

THE WOODCHESTER WORD



Issue 69, Winter 2019



WOODCHESTER SCHOOL IN THE 1950S

The Editor has received an email from ex-Woodchester resident Roy Harris now living in Swindon who has kindly sent two photos of Woodchester School, taken about 1952. He lived in Rose Cottage and 4 The Avenue at different times. The photos here are of his class and of a play performed at the time of the Queen's Coronation. Roy wrote:

"I visit Stroud about five times a year as I have got relatives living there my mother was born there but have not seen Woodchester for a few years. Before living in the village I used to live at Little London on Rodborough Common we used to enjoy going to Winston's for an ice cream which we still do we will just get into the car on the spur-of-the-moment and drive down just to get one.

When I was a kid we used to play down by the rail track and on thing we used to do was when we knew a train was due we would put an old penny on the track with two nails across it and when the wheels went over it we would

have our own scull and cross swords. The other thing that I can remember was when we were living in the Avenue there was a farm opposite and on bonfire night we had a big bonfire for us and our parents would cook potatoes on the fire.

You would not be able to do this these days. I also had the privilege to see the Roman Pavement the last time they opened it up.

I would like to keep in touch with the village where I have some good memories."

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Roy has been able to get a list of names but is not sure how accurate they are:
 Back row Lt - Rt, Marion Hurcome, Paul Oakey, Christopher Turner, ??, Richard Bingham, Robert Taylor, Tony Coles, Sandra Winston.
 Middle row Lt - Rt, Lawrence Wright, Roger Vanstone, Angela Stansbury, Doreen Weaving, Carol Farley, ??, Valerie Brinkley, Michael Dickinson, Paul Rowlands.
 Front Row Lt - Rt, Brenda Huxford, Bruce Neale, Enid Thain, Royston Harris (me), Jennifer ?, Peter ?, Caren Broad, ??, Magdelin Baker, John Gazzard, Josie ?, Noel Clift.
 The photo on page one was taken at the village hall on June 2nd 1953 the only name I know on this photo is my sister Joyce Harris 1st left the people on this photo would have been about 10 or 11 years old.



It would be GREAT if anyone can remember these photo's. It would also be GREAT if there is anyone who is still around from the school photo. If anyone would like to contact me they can do so by Facebook or email me at: amor123@sky.com#

Citizen's Advice Stroud and Cotswolds – Winter Heating Payments



With Winter just around the corner the thought of heating our homes becomes ever more a constant worry for many of those in our communities.

In order to help with some of the energy costs, the government allow a **Winter Fuel Payment** to every household with someone born before 5th April 1954 living there. The payments are tax free, not means-tested and paid to anyone who satisfies the criteria, irrespective of whether they work or not.

Winter Fuel Payments are paid automatically to those who qualify between November and December by The Department for Work and Pensions; all payments are usually by 13th January the following year. If you think you are entitled to a payment and you do not receive one, then contact the DWP before 31st March 2020.

Cold Weather Payments are another form of government help with energy costs for those household living on low incomes. Payments are only paid to certain means-tested benefits claimants when the average temperature of zero degrees or below lasts for seven consecutive days in any period from 1st November to 31st March. The Payments of £25 for any qualifying period are triggered automatically by The Department for Work and Pensions.

If you would like any further information about these issues or any other matter please contact Citizens Advice on confidential freephone-08088000510.

Over this last year we have been celebrating 60 years in Stroud: Can you help us find 60 new donors for your local charity? An annual pledge of £5 per month can make a real difference. Please phone us on Freephone 0808 800 0510 for the necessary forms. **Thank you.**

Woodchester Open Gardens 2020?

Would you be interested in participating in Woodchester Open gardens in 2020? We have done this twice in recent years and it's been very enjoyable. All we ask is that your garden is beautiful, unusual or interesting, and that you are happy to let local people come and have a look at it!

Possible dates on a Sunday at the end of June or early July.

If you would be willing to do this, or would like more information, please email Katharine McNealey at Kathinny@hotmail.com



Woodchester Mansion

Woodchester Mansion is open on New Years Day January 1st 2020 from 11am to 4pm. The servants quarters cafe will not be open but there will be Hot drinks and a blazing fire in the drawing room.

Fans of Phillip Pullmans His Dark Materials Trilogy may have spotted Woodchester Mansion in the first episode of the new BBC1 series, which was aired on November 3rd.

A really spicy evening!

A new event took place in St. Mary's Church early last month – a Spice evening. This was organised as a part of the fund raising for the church re-ordering appeal, which when completed will provide new toilets, a disabled toilet, office space and an improved, weather proof entrance, and eventually removal of pews with replacement chairs, allowing a much more flexible space in the church.

The Spice Evening was attended by 100 or so villagers who enjoyed a delicious meal provided in part by the church catering team but also by a Syrian refugee family who have been rehomed in Cheltenham and have established a catering business in Cheltenham.

During the evening, a spicy quiz stretched the brains of the participants and an auction with Rod Harris as auctioneer raised approx. £900. The whole evening raised a little less than £2,000.



Village Carols

The annual and traditional carol singing evening will be on Monday December 23rd. This is an event that all villagers and friends are invited to join in with. Groups start in different places and finish up on Church Green or inside the church if the weather is seriously bad. Timings are as follows:

Meet at Frogmarsh at 6.30 p.m., or the Ram at 6.50 p.m., or the Royal Oak at 7.00p.m., then making our way to Church Green for 7.15p.m. where there will be mulled wine and mince pies to aid the carol singing alongside the Nativity scene, Wise Men and Shepherds!

Please support your village shop: A plea from Katharine McNealy

Amazingly its been 5 years since we, as a community took over the village shop as a community lead, volunteer run enterprise. The shop offers a surprising range of goods including grocery staples, fresh bread and milk, Essential Organics, Faith in Nature toiletries, Ecover cleaning products and Woodchester Valley Wine. We also have a fantastic variety of cards, gifts and sweets and a small supply of fresh fruit and vegetables.

However profits have dropped over the past year reflecting a reduction in footfall which we attribute to a number of reasons including the loss of several regular customers, national economic uncertainty and problems caused by road closures and traffic congestion on the A46 and surrounding roads.

Although we have no immediate cause for concern as we have healthy capital reserves, a drop in profit is often indicative of something not going to plan. So from now on we will be improving our marketing and promotion and keeping a critical eye on stock levels and pricing.

If you have never been into the village shop please do come in and buy something. You will be surprised at the things we sell. And if you are an occasional shopper please do call in and shop with us more regularly. Although our nearest supermarket may be a few pennies cheaper, by supporting the village shop you are also supporting your local community. If everyone in the village just bought one item a week from the shop we would be back on a firm footing.

Katharine McNealey





Mistletoe

Mistletoe has a curious history. We all know how it is used at Christmas but its use is clothed in myth and mystery, as well as being a subject of many Christmas songs ("Mistletoe and Wine" by Cliff Richard is a good example.) It is a parasitic plant that grows on trees, mainly apple, lime, poplar and willows. It grows from sticky seeds wiped on the branches of trees by birds. Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire are counties where mistletoe grows well and supplies farmers with a useful winter crop.

Mistletoe has always been a symbol of love and fertility from Trojan, Roman and Viking times through to Victorian days. In Ancient Greek mythology, mistletoe was used by the hero Aeneas to reach the underworld. In Norse Mythology, Loki tricked the blind god Hodur into murdering his own twin brother Balder with an arrow made of mistletoe wood, being the only plant to which Balder was vulnerable. Some versions of the story have mistletoe becoming a symbol of peace and friendship to compensate for its part in the murder. The Romans associated mistletoe with peace, love and understanding and hung it over doorways to protect the household. For Victorians, at a time of strict social restraint, the idea of kissing under the mistletoe (almost a "licence to kiss") had obvious popular appeal. It is interesting to read that some churches considered this to be rather too pagan and often banned mistletoe from churches, although other evergreens were allowed. A sprig of mistletoe isn't cheap if purchased from shops but fortunately many of us in Woodchester have this festive plant growing in our gardens or access to it in the countryside. But let's not forget the important message of Christmas of love and joy that are represented by the white berries of mistletoe. Happy Christmas all!!

North Woodchester Village Shop

Reduce your Carbon Footprint by buying local this Christmas whilst supporting your Community Village Shop.

Again this year Santa has placed his Post Box in our shop and we have seen a steady flow of youngsters posting their letters in anticipation of receiving a reply from him (remember last day for posting to receive a reply is 7th December!) We have an extensive range of beautiful cards (including multipacks) and gift bags from Noel Tatt – supporting 32 different charities. We stock some lovely luxury items including Dates, Caramelised Almonds, Attractive Tea Caddies, Cranberry Sauce, Mince Pie Filling, Drinking Chocolate, Christmas Crackers, Divine Chocolate Coins and Christmas Tea - these always sell out so they must be good! If you are looking for a gift we have Faith in Nature Gift Boxes and Toiletries for both men and women, Woodchester Wine and Gift Boxes, Potted Plants and Calendars. Orders are being taken for Miss Daisy Gluten Free Christmas Puddings. As usual Mince Pies and Christmas Cakes will be supplied by

Dangerfields. Don't forget some Woodchester Meats Bacon and Dangerfield Bread for a quick bacon sarnie on Christmas Eve or a really easy Lodge Farm Frozen meal! Of course we will have the full range of Woodchester Meats including Ham, Sausages and Bacon.

Come in and see us during December and participate in our free Raffles – you could win some lovely prizes. Pick up a ticket every time you visit.

Buying your Christmas gifts and provisions from Woodchester Village Shop also means that we are able to support local charities.

The shop will be open throughout the holiday period apart from Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

A very Merry Christmas to all of our customers old and new and thank you for your support throughout 2019 and we look forward to serving you in 2020.



Potholes – the final answer?

Many of us have been angered by the number of potholes in our roads as we drive along. Selsley Road and the A46 are particularly bad in places.

Now we might be seeing the end to potholes as a super tough road surface that will bring an end to potholes has been trialled in the UK. This is a graphene-reinforced asphalt that was developed in Italy and has so far only been tested there. Its makers are seeing how it fares in hotter and colder countries. One trial is taking place in Curbridge, a village in Oxfordshire where a 750 metre strip has been laid. Test will be carried out before a possible roll-out over the next year or so in other parts of Britain. This new material costs 20% more than conventional asphalt, but its makers say that is ultimately cost-saving and will double the lifespan of the road. Will we see it in Gloucestershire?

Iain and Dave

Iain Dunbar has handed over the job of putting together the items and articles in the Woodchester Word to Dave Fussell. Iain has been involved with the Word for many years, originally as editor, then as partner to Rod by dealing with the artwork and shape of the Word each month. We are all very grateful for Iain's input to the magazine and for the many ways in which he improved its look. Thank you Iain from all of us, editor, distributors and readers for your hard work on behalf of the Woodchester Word. Iain will now have more time to dedicate to his other voluntary work, notably in road safety.

Dave Fussell lives in South Woodchester and is the owner of Pus One Design, a graphics design agency based in the area. He has kindly offered to produce the newsletter without cost. He hopes that you all like the new look of The Woodchester Word.

**PLUSONE
DESIGN.**

WWW.PLUS-ONE.CO.UK

Reducing speed limits and educating drivers

Stroud District Road Safety Group is an independent group which was formed last year to work with all 52 Town and Parish Councils in the Stroud District to promote all aspects of road safety. The group holds quarterly open meetings, details of which can be found at the group's website.

The idea of a 'Rural Multi-Site Traffic Regulation Order' (TRO) to reduce speed limits at specific sites in the Stroud District, identified and supported by appropriate traffic flow and speed data, was originally suggested by Scott Tomkins (Highways Commissioner, GCC), and the group was told that GCC were in favour of such a project, that the costs of TRO's would reduce 'significantly' this year, and that a multi-site TRO such as was being proposed by SDRSG "is possible".

SDRSG went ahead and compiled a list of 42 sites within SDC where the local Town or Parish Council considered the current speed limit to be inappropriate (including in Woodchester), held meetings with GCC and Police officials and examined recent UK speed reduction studies.

It soon became apparent that there has in fact been no reduction in TRO costs as a result of GCC bringing these services inhouse in April 2019. It was also made clear to SDRSG that unless the locations chosen for possible speed reductions are focussed on areas where there is a history of serious road traffic collisions (and a likely significant improvement in road safety and reduction in KSI figures) the proposed Rural Multi-Site Traffic Regulation Order to reduce speed limits is unlikely to be prioritised over other existing schemes by the authorities, will take a long period of time to complete, and will subject each participating Council to significant costs, even if it were to be successful.

"Our conclusion was that we would therefore be better focussing our limited resources on our education and enforcement campaign, working closely with Gloucestershire Constabulary" explains Chairman Iain Dunbar. "We will also support councils in targeted local speed reduction efforts (including TRO's) where there is a history of serious road traffic collisions, as well as



hopefully implementing other new road safety initiatives such as the proposed district-wide Community Road Watch scheme."

This does mean that the plan to apply for a speed limit reduction in Woodchester has been shelved for the time being at least.

Safe and social driving

With support from more than 20 local Parish and Town councils (including Woodchester) and match-funding from GCC, SDRSG has purchased two Mobile Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VAS) systems. These devices alert drivers to the existing speed limit in order to positively influence driver behaviour. They also collect traffic flow and speed data which can be used to inform and assist future enforcement campaigns.

SDRSG's two mobile VAS systems are now being used around the District and will be seen in Frocester, Whiteshill, Uley, Woodchester, Slimbridge, Horsley, Rodborough, Stonehouse, Eastington, Ruscombe, Bisley, Moreton Valance, Selsley, Cainscross and Minchinhampton over the next few months.

Following meetings with the Road Safety Management Team at Gloucestershire Constabulary, SDRSG now has agreement with them that if a VAS deployment identifies a serious and repetitive speeding issue at a specific location, the Police will implement an enforcement program at that site. "This is excellent news and represents exactly the sort of cooperation between community groups and the police that we were hoping to encourage when SDRSG was formed last year" comments Iain.

SDRSG recently took part in the Gloucestershire Road Safety Alliance Conference, following which Assistant Chief Constable Julian Moss said "I am so impressed with the progress your group has made over the last year" and David Hawker, Unit Head of the Criminal Justice Department at Gloucestershire Constabulary said "we are delighted with your VAS initiative, it is highly impactful and helpful to the Police"

You can find out more about Stroud District Road Safety Group at www.struddistrictroadsafety.com.

Orchard Pastures

Winter is upon us, so it's a quiet time on the allotments and in the orchard. However, you are all invited to make up for that by coming to our annual wassail on Sunday 19th January at 4pm. A short participative piece of musical theatre will be followed by mulled cider in The Ram. Everyone welcome.

If anyone would like manure, we have a heap to share. Please get in contact if you are interested.

Orchard Pastures is the land below The Ram owned by a group of villagers. For more information, please email: swalt.org@gmail.com or phone Bert or Glen Cossins on 872407.

Plane Crashes in Woodchester

Chris Jezewski has completed some more research following the interest shown by Woodchester residents in the war time plane crash in Woodchester.

He writes :

Further to the article on the plane crashes during World War 2, I have some more information.

The IWM <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/item/memorial/32846> link had information about the memorial to Pugh at Dilwyn village. It has this inscription: "PRO PATRIA"

Near the village of Dilwyn on 21st May 1940, Pilot Officer John Connolly Pugh, RAF, selflessly gave his life to save that of another.

P.O. Pugh's Supermarine Spitfire fighter, P9517, suffered an engine malfunction and the young pilot sought to force land his aeroplane, thus saving a very valuable fighting machine from destruction. Despite thick black smoke from the engine seriously reducing his visibility, P.O. Pugh made an excellent effort in setting up a forced landing in a field. At the last moment, through the smoke, P.O. Pugh saw a farm worker, Mr Leonard Deakin, in his path and immediately swerved to avoid a collision. P9517 struck two oak trees and the twenty year old pilot was killed in the subsequent crash. Eyewitnesses have since described P.O. Pugh's bravery as "Remarkable".

This memorial was dedicated on the 20th August 1988, unveiled by the pilot's brother Sqn. Ldr. RM Pugh AFC RAF (Ret'd) and erected by "The Malvern Spitfire Team" and Dilwyn Parish Council. WE WILL REMEMBER HIM."

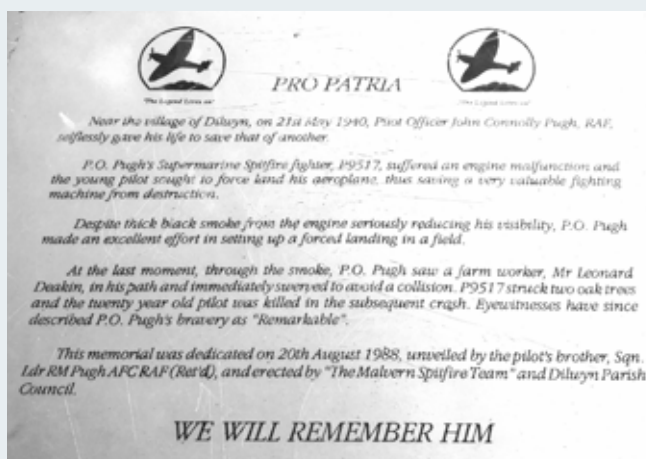
The photo of the Memorial has been kindly provided by Dilwyn village.

Sadly, in Woodchester, we seem to have forgotten him. Pugh does not have a CWGC headstone and is buried in what was probably a family plot. Dare I say, it is neglected. I have (again?) tried cleaning the inscription (photo attached) but I am wary of using anything too harsh in case I damage the letters – which may be made of lead. Something bleach based may be required. Obviously, this is a family grave marker and not CWGC (who do NOT clean WW2 headstones hence why I cleaned the other 5 RAF WW2 headstones) so I may be going outside my remit.

I suppose the other option is to request CWGC to erect a headstone at the grave. There is a precedent with the post war grave of Czech RAF pilot Sergeant Frantisek Bartos. Bartos was killed on 17 Sep 1952 whilst flying in Meteor T Mk 7, WL454 of No 20 Maintenance Unit, which flew into high ground at Cranham near Gloucester after flying into cloud during a publicity demonstration flight over Gloucester.

Does Woodchester Priory have an opinion about how to care for, and remember these pilots, in particular Pilot Officer Pugh who has a memorial in another village?

Chris Jezewski



Christmas at St Mary's Church

Sunday 15th December

Christingle Service at 11am

An event for all the family, where everyone gets to assemble a Christingle, learn what it symbolises, and enjoy the sweets afterwards!

Tuesday 24th December Christmas Eve

Crib Service at 3pm

The Christmas Story, told in a style suitable for young children with refreshments to follow

Carol Service at 6.30pm

Be ready for a crowded church, hearty singing, and refreshments afterwards

Wednesday 25th December Christmas Day

Christmas Day Service in church at 10.00am

A Memorial at Christmas

Christmas draws us all closer together and is a time for celebrating with family and friends, but it can also be the time when the pain of loss is felt most sharply. This Christmas, as last year, we will be offering everyone a chance to remember loved ones who are no longer with us.

We invite everyone who visits St Mary's at any time over the Christmas period to hang the name or names of loved ones who have died on our prayer tree. Special cards will be provided near the tree. We will remember them before God with thanks for their lives and the love they shared.

Christmas Roasties



The average Brit eats 100kg of potatoes a year, and potato growers, of which there are 2,500 employing 16,000 farm workers in the UK, grow approximately six million tons of potatoes a year. At Christmas, this humble root vegetable is an important part of our celebrations, usually roasted as a part of Christmas Day lunch of course. No-one makes a better roast than my mother-in-law, so if you want to cook perfect roasties, follow the steps below:

1. Always par-boil the potatoes, drain, then fluff up the potatoes (two medium sized potatoes cut into four per person,) by shaking them in the colander. Then add one tablespoon of flour per person and shake again.
2. Heat the oil (duck or goose fat !! or 100ml of olive oil) in the roasting tin in the oven for a few minutes, then spread the potatoes out in the tin, baste with a spoon and place into the oven.
3. Roast the potatoes for 40/50 minutes, turning them occasionally until golden.
4. Then eat them!!



HEARD IN THE PUB

"The real problem of humanity is that we have Palaeolithic emotions, medieval institutions and god-like technology!"

"One reason that my cat is happier than people is that they have no newspapers"

HEARD IN THE SCHOOL

"Practice doesn't make you perfect but it makes you a little bit better!"

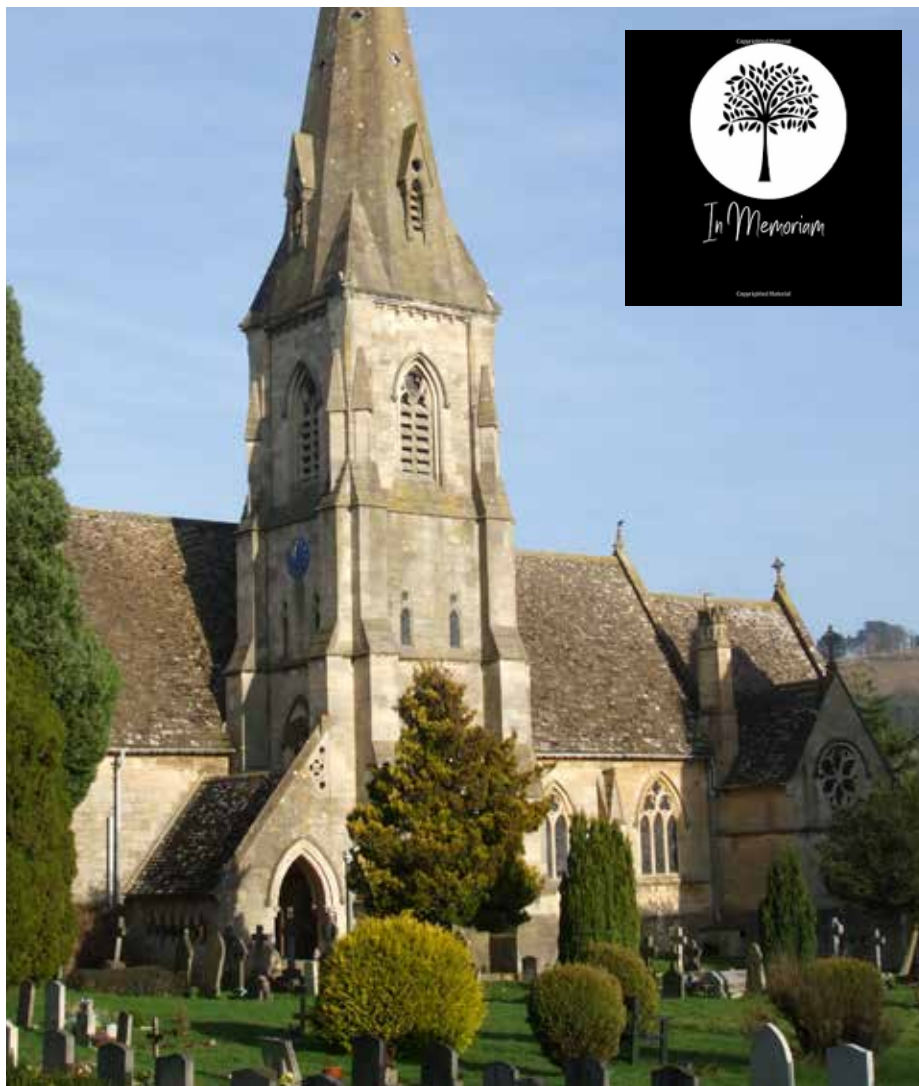
Everyone is welcome to all our Christmas services.

Contact

If you are experiencing distress and feel in need of prayerful support over the Christmas period, please contact a member of our pastoral team:

Ann Cresswell: telephone 01453 765114 or email ann.cresswell@btinternet.com

Alex Stuart: telephone 01453 762702 or email alex.stuart@rocketmail.com



Woodchester Craft Show

A very successful craft show was held in the village hall in mid-November. What was special was that all the crafts were designed and made by local, mainly Woodchester, people and an impressive range of specialist skills across all mediums was on view and available for purchase. The show was well supported by the village and many appreciative comments were heard by those looking at the crafts.



Centenary Celebrations at the WI

In October the Gloucestershire Federation celebrated a very big birthday with an exhibition in Gloucester cathedral with stalls from lots of the WIs across the county showcasing the considerable skills of members. Double-sided pennants with a huge range of images representing the one hundred years of our federation's existence were particularly impressive.



Two members represented our group, attending the celebration gathering in the cathedral while three more sang in the WI county choir, an uplifting and moving experience. At Woodchester, we have made good progress with our own centenary celebration, the creation of a banner to represent the homes and interests of all current members and to mark this special milestone. The embroidered, appliqued, painted, beaded, crocheted and knitted contributions have belied members' claims that they lack the talent of the ideas to make a contribution. We hope to find the time to assemble all contributions in time for an early 2020 meeting.

Meetings continue to offer a range of experiences including the board games enjoyed in lieu of a speaker in October and a craft session organised by our Treasurer after our AGM in November. Our September speaker, Mandie Cran, soldier, engineer, mother, sailor, business woman, had a strong and appropriate messages for the group.

She attributes her own success to a positive response to the prejudices prevalent when she was growing up and has always ensured in her working life that her treatment, pleasant or challenging, has been the same as that of her almost entirely male counterparts.

After a successful contribution to the first Made in Woodchester Craft event, we were delighted to be invited back to provide light lunches, cake and drinks. The soup and rolls were well received and lots of cake was consumed. Our excellent team of volunteers all seemed to enjoy the occasion and worked hard to make it a success.

Two members have also enjoyed one of the regular craft sessions at WI House in Gloucester. The Secretary has enjoyed a painting course at Denman, the WI College near Abingdon, which offers a wide range of residential and day courses all year round and is open to non-members (and men) too. Have a look on-line to see what is on offer!

The arrangements for next year's programme are well underway. We expect to have a good range of speakers and activities in meetings as usual, ranging from a craft demonstration to a speaker involved with Brunel's SS Great Britain, docked at Bristol. Meetings are always advertised on boards in the village and programmes will be available in the village shop once they are complete.

We have been delighted to welcome a number of new members over the course of 2019. Would-be members, who may attend up to three sessions before having to commit, will find us to be a friendly group of people and will be surprised by the range of activities the WI has to offer at local, county and national level – much more than jam and Jerusalem although these remain important! You are welcome to phone Sally, the Secretary, on 873003, for more information. We meet at 7.30 on the third Thursday of most months.

Sally Bull

‘Stiles and footpaths’ in Woodchester – a response

First of all, I carry out an annual survey of all the footpaths in the parish, usually before the Annual Parish Meeting so that I can report back to interested parishioners. Whilst doing this, I consider the condition of the path itself and any gates or stiles on the route and whether the path is obvious.

We currently have 16 stiles (I may have missed the odd one) in and around Woodchester parish. Of these, 2 are on the parish boundary and lead to other stiles in adjacent parishes, 4 are squeeze stiles and 10 are ‘normal’.

In recent years we have replaced 2 stiles with kissing gates – Selsley Road near Park View and Convent Lane leading to Atcombe. These were selected as they opened a route that was otherwise reasonably easy to use. To do this, we used Section 106 money (a levy on development in the parish) at a total cost of £1855. These gates were custom made in the parish.

Section 106 has now been replaced by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and we currently have some money available. However, the rules for usage of this money have also changed and it can be used for many other purposes. As a result, stile replacement is only one of the options the Parish Council is considering.

I have a priority list for stiles to replace with kissing gates and the one on Park Lane leading to Woodchester Valley Village is currently top as again it opens up a route. Other stiles are lower in the list for the following reasons.

- Squeeze stiles are generally easier – I accept the one on Water Lane is tricky because of the steps leading up to it but a gate would have the same steps.

- Stiles on the parish boundary, behind the Old Priory and across the field from Little Britain lead to further stiles over which we have no control.
- The remainder are on more difficult walking routes, leading to steep hills and rougher ground so people using the paths are considered to be ‘more able’ to cope.

I am often asked about stiles that are outside the parish such as the ones on the path leading from the wooden kissing gate behind the Old Priory. These are in King’s Stanley as are the ones on the other side of Water Lane leading down to Castle Cottage.

Another common question is ‘why kissing gates and not ordinary gates?’ The short answer is a kissing gate is always open and always closed! An ‘ordinary’ gate could be left open allowing livestock to escape unless it has a strong spring on it. Unfortunately, a strong spring can make a gate difficult to use if you need to hold it open.

The parish council does not have a ‘slush fund’ to pay for this and just to make it clear the only money we have comes from within the parish either from council tax that you pay or a levy on development. Should landowners pay to replace stiles with gates? There is no requirement for them to do so, it is all down to ‘goodwill’.

Barbara Warnes
Chair of Higways & Rights of Way Sub-committee
Woodchester Parish Council

The Ash Tree

“When the oak comes (into leaf) before the Ash, then summer will be but a splash

When the ash comes before the oak, then summer will be a soak”

So goes the saying about the Ash tree. Those of us who walk the Woodchester countryside will have noticed a problem with this, one of our best known and favourite trees – the tall and graceful Ash. Ash dieback, is a disease caused by a fungus which originated in Asia. It was first discovered in Europe about 30 years ago and was first recorded in the UK in 2012. Since then, the disease, spread by the spores of the fungus in the wind, has affected thousands of our native trees and because the ash tree has no natural defence against it, it is expected that 95 % of all ash trees in the UK will die during the next few years – this will have a devastating impact on the landscape. Many of us remember the effect that Dutch Elm disease had on our elms several decades ago, now we are in danger of losing our ash trees. Visit the Woodland Trust website to learn more about ash dieback and what we can do to save our ash trees.



Parkrun? Your New Years resolution!

**Resolve to get fitter in 2020?
Why not add Parkrun to your
regular exercise programme?**

It's a free, weekly, timed 5K walk, jog or run in your local park and it happens at 9am every Saturday morning. It's NOT a race, and it can be done at any speed and even with a dog (on a lead) or a baby in a buggy. Children are welcome too as long as they keep their responsible adult close at hand!

Locally we have a flat, grassy and occasionally muddy, but small and friendly Parkrun in Stonehouse, on Oldends Lane playing fields. There is also a tougher and hillier course in Stratford Park in Stroud. Further afield we have Parkrun in Quedgeley, Tetbury and Cirencester.

By joining Parkrun you can become part of a worldwide community of enthusiasts. Register online to receive your barcode and away you go. Your time will be emailed to

you shortly after the run finishes, and runners who compete 25, 50 or even 100 runs are eligible for a special T shirt! Not so keen on running but you are great at clapping, cheering or operating a stopwatch? Why not sign up to VOLUNTEER. At least you will feel good about getting out of bed on a Saturday morning, and you may bump into one of your Woodchester neighbours too.

**For more details and to register visit
parkrun.org.uk.**

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School

We welcomed our new Reception children who have all made a delightful start, settling well into life at school. The Year 6 children have enjoyed being 'buddies', looking after their new little friends and supporting them around school, and it has been fantastic to see such strong relationships flourish between our youngest and oldest children.

The School Council was appointed by the end of the first week of the autumn term and wasted no time getting started on their first project. They worked alongside staff from the NSPCC on their 'Speak Out, Stay Safe' campaign organising an assembly for children, a workshop for Y5 and Y6 and an information session for parents. The School Council wanted to promote the good work of the NSPCC in a fun way and organised a 'wear something green' day as well as a cake sale. The hall was packed with children and their families and we raised an enormous £222.38 for the charity. What a fantastic achievement! The School Council also took responsibility for promoting this year's shoebox appeal and we had a generous response from families. All shoeboxes, packed with Christmas presents for boys and girls abroad, were taken to church by Hawthorn Class and left in the 'Undercroft' at St Mary's, awaiting collection. The shoeboxes are now on their way to Eastern Europe and we hope that we have helped, even if in just a small way, to try and address some of the inequality that exists in our world today.

In addition to the assemblies organised by the School Council, we have also enjoyed other Collective Worship organised and presented by children. In November, the Nature Club presented an assembly to the whole school describing all the fun activities they had enjoyed taking part in as well as reminding us all about the need to protect our wildlife and natural environment. They were even able to share some footage of a badger visiting our Forest School area! Recently, Willow Class, shared their learning about World War 2 which included a very poignant drama about evacuees. Before half term, the school community gathered at St Mary's to give thanks and to support the Stroud District Foodbank Harvest appeal during our annual Harvest Service.

As we enter the season of Advent, we look forward to Christmas, a very special time in school. There is much to prepare and enjoy with the forthcoming Carol Service at church and the Infant Nativity at school as, together, we celebrate and share in God's message of love and peace at Christmas time.

Woodchester Endowed Church of England Primary School

MIDDAY SUPERVISOR POST

We are looking to appoint an enthusiastic midday supervisor to join the lunchtime team

The post will be term-time only and is a fixed term contract until 31.08.20. The role will be 12:00 – 1:20 Weds/Thurs/Friday each week.

Further details can be found on the home page of the school website.

www.woodchester.gloucs.sch.uk

Please do contact school if you have any questions or would like more information.



Shoeboxes awaiting transportation to Eastern Europe

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 final article for Woodchester.

Charles Frederick Boulton

Charles Frederick Boulton was born 4 October 1897 in Woodchester, the son of William Boulton, a sawyer, and his wife Emily Jane nee Wathan. He was baptised 2 January 1898 at St Mary's Church, Woodchester.

The family lived on Bospin Lane and in 1911, Charles was a 13 year old Printer (Lithograph) at a Pin Factory (Perkins and Marmont at Frogmarsh).

Charlie enlisted in the Royal Garrison Artillery as a Gunner on 11 December 1915 serving in both 156 and 289 Siege Battery. He served abroad for 140 days and was reported in the Casualty List of 13 July 1917. This date coincides with the introduction of

mustard gas bombardments at Ypres. The Germans fired 50,000 shells over the night of 12-13 July.

He was discharged from the Army on 15 March 1918 with a Silver War Badge but was in a poor state of health. In the Stroud Journal's report of Peace Day at Woodchester in July 1919, there is a reference to him. *'It is worthy of record that all discharged soldiers who won prizes handed them over to be sent to Charlie Boulton, a young discharged soldier who has been bedridden for many months owing to being 'gassed' in France'.*

Charlie died in January 1920, aged 22, and was buried in St Mary's Churchyard 10

January. The parish register records that he 'died of gas poisoning in the war'. That day the bell ringers rang a peal of 5040 Grandsire Doubles. We do not know whether the two events were connected but if they were, it is fitting that his memory will be honoured by the current bell ringers ringing a half muffled peal one hundred years later.

Mustard Gas

Mustard was adopted as a defensive agent which was suitable for the continuous poisoning of an area. Mustard gas, dichlorodiethyl sulphide, is in fact an oily liquid with a low boiling point, given the name mustard gas by the British owing to its odour of mustard or horseradish in its impure form. It became the most effective chemical agent used during WW1, not because of the numbers it killed but because of the temporary effects of skin blistering and severe conjunctivitis and its ability to render ground uninhabitable during the time it took to evaporate.

Barbara Warnes

The Ram

Most of us know that it is the intention of the owner to sell the 17th century Ram Inn on the open market. Many villagers are concerned that there will be a change of use with closure as a pub into residential use.

Last year, the Ram was given Asset of Community Value (ACV) status following an application by a group of Woodchester residents concerned about its future. The Ram has beautiful views from its outdoor seating area, has lots of space inside and out, and a spacious car park (an asset not found in many local Cotswold pubs.) With these attributes, it should be a flourishing, dynamic pub, and although it retains an excellent range of well priced beers on offer, it has not been providing food for about 18 months, and consequently customer footfall and the number of local groups who regularly hold meetings in the pub appears to have dwindled. The owners sought planning permission initially for three dwellings on the site of the lower car park in 2018, then reduced to two. The lower part of the car park was granted permission for two houses and associated parking in February 2019.

The great concern held by so many is that the Ram could be lost to the village as a pub. At an open meeting on November 14th organised by the Action Group, chaired by Shona Ward and attended by at least 65 people from Woodchester and around, it was explained that the ACV provides some protection from immediate sale with the community

having the option of making an offer, although in a worst case scenario, an offer from the community could be rejected and the owner could apply for a 'Change of Use' to a residential building on the grounds that as a pub it is not viable, although the pub has clearly only been run down in the past few years; history shows it as thriving in the past.

There was much discussion during the meeting on the reasons why the pub should be up for sale, its history, options possible, the sale price, the planning permission, the Ram's viability as a pub and what the next steps that could be taken to save closure should be. Jean Lawton explained that the two main possible steps are either the community buys the pub or a sympathetic purchaser is found.

At the end of the evening, Shona rounded off a positive meeting and asked that those present fill in the distributed form asking for volunteers to join the working group, even if they just wanted to be kept in the loop. Residents were reminded that Woodchester is a village with a recent history of the community coming together to protect assets, namely SWALT land and more recently, the Village Shop. With energy and determination they can work together again to save this village pub.



IT IS SURPRISING
WHAT TURNS
UP ON SELSLEY
COMMON SOME
DAYS. SO WHERE IS
THE HORSE?!



Parish Council News

Resurfacing of the 'Cycle Path' and Bridleway Proposal

Resurfacing work currently underway near Nailsworth has been funded by GCC, SDC and a grant from the European Regional Development Fund. The new surface is much-improved. By the time this goes to print, the section from Nailsworth to Frogmarsh should be complete. The contractors are doing their best to keep the route open during the resurfacing work, but it is proving difficult at times. We have also received the great news that funding had now been secured to resurface the section from Selsley Road to Dudbridge which is due to be carried out by mid-December, providing a much smoother surface right from Nailsworth through to Dudbridge.

A public meeting was held on the 29th October to provide an opportunity for residents to understanding the process for a Bridleway Creation Order, to raise support or concern for the proposed change and ask questions.

The Parish Council had previously raised a number of concerns which came partly as a result of the 'cycle path' being considered an important part of the transport network in the village, and as such is widely used as a route to and from places, for commuting, to access the schools, Village Shop etc. and is far from being simply a recreational path.

Alan Bently, Principal Rights of Way Officer at Gloucestershire County Council gave some background to this proposal. GCC were approached approximately ten years ago by representatives of the horse-riding society to seek permission to use the path. More recently GCC have discussed designating this permissive route, which would create more protection for users as the route would be subject to a legal process should GCC decide to sell off parts of the route for development. Designation would also mean that GCC would be under a legal obligation to maintain the route.

The process for a Bridleway Creation Order is twenty eight days public consultation. If there are objections raised by members of the public which cannot be resolved by GCC, the process would then be taken to the Secretary of State. This then involves substantial costs to GCC, the process being likely to take several months. Following issues raised by the Parish Council, the process has been put on hold whilst these concerns are considered.

The issue of the very real risk to horses on roads was raised. Horse riding groups, particularly the Mid Cotswold Tracks and Trails group are actively campaigning for a better bridleway network. This is part of a national campaign to provide safe access to the countryside and is backed by the British Horse Society.

Concerns raised at the meeting related to, amongst other things, the narrow width in places and the condition of the bridge south of Pauls Rise. Mr. Bently confirmed that an engineer had been out to assess the bridge and that repairs would be carried out as necessary. Suggestions were made which included the order only applying to certain stretches where width was not an issue and looking into other options such as designation as a cycle path.

Minutes of the meeting which include much more detail can be found at: <https://www.woodchesterparish.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Draft-Minutes-HROW-29th-October-2019.pdf>

Winter Weather

We have 26 grit bins strategically located around the Parish which have recently been topped up by Gloucestershire Highways. It would be helpful if residents could sprinkle a small quantity of grit from these bins on the public roads and pavements, especially on bends and steep sections. Please remember that the grit is provided for the whole community and should not be used on privately owned paths and driveways! In the event of heavy snow, we have arranged for Peter Brown to bring his digger from the woodyard with the aim of keeping routes to schools and the Village Shop open.

If you notice that a grit bin is in need of topping up, please contact the clerk, Ann Bijkerk on 01453 873456 or clerk@woodchesterparish.org.uk who will in turn contact Gloucestershire Highways.

Parish Council Meetings

The dates for Parish Council meetings in 2020 are as follows: as January 9th, March 5th, June 4th, July 2nd, September 3rd and November 5th at 7pm in the Village Hall. There will also be a Parish Council meeting on the 14th May at 6pm in the Village Hall, followed by the Annual Parish Meeting at 7pm. Residents are very welcome to attend.

The Parish Council would like to wish you all a happy and peaceful Christmas.



Girlguiding Woodchester

Many of you may have been aware that Girlguiding launched a new programme, to run across every age group of Girlguiding, at the end of the summer term.

Woodchester Brownies and Guides have decided to run the old programme and the new programme simultaneously for a couple of terms, in order to allow older girls to complete badges and awards under the old programme but also to ensure younger girls start working on the new programme in order to ensure they receive the full benefit of the new programme. The end of term plans include the usual Christmas party.

Brownies and Guides have been on two trips recently, one to Cattle Country at Berkeley and one to the Cotswold Wildlife Park at Burford.

As usual we took part in the Remembrance parade and service in Nailsworth. Before we did this however, we had to arrange to have our new unit colours (flags) blessed. We were very fortunate to have Rev Peter Francis attend one of our Brownie meetings at which he retired the unit colours for all the Brownies and Guides in Nailsworth District (which includes Woodchester) and dedicated all the new colours for all the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides and Rangers.

At Nailsworth Noel the District will be running a treasure map. 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
www.ggwoodchester.wordpress.com

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Christmas
and happy
new year



What's on in Woodchester

Dates for your diary

Sunday 15th December

11.00 a.m. Christingle Service at St. Mary's Church

Monday 23rd December

Carol Singing in the village. Starting at Frogmarsh 6.30 p.m.
The Ram 6.50 p.m. and The Royal Oak 7.00p.m

Christmas Eve

3.00 p.m. Crib Service for children at St. Mary's Church

Christmas Eve

6.30 p.m. Carol Service at St. Mary's Church

Christmas Day

10.00 a.m. Christmas Day Praise at St. Mary's Church

Christmas Day

11.00 a.m. Christmas Service at the Church of the Annunciation

New Year's Day

11.00 to 4.00 p.m. Woodchester Mansion open for hot drinks and cake in front of a roaring fire in the drawing room

Sunday 19th January

at 4p.m. Wassail at the Orchard Pastures
(See article in the Word)

Useful Village Contacts

PCSO: Steven Phillipson

T: 101 or visit www.gloucestershire.police.uk

Neighbourhood Warden: Chris James,

T: 01453 754512, 07753 725185 E: chris.james@stroud.gov.uk

District Councillor: Philip McAsey,

T: 01453 873329 E: Cllr.philip.mcasy@stroud.gov.uk

County Councillor: Steve Robinson,

T: 01453 834270 E: steve.robinson@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Village Hall: Mrs. Kath Gay,

T: 01453 873348 E: wvh888@btinternet.com

Parish Council: Ann Bijkerk,

T: 01453 873456 E: woodchesterparish@gmail.com

Gloucestershire Highways

www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/transport/

T: 08000 514514 E: gchighways@amey.co.uk

Woodchester Post Office and Village Shop: T: 01453 872581

St Mary's Church: Rev Peter Francis, T: 01453 759680

Church of the Annunciation: T: 01453 832120

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

Wednesday

Calligraphy: 10.00 – 16.00, Fortnightly

(Josie Brown, T: 01452 387768)

Creative Sewing: 10.00 – 17.00, Monthly

(Catherine Kingzett)

FMC Dance Academy: 17.00 – 19.45, Subject to Sewing

(Fay Cottrell, T: 07931 253116)

Ballet: 20.15 – 21.15

(Sophie Makosch, T: 07887 671956)

Thursday

Senior Health & Fitness: 10.00 – 12.00

(Dorothy Turner, T: 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, T: 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,

T: 01453 873348 or wvh888@btinternet.com.

Letters, articles and items for publication should be sent to the editor, Rod Harris, at 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.

Copy deadline for next issue: 30th March 2020