

# THE WOODCHESTER WORD

Issue 64 - Autumn 2018

## Village Shop re-opens after major re-fit

Four years to the month since the 'Woodchester Post Office and Stores' was saved from closure by a village community group, the shop has undergone a major refit and is back open for business with a bright new interior and space for new lines which will be introduced in the coming months.

"As our village shop has had a dated look from the start, a shop refurbishment was always high on the wish list" explained Manager Christian Danneman. "When the opportunity to get a grant from the Post Office came up, Cathy seized the moment and successfully applied for it. This allowed us to consider a shop refurbishment earlier than we would have otherwise been able to."

To raise the rest of the funds, two bonds were issued which, thanks to the support of many villagers, were snapped up quickly. The shop was closed for the first week of September for the refit, and is now open again for business.

"We have recently signed a new 7-year lease with our landlord, and are now in a position to take our little shop into the next decade of successful trading" commented Christian.

One shop volunteer told the Woodchester Word "we are really excited about the new look to the shop - it will be nicer to work in and for our customers to shop in. We are all looking forward to presenting our "new" shop to our customers!"

"Our customers and supporters have been the driving force in the success of our Community Shop so far



and the increase in the products that we have been able to stock and sell" Cathy Adams told the Woodchester Word. "After the refurbishment, we will endeavour to stock items that are specifically requested by our customers and welcome new enquiries. We will continue to stock local produce and to source new suppliers, particularly those with an ethical approach. Also look out for seasonal items and local gems - watch this space. We look forward to welcoming our customers old and new and encourage everyone to help to support and protect this amazing asset when so many villages are losing theirs - village shops have a positive impact on house prices. You can do this by buying one or two extra items on your weekly shopping list in Woodchester village shop. Our prices are very competitive. Keep visiting us to check our new stock and consider signing up with our Facebook page to hear about new items and offers".

Post Mistress Pauline Woolam is "looking forward to Christmas, not that far away, in our lovely newly refurbished shop and Post Office. Leaflets detailing Christmas posting dates are now available. Christmas Cards will be available in the shop nearer the time and I will soon be ordering supplies of this years Christmas stamps".

Shop opening hours are 07:30-17:30 Monday to Friday and 08:30-12:30 on Saturday. The Post Office is open 09:00-07:30 Monday to Friday and 09:00-12:00 on Saturday.



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# Parish Council

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## Hillgrove House Planning Application



An application has been submitted for four 2.5-storey houses and one single storey house on the site of the grounds of the important Grade II listed building. Plans can be found at [www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk).

The Parish Council discussed the application at a public meeting and have objected to the proposals on the grounds of a detrimental effect to heritage assets, poor access and the lack of provision of affordable housing. Historic England have also expressed concerns with the current proposals.

## The Ram Planning Application

Revised plans were submitted in July which propose the erection of two dwellings and extensions to the kitchen and restaurant area, but the café, part of the original application has been removed, providing more car parking. Councillors discussed the revisions at a public meeting on 19th July. Concerns were raised relating to car parking provision, the lack of affordable housing in the village and the impact of the proposed development within the setting of a Conservation Area.

The owner of the pub, Mr. Phil McAsey stated that he will have a legal document drawn up which will allow

the Parish Council 12 months to purchase the property at market value should he wish to sell. Meanwhile, the Parish Council have been made aware that a group of concerned residents have submitted an application to Stroud District Council to request The Ram be listed as a Community Asset to allow the community the opportunity to buy should the owner decide to sell the business (see page six).

## Rooksmoor Mills Update

Work on the development has yet to start, with Tony Cooper advising that "we are working on discharging planning conditions and hopefully we are looking to start in January 2019 with completion May 2021"

## Neighbourhood Watch

The aim of Neighbourhood Watch is to 'bring neighbours together to create strong, friendly, active communities where crime and anti-social behaviour are less likely to happen.' Neighbourhood Watch is about 'making sure that fewer people feel afraid, vulnerable or isolated in the place where they live'.

A Neighbourhood Watch scheme currently operates in Lawns Park. If there are residents interested in being part of a Neighbourhood Watch group elsewhere in the village, please let us know and we'll put you in touch with each other and organise some support from the police 'single point of contact' for the area if required. If interested, please contact the clerk Ann Bijkerk on 01453 873456 or [woodchesterparish@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterparish@gmail.com).

## Village Maintenance

Lastly, just a plea to residents to weed and tidy up along property boundaries. With a reduced budget, it is becoming increasingly difficult to get Gloucestershire Highways to carry out work for us. We have in the past been very grateful for the work of the Leyhill Team, but they are also busier and booking their time is more difficult.

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## Footpath closures

These are for work by Severn Trent on a new water main and will be closed 'at certain times' until 28 February 2019. The closures near us are mainly in Kings Stanley parish but could affect residents of Woodchester.

They are basically on paths that lead down to the Ebley bypass where there is no assisted crossing point so may not be on anyone's favourite route. If you use paths in this area, it will be best to check.

The chief issue in Woodchester will be on the way from Selsley common down through Rabbit Warren wood.

- MKS/62 goes from near the corner of the common at the Water Lane junction, between cottages and into the field where it crosses MKS/63 before heading down to Castle Cottage. It will be closed to the cross paths.
- MKS/63 will be closed from Water Lane to this cross paths.
- A stretch of path from the cross paths to Castle Cottage will remain open and have access from the road across the common at both ends. This may well be best avoided.
- MKS/64 goes from Castle Cottage through the wood becomes MWO/4 and drops down the field to Water Lane at the stile beyond Selsley Lodge. It will be closed.

The paths can be identified on the map at [https://gis.gloucestershire.gov.uk/LocalViewPub/Sites/PROW\\_EXT/](https://gis.gloucestershire.gov.uk/LocalViewPub/Sites/PROW_EXT/)

### Woodchester Park Lakes – to swim or not to swim?

Encouraged by the hot weather, Woodchester Park Lakes have become a popular destination for swimmers and canoers this summer, as well as families wanting a stunning location for a walk and a picnic with their children. And this popularity was more than local. With the lakes listed on wild swimming websites (wildswim.com lists it as "lovely lake swimming, best in the early morning or evening") as many as 200 people took to the water on some evenings this summer.



It's a wonderful location for families wanting a walk and perhaps a lakeside picnic with their children, but there are numerous problems associated with the newfound popularity of the lakes. It's very tempting to swim in the beautiful lakes on a hot day and some swimmers may have dived in unknowingly - signs telling people they should not swim have vanished, but the National Trust intends to replace them.

"Woodchester is home to a heronry but in the past few months, disturbance caused by people swimming has seen the herons abandon their nests - there are usually about 12 heron nest sites around the lakes but now there are just two. They also damaged trees and disturbed wildlife by playing loud music and lit fires in "bone dry woodland", said Max Dancer from the National Trust, adding that bathing was not allowed in the lakes.

"The recent heat wave has seen a surge in the popularity of the lakes, and although tempting, there are many dangers underneath the water," Mr Dancer explained. Deep waters that hide dangers below are behind the swimming ban. "It's just not safe," said Allan King of the National Trust. "There is lifesaving equipment nearby to the lakes, but this is there for the worst-case scenario, not encouragement." There is no mobile phone coverage

and it could be difficult for emergency vehicles to get to the scene in the event of an accident.

The call to stay out of the water came after a teenage boy suffered a gruesome foot injury in one of the Woodchester Park lakes, which meant he could not take his driving test. Naked swimmers have caused some consternation in the area. One woman wrote on a private Facebook group: "Another morning, another bare bottom bobbing around the lakes, scaring the carp and making me and the dog feel sick at Woodchester Park."

Woodchester Park is a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and surrounds the unfinished Victorian Gothic Woodchester Mansion. The mansion was recently used as a location for the Netflix TV series *The Crown* and is home to rare Greater Horseshoe bats.

The increased visitor numbers have also caused problems for villagers. "The large numbers of visitors resulted in parking problems in St. Mary's Hill and Convent Lane, blocking access for emergency vehicles and local residents, as well as improper use of the RC Priory Church car park" commented Parish Council Chairman Gervase Hamilton.

"We met with the National Trust's Area Ranger in an endeavour to address these problems and the Trust have agreed to highlight the dangers of swimming in the lakes on their website and in the Park leaflets, and display more 'no swimming' notices in the Park. They will also direct visitors to the official designated NT car park at the Nympsfield end of the Park emphasising there is no road access or permitted parking at the South Woodchester end".

Councillor Hamilton suggested that local residents should contact the police if resident or emergency vehicle access is obstructed or if they witness anti-social behaviour in the Park.



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### Keeping Dogs under control

Whilst most dog owners are responsible regarding their pets behaviour when off the lead, a small minority are not. Earlier this summer a dog chased and spooked the cows in Claypits causing them to stampede and smash down about 10 yards of fencing, landing up in Water Lane. Two dogs (out for a walk with their owner not far away) were seen killing a mink deer in Park Field. And there have been six separate incidents of dogs attacking sheep in Woodchester Park this summer, with one lamb having to be put down recently because of the severity of its injuries. Lets hope that Woodchester dog owners will make sure that these incidents are not repeated.

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# Environment

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## Woodchester family attempts a plastic-free month.

Following our article on plastic waste in the last issue of Woodchester Word, Selsley Road resident Sylvia May got talking to a lady from the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) on a train to London. She described the MCS *Plastic Challenge*, an annual event to try to encourage people to live without single use plastic for the month of July. "Like most of us, I have been concerned for some time about the amount of plastic waste we are generating, and the conversation prompted me to have a go at reducing my family's plastic waste for a month" explains Sylvia.

The May family did lots of research before starting, looking at alternatives to plastic packaging and working out what was practical within the constraints of a busy family lifestyle.

Food was the first target. 'It's very difficult to avoid single use plastics if you shop at supermarkets and it leaves you with a lot less choice. But many supermarkets will now fill your reusable container for meat and fish from their deli counters. You can avoid plastics for fruit and veg, but again there's less choice, so we ate lots of carrots, melons, apples, leeks, pears, peppers and new potatoes in July! Shopping in independent shops may be a better option for choice if you have time. Dry ingredients can be sourced from 'Loose' in Gloucester Street in Stroud. Rice, pasta, porridge, tea, oil and nuts were all collected in re-usable containers, many at competitive prices.

"To really go 'plastic free' I would need to change my lifestyle completely" comments Sylvia. "You have to plan more (taking nets and containers with you as well as your reusable bags!), shop more often (as food doesn't keep as well), and to get the variety, you would need to shop from smaller suppliers instead of supermarkets, which isn't always possible with our busy lifestyles. It also means eating less processed food and avoiding some family favourites like crisps and biscuits all together (although Stroud Valley Project in Threadneedle Street, Stroud, will recycle your biscuit wrappers now!) Plus it almost always seems to cost more!"

Storage of foods and other kitchen items was another area for consideration. The Stroud Valleys Project will refill any container for household cleaners at competitive prices. They also sell coconut scourers and soap bars etc as well as beeswax wraps, a good (but pricey) reusable alternative to cling film (although many cling films are 100% biodegradable now).

The next area for attention by the May family was the bathroom. Deodorant in a tin, bamboo toothbrushes, shampoo bars and old fashioned bars of soap were introduced, but some of the other changes might not



seem so obvious. "Toilet brushes can shed plastic filaments which go down the toilet and basically go straight into the sea" explains Sylvia, "and until I did this I didn't realise that modern fabrics like fleece, also shed plastic filaments when you wash them that are too small for sewage plants to catch. I plan to replace these with plastic free alternatives (e.g. hog hair loo brushes) over time.' They also tried 'who gives a crap' recycled toilet paper and kitchen rolls sold on-line with no plastic packaging.

"I don't think we will be able to go plastic-free until we convince the Government and major supermarkets to make changes. At the moment it is very difficult when plastic free alternatives are harder to find and often more expensive, but the main thing about doing the Plastic Challenge was that it focused us on where we currently create unnecessary plastic waste as a family, and how we can reduce it. And the good news is that two months later we are still using 'Loose' for dry foods and oil, as well as eco-friendly deodorant, soap and shampoo and reusable containers where ever possible. And as a family we are much more aware of plastics in our daily lives" comments Sylvia.

*Editors Note: The whole weekly recycling thing can lull us into a false sense of achievement. We all put our recycling bin out each week, but so much of it still goes to landfill. We need to cut down on our plastic use, not just send more to recycling. There are occasional 'days of action' on plastic organised by Greenpeace (eg Saturday 15th September) and many on-line petitions you can sign highlighting the issue to Government (e.g. MCS petition for a 'plastic levy', or Friends of the Earth petition to Government) and major supermarkets (e.g. Greenpeace).*

*Julie Brown, from Loose, told the Word "As well as many committed and regular customers we are getting new customers almost every day. People are really creative about the means of collecting the 'Loose' food and taking it home and seem to enjoy the slower pace and old fashioned service. We've seen bags made from shirts, an empty tissue box, and recently someone put their purchase directly into their pocket. However, we are still a small and new business and are a way away from being financially viable. We are optimistic and realise that it takes time for people to change their habits, plus our location at the bottom of town means that shopping here is not always convenient and we don't get many passers by.*

### So... What's going on at Boundary Court Farm?

Boundary Court Farm covers approximately 55 hectares and consists of a coombe on the Cotswold escarpment. The upper slopes are wooded, with cattle-grazed pasture on the lower slopes and a wooden stream in the valley bottom. There is little historical information available on Boundary Court but we do know that in the 17th Century it was part of the Spring Park Estate, now Woodchester Park where it belonged to Earl Ducie until the mid-19th Century.

The site was donated to the National Trust by a gentleman in the early 2000's, who at the time was a member of the National Trust regional committee and therefore had a strong relationship with us. The site locally is known as a special place to walk but it is also a special place for nature conservation. It is not only recognised as a Key Wildlife Site by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust but the woodland is classed as Ancient Woodland, so has been there since 16th Century. Nationally scarce plants and invertebrates have been found within the woodland and in the grassland. Our aim is to conserve the species-rich habitats that we have and also to improve habitats elsewhere on the farm.

Since taking the farm back in-hand in 2016 we have carried out extensive works to improve the habitat and protect what we have. We have carried out fencing of three fields which will be maintained as wildflower hay meadows and installed 3 spring-fed water troughs to supply water. The three hay fields have also been enriched by a wild flower seed to increase species rich habitats.

Over the next 18 months we will be carrying out further fencing and we will also be enhancing a field next to Selsley Common with a yellow rattle wildflower seed. This will break up thick areas of grass and create more areas of bare ground which will enable us to over-seed with a broader wild flower seed mix over the next 3 years.

The decision was made earlier this year to graze the grassland with our herd of Belted Galloways, rather than rent the farm out to a tenant. This was due to increased flexibility to allow for field enhancements and strategic grazing throughout the year. The Belted



Galloways are a native breed, well known for their hardiness and ability to thrive on semi-improved grasslands. Our conservation herd play an important role in improving and conserving wildflower-rich grasslands, which supports an abundance of plants and insects.

Reducing cattle numbers and increasing the area which they graze allows the Belties to roam and munch on selective areas of grassland. In addition, these cattle excrete dung onto the ground, which is an important form of feed for the Greater Horseshoe Bats who fly over from Woodchester Park. The Greater Horseshoe Bat roost at the Woodchester Mansion is the only summer bat roost this side of the Severn in Gloucestershire, highlighting the importance of summer grazing with cattle at nearby sites such as Boundary Court Farm.

The welfare of our cattle is absolutely paramount; the cattle are checked by our wonderful volunteers (who have all completed checker training) daily as well as staff a couple times per week. The herd are also registered with the Pasture Fed Livestock Association, which guarantees that they have a grain-free diet, which provides a more healthy and natural diet.

We are very excited about our plan to further enhance Boundary Court Farm and look forward to the next few years. If you would like any more information please visit the Ebworth Centre National Trust web page.

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### Orchard Pastures

Apples are ripening, with what looks like a bit of a hit and miss harvest – some trees burgeoning – we had to remove apples so the branches would not break – and some quite sparse. No doubt the extraordinary weather this year played a part. We have a couple of allotments available, for anyone who's interested. Our rents are reasonable and the plot is in the heart of the village. Orchard Pastures is the land below The Ram owned by a group of villagers. For more information, please email: [swalt.org@gmail.com](mailto:swalt.org@gmail.com) or phone Bert or Glen Cossins on 872407.



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## Around the village

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### **The Ram Inn - Applying for listing as an Asset of Community Value (ACV).**

As a response to the Ram's current planning application, a group of local residents has applied to have the Ram Inn listed as an ACV with Stroud District Council.

#### **What does listing mean?**

If successfully listed, it will mean that, if the pub comes up for sale in the following five years, the community will have a chance to bid to buy it. The objective is to ensure that the community continues to have its pub and it is not lost as a public amenity. A listing prevents the immediate sale of the property for 6 months allowing the community organisation to come up with the funding to purchase for itself. Although the owners retain the right to set the purchase price and ultimately to sell to the highest bidder, it gives the community a chance to influence who it is sold to and to what future use it may be put. After six months if the community fails to come up with an acceptable offer the owner may still sell to whomsoever he wishes.

#### **Why apply for ACV listing?**

The reasons why the Ram Inn is an important community asset will be obvious to any villager who has organised or attended anything, from a small meeting to an outdoor theatrical performance there. Works meetings and parties, Christmas parties, christening celebrations, birthdays, weddings and wakes were hosted. Sports teams regularly met there and at least 3 darts teams used it as their base. Inside and outside music events were held and drama performances were given. Rambling groups frequently lunched there. In the recent past charities such as the McMillan Trust, Children in Need and Round Tablers used it as a venue. A decent range of good beers and sensibly priced meals were always on offer. And everyone who visited commented on the magnificent views, the outdoor space and its characterful interior. The Ram has all the natural attributes required of a successful village pub.

We know that our pub can be restored to its natural position as the hub of community activity. We believe that when the time comes for the pub to be sold, the



community should have the first chance to determine its future to the benefit of everyone.

#### **Concerns about the current planning application**

This latest planning application does give rise to the anxiety that the pub's future may be precarious and it's worth looking at it on the Stroud District Council's planning website where there are many letters of objection from locals and not so locals.

The planning application will be heard by SDC probably in early September. Those of us who have raised our misgivings (in some detail) will have their case heard at that time. The principal concern of the group applying for ACV listing is that the current planning application may be the "thin end of the wedge". Once one part of the car park is lost might other areas of the property also be progressively stripped away such that our pub eventually is deemed unviable and is closed or redeveloped for housing?

Whether or not the current planning application is successful we believe it is now essential that the Ram is recognised and listed as an ACV.

#### **Community-owned pubs**

There are over 50 pubs across the UK now run by their local communities and others are in the pipeline. In Gloucestershire the Beauchamp Arms at Dymock, Fleece Inn at Hillesley and Red Lion at Arlingham are all owned and run by local communities. Maybe one day the Ram Inn will be another of those successful community pubs.

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### **St Loes Exhibition Trust.**

Applicants are invited from students who are under the age of 25 years and live in the Parish of Woodchester and the Rodborough Tithing of the Parish of Minchinhampton, which includes the Parish of Amberley and the Watledge district of Nailsworth. These awards known as Nathaniel Cambridge Exhibitions are given to students who are going to university, colleges of further education or starting an apprenticeship scheme. Governors also have the power to give financial assistance to students transferring to secondary school according to their means. Applications to the Chairman George Bastin at Goring House, Selsley Road, North Woodchester GL5 5NG or the Hon. Secretary Mrs J. Varley, Newton Cottage, Watledge, Nailsworth, GL6 0AY. Applications to be received prior to the meeting of the Governors to be held at the beginning of October. All applications will be treated in the strictest confidence. *George Bastin*

### Village Shop Focus - Dangerfields Bakery

The village shop stocks bread, rolls and cakes from Dangerfields Bakery, a local company which was set up in 1928 by Louis Dangerfield to supplement income from the family pub, the "The New Inn". Initially the bakery provided bread for King's Stanley and Leonard Stanley, delivered door to door - bicycles and a horse and cart



were used to make deliveries.

The original coal fired ovens have been superseded by gas and electric fired rack and deck ovens and the company supplies their products throughout Gloucestershire, Bristol, Somerset, Wiltshire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire.

The company is currently led by Tim Dangerfield, the grandson of the founder.

### 'Special vacuum' will allow Cotswold insects to thrive



A special vacuum is being used to improve plant diversity by collecting wildflower seeds at Boundary Court. The National Trust will then spread the seeds over the Cotswold countryside to develop a more diverse wildflower-rich grassland which they hope will create a habitat for pollinating insects to flourish.

David Armstrong, the manager for the Stroud Landscape Project, has championed the work being done by the National Trust. "In general the natural environment has seen worrying declines in wildlife diversity, partly as a result of intensive farming and climate change," said Mr Armstrong. "Fortunately, the National Trust is making a difference by managing the land in a way that is sensitive to the needs of both the environment and farming alike, which is helping to restore the health and beauty of the countryside."

The Stroud Landscape Project is working with partners to create more spaces for nature and make the network of wildlife sites bigger and better. A big part of this is establishing high quality sites, with wildlife corridors between them that allow for movement across the Stroud valleys. When the vacuuming is complete the seeds will be dried and stored until autumn when they will be spread onto areas that need a helping hand. This will subdue the grasses and allow space for more wildflowers to thrive.

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### Woodchester FC

Another season kicks-off at Woodchester FC, with a good number of new faces joining the more familiar cast of "old hands". With a comprehensive pre-season programme concluded - weekly training at the ground and six full friendly fixtures - the league campaign got underway on Saturday 1st September with a commendable 2-2 draw at home to Randwick Thirds. Only time will tell whether that was two points dropped in the quest for promotion, or a valuable point gained to stave off the bottom of the table! *James Collins, Secretary and Treasurer*

### SUPPORT YOUR NEW-LOOK VILLAGE SHOP AND POST OFFICE!

Fresh local bread and cakes, milk and cheese, ham, bacon, sausages, eggs and honey all from local suppliers. Ready meals and freezer food. Cordials, beer, wine and chocolates. Lots of organic and environmentally-positive products. Groceries, home essentials, stationery, greetings cards, magazines and of course your daily paper!



Post Office Services include all your postage requirements as well as banking, bill payments, currency, home shopping returns, National Lottery payouts and Health Lottery.

#### Shop opening hours:

Monday-Friday 0730-1730. Saturday 0830-1230.

#### Post Office opening hours:

Monday-Friday 0900-1730. Saturday 0900-1230.

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## Around the village

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### Woodchester WI - The Bench and the Bells

Celia Hargrave's lively talk on her life as a magistrate was very much enjoyed. Several apparently respectable WI members found themselves in the dock under her terrifying gaze as she demonstrated the workings of the magistrates' court. Most of us were surprised to discover how little we knew about this English institution (why there are three magistrates and their respective roles, for example) and finished the evening far better informed and very well entertained. Her observations on changes in the courts over her years of service, from the introduction of tablets to replace rule books to the closure of many of the local magistrates' courts, were particularly interesting. We moved from the bench to bells in July when Morris Man Stephen Rowley spoke about the history of Morris Dancing and links between dancing in modern Catalonia and Morris Dancers here. Food is always an important element of WI activities and in August we enjoyed our usual fish and chip supper.

Our trip to Rodmarton Manor in June was a huge success. We were shown round the house by a member of the family which has owned the house since they had it built. There was lots of interesting detail about the Arts and Crafts movement and about the furniture and art with which it is abundantly furnished. The coronation hanging, the work of a group of women, has given us ideas (on a rather more modest scale) for our own combined Woodchester WI banner to celebrate the Gloucestershire Centenary next year.

In June it was the turn of our WI President Gail to represent a group of local WIs at the WI's Annual General Meeting in Cardiff where the resolution for the year, a demand that mental ill health receives parity of treatment with physical ill health, was

overwhelmingly adopted by the membership. The meeting was also addressed by Stella Rimmington, first female head of MI5 and successful novelist, who spoke brilliantly and without notes for 40 minutes. While the day was very long and tiring, it was exhilarating to be part of such a large group (there were 5000 delegates) of engaged and engaging women.

Our craft and book clubs are thriving. Ian McEwan's *Nutshell* provoked some interesting discussion and was much enjoyed. Our next book is *The Toll Bridge*, by local author Aidan Chambers. The craft group meets once a month in the village hall.

WI members were pleased to offer their support to the church fundraising campaign in August, providing cakes and servers for the cream teas at the fete in the grounds of the Old Priory. We were overwhelmed by the numbers of enthusiastic customers at times but enjoyed being part of a thoroughly enjoyable and worthwhile event. We will also be represented at the September produce show, with a stall on the church green offering games for the children and a selection of produce for purchase, all to support our funds and enable us to put together another lively programme next year.

We are looking forward to a couple of practical craft demonstrations in autumn, starting with a session of flower arranging in September followed by a demonstration of willow weaving by Norah Kennedy in October. Prospective members are welcome to attend for up to three visits before committing to joining us. Meetings are usually on the third Thursday of the month in the village hall, starting at 7.30. We have welcomed several new members recently and would be delighted to be joined by more.

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### Girlguiding Woodchester

Brownies finished the summer term with an evening playing rounders and the Guides cooked over a campfire and completed their Personal Safety badge. Woodchester Brownies joined other Brownies from across the County at Brownie camp and had the opportunity to try the on-site outdoor activities at Girlguiding Gloucestershire HQ, such as grass sledging and tunnels. Woodchester Guides meanwhile joined Nailsworth Guides at summer camp in Oxford, where they also experienced on-site activities such as giant swing, archery, abseiling and aerial walk, along with swimming and a bit of retail therapy in the town.

We are all looking forward to the new term when we are going to start introducing the new Girlguiding programme at both Brownies and Guides. There are lots of new activities planned using the new resources and there is a whole new range of badges to complement the new programme. Anyone who would like to get involved in Girlguiding, either as a Brownie, Guide or Leader should contact Jackie on 01453 821258 or through one of the following websites: [www.girlguiding.org.uk](http://www.girlguiding.org.uk). [www.ggwoodchester.wordpress.com](http://www.ggwoodchester.wordpress.com)



### Early Routes in Woodchester

This will be the last of my articles about where I believe the Roman and medieval routes were in Woodchester. It covers the route from the old Parish Church (The Roman Villa) through South Woodchester to Inchbrook.

The route, as it was the 1840s, was elegantly described by the Rev. Henry Housman, a relation of A E Housman, and reproduced in a Woodchester Word Article several years ago as 'From The Story of Our Museum and What it Taught Us by Rev Henry Housman published in 1881'. This can be seen at [woodchesterhistory.weebly.com](http://woodchesterhistory.weebly.com). In the medieval period the centre of Woodchester was around the Church and the Manor House, now the Old Priory, and the route out of the village to the south would have been along the side of the valley high enough up to avoid both the marshy ground at the bottom of the valley and also its steep slopes. I think it would have followed modern day Church Lane, with 'The Lawn' on the right, then, on reaching Selsley Road, I suspect it went straight across and continued in the same direction along the top boundary of Upper Berrymore Cottage. Then, back on Church Road, it continued above the 'new' church all the way to South Woodchester High Street on the current footpath over 'Little Hill'. If this interpretation is correct the 'Royal Oak' was not on this route, so the diversion it is on must have been in place before it was built in the 17th century.

At the south end of the High Street the way would have continued on Atcombe Road and then on the driveway of Atcombe Court before diverging from it somewhere near the house to cross the valley near the top of the Frogmarsh millpond. Next it would have contoured around the valley to pass just above Atcombe Farmhouse to reach Convent Lane. Observant villagers will have noticed that Atcombe Farmhouse is at a strange angle to the current road and that this would explain why.

The route would then have continued along the present day Convent Lane, probably diverging from it near to the Convent to follow the Convent's alignment along the back of the gardens on the east side of the lane. At roughly the position of the present junction with St Mary's Hill and Park Lane it probably continued south crossing the side valley just below Woodchester Valley Village to emerge onto Inchbrook Hill at the bend where Inchbrook House stands now at a strange angle to the current road, but appropriately aligned to this old route.

Mike Warnes



### Lest We Forget

Several parishes in the Stroud and Nailsworth area are remembering the fallen of the Great War in their respective local magazines and newsletters, around the hundredth anniversary of their death. This is the eleventh and penultimate article for Woodchester.

**William John Cook** was born in 1877 in Sittingbourne, Kent, the son of John Cook, a Master Mariner, and his wife Harriet. In July 1899, William married Emily Ellen Abell, 5 August 1899 at All Saints, Selsley. By 1901, the couple were living in South Woodchester High Street. They were still there in 1911 but by now had an 8 year old daughter. Lilian Emily Harriet. William was a Cloth-worker in the Cardroom Department of a Cloth Mill. He enlisted as a private in the Gloucestershire Regiment (serving in the 5th and 14th Battalions) before being transferred to the 15th Battalion of the Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. He died of wounds in a medical unit near St Omer on 8 October 1918, aged 41 and is buried in La Kreule Military Cemetery, Hazebrouck.

*It is assumed that William's service was 5th Bn then 14 Bn Gloucesters followed by 15th Bn KOYLI. 14 Bn Gloucesters was disbanded in France 11 Feb 1918 with 12 officers and 250 men transferring to 13 Bn. The 13 Bn was reduced to cadre strength 6 May 1918. The 15th (Service) Bn KOYLI formed in France 11 June 1918 from 10th Garrison Guard Bn. The 15th KOYLI were part of the 40th Division. The 40th Division were involved in the Advance on Flanders (5th Battle of Ypres) 28 September to 2 October 1918. This may be when William's wounds were inflicted. However, if so, he seems to have been unlucky as 15th Bn KOYLI's losses appear to be very small.*

**Alfred Edward Dennis Palmer** was born 25 November 1898 in Frampton on Severn, the son of Alfred Edward Palmer, a Prudential Agent, and his wife Edith Caroline nee Browning. He was baptised at St Mary's, Woodchester on 5 February 1899. His mother's family had long connections with Woodchester - she was a daughter of Shadrach Browning. By 1911, the family were living at Mill Cottages, near Woodchester Mill and Alfred was at school. By 1918 he was a Fitter and Turner. He was 5 feet 2 inches tall with light hair and blue eyes. He joined the Royal Navy as Armourer's Crew in Portsmouth on 5 March 1918, spending 4 months on HMS Excellent, the Royal Navy's main gunnery training establishment. On 2 July he was posted to HMS Iron Duke. He died of pneumonia, possibly a victim of the influenza epidemic, aged 20, 4 November 1918 at the Royal Naval Hospital, South Queensferry, Scotland and was buried in St Mary's Churchyard, Woodchester.

*There's not a lot of information about HMS Iron Duke in 1918. She was fitted with flying off platforms on her "B" and "Q" turrets. In a torpedo firing practice exercise on 1 July, Iron reloaded a submerged tube in one minute fifty-four seconds, and fired the second shot after a further delay of six seconds. With the other tube, she took two minutes fifteen seconds to reload and 45 further seconds to fire. At some point between 2 July and 4 November, she must have entered a 'theatre of war' somewhere.*

## Churches & Schools

### **St Mary's Church "A Building for Everyone"**

The fund-raising campaign has made good progress and as at the end of August we have reached £115,000 of our £200,000 target figure. We have had great support from the wider community as well as church members, and the recent events we have organised in the form of Barn Dance and Garden Party have been thoroughly enjoyed by a wide range of Woodchester folk.

The significance of passing our half-way mark in June is that we are better-positioned to seek funds from grant-making bodies – having such positive evidence of community backing – and we now have some grant applications in the pipeline (decisions by such bodies take several months to come through). We have already attracted one – albeit relatively small – grant from Allchurches Trust; which I hope is a sign of more to come.

The work itself will take place in three stages – the first being the building of the new kitchen – and with the help of our Surveyor we are in the process of inviting tenders for this first stage.

We can't yet say for certain when the work will start or finish, but we're doing what we can to push things along!

There are more "fun and fund-raising" events planned for this autumn and beyond, so look out for posters on village noticeboards. Via this Woodchester Word, the campaign team sends a big THANK YOU to all our supporters. (*Andrew Pemberton*)

### **Messy Church at St. Mary's**

Messy Church is a free, fun-filled session including refreshments, crafts, music and stories, for all youngsters up to Y6, who must be accompanied by an adult. Older youngsters often come to help and we are delighted to see them.

We will be starting again, after our summer break, on Wednesday September 19th, 3.20-4.45pm. There is an area for little ones to play and there are refreshments for adults through the afternoon, an opportunity to sit down and to meet new friends.

There are cards at the back of church giving Messy Church dates for the new school year. Please join us.

### **Little Stars Toddler Group**

Little Stars is a toddler group for parents/carers and their children under 5. Each week we have a bible story and craft, song time, play-doh and free play time with toys. Come along, make new friends and enjoy home-made cake and a cuppa (healthy snacks and squash/water for the children).

Suggested donation £1 per family. Mondays (during term time) 9:30-11:30, in the undercroft at St Mary's Church. For more information contact Helen at [littlestars@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk](mailto:littlestars@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk)

### **Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School**

Wow, another academic year over and how the time has simply flown by! It is important to make time to sit back and reflect. Here is a snippet of some of our things to celebrate.

We are extremely fortunate to enjoy the support of very enthusiastic adults who contribute in so many ways to school life. These include parents, teachers, adults and young people from the local community, and members of our generous church community. Each week, our Open the Book team lead worship in an interactive way, using drama to introduce our children to Bible stories. Our Ministry Team provide a further weekly worship during which children, regardless of their beliefs, can think about our Christian values and how they enable us to lead positive, rewarding and fulfilling lives. Watching our children demonstrate these values every day is immensely rewarding.

During recent months, our outside learning areas have received some tender loving care from a band of dedicated and generous parents. After an incredible amount of digging, sawing, hammering and building, we now have a wonderful area for Forest School and outdoor learning to take place. This work was completed during two very hot weekends and we are enormously grateful to all those who contributed in any way they could. Our children are already enjoying the fruits of this labour and having wonderful learning experiences. Work to improve the Ash Class outdoor area is due to begin shortly and this is being funded by the PTA who have organised a wide selection of events this year as well as making a number of successful grant applications.

Music is definitely one of life's pleasures and it is highly valued here at Woodchester. Recently, we were enormously grateful to one of our parents who owns 'The Piano Shop' in Bath for his generous donation of a new piano. This summer term has been packed with musical events and the children have played and sung with confidence and enjoyment. Drumming pupils gave a showcase concert, our band played during the Summer Fair, parents and families enjoyed a Saturday afternoon Musical Tea, our instrumentalists and singers provided solo and ensemble performances during a whole school concert and Hawthorn and Juniper classes were introduced to the violin. A group of woodwind and brass instrumentalists travelled to The King's School, Gloucester to take part in an orchestral workshop, ending with an informal concert to parents.

Finally, the Juniors and our Year 6 children presented a wonderful musical production of Twelfth Night. Our children have given us so much to celebrate and enjoy and we thank them for sharing their many talents.  
Lynn Pennington (Headteacher)

## Around the village

## Update on the Southbank development

The Southbank development of five new homes was discussed at a recent meeting of the Parish Council. Julian Kent, Project Manager at Stroud District Council, apologised that the site at Southbank has been empty for an extended period of time and for its poor condition. The delays have been due to issues with the contractors which has led to a recent termination of contract.

SDC have now regained possession of the site and expect to appoint new contractors in September. The new contractor will then have eight weeks to submit a detailed design. Completion is then expected to take ten months.

The Parish Council will be updated in September along with a letter drop to all residents in Southbank. Councillors and residents raised a number of concerns, including potential damage to surrounding houses during the works, traffic management and parking for contractors. These are being addressed by SDC.

Piling will be involved during construction, but will take place for a short period of time and within working hours. Mr. Kent encouraged any resident with a concern to contact him and he agreed to keep residents and the Parish Council updated.

## Village Barn Dance

As a part of the fund – raising for the re-ordering of the church, (phase one being the building of a new kitchen, improving the toilet arrangements and reorganising a number of areas of the church,) the events committee organised a Barn Dance earlier this summer. This was held in the barn alongside Church Road in North Woodchester by kind permission of Woodchester house. The committee and those who went to the barn dance are very grateful to the Woodchester House Estate Manager for allowing the use of the barn and for clearing it out for the dance, no mean task!



The evening was very successful, welcoming over a hundred villagers, with excellent food and drinks available during the evening. The photographs show that in a number of dances the dancers stretched out through the barn doors!



## Lunch with Friends

St. Mary's Church organises a lunch, usually on the third Friday of each month, when invites are sent out to our village senior citizens as guests. The lunch menu changes each time and comprises of two excellent courses and tea/coffee. The guests, usually 40 to 50 on each lunch, enjoy the meal of course but also enjoy the companionship of meeting their friends and colleagues from all over North and South Woodchester, Rooksmoor and further afield. For some, especially those whose mobility isn't good, it is the only occasion when they get out to meet friends. For more information, contact Liz Cole on 872287 or Christina Lewis on 873481.

**Little Stars Toddler Group**

He counts the stars and calls them all by name. How greet is our Lord.  
Psalm 147:3-5

Little Stars is a toddler group for parents/carers and their children (under 5's).

Each week we have a Bible story and craft, song time, play-doh and free-play time with toys.

Come along, make new friends and enjoy home made cake and a cuppa (healthy snacks and squash / water for the children).

Mondays (during term time) 9.30am - 11.30am.  
We return from summer break on 10th September.

In the Undercroft at St Mary's Church  
North Woodchester

For more information contact Helen at  
[littlestars@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk](mailto:littlestars@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk)

Suggested donation £1 per family

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## Events

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### The Fabulous Fete and Garden Party

Fun... and lots of cake was had by all at Woodchester's first Fabulous Fete and Garden Party on Bank Holiday Monday! The rain and wind held off and we reckon that over 300 people came to the event which was held at The Old Priory by kind permission of Mr and Mrs Jeremy Hill.

There were lots of fun races alongside traditional stalls, some of which were kindly lent to us by Stuart Mitchell of Every Event Hire. The Frampton Footwarmers band played their festive airs of jazz and swing. Face-painting was especially popular, as was the 'Water and Wine' game, particularly appropriate as the event was held to raise money for the 'Space for Everyone' appeal to modernise and improve the facilities inside St Mary's Church in North Woodchester. And there was cake, cake and more cake with queues for the tea tent stretching across the garden at times.

Thanks to everyone's generosity, the fete raised about £3000 towards the St Mary's Church appeal.

Quizzle Winners: 1st prize: K. Glover - tickets for 2 on Flying Scotsman, a wonderful prize kindly donated by Pathfinder Tours. 2nd Prize: C. Price - £100. 3rd Prize: M. Pegler - £50.

The winner of the Treasure Map was Muriel McTiffin who won a fantastic Organic hamper that was supplied by Essentials Food, Woodchester Village Shop and Higgidy. The children's prize was won by Maddy.



Race Winners: **Sack Races:** 7 & Under – Thomas Hale; 13 & Under – Noah Francis; All Comers – Matt Williams. **Egg-and-Spoon Races:** 7 & Under – Ashley Cole; 13 & Under – Tara Simenauer; All Comers – Tom Coombs. **Three-legged Races:** 7 & Under – Hugo and Laurie Francis, Thomas and Isla Hale (dead heat); 13 & Under – Honey and Otilie Edwards; All Comers – Honey and Otilie Edwards (again!). **Dressing-up Races:** 7 & Under – Hugo and Laurie Francis; 8 & Older – Daisy Trainor and Emma Reader

Others who generously supported the event were: Faith in Nature, Ecover, Rush Skatepark & Katie Fforde. And thanks also to all our volunteers!

### Woodchester Village Show

The 10th annual Village Show was held on 8th September, with a Produce Show, Dog Show and local Craft exhibition as well as stalls on the green and the Dennis Brown traction engine. Entries in the Produce Show were down this year, with the weather playing a large part in the availability of vegetables and flowers!

Although Produce Show entry numbers were down this year, the quality of the entries was very high, so congratulations to the winners of the three trophies, which were presented by Woodchester Endowed School head teacher Lynn Pennington:

Junior Trophy – **Maddy Bijkerk**

The David Brown Silver Salver (awarded to the person with the most points in Sections 1- Vegetables and 2 - Fruit) – **Harri Barnes**

'Best in Show' Trophy (awarded to the person with the most points overall) – **Harri Barnes**



The recently introduced Fun Dog Show was popular again this year, the winners were:



1. Most Handsome Dog: Bobby (Emma Sheppard)
2. Prettiest Bitch: Minka (Caroline Hill)
3. Golden Oldie: Pippa (Malcolm Swait)
4. Sit & Stay: Saxon (Valerie Richards)
5. Waggiest Tail: Jeff (Felix Trusty)
6. Six-legged fancy dress: tied between Theo and Ellie (Ian Simpson)



## Christmas Craft Market

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November  
in the Village Hall, 10:00-13:00.  
Locally made craft items for sale including lots of  
unique and interesting Christmas presents!

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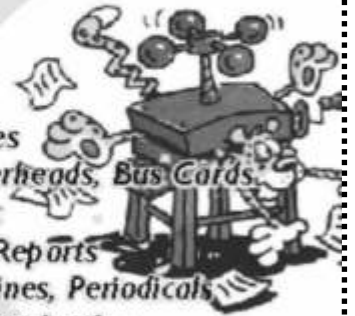
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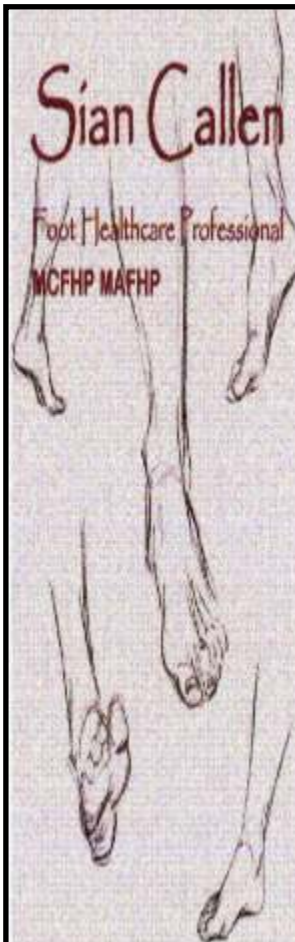
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## Whole School Open Day

Saturday 6th October

Prep, 2-13 years, 10am - 12pm

Senior, 13-18 years, 9am - 12pm

## Sixth Form Open Evening

Wednesday 26th September

5:30pm - 7:30pm

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# What's on

## Give love in a box this Christmas

Please support teams T4U and give a gift-filled shoebox to a vulnerable child or family. The boxes are distributed through schools, nurseries, hospitals and orphanages in Eastern Europe. A team of volunteers from Evesham, where the boxes are sorted and packed for their long journey, will travel to Eastern Europe and give the boxes to desperately poor families and children. There are leaflets at the back of Woodchester Church. There is a need for scarves, hats and gloves if you would like to knit some please, that will be much appreciated. Can you please return filled shoeboxes by the end of October? Please leave at the back of Woodchester Church. Thank you. Liz Hale

**Woodchester Mansion** remains open for the season on Friday, Saturday and Sunday until October 28th, and then will close for the winter. The Mansion will also be open Tuesday to Friday October 23rd-28th during half term when the cellars will be decorated with a Halloween theme and there will be children's activities. The Tea room will be open for visitors to Woodchester Park on October 22nd.

## Useful Village Contacts

### PCSO: Steven Phillipson

Tel: 101 or visit [www.gloucestershire.police.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.police.uk)

### Neighbourhood Warden: Dominic Everiss

Email: [dominic.everiss@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:dominic.everiss@stroud.gov.uk)

Tel: 01453 754514

Mobile: 07753 725185

### District Councillor: Philip McAsey

Email: [Cllr.philip.mcasey@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:Cllr.philip.mcasey@stroud.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01453 873329

### County Councillor: Steve Robinson

Email: [steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01453 834270

### Village Hall: Mrs. Kath Gay

Email: [wvh888@btinternet.com](mailto:wvh888@btinternet.com)

Telephone: 01453 873348

### Parish Council: Ann Bijkerk

Email: [woodchesterparish@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterparish@gmail.com)

Telephone: 01453 873456

### Gloucestershire Highways

Website: [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/)

Telephone: 08000 514514

Email: [gcchighways@amey.co.uk](mailto:gcchighways@amey.co.uk)

## Woodchester Village Hall

- Monday** **Circle Dancing:** 11.00 – 13.00  
Weekly, (Chrissie Grice: 07814 011980)  
**Circle Dancing:** 14.00 – 16.00  
Fortnightly  
**Table Tennis:** 19.15 – 23.00  
Sept – March  
(John Bunn: 07702 058754)
- Tuesday** **Art Group:** 10.00 – 12.00  
(Vera Naumann: 01453 873689)  
**Dru Yoga** 13.30 – 14.45  
(Elisabeth Noblet: 07973 877029)  
**Table Tennis:** 19.15 – 23.00  
Sept. – March
- Weds** **Calligraphy:** 10.00 – 16.00  
Fortnightly  
(Josie Brown: 01452 387768)  
**Creative Sewing:** 10.00 – 17.00  
Monthly  
(Catherine Kingzett)  
**FMC Dance Academy:** 17.00 – 19.45  
Subject to Sewing  
(Fay Cottrell: 07931 253116)
- Thursday** **Senior Health & Fitness:** 10.00–12.00  
(Dorothy Turner: 01285 885766)  
**FMC Dance Academy:** 16.30 – 20.30  
Subject to PC & WI  
**Parish Council:** 19.00 – 21.00  
1st in alternate months  
**WI:** 19.30 – 21.30  
3rd in month  
(Gail Birch: 07875 028671)
- Friday** **Circle Dancing:** 14.00 – 16.00  
Monthly  
Private booking 17.00 – 18.30

**Weekends** Available for Private functions

All Village Hall sessions are subject to change and are guidelines only. For bookings/late availability contact: Kath Gay: 01453 873348 or [wvh888@btinternet.com](mailto:wvh888@btinternet.com).

## Woodchester Endowed School

**Thursday Dancercise:** 7-8 pm Weekly  
Tricia Dunbar (07400 433536)

## Dates for your diary

**Saturday 29th September:** Harvest supper in St Mary's Church.

**Saturday 24th November:** 'Made in Woodchester' Christmas Craft Market, Village Hall, 10:00-13:00

## Woodchester Word Distributors needed

Can you help deliver a few copies of the Woodchester Word in your area of the village? If so please contact Rod Harris at [woodchesterword@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterword@gmail.com).

**Copy deadline for next issue:** 23rd November

*Letters, articles and items for publication should be sent to the editor, Rod Harris, at [woodchesterword@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterword@gmail.com) Production: Iain Dunbar. Advertising: Ann Bijkerk. Printed by Leopard Press. The Woodchester Word is an independent publication and is funded by advertisers. Please mention the Woodchester Word when replying to the adverts in this edition. The views expressed in this publication are those of the editorial team. We reserve the right to edit or omit any material submitted for publication. No liability is accepted for loss or damage arising from any omission of copy or advertising.*