

# THE WOODCHESTER WORD

Issue 68 - Autumn 2019

## New plans will give horses priority on cycle path

Gloucestershire County Council's proposal to give the Nailsworth to Dudbridge 'cycle path' Bridleway status is causing significant local controversy. The cycle path - which was created in 1984 when the disused railway line from Stroud to Nailsworth was renovated - is currently not officially designated, and there have been issues regarding who is responsible for its maintenance which might be solved by the new designation. GCC's proposal to give it Bridleway status will safeguard access to the path for all users and should clarify who is responsible for its maintenance.

But in spite of support from both Rodborough Parish Council and Nailsworth Town Council, Woodchester Parish Council have grave misgivings about both the proposal, and the process being used. Bridleways are open for use by horse riders, and many local people have concerns about the risks involved in adding horses to the mix of walkers (including older people and children), cyclists and mobility scooter using the path. (continued on page 2)



*Work being carried out on the Woodchester section of the new cycle path in 1984*

## Woodchester road closures

**Southfield Road** will be closed from Woodchester House to Southfield Mill from 23rd September until 4th October (or until work is completed) for work on the new water main. Pedestrian and emergency access to premises on or next to the road will not be maintained due to excavations in the road and no existing public footway.



**Selsley Road will be closed at the bridge from 28<sup>th</sup> October 2019 to 1<sup>st</sup> November 2019.** This is to allow for works on the bridge by Gloucestershire County Council. Due to the nature of the works no vehicular access can be maintained.

**Traffic lights are expected on the A46 near Manor Drive from 26<sup>th</sup> October to 3<sup>rd</sup> November** for work by Severn Trent to the new water main. The Parish Council have expressed their concern to Gloucestershire Highways that this restriction coincides with the closure at the bottom of Selsley Road and could cause added inconvenience when drivers try to use Station Road as an alternative route.

## WW2 collision over Woodchester

The previous issue of "Woodchester Word" (p4) has mention of mid-air collision between Spitfires over Woodchester. A few years ago I came across an almost matching incident but a quick search - at that time - did not find any other details. The apparent eye-witness account published in the Summer edition prompted a deeper look.

Firstly, the aircraft involved were not Spitfires but Hawker HURRICANES. The planes were from the Gloster Aircraft Company at Hucclecote where the vast majority of Hurricanes were built. A total of 2750 were made before production stopped in 1942. The company used to be called Gloucestershire Aircraft Company but they changed it in 1926 to make it easier for their customers outside the UK. The planes involved in the accident had not been handed over to the RAF and were possibly en-route to RAF Aston Down or undergoing flight tests. That would be one reason why the MOD had no information and the details are - as they say - sketchy. (continued on page 3)

## New plans for cycle path (continued)

One mile of the 3.12 miles (32%) of the track lie within the parish of Woodchester, with housing in Rooksmoor and Woodchester clustered on both sides. The very successful mountain bike trails opposite Rooksmoor Mills were a Woodchester initiative proving to be an asset to the local community and the wider area.

Woodchester Parish Council has replied to the proposal expressing grave concerns including:

- The Parish Council are disappointed that there has been no survey of current use, nor any clear process of evaluation, to demonstrate just how many and what type of users will be affected by the addition of horses on the track.
- The track is currently used for commuting to work, shops etc. with the addition of dog walkers, leisure cyclists and pedestrians, including school children both on foot and on bicycles.
- The track is very narrow and overgrown in parts, barely 1.5 metres wide which is the width of a horse and rider.
- We are concerned about the safety of users. Cyclists and horses will find passing difficult. Users at a low height such as babies and toddlers in pushchairs or small children learning to ride their bikes could be at risk. We note that more and more people with mobility scooters are using the track – they have limited options for getting out of the way and an accident could be attended with serious consequences.
- Section 6.2.2.1 of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan emphasises the provision of PROW to provide, 'safe, traffic-free routes to school'. The section of the current track from Giddynap to Dudbridge is used regularly by a large number of parents and children to access Woodchester Endowed School and St. Dominic's School both on foot and by bicycle. The Parish Council believe that the addition of horses would make those routes to school 'less safe'.
- While many reasons have been put forward on how much this change would benefit horse riders, no consideration has been given to existing users and how they would be disadvantaged.
- The designation of a bridleway will benefit a very small minority of the public. The highway authority must have regard to the convenience of persons resident in the area. The addition of horses on the track can only be detrimental to persons resident in the area (apart from the small minority of horse riders).
- It is claimed that cyclists' rights will be enhanced by this change. This is not the case. As this track has been signed as a cycle and pedestrian route for well over 20 years, we believe it would be difficult for GCC to deny that it has not become 'de facto' a cycle and pedestrian route. A cyclist currently using the track has equal rights with other users and this would be the case on a multi-use track. However, on a bridleway, a cyclist is required to give way to other users therefore cyclists rights would be reduced.
- Currently, there are barriers at access points. If these are removed to give access to horses, it will be possible for motor vehicles and motorbikes to get onto the track at any time and without warning causing a danger to legitimate users.



"The Parish Council are very aware that horse riders put themselves and their animals at risk when riding on local roads, but believe that creating a bridleway from Nailsworth to Dudbridge is not an appropriate alternative" commented Chairman Dr Gervase Hamilton. "The only access for horses is via a road, there is very limited parking for a horse box at either end, and the Parish Council are of the belief that at best this will have a detrimental effect on current users, and at worst could lead to a potential accident, particularly at the very narrow sections and those where sight lines are poor."

In light of these concerns and the need to formulate a maintenance plan, the Parish Council has asked that Gloucestershire County Council reconsider their proposal and instead consider designation as a 'cycle path' which they understand is possible under the Cycle Paths Act 1984.

It is believed that this proposal will be required to go to a public consultation. You can make your views known about the proposal through the Parish Council - email [woodchesterparish@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterparish@gmail.com).

## Mid-Air Collision (continued)

The mid-air collision occurred on the 4-Aug-1941. The plane that crashed on "Scotland Bank" was being piloted by Arthur Pakenham Fitzhardinge Murray BERKELEY who was killed in the crash. He was a Production Test Pilot for Gloster and a former Squadron Leader who retired from the RAF on 18-Jan-1940 due to ill-health. Born 1907, he joined the RAF in 1925 and progressed through the ranks becoming a Sqn Ldr on 1-Jun-1938. He died aged 33 and is buried at Brompton Cemetery, London. His father used to be the Bishop of Barbados and the Windward Islands. Scotland Bank is the area between the vineyard and the track within Woodchester Park. In the 1940's (generally)



that area was a field. It would be good to pin down the precise location of the crash site. The other test pilot may have been called Marshall but further details remain elusive. It was probably his plane that came down on Newman Hender's Sports Field (now Renishaw's bottom car park). The location of the crash site was stated as Park Lane, Woodchester. Park Lane is the short section of road leading to the track to Woodchester Park. That track is not a public footpath and should not be used to get to the park – there is a locked gate at the end. Park Lane was also pointlessly/unnecessarily/surprisingly surfaced by "austere" GCC at a cost of £10,000 a few years ago.

During WW2, RAF Aston Down was a busy place and home to various Operational Training Units (OTUs) and other units incl. maintenance. The OTUs were formed to try and reduce the incident and mortality rates of pilots joining squadrons straight after graduating from Flight Training Schools. There was intense activity at Aston Down during 1941. Over at the Priory Church of the Annunciation (Inchbrook) are the graves of 6 RAF pilots from WW2 who were based at Aston Down. 2 Polish, 1 Canadian, 1 New Zealander and 2 British airmen. All tragically killed in accidents.



- 10-9-1939, James Pratt, served as James McLaughlin, aged 20. Sergeant. 82 Squadron. Blenheim P4853, engine failure which caused the aircraft to strike a wire and somersault near Clee, Somerset.
- 21-5-1940, John Connolly Pugh, aged 20. Plt Off. 5 OTU. Spitfire (P9517) died following a crash landing after engine malfunction/fire, he heroically swerved and hit a tree to avoid a farm worker.
- 26-8-1940, Ronald Stanley Magee, aged 25. From New Zealand. Plt Off. 5 OTU. Hurricane (N2606) spun into the ground after stalling at South Cerney.
- 20-9-1940, Józef Franciszek Stępień, aged 25, Polish, PPOR/Plt Off, 5 OTU, Miles Master (N7987) broke-up in the air near Little Rissington.
- 2-12-1940, Tadeusz Bagrowski (Swinka), aged 23, Polish, PPOR/Plt Off, 5 OTU, died in Stroud hospital after a motorcycle accident.
- 6-2-1942, Bernard Hugh Cassidy, aged 24, Canadian, Sergeant (RCAF), 52 OTU, Spitfire (X4932) mid-air collision with another Spitfire (R7135) near Aston Down. Both Canadian pilots killed.

Hurricanes are often confused with Spitfires. Likewise, victory in the Battle of Britain is usually attributed to Spitfires. However, during that battle the Hurricane was the more significant plane. There were more Hurricane squadrons and they shot down more German planes. The best of the "few" during the BoB was the Polish 303 Squadron and at that time they flew Hurricanes. As Commander-in-Chief of Fighter Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding put it: 'Had it not been for the magnificent work of the Polish squadrons and their unsurpassed gallantry, I hesitate to say that the outcome of battle would have been the same'. The background story of the Polish pilots is told in this excellent YouTube video "Polish Airmen Fighting for Freedom" - it involves the hi-jacking of a French train.

Incidentally, the plane used to illustrate the last WORD was Spitfire EE602 built by Westland in Yeovil on 11-9-1942. There was also another crash over Woodchester on 18-11-1940, an Airspeed Oxford (P1078), from 3 FTS, which during bad visibility, crashed into the hillside at Bospin Lane killing the RAF Volunteer Reserve pilot LAC Andrew O'Neil Wontner-Smith. He was 24 years old. Apparently the engine block ended up in one of the houses. Any further information would be appreciated. (Chris Jezewski)

## REFLECTIONS – a year in the life of a wildlife pond.

On warm summer evenings we sit next to the cool, clear pond which is flood lit and watch the shadows of the pond skaters. The newts come up to the light and sit around which makes them easy to catch. They have orange bellies and feel slimy. We see many baby newts so they must be doing well. The flowers on the plants are going to seed but even this looks pretty. There are lots of blue and green dragonflies and damsel flies hovering above the pond. The slime algae started to get out of balance so we put some copper pipes in the water to help manage it which seems to be working well.

Daisy



## Keep your eyes open! Would you like to join Neighbourhood Watch?

We are very fortunate to live in Woodchester which is generally a quiet area with a low crime rate. However every community suffers from occasional petty thefts, suspicious door to door callers and sometimes the feeling that something isn't quite right.

Neighbourhood Watch (NW) helps communities to work together to prevent crime and build safer communities. Membership enables residents to get to know each other and keep an eye out for each other. A "watchful" community can help to deter theft and suspicious activity and report this at the earliest opportunity. Neighbourhood Watch creates closer contact with the Police, better access to information and advice about crime and suspicious activity. This in turn can lead to a reduction of fear of crime and can help build a stronger community.



Neighbourhood Watch is NOT run by the police, but by residents of each NW group, so it can be run in any way appropriate to that neighbourhood. Further information can be found on [www.ourwatch.org.uk](http://www.ourwatch.org.uk)

In North Woodchester we have an existing Neighbourhood Watch scheme operating in Lawns Park and the middle section of Selsley Rd. It would be wonderful to set up several other NW schemes to cover other areas of the Parish, for example Rooksmoor, Manor Gardens, Pauls Rise and The Garden, South Woodchester High Street, Convent Lane and Frogmarsh. Do you live in any of these areas? Would you be willing to set up a NW group in your locality?

You can find out what is involved, or even set up a new group by visiting <https://www.ourwatch.org.uk/crimes-archive/where-do-i-start/>. Or email Adrian Weaver on [adrianweaver9@gmail.com](mailto:adrianweaver9@gmail.com) for advice on how NW works locally.

## Do you remember this event 30 years ago?

Bentley's Piano Works, which had been rebuilt after a fire in 1938, was again destroyed by fire in October 1989.



## Woodchester Raptors

As we walk the dog or take an autumn stroll around Boundary Court or on Selsley Common during the next few weeks, look up into the sky. It will be very likely that you will see one of our local raptors above your head soaring the skies. Raptors (we may know them as birds of prey), are a common sight here in Woodchester. Some are very common, some less so, some very rare.



The Buzzard, in the 1960s a rare sight here, is now our most common raptor. It soars silently on the air currents, sometimes only a few feet above our heads, with its broad wings and wingtip feathers widely splayed and with its tail feathers fanned out, looking for rabbits, mice or voles. Its brown, grey and white markings are clear to see from the ground.



We all recognize the kestrel with its amazing ability in all winds and weathers to hover in one place while it searches for prey down below. Its ability to suddenly soar, and fly in pursuit of prey can take you by surprise. Selsley Common is a popular place for kestrels as, with its excellent eyesight, its prey can be clearly seen from above.

Sometimes you will not need to leave your garden to see a sparrowhawk, as these fast flying hunters hunt mainly at hedge height often for small birds that are feeding from your bird table in the garden. It is easily identifiable (if you have time to see it as it flashes by!) by its striped chest, its long tail and wide wings and feathered wingtips like fingers.



The fourth bird of prey that is becoming more common now in the Cotswolds, but still a relative rarity, is the Red Kite. Introduced in to the Chilterns twenty or more years ago, it is gradually expanding its range into the Cotswolds, and it is not unusual to spot one above Woodchester. This elegant bird has a uniquely forked tail and angular wings, and can change its tail and wing pitch to execute a sudden change of direction. These birds are mainly carrion eaters and many people living in the Didcot/Reading/Oxford areas, leave food out in their gardens to be able to watch these beautiful birds soaring down to feed.

Surprisingly, other rare birds of prey are regular visitors to Gloucestershire and MIGHT be seen over Woodchester. For example, the osprey, who feeds on fish, passes through the county in its migration northwards in spring, often being observed at Slimbridge or close to the Severn. There have been four or five sightings each year of the hen harrier too as a passage migrant or rare winter visitor. Also the Marsh Harrier has been seen very occasionally at Slimbridge and by the lakes of the Cotswold Water Park. Other rare birds of prey that Gloucestershire "twitchers" have reported seeing on very, very rare occasions include the Hobby, the merlin and the Goshawk. It wasn't long ago that a Peregrine Falcon was a regular visitor to the window ledges on the Hill Paul Building near the station in Stroud and there are several church towers in Gloucestershire where peregrines have regularly nested but sadly, not in Woodchester! (Rod Harris)

## Wild Swimming still a problem at Woodchester Park

Swimming is banned in the lakes at the National Trust-owned Woodchester Park estate, but that hasn't stopped people diving in again this summer, despite strict warnings about their safety. National Trust Area Ranger Max Dancer said: "There has been as many as a couple of hundred people swimming in the lakes late into the evening. Not only is swimming in the lakes dangerous, but they're also leaving behind lots of litter, causing a disturbance to wildlife by playing loud music in the evening and damaging some of the trees". Parking has also been a major problem, with swimmers cars blocking St Mary's Hill. On one occasion recently a fire engine on an emergency call was unable to reach its destination in Park Lane because of parked cars. 'No Parking' signs, funded by local residents, were erected at various points on St Mary's Hill. Incredibly, these were soon vandalised, but have been replaced and fixed more securely. At present swimmers are still parking in the church car park as well, though this will not be possible next year when the planned gates are installed, which may serve to make the street parking problem worse. The situation remains under review and consultation with the National Trust continues.



## GET INVOLVED IN YOUR COMMUNITY!

Woodchester is a thriving village community, but many of the activities in the village depend on volunteers to make them successful. It can be great fun and very rewarding, but more volunteers are always needed. Is there a way **you** can get more involved in your community?



### The village shop

The Village shop has been a huge success since it was taken over by a village cooperative. On a busy day up to 200 people use the shop and post office. The Village Shop is run entirely by volunteers and at the moment we urgently need more volunteers to keep the shop open. It is great fun, very sociable, and you have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to keep a valuable community asset going. Full training is given. Shifts are 2.5 hours, and you can book regular shifts or just work when you are able. If you think you can help, please email the Shop Manager Christian Dannemann at [christian@dannemann.org](mailto:christian@dannemann.org) or register at [woodchestervillageshop.org.uk/volunteers/](http://woodchestervillageshop.org.uk/volunteers/)

### Bike trail volunteers needed

The Woodchester Bike Trail has been another real success since it was created by the Parish Council three years ago, with the help of sponsorship from a number of local companies. The track is used not only by village residents but by people from across the District. It is maintained by a small group of volunteers and we need a few extra people to help us do regular checks of the track. If you already use the track or are interested in helping to maintain this great local asset, please contact Iain Dunbar on 01453 872185 or at [iaindunbar29@gmail.com](mailto:iaindunbar29@gmail.com)



### Help needed with Woodchester Word production

Since you are already reading this, you will be aware how much the Woodchester Word is valued by our residents. It has been spared from extinction a couple of times in the past and is now financially supported entirely by our valued advertisers. Produced quarterly, we need some additional help with its production. If you are any good at creating artwork using basic publishing software, we could really do with your help to keep it going when one of our team retires at the end of this year after more than 10 years in the role. For more information, contact the Editor, Rod Harris, at [woodchesterword@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterword@gmail.com).

## Stiles and footpaths

The Editor has recently had a total knee replacement which, as expected, reduced his mobility considerably for several weeks. As soon as the recovery period allowed, he began to walk the dog to help the knee improve its flexibility and to improve fitness after months of hobbling for short distances only. This gave him an

insight into how difficult it is for disabled and partially disabled people in Woodchester to walk the footpaths, fields and to manage stiles around our village. It is a pity that so many of the stiles are

inaccessible to someone with disabilities – all ok if it is a gate type – but so many are ones which you have to climb over, in some cases quite a considerable height from the ground. Also, your editor found that too many stiles and footpaths aren't kept clear of nettles and brambles, or have slippery, uneven steps that can be quite dangerous if you aren't surefooted. So, although my mobility will be back to normal very soon, on behalf of all disabled and people with mobility problems, I have a request – that the Parish Council should make a survey of all footpaths and stiles in the parish and where necessary, contact the land owners to improve accessibility so that all can use them without difficulty. Perhaps the Parish Council has a "slush fund" which it can use to maintain or improve the stiles, or is that wishful thinking?! (Rod Harris)



## Woodchester WI this summer – Outings, Eat-ins and Craft

Flushed with the success of last year's trip, we have organised two outings this year, one to our local hospice at Minchinhampton and the second to the meadows of a cut flower business. The Longfield trip was uplifting as we were taken round their lovely gardens, visited the craft rooms and were introduced to some of the huge and enthusiastic team of volunteers. The trip finished with a proper afternoon tea (complete with floral china and cake stands) and a chance to chat to some of their staff, including someone from the Hospice at Home team. Our visit to Kate's Cutting Patch, in summer sunshine, gave us the chance to enjoy the beautiful flower meadows which were the source of the flowers we put into posies last September. Wildlife is encouraged in this environmentally friendly enterprise with barn owl chicks raised in their outbuildings and visiting badgers digging up the grass paths between beds. The view from the garden added to our pleasure as we finished the visit with home-made cake and tea.



In July, a small group of us enjoyed a walk round Frampton, the sun shining brightly on us, the canal boat holidaymakers and the water. We had a brief halt in the café for teacake and coffee and two longer halts as we waited for bridges to return to position across the water. A walk arranged at county level round Temple Guiting, culminating in a lunch in the courtyard of the village café, was much enjoyed by two of us.

Our centenary banner preparations are now well underway and a number of beautiful embroidered, appliqué and painted contributions have been much admired. We hope the banner will feature contributions from all current members who are choosing a way in which to represent themselves or an aspect of their lives in this area. Our craft group, also open to non-members, continues to meet most months (first Thursday from 2 to 4 in the village hall for £3) and provides a good opportunity to admire the skills of others, enjoy tea and biscuits, perhaps to make a little progress with a neglected project and definitely to chat. The book group continues to meet bi-monthly.

We have enjoyed a variety of speakers at our monthly meetings, including a very knowledgeable volunteer from Westonbirt who spoke about the origin of the plants in our gardens (very few are native). Most of us found that we had known very little about the extensive work done by the Nelson Trust, particularly the services offered for women and the support network, including cafes, to support clients in the long term. In August we shared a fish and chip supper as usual. We are looking forward to our September speaker, Mandie Cran, who spent 15 years in the army as officer and engineer and whose talk is called *From Warfare to Welfare*. In October the Canals Trust will share news of their successes and ambitions for the future.

Membership numbers are strong but we are always delighted to welcome would-be members who may attend up to three sessions before having to commit. Programmes are available in the village shop or you are welcome to phone Sally, the Secretary, on 873003. (Sally Bull)

## Rooksmoor Mills on track

Latest news from the developer is that the project is on programme. The new culverts should be completed in September, although the wet weather in August has not helped. You can see progress with installing the massive pre-formed concrete culverts in this aerial shot taken recently. The developers advise that the twin tunnel culvert design was worked out in conjunction with the Environment Agency and should help prevent any flooding upstream of the the complex. Work should then start with the pond. With respect to the piling for block F, this will now be done using orgar drilling with steel liners. This will be more expensive and will still require driving in steel tubes, but it will be far less noisy than power piling, and quicker.



## A new term and a new era

This month, in all areas of England and including Woodchester and the Stroud valleys, children will start back at school. In the case of the 4 year olds, these early September days will be their first days at school. Ahead of them are fourteen or more years of education. But those first few days in the early years classes of primary school are very special to the child, parents and teachers. Those first days of the September term was a joy for me in school, just watching and being with those children - bright eyed, bushy tailed and full of enthusiasm, yet sometimes a little apprehensive of everything going on around them. But within a few days, with the nurturing and skilful encouragement of the teachers they were as confident as the Y6s and settled down to the routine of daily school life as if they have been there for years!



Laurie Lee and Gerald Roberts wrote about their first days at school:

*"The morning came, without any warning, when my sisters surrounded me, wrapped me in scarves, tied up my bootlaces, thrust a cap on my head and thrust a baked potato in my pocket.*

*"What's this?" I said.*

*"You're starting school today."*

*"I ain't. I'm stopping 'ome."*

*"Now come on Loll. You're a big boy now."*

*"I ain't."*

*"You are."*

*They picked me up bodily, kicking and bawling and carried me up to the road.*

*"Boys who don't go to school get put into boxes, and turn into rabbits and get chopped up Sundays."*

*I felt this was overdoing it rather but I said no more after that. I arrived at the school just three feet tall and fatrly wrapped up in scarves. The playground roared like a rodeo. Old boots, ragged stockings, torn trousers and skirts went skating and skidding around me. The rabble closed in; I was encircled; grit flew in my face like shrapnel. Tall girls with frizzled hair and huge boys with sharp elbows began to prod me with hideous interest. They plucked my scarves, spun me round like a top, screwed my nose and stole my potato. I was rescued by a gracious lady – the sixteen year old teacher, who boxed as few ears and dried my face and led me off the The Infants. I spent the first day picking holes in paper. I went home in a smouldering temper.*

*"What's the matter Loll? Didn't you like school, then?"*

*"They never gave me the present!"*

*"Present? What present?"*

*"They said they would give me the present."*

*"Well now, I'm sure they didn't"*

*"They did! They said "You're Laurie Lee, ain't you. Well just sit there for the present." I sat there all day but I never got the present. I ain't going back there again!"*

*From Cider with Rosie by Laurie Lee*

*I was not yet five years old when one Monday morning I was taken to the back kitchen, washed with suspicious thoroughness, given a lethally large spoonful of cod liver oil and malt and told I was going to school. The threat of school (and threat is what it was) was about to be carried out, and I went more or less without resistance.*

*Nevertheless, I was miserable. I said goodbye to the dog as if I would never see him again and took one last look at the silent wood.....The school was two wandering miles in the misty valley and all the way there mother tried to make light of it." It's only for an hour or two. There, you'll be home before you know it." The play yard to which I was delivered was already seething. It was quick and loud and rough, body blobs stretching, breaking and merging with other body blobs, then dividing like cells, all part of one fighting animal. That shrieking clamour, the beginning of love and fear remained to stir and whisper through all the next fifty years. Mother handed me over to Miss Aplin, the infants teacher who took my hand and led me gently away. Snatching a last look at the world I was leaving, I sensed nothing would ever be the same again.*

*From Pear Tree Hollow by Gerald Roberts*

How it is all so very different now! The Word would be pleased to hear of your stories of the beginning of school experienced by Woodchester residents.

## Woodchester Village Show 2019

A warm and sunny day on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September encouraged lots of people to come along to the Village show and enjoy music, cake, games and marvel at the beautiful range of vegetables, baking, flowers and preserves on display.

We are very grateful to judges Hayden and Sue Sutton and Jo Peach who willingly give their time and expertise to judge the fruit and vegetable classes (and also give advice on how entries should be displayed) and to Barbara Poulton who judged the flower classes. Judges Muriel McTiffin and Agnes Arkell had the toughest job, inspecting and tasting their way through a variety of Victoria sponge cakes, chocolate brownies, fruit scones, jams, and chutneys! We had some stunning entries in the photography classes which were judged by Tamsin Phillips from Nailsworth. Emma and Dena Wray judged the younger children's classes and the beautiful fantasy island created by Charlotte Edmundson was a well deserved winner and highly commended.

The David Brown Salver is awarded to the competitor with the most points in the fruit and vegetable classes, and Richard Butler and Tom White shared the award between them. Tom pipped Richard by one point to win the overall trophy for Best in Show. The Junior trophy was won by a very modest 4 year old Rowan Anthony from North Woodchester who had entered all the classes for children aged under five. The judges really liked his dinosaur themed decorated stone.



*Tom White won the Best in Show trophy*

The afternoon saw a very successful dog show with a variety of waggy tails and appealing eyes. Once again this was run and judged with great enthusiasm by Angela Morton and Doreen Haskins. Winners are listed below.

We all enjoyed the music provided by Phillip Fords traditional fairground organ and then a lovely selection of tunes from the amazing Rodborough Folk Orchestra. There were books and cards and toys to buy, some beautiful local crafts and artwork on display in the church. A variety of games kept both children and adults entertained and the members of St Mary's Church were busy serving tea and cakes all afternoon.



*4-year-old Rowan Anthony won the Junior Trophy*

So, a huge THANK YOU to everyone who helped out and joined in on the day. To Stuart Mitchell for loaning us some traditional games, and to Lynn Pennington and the Governors of Woodchester Endowed school for letting us use the school hall. (Katharine McNealey)

## Dog Show Results

### Most Handsome Dog

1. Milo - Rebecca Binns
2. Eric - Sally Bull
3. Duke - Sandra Bullock
4. Marcus - Holly Daneman

### Waggiest Tail

1. Rolly - Teigan Rayner
2. Marcus - Holly Daneman
3. Teasez - Daisy Koos
4. Mini - Clive Amos

### Prettiest Bitch

1. Suki - Millie Franks
2. River - David Blackstone
3. Mitti - Ella Brooks
4. Lottie - Malcolm Swait

### Most appealing eyes

1. Mitti - Ella Brooks
2. River - Daniel Blackstone
3. Hattie - Emma Ray
4. Nancy - Becky Thom

### Golden Oldie

1. George - Mrs Platham
2. Lily - Alan Ray
3. Lola - Jason Martin
4. Pippa - Malcolm Swait



*The tea tent and dog show were as popular as ever...*



## Village Shop and Post Office

The shop continues to go from strength to strength. We experienced a quieter spell in the summer but the village is livelier now that the school year has started.

We continue to source new products and regularly put these onto our Facebook page. Most recently natural toiletries that include eco friendly and natural alternatives. Some of our regular shoppers may have noticed that we now stock Beeswax wraps that are a reusable alternative to Cling Film, beautiful Faith in Nature soaps that are without unnecessary packaging and Shampoos etc that are in containers that are made from recycled plastic.

Although it may seem a long way off, Christmas is only around the corner especially in retail terms. Our lovely range of Christmas cards including our 'From Woodchester' range will soon be arriving and will go on sale in November. The range of cards is mainly Charity and very popular. The Post Office leaflets detailing recommended posting dates will be available from the 23rd September. We are sourcing Christmas products and gift ideas and hope to include some local items to this range. As usual we hope to supply Gluten Free Christmas Puddings made in Woodchester by Miss Daisy who also supplies our very popular Gluten Free Chocolate Brownies.

The Post Office continues to sell One4all Gift Cards that are accepted in over 130 High Street stores that may make your Christmas shopping and posting easier. Once again we will have the Christmas Post Box for all your letters to Santa - your letter will need to include the child's name and address so that Santa knows where to send his reply, the envelope to Santa will need to be stamped - last day for posting these will be Saturday the 7th December.

Look out very soon for another of our very popular free to enter Raffles with prizes including some very lovely products!

Just a reminder that we are Community Shop and rely on your continued support and recommendation to make sure that we are a constant presence in the village and able to continue the good work. Finally, if there are items that you would regularly buy and would like us to stock please let us know.

## First Aid Training

Would you like to get free First Aid Training? A First Aid trainer from Gloucestershire County Council will be providing free training for Woodchester residents on Friday 25th October in the Village Hall. There will be two sessions - morning and afternoon and you will need to sign up at the Village Shop, as there will be a maximum of 20 attendees for each session.



## Woodchester Football Club

It is with great regret that I must report that Woodchester FC as a stand-alone club has had to fold ahead of the forthcoming season. Despite the sterling efforts of a few, and some solid successes in recent years – winning the Bill Bick Cup, becoming FA Standard Charter and not finishing bottom of the league for the last four seasons – dwindling player numbers have finally gotten the better of us.

With this prospect becoming imminent, proactive action has been taken to ensure the club will continue, albeit in a different guise. Alkerton Rangers have similarly been struggling for players, so we have agreed a merger of the two clubs to create Alkerton and Woodchester FC. Home games will be played at the Owen Harris Memorial Ground in Eastington – whilst it'll be an emotional wrench not to be playing at Villa Park, the benefits of a lovely flat pitch and excellent changing facilities will be well received! As ever, new players remain very welcome, so please get in touch by email as below, or for any other matters relating to the club. (James Collins, Secretary and Treasurer)

## Girlguiding Woodchester

The Brownie summer term ended a little bit abruptly due to girls having school activities to attend so our last couple of meetings were cancelled, but the Guides had a wonderful time on Selsley Common and in Penn Woods, playing games and enjoying a 'bring and share picnic.' After a year of exploring the new national Girlguiding programme both 1st Woodchester Brownies and 1st Woodchester Guides are looking forward to it continuing well into the future. There is always an exciting activity on offer, even if girls are unable to complete the badge work.

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) or [www.ggwoodchester.wordpress.com](http://www.ggwoodchester.wordpress.com)

## Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School

There has been much to celebrate during the summer term with lots of fantastic learning happening inside and outside classrooms, day to day, as well as an abundance of extra-curricular events ranging from sport to music to problem solving!

In spite of budgetary pressures, Governors, Staff and Parents work together to maximise any opportunity to improve provision and children returned after the Easter holiday to find 'Clevertouch' interactive boards installed in each of our five classrooms. These will enhance teaching and learning within the classrooms. We were also very fortunate to receive two generous donations from our local community; Seys and Bridges Educational Trust awarded us £500 and our local village Post Office donated £300. With an additional donation from the PTA, we were able to buy 12 Probots to support children's development of IT skills and cross-curricular approaches in other subjects such as maths. In addition, Gloucestershire University lent us their 'SPHEROS', enabling Hawthorn class to gain IT programming skills as well as having great fun. The 'STEM' theme continued when Sam and Freddie, took part in the Gloucestershire K'nex Challenge Final 2019 at Renishaw's innovation centre putting their creativity and ingenuity to good use.



Sport always features highly during the summer term and this year it was great to see more festival opportunities for our younger children being organised. Our infants took part in Cross Country and Dodgeball inter schools' competitions as well as Country Dancing. Our Key Stage 2 children also competed in District Sports, Cheltenham Athletics, Small Schools' Swimming Gala, Cross Country and Country Dancing. They looked very smart in the newly purchased Woodchester sports kit and competed with enthusiasm and plenty of sporting spirit. There were also events to enjoy within school such as the Leavers' Rounders match (staff/parents 'v' Y6) and Sports Day ending with a family lunch on the field.



Creative talents have also been homed during the summer term with our musicians playing in a number of different events both in and out of school. Learning to perform alongside other musicians is great fun and during a 'Musical Tea Afternoon' in school and at the 'Orchestra in the Afternoon' event at King's School, Gloucester our children developed their rehearsal and performance skills. With great pride, Year 6 produced two polished and much appreciated performances of Romeo and Juliet for their families, ably assisted by our KS2 choir. All children took part in a 'Faith Encounters in Art' competition; imaginative work was displayed around school and in church, with a small selection being displayed at St. Mary de Crypt Church in Gloucester. We were delighted to hear that Poppy's artwork was selected as a winning entry! Well done to all our children for supporting one another and for everything they have achieved throughout the year. (Lynne Pennington, Headteacher)

## Made in Woodchester Christmas Craft Market

Following last years inaugural and successful Christmas Craft Market, the event will take place again this year on Saturday 23 November 2019 in Woodchester Village Hall. The Craft Market provides a unique opportunity to browse and purchase Christmas gifts from a wide range of locally made craft items. The event will run from 10.30 to 3.00 and in addition to the craft stalls selling items to suit all pockets, there will also be refreshments available courtesy of the WI throughout the day. There will be a number of new stalls this year

If there are any 'crafters' in the village who would like to have a stall - and who have not yet been contacted - would they please get in touch with the organiser: Mike Barnard on 872458 or [m.barnard.123@btinternet.com](mailto:m.barnard.123@btinternet.com)

**Put the date in your diary - and we look forward to seeing you there**



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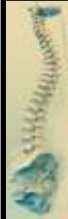
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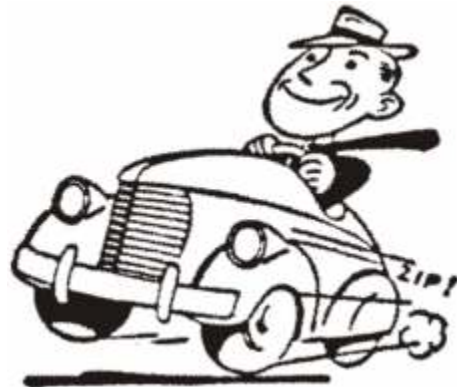
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## News from St Mary's Church

Coinciding with the new school year, we have a sense of "fresh start" in September, though our monthly "Lunch with Friends" has continued through the summer months. We have regretfully said our goodbyes to our former curate, Revd Deborah Curram, who is now in Hayling Island and enjoying her work with the community there - as well as the sea air.

Messy Church returns, starting on September 18th, for all youngsters up to Year 6, accompanied by an adult. And as always, we welcome everyone, at any of our services, who might want to turn over a new leaf at this time of year.

Our "A Building for Everyone" project continues. If you haven't seen the results of the first stage - the new kitchen - do have a look at it inside the church.

We still have some more money to raise in our appeal, to complete the planned improvements to the church interior. Work is continuing behind the scenes as we finalise the design details for the next stage, when we will be re-building the west end inside the church.

And we are also thinking further ahead, towards creating a more flexible space in the church, and seeing what we might do about improving the church heating. So on Saturday November 9th we are holding a **spice-themed** fund-raising event, in St Mary's, with live music, with spicy food and drink, and with some entertaining and awesome Promises to bid for! Look out for posters on village notice boards nearer the date.

*(Andrew Pemberton)*

## Woodchester Village Hall

Since the last issue of Woodchester Word further energy saving improvements have been made to the hall. The roof space insulation has been increased, the kitchen and rear storeroom lights have been upgraded to LED's and all inner toilet areas now have sensors fitted, these will activate the lights when someone enters. This recent work has only been made possible with the award of a 35% Target 2020 – Carbon Saving Grant. The central heating system has also been "flushed" and will enable the radiators to function more fully. With all the improvements made we envisage that our running costs will be lowered, and thus keep the hire charges realistic for everyone and to improve the facilities of a popular village hall that is used by locals and people from further afield.

Our regular classes/courses and their leaders' details can be found on the village notice boards and Woodchester Parish website; a wide selection of interests for all ages is on offer. On average the hall is used for 29 hours each week. At the time of writing we can only offer regular slots on a Friday, but there may always be the chance of a "one-off" being available, contact details as under.

Again, we would like to say that the hall is run by volunteers and we would gladly welcome anyone to come and join our committee, we aim to meet three or four times a year, fresh blood and ideas always welcomed. Regular hall classes can also nominate a member of their group to join our committee as a User Trustee. Those currently represented are The Parish Council, WI, Table Tennis and Tuesday Art Class.

All booking enquiries to Kath Gay on 01453 873348 or wvh888@btinternet.com. (Alan Boulton, Chairman)

## Morris Dancers required

Ragged & Old Morris have been dancing at pubs, fetes and festivals in the Five Valleys, including Woodchester's pubs and school, for the last twenty years, and are now recruiting dancers (women and men) to practise with us and prepare for the 2020 dancing season. If you've seen Morris dancing you'll know it's vigorous, colourful and fun. No experience is necessary – some energy and enthusiasm is all that's required! Fancy helping to keep one of our most distinctive traditions alive and kicking? Join us for a taster session on one of our regular practice nights and master your first Ragged & Old dance by the end of the evening!

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 8.00-9.30pm, Box Village Hall GL6 9HJ**, also Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> September, 8.00-9.30pm, Bussage Village Hall GL6 8BB - our usual venue.

For more information, visit our website at [raggedandold.com](http://raggedandold.com), follow us on Facebook or call/e-mail Mike on 01453 350689/[jubilee@phonecoop.coop](mailto:jubilee@phonecoop.coop)

# What's on in Woodchester

## Dates for your diary

**Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> October:** Harvest Festival at St. Mary's Church

**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> October:** First Aid Training in Village Hall (see page 10)

**Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> November:** Parish Council Meeting, Village Hall

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> November:** spice-themed fund-raising event in St Mary's church, with live music, spicy food and drink

**Saturday 23 November,** 10:30-3pm: Christmas Craft Market, Village Hall

## Words of Wisdom

"The greatest pleasure I know is to do a good action by stealth, and to have it found out by accident!"

"Coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous"

"Many receive advice, only the wise profit from it."

## Useful Village Contacts

**PCSO:** Steven Phillipson

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

**Neighbourhood Warden:**

Carol Novoth. T: 01453 754512. M: 07970 250343  
email: [carol.novoth@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:carol.novoth@stroud.gov.uk)

**District Councillor:** Philip McAsey

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

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**Gloucestershire Highways**

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**Woodchester Post Office and Village Shop:**

Pauline Woolam, 01453 872581

**St Mary's Church:** Rev Peter Francis, 01453 759680

**Church of the Annunciation:** 01453 832120

## Woodchester Village Hall

**Mon** **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)

**Tues** **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)

**Thurs** **Senior Health & Fitness:**

10.00–12.00

(Dorothy Turner: 01285 885766)

**Parish Council:** 19.00 – 21.00

1st in alternate months

**WI:** 19.30 – 21.30

3rd in month

(Gail Birch: 07875 028671)

**Craft and Chat:** 14.00 – 16.00,

Open to everyone, Contact as WI

**Friday** Private function, occasional

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).

*Letters, articles and items for publication should be sent to the editor, Rod Harris, at [woodchesterword@gmail.com](mailto:woodchesterword@gmail.com)  
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**Copy deadline for next issue:** 20 November 2019