot's Farm.

Cross the road and go down the track to the left of the farmhouse, almost immediately taking a footpath left into a wood.

There are two paths, take the left hand one. This path can be very muddy at times. Follow this path through the wood and in about 500 yards you reach a road.

Turn right and in 300 yards reach the Black Horse.



The Black Horse (drawing by Stephen Hanna)

Though the pub doesn't serve meals, it is an absolute gem, serving real ales in perfect condition, with seats outside at the front and a beautiful garden to the side. Walkers are asked to remove their boots before entering. Inside it is almost like entering an old-fashioned parlour and if you do this walk in winter, you are almost guaranteed to find a roaring open fire to welcome you. It is one of those pubs in the middle of the woods which you would never stumble across unless you know it is there and you feel it is almost best to keep it a secret.

After a welcome pint or two (don't forget you have to walk back), take the tarmac path next to the pub garden and when you see a brick house in front of you look for a yellow arrow and turn right on a broad (sometimes muddy) path.

After 200 yards, take the left fork and emerge from the wood with a quaint pink cottage on your left.

Turn left on the track and after 75 yards, look for a stile on your right. Cross the stile and walk across a field to a second stile. This path leads to the road at Checkendon Equestrian Centre.



Pink Cottage

Cross the road to take a footpath down the side of a garage.

Cross the grass to a path slightly to your left. Pass a pond on your left and follow the clearly defined path to a stile.

Cross the stile and follow the yellow arrow to cross another stile.

Turn left on a narrow path which leads to Checkendon Church, well worth a visit if you have time.

Cross over the road with Checkendon Court on your right to enter a large field through a kissing gate.

Walk diagonally across the field to reach another kissing gate, followed almost immediately by another.

Turn left on a narrow path and in 250 yards reach the Checkendon-Woodcote road.

Turn right and walk along the road for 100 yards then turn left on Corkers Lane.

Follow this muddy track for about 500 yards and where the path narrows look out for a cross-track with a narrow opening on the right leading to a stile (not easy to see).

Cross this stile and walk diagonally across a large field with a farm on your left. At the far side of the field cross a stile, walk past a pond and turn sharp right (ignore metal gate to your left) and walk down the left of a field to reach a narrow path which leads to Exlade Street.

Turn right and then left on a footpath uphill. Cross the stile and go down the steps to reach the A4074. Cross the road and climb the steps on the other side to enter the Oratory School grounds.

The footpath crosses diagonally to the right over the playing field. Head for the black rectangular storage shed, then follow the drive round to the right passing between the top of the main drive on the right and the main school building (which was once Woodcote House) on the left.

Follow the drive round until it meets Greenmore from whence you turn right and make your way back to the Village Hall.

Stilehopper.

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



STORAGE

DRY SECURE STORAGE UNITS

ON GATED PREMISES IN WOODCOTE

FROM £70 PER MONTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE PHONE

01491 680919 / 07763 101393

Professional Organising & Decluttering Services



Are you: Moving house • downsizing
divorcing • relocating
expecting a new arrival • empty nesting

... or just wanting to clear out your
clutter and get organised?

Call for a free consultation

07798 702041

info@thespacemaker.co.uk



TS.CARS & SON WOODCOTE GARAGE

Reading Road Woodcote (Next To Shop & Garden Centre)

We Service & Repair All Types of Cars & Vans.

Family Run Quality Garage. Established Here 40 Years.

We offer a Free Loan Car,

Or will Pick up & Deliver back to your Home.

We are also a Jaguar Repair Centre.

Phone: 01491 680286 Email: tscars@live.co.uk

Web site: tscars-woodcote.co.uk

THE BRITISH MODERN MILITARY HISTORY SOCIETY



Our new book launches soon!

The British Modern Military History Society is delighted to announce that its book *Glimpses of War* will be published on the 8th May (the anniversary of VE Day). Born out of the COVID-19 lockdown, *Glimpses of War* is a compilation of military stories and articles from our members and historians of experiences in wartime, both civilian and military in any role and any conflict. All proceeds from this 550-page volume will go to the charity Blind Veterans UK (formerly St Dunstan's) who have given full endorsement to the book. More details of the publication and how to contribute to future volumes can be found on the website www.bmmhs.org/glimpses-of-war



Forthcoming Talks

During 2021, BMMHS will continue Zoom talks twice a month and look to resume live meetings as soon as we can. Please check our website www.bmmhs.org for up-to-date information.

Our afternoon meeting on Tuesday May 4th will be entitled *Ships, Stars and Isles* - an illustrated talk based on a collection of some four hundred letters that the speaker's father, Billy Taylor, wrote home to his parents whilst serving in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during WW2.

Long after his father's death, Mark Taylor discovered the letters. As he read them, he saw that his father was a skilled and witty writer who had described a naval life, both routine and in action, from the Dover Patrol via the Dunkirk evacuation (where Billy was awarded the D.S.M.), Atlantic convoys, U-boat encounters, the invasions of both North Africa and France, and ultimately the Japanese surrender in the Far East. In that time Billy rose from the rank of Ordinary Signaller to that of First Lieutenant and served in shore stations as well as converted trawlers, a paddle steamer, a corvette and two frigates in locations as far apart as Scapa Flow and Surabaya.

Despite the constraints of the censor and his audience, Billy's letters revealed his thoughts as well as his experience. Here was a complete story of Billy's naval career which was not only a valuable historical record but also a precious personal insight into his father's life.

On Wednesday May 12th, our evening talk will be on *Lawrence of Arabia: Man, Myth and Movie*. Lawrence was probably the most remarkable officer to have served in the British Army during the Great War. Today he is probably the most famous. Yet it is now difficult to separate the man from the myth.

As a result of recent operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, T.E. Lawrence has enjoyed a resurgence of interest among British and American army officers.

In his presentation, Dr John Peaty will try to disentangle the man from the myth, examine the various portrayals of Lawrence and try to explain how a junior British Army officer became, next to Mao, the most famous guerrilla leader the world has ever known.

Check out our website on www.bmmhs.org for details of all our talks, and to register for talks, email us on zoom@bmmhs.org Thank you to everyone who has supported us and made donations to help keep us going.

ALL OUR YESTERDAYS

May 2016

Jean-Paul Brouard's article, 'Amphibian Spring Migration', gave us all the 'lowdown' on the epic annual journey of frogs, newts and toads to Greenmoor Ponds. He wrote:

'As the evening temperatures rise and the heavens open, amphibians are drawn out of hibernation and move en masse towards their ancestral breeding ponds to spawn. Year after year they will follow the same route, regardless of what obstacles lie in front of them. Unfortunately, many of these obstacles are man-made. One hurdle that poses a major threat is the heavy traffic on our roads. As the roads often cross their migratory routes, the horrific scene of multitudes of dead amphibians is a sad reality. This is also extremely damaging to their populations.'

This edition also carried the definitive version of why the X39 bus cannot be diverted to stop in Woodcote. The Customer Service and Retail Manager of Thames Travel was quoted:

'The only way that a diversion to Woodcote could be accommodated in both directions would be to introduce an extra bus (and associated drivers) into the cycle. This would increase running costs for the route by a six-figure sum each year. This equates to an additional 440 Adult Return passengers per week at the full on-board ticket price of £5.90 that would need to be carried to cover the cost. Such additional costs could not be covered by revenue from the village and is unlikely to be found elsewhere on the route.'

There was news of a third national award for Langtree in two years. This award was for 'exceptional progress at GCSE'.

May 2011

Pride of place was given to a report from the AGM of the Friends of St Leonards. Marcia Spiers reported a

successful year of fundraising and completed projects, but she reminded readers that it costs £32,000 a year to keep the church up and running and she invited more people to join the 'Friends'.

The Conservation Group wanted to raise awareness of the decrease in the number of house sparrows, not just locally, but worldwide. John Sandford suggested a local cause.

'Increasing car ownership, for instance, has led to the creation of parking places in front gardens or on plots of 'waste land' – once vital sources of food for the birds; improvements to our houses have meant that far fewer buildings today have the nooks and crannies where sparrows nest.'

The Football Club was doing well in cup competitions with the first team reaching the Senior Cup Final at the Madejski Stadium and the under-13s reaching their cup final, both for the second successive year.

There was news of the impending retirement of Dr Rhys Hamilton from the Medical Practice.

Langtree School's Year 8 pupils had been taking part in the BBC Schools' News Report. '

Sophie van Brugen, television reporter for BBC Breakfast, who worked with the pupils, said: "It is a fantastic opportunity for the students to get an idea of what life is like as a journalist, from finding stories to working to deadlines. I have been extremely impressed with their tenacity and enthusiasm – there are definitely some budding reporters in the making.'

May 2006.

In the lead article, the Editor, Christopher Quinton, posed the question, 'New Land for Development?' He indicated that the Oxfordshire Structure Plan published by OCC proposed 1300 new houses to be built in the South Oxon District Council Area. 'Their plan indicates that new development should take place in and around the towns and larger villages in the district.' Woodcote was identified as one such 'larger village'.

Mary Hulbert was seeking information on the men named on the War Memorial. She wrote, 'The Woodcote War Memorial project will be quite an undertaking, but please give it serious consideration, so that Woodcote has a record of war victims that is not just names.'

Remember Ian Cruikshank's Gypsy Jazz Concerts at the Village Hall, arranged by Ruth Hubbard? This one for the Pre-School was packed to the rafters and raised £1200. As Ruth observed, 'What a Night!'

The Parish Council raised no objection to the proposed demolition of 'the existing Thames Water reservoir and office building and the erection of a replacement building divided into four flats, plus the formation of new access.'

DID YOU KNOW?...

You can reach over 1300 homes each month if you advertise with us? That's a lot of potential customers! For more details, email us at: wood-co@runbox.com

Aldridge's est 1879

www.aldridges.co.uk

Samsonite Spares & Repairs – Quality Leather Goods

We now stock a selection of:

Gents Leather Wallets
Ladies Leather Purses
Leather Accessories
Handmade Leather Belts

Available to purchase online and from our new
Woodcote showroom.
Please contact us before visiting

Jonny Aldridge – info@aldridges.co.uk/07980253841
Unit 7 Church Farm Woodcote RG8 0QX

REGISTERED OSTEOPATH

KAREN L. PHILLIPS D.O.

WOODCOTE PRACTICE 01491 684060
Flexible appointment times
Private Health Insurance Provider

J Roxborough Services

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
- Flat roof renewal & roof repairs
- Bathroom & kitchen installations
- Fascia & gutter replacement

Free quotes, fully insured, recommendations freely available

Tel: 07909 931601 or 01491 682955

AN INTERVIEW WITH...

This month, we interview Woodcote resident, Jonny Aldridge.

Welcome Jonny!

Could you start by giving us a brief history of Aldridge's and how your family became involved in the leather trade?

G Aldridge & Son (our original name) was established in 1879 by my great, great grandfather George Aldridge. He purchased 91 Friar Street and the main business back then was harness making. The location was chosen as it was close to Reading market (now Thimbelby and Shorland). Horses would come to the back of the shop to be fitted with their harness.



The Old Shop

Harness manufacture and retail was the main part of the business for several years and when my great grandfather joined the business, he introduced

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

saddlery and all kinds of leather goods. My great grandfather lived above the shop and my grandfather was born there.



During the visit of Bostock and Wombwell's show to Reading it was found necessary to fit one of the elephants with a pair of boots for her hind feet.

Here one of the boots is being fitted by Jonny's great grandfather. They were made of leather, lined with felt and tipped with steel. They each weighed 12lbs (5.4 kg).

My grandfather joined the business in the early 1920's. Harness manufacture was still a large part of the business but with horse riding becoming popular, we branched into the saddlery business. With the business expanding, my grandfather purchased 90 Friar Street and turned the 2 properties into one.

Dad joined the business in 1956 and by now, saddlery had taken over from harness manufacture. The business was extremely busy with saddlery and there were four full time leather workers in the workshop. We made all the saddlery goods we sold. Dad would drive to Walsall twice a week to fill his van with leather. *(See colour picture, page 12)*

In the 80's and 90's, we also made specialist goods for several of the local businesses. We made and supplied all the leather cash bags for the SEB, gun holsters for the security staff at AWE and numerous leather goods for Thames Valley Police. These included truncheon wrist straps, torch pouches and handcuff straps.

In 1989 we supplied several harnesses for the stunt men working on the James Bond film *Licence to Kill*

**Why did you decide to join the family business?
What training did you receive?**

I joined the business in 1988. I had spent much of my childhood in the shop especially in the workshop. I would sit for hours watching large pieces of leather being turned into works of art. Dad offered me a job when I left college and I can say I literally loved every

single day I worked there. Dad taught me the retail and business skills and Richard – who worked in the workshop for forty years - taught me my leather skills.

The saddlery side of the business was slowing down by the time I joined so we moved into the luggage and small leather goods business.

When did the shop close and why?

I enjoyed 28 years working in the shop but unfortunately, we had to close the shop in February 2016 because online business started to take over. However, I am fortunate and immensely proud to keep the business going from my new premises in Woodcote.

I also have some amazing memories from my time working at the shop. For instance, I found out that my great grandfather had once made a leather boot for an injured elephant from a local circus!

And after my grandfather retired, he would still come into the shop. He would pull up outside in his car and it was almost like royalty was walking in. The staff would stop what they were doing and say, 'Good morning Mr Aldridge'.

Tell us about your new(ish) business in Woodcote

I moved into my new premises in Woodcote in 2018. Unfortunately, Dad passed away later that year but I was proud that he had seen the new premises from where I will carry on the family business.

I still carried out leather repairs but my main business was supplying Samsonite luggage spare parts to the general public through my website. We even supplied goods to Heathrow Airport and several large companies in Singapore and Australia.

Unfortunately, last March, with Covid stopping air travel, the spare parts business went very quiet. This allowed me to resurrect my leather goods business. I am now making handmade leather belts, leather wallets, leather dog collars and leads and several leather accessories. These can be viewed on my new website www.englishmadebelts.co.uk. I am more than happy for customers to view my products at the workshop in Woodcote.

And finally, do you ever find time for hobbies and sports?

Outside work, sport and fitness have always been my passion. Football, cricket, moto x and the gym are my favourites. After having a hip replacement last year, football is now just watching and supporting Woodcote FC out on the Green with friends and a pint in my hand!

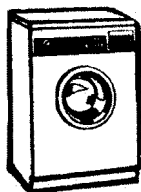
Cricket though is still a huge part of my life with my beloved Woodcote CC. I have been playing since I was 17 and hopefully have several years left playing. I was asked to help out many years ago with pitch work and preparation. Not sure how but I am still doing it!! Nothing beats sitting on the roller on a summer's evening, then heading to the Red Lion for a well-deserved pint!

Chiltern Domestic Appliances

Est 1985

Repairs, Servicing and Sales

Washing Machines, Tumble Dryers, Dishwashers,
Cookers



* Low call-out fee * Prompt Attention

Tel: 01491 638146



www.thecabinpreschool.co.uk

01491 680854

Info@thecabinpreschool.co.uk

Cabin is a friendly pre-school in a great location within Woodcote Primary School.

- children from 2 years old through to start of school
- dedicated outdoor space plus access to the playground, field and climbing frames.
- offer an exciting range of activities including: French and sports.
- flexible choice of sessions
- Term time, 9am - 3pm, early drop off and late stay available



Registered Incorporated Charitable Organisation: 1364579 OFSTED Registered: EY547804

J & R Collier



BUILDERS



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

01491 680779 or 0118 9451518



TEL: 01491 682437 MOB. 07966509908.
PUBLIC LIABILITY, OWN CAR, TRAINED, DBS,
EXPERIENCED, DEMENTIA, PALLIATIVE.



WALLINGFORD GARDEN CLUB NEWS

During the Covid epidemic, WGC has not disappeared! We have not been able to meet but as you would guess like many, we have been active in our gardens tending and nurturing them despite the ever-changing weather conditions.

Our first club activity of 2021 will be our annual plant sale on *Saturday 8th May 2021* from 09:30 – 12:30 in the Wallingford Town Square

Our members have been busy sowing and propagating a wide range of flowers and vegetable plants. Feel free to come and browse.

Keep an eye on our website (www.wallingford-gardening-club.com) and Facebook (Wallingford Gardening Club South Oxford) for news of our summer garden visits which will enable us to meet safely and re-establish those friendly links. You can also find useful gardening tips and information on these sites.

We are happy to answer your gardening questions by email gardenswallingford@gmail.com

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

CONNECTION

By Gabby Robinson

During the last year, we were told to stay safe, stay indoors, not to mix with and basically not to trust in others. We were told to disconnect from our usual ways of being and interaction, cover our faces, don't touch, don't breathe, don't hug, don't mix. What has that done for our feelings of connection?



Of course, we have been resilient, we have moulded ourselves, created new forms of communication, new measures of conversation, new ways of being together, but not in person, not live and direct. We have used screens, phones, glass walls, 2-metre spaces. But what is the cost of this lack of connection?

Have you noticed though, how people are perfecting the art of smiling with their eyes?

I went for a walk recently with a friend that I hadn't seen in person for a very long time. The kind of friend who doesn't go for small talk, who goes deep into exactly where she is and what is going on at that moment. It was so refreshing, I left feeling nourished, empowered and revived. That's not to say the whole conversation was positive, but it was real. It was connected.

Think about the polite, superficial conversations we have and clearly need to have sometimes. They are all valid and valuable, but do you have anyone that knows you well enough to skip the small talk and look deeper into your being and connect? For that matter, do you ask yourself the deeper questions? Do you stop and check in with yourself, what you are doing, how you are feeling, if you are on automatic pilot or actually present? Do you notice your self-talk, that constant inner monologue? Are you even kind and connected to yourself?

Just as I was writing this article, I had an email from one of the studios that I teach for with the same heading, 'Connection'. I often find that when I am writing or contemplating a topic, I receive emails or messages on the same subject so I opened it and read:

In a world full of people, what can be more beautiful than knowing how to form healthy relationships and establish deeper connections with those around us? Where we hope to connect, empower, accept, grow and rest.

What can be more powerful than looking at people around you and understanding that by being kind, loving and helpful towards others, you are also being kind, loving and helpful towards yourself?

Yoga offers the space and time to ask the questions, to sit with the answers and to be truly present to whatever unfolds - the good, the bad and everything in between. I am not saying everyone needs to rush to a Yoga class immediately, but I do want to offer the suggestion that connection is key. Connection

with yourself, your inner critic, your thoughts, deeds, your actions and reactions and of course your connection with others, that's where the magic is!

I teach Hatha yoga, Yin yoga, breath-work, meditation, Restorative yoga and Yoga Nidra or relaxation in my online classes. Hopefully you can see that Yoga is not just about holding poses but a way to truly access the real you, nurture it and connect!

My new website is www.gabbyrobinsonwellness.co.uk where you can learn all about what I offer so do get in touch for your first class FREE!



COULD YOU VOLUNTEER FOR US?



We can all face problems that are too stressful or complicated to sort out alone.

In 2019 our 150 volunteers advised over 11,000 people. We helped three quarters resolve their debt, benefits, employment and housing problems.

We now need more advisers to help us during and after the Covid-19 crisis.

Our main offices are in Abingdon, Didcot, Henley and Thame. Since March 2020, 90 volunteers and staff have been advising the public from home on our Adviceline service. Recently we partially re-opened our offices, in part to train new advisers.

What will you get out of it? You will join a friendly team, meet new people, develop your skills and make a real difference to people's lives.

You'll need to have good listening and interpersonal skills, a willingness to learn and be confident with computers. Full training will be provided.

If you have eight hours a week to spare for the next two years or more and are looking for a satisfying and stimulating volunteer role in your local community, please contact us at:

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale/volunteer/

General Maintenance Gardener

Grass cutting, Hedge cutting,
Edging, Weeding, General tidy-up.
For a one-off or regular maintenance
Call: Jason 07775564275

Kitty Kare
Going on Holiday - Away on Business
Have Your Cat(s) Looked After in Your Own Home
Fully Insured * References Available
Competitive Rates
Call Val on 01491 681235 or 07768 732439
email: val.ogilvie878@gmail.com



NEED A GOOD READ?

We have two more reviews from the Wallingford bookshop ladies!

For adults:

'Greenwich Park' by Katherine Faulkner



We've not reviewed a psychological thriller on this page for a while, and this one is a cracking debut from journalist Katherine Faulkner. Helen and her husband Daniel, and Helen's brother Rory and his wife Serena, have been blessed with money and success. Both couples are pregnant and are eagerly anticipating parenthood. Then at an ante-natal class Helen meets brash, uncompromising Rachel, who befriends Helen...but whose friendship may not be entirely altruistic...

This is a meticulously plotted, pacy read filled with twists and turns...and as for the ending! We both read this in one sitting and agree that Katherine Faulkner is one to watch...

For children:

'By Ash, Oak and Thorn' by Melissa Harrison



Award winning nature writer Melissa Harrison is best known for her evocative fiction (including 'All Among the Barley'). This book is her first foray into middle grade fiction and it's an enchanting read. Three ancient tiny 'hidden folk', Cumulus, Moss and Burnet wake from their winter sleep to discover that Cumulus, the eldest, is beginning to fade away. The trio leave their home to search for their relatives in the hope that they can find some answers. Meeting a multiplicity of marvellous characters along the way, the trio realise that they have to head to the 'mortals hive' or the city for answers to their plight. Harrison interweaves fascinating facts about the natural world seamlessly into the narrative, making this a must for young nature lovers and environmentalists.

We're thrilled to be back open for browsing - we've missed you! The shop is open between 9am and 4pm, Tuesdays to Saturdays. No appointment necessary, but we are operating social distancing so may ask you to wait outside for a minute or two if the shop is busy. Please do not visit us if you're feeling poorly - stay home, get well and read books!



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

OFSTED RATING 'GOOD' JULY 2016

As well as a varied curriculum of activities, children will also benefit from:

- Trips to our own allotment & around the village
- Large indoor and outdoor play area
- Flexible sessions
- Fresh homecooked meals prepared on the premises
- Easter & Summer Holiday Club

www.woodcotepreschool.co.uk 01491 682300

Find us on Facebook 'Woodcote Pre School'



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

STUARTS HOME DECORATING

PAINTER & DECORATOR
FULLY INSURED & RELIABLE

INTERIOR & EXTERIOR HOME DECORATION

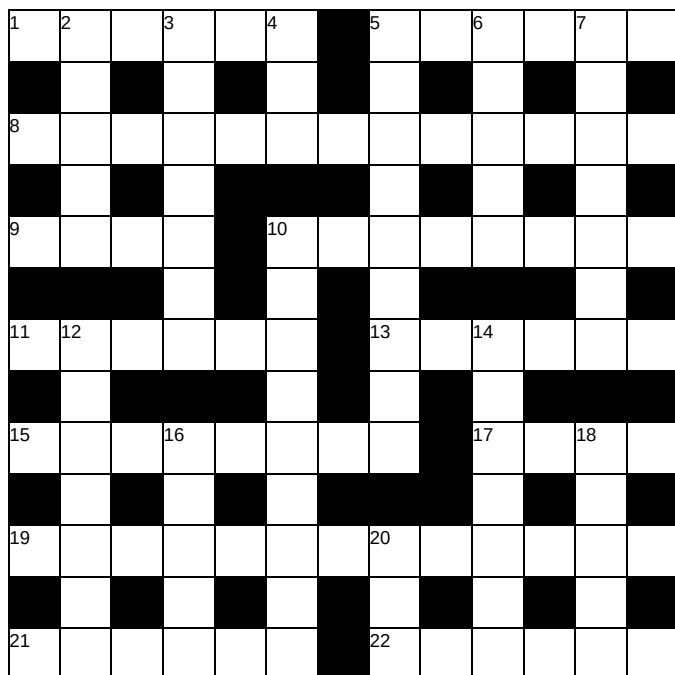
**Woodcote
South Oxfordshire**



Tel. 07976431697

nozeyparker5@gmail.com

MAY CROSSWORD



Across

- 1 Force commander takes king to church (6)
- 5 Acknowledge current church taking exercise (6)
- 8 Red admiral's student (13)
- 9 Sailor turns fifty-one on island (4)
- 10 Secure miserable confinement (8)
- 11 Techie talk from Juliet having a gas (6)
- 13 Presents from unopened treasure chests (6)
- 15 That's a proper flower! (8)
- 17 Overused! Trick inside (4)
- 19 Neighbourhood boss supplies supplies (7,6)
- 21 Dreads crushed snakes (6)
- 22 Seaman goes back to another rock (6)

Down

- 2 Show takes a long time after opening of performance (5)
- 3 Phone about help for ransacking (7)
- 4 I, therefore, exit right (3)
- 5 Take choir around vegetable plant (9)
- 6 Concerned about Cardinal (5)
- 7 Art POWs liberated in late 1945 (7)
- 10 Capital chaps (9)
- 12 A pitch on the rocks (7)
- 14 Woodland defences built around final two ditches (7)
- 16 Medic takes last car south east for policeman (5)
- 18 Wonderful US balloon (5)
- 20 Crowd leaders make others battle (3)

APRIL CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS



WALLINGFORD & DISTRICT ART CLUB (WADAC)



Our demonstration on Tuesday 18th May 2021 is an online live demonstration entitled "River Scene" in pastels by Rick Holmes.

Rick's style with soft pastels is loose impressionistic and he has developed a unique style using inks and roller to form a base on which to lay the pastels. He loves outdoor painting, especially near the River Wey with its various locks, with the sound of running water that is very inspirational. While he is exploring and developing his own painting, he says "You never stop learning!"

Our demonstrations are held at 7.30pm online. To join, email: admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk for the Zoom link. All viewing is free to members, friends of the club and local artists/clubs, as part of our "Art into the Community" project.

For information on all our art classes, please visit our website: www.wallingfordartclub.org.uk or email us at: admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk

We are hoping to restart on the 18th May once Covid restrictions are lifted.

WALLINGFORD COUNTRY MARKET RE-OPENS!

After a very disruptive 2020 due to the Covid-19 situation, we are pleased to announce that we are open for business again in front of St. Mary-le-More Church, situated in the Market Place, until the church itself re-opens. If wet, Bakery and Crafts will transfer to Centre 70, Kinecroft, Goldsmith Lane, near the Regal Centre carpark, just a short walk from the church, (where plants will remain), alongside the path by the Old Post Office.

DATES FOR THE DIARY – MAY

- Sun 2nd * St. Leonard's open for service of Holy Communion. St. Leonard's Church. 8.30am
- * St. Leonard's online church service. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 10.00am
- Tues 4th * BMMHS Zoom Talk: 'Ships Stars and Isles'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 2.00pm
- Wed 5th * St. Leonard's open for private prayer. St. Leonard's Church. 2pm-4pm.
- * St. Leonard's online Night Prayer. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 8.30pm
- Thur 6th * Wallingford Photographic Club: End of Season Competitions. www.wallingfordphoto.club. 7.30pm
- Sat 8th * Wallingford Garden Club Plant Sale. Wallingford Town Square. 9.30am-12.30pm
- Sun 9th * St. Leonard's open for service of Holy Communion. St. Leonard's Church. 8.30am
- * St. Leonard's online church service. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 10.00am
- Mon 10th * Henley & District Stamp Club Zoom meeting. www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk. 7.30pm
- Wed 12th * BMMHS Zoom Talk: 'Lawrence of Arabia'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 7.30pm
- * St. Leonard's open for private prayer. St. Leonard's Church. 2pm-4pm.
- * St. Leonard's online Night Prayer. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 8.30pm
- Thur 13th * Wallingford Photographic Club AGM. www.wallingfordphoto.club. 7.30pm
- Sun 16th * St. Leonard's open for service of Holy Communion. St. Leonard's Church. 8.30am
- * St. Leonard's online church service. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 10.00am
- Tues 18th * Wallingford & District Art Club on-line demonstration: 'River Scene in Pastels'. Email admin@wallingfordartclub.org.uk. 7.30pm
- Wed 19th * St. Leonard's open for private prayer. St. Leonard's Church. 2pm-4pm.
- * St. Leonard's online Night Prayer. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 8.30pm
- Sun 23rd * St. Leonard's open for service of Holy Communion. St. Leonard's Church. 8.30am
- * St. Leonard's online church service. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 10.00am

SMALL ADS

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

MAY DATES *(continued)*

- Sun 23rd * Woodcote Co-Op Charity Football Match in aid of MIND. Woodcote Village Green. 10.30am
- Mon 24th * Henley & District Stamp Club Zoom meeting. www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk. 7.30pm
- Wed 26th * St. Leonard's open for private prayer. St. Leonard's Church. 2pm-4pm.
- * St. Leonard's online Night Prayer. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 8.30pm
- Sun 30th * St. Leonard's open for service of Holy Communion. St. Leonard's Church. 8.30am
- * St. Leonard's online church service. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 10.00am

FORTHCOMING DATES IN JUNE

- Tues 1st * BMMHS Zoom Talk: 'The Zeppelin Onslaught – Britain's Forgotten Blitz'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 2.00pm
- Wed 2nd * St. Leonard's open for private prayer. St. Leonard's Church. 2pm-4pm.
- * St. Leonard's online Night Prayer. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 8.30pm
- Sun 6th * St. Leonard's open for service of Holy Communion. St. Leonard's Church. 8.30am
- * St. Leonard's online church service. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 10.00am
- Wed 9th * St. Leonard's open for private prayer. St. Leonard's Church. 2pm-4pm.
- * BMMHS Zoom Talk: 'The Battle of the Nile'. Email zoom@bmmhs.org. 7.30pm
- * St. Leonard's online Night Prayer. Email woodcotevicarage@btinternet.com. 8.30pm

CLOSING THOUGHT

Always remember that you are absolutely unique.
Just like everyone else.

Margaret Mead