

The WOODCHESTER Word

Issue 53 -Christmas 2015



The Woodchester Website –

www.woodchesterparish.org.uk

Villagers are reminded to visit the Woodchester Parish website regularly to keep up to date with events and happenings taking place in the village.

Copies of past editions of the Woodchester Word are on the village website and can be accessed on woodchesterparish.org.uk

Heard in school nativity play :

Joseph (knocking on the inn door): Is there any room in the inn for Mary and me?

Innkeeper (*who was annoyed that he didn't get the part of Joseph*) pulling Mary through the inn door "Not for you but Mary can come in!"

Heard in the pub.....

A dozen red roses will always produce those magic words "What have you been doing wrong?!"

"There's nothing more wonderful than getting a Valentine on Valentine's Day. Even if it is only from your husband"

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.

Articles, items for publication and letters to the editor should be forwarded to Rod Harris, tel: 872317 or 0777 565 2379, or by email (preferred) rod.harris@fsmail.net

Deadline for the next edition is March 1st 2016.

Dates for your Diary

Winter in Woodchester

St. Mary's Church, North Woodchester : See notice boards or web site for times of services.

Church of the Annunciation : See notice board for details of Christmas Services

Messy Church: Wednesdays, monthly, at 3.15 p.m. in the church (details from Liz Hale 765422) Next Messy Church

Lunch-with-friends at St. Mary's Church on third Friday of the month (usually) at 12 noon. Liz on 872287 or Christina on 873481 or Liz 872287 for details. Next dates : Christmas lunch Friday December 11th at 12.00 in the church. (The boiler will have been repaired by this date!!)

Saturday Coffee Mornings - first Saturday in each month, in the Undercroft Room, entrance near main gate. 10.30 a.m. All welcome.

Christmas Carols December 21st.
More details on page 10

Historical Society : Next meeting March 1st "Children in Employment in Gloucestershire." 7.30 p.m. in the church undercroft.

Village Hall

Monday

1400-1600 Circle Dancing (alternate weeks 07814 011980)

17.45 - 19.00 Pilates 07773 788608

1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

Tuesday

1000-1200 Art Group (01453 873689)

1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

Wednesday

1000-1600 Calligraphy- alternate weeks (01452 387768)

1900-2000 Nia Dance (01453 836378)

Thursday

1000-1200 Healthy Lifestyles (01285 885766)

1830-2130 Parish Council (1st in alternate months)

1930-2130 Women's Institute (3rd in month, 873658)

1930-2130 Morris Dancing (2nd, 4th, 5th, 731752)

Friday

1000-1200 Art Class U3A (01453 872044)

1915-2245 Table Tennis Club (Sept-March, 766116)

For all bookings, including weekend bookings, please contact Mrs Kath Gay on 01453 873348.

Views expressed in this paper are those of the editor and not necessarily those of Woodchester Parish Council. 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.

Festive Thoughts

Advent

Advent this year begins on Sunday November 29th, four weeks before Christmas Day. You will be forgiven for associating Advent with cheap chocolate but for Christians, Advent is the time of expectant waiting and preparation, when Christians prepare for the celebration of Jesus' birth. In past times, Advent was a fast that began in mid-November. Many churches have Advent Wreaths with four White candles around a central one (usually red.) Each Sunday, one candle is lit and a passage from the Bible, linked with the coming of Christ, is read. The central candle is not lit until Christmas Day. Advent Sunday is also the beginning of the Christian liturgical year. No-one knows when the season of Advent was first celebrated but it was probably back in the very early days of Christianity. As far as I know, there are no local traditions associated with Advent in Woodchester but in some towns especially in the north, two dolls dressed as Mary and Jesus were taken from house to house in the village by a poor woman and a half penny was given to her. Bad luck would fall upon the homes where no gift was given. Perhaps the Editor will need to do this in our village to ensure the Woodchester Word has enough income to print the Spring Edition!!



The Winter Solstice

The winter solstice is the day in the northern hemisphere when the sun is directly over the southern equinox and is a day to celebrate – it marks the day when we have the shortest number of daylight hours and the sun is at its lowest point in the sky but also after the winter solstice we get more light as the days gradually get lighter. This year the turning point is Tuesday December 22nd.

Also known as mid-winter day and Yule, in past years the winter solstice marked the time when cattle were slaughtered because there wouldn't be enough fodder to feed them during the winter months and much of the wine and beer made in the summer months had finally fermented and was ready for drinking. So, mid-winter day was the last celebration of the year before deep winter began. The following months of January and February were often times of hardship and near - starvation for the poorer country villagers. Luckily, with modern farming methods and global supplies of food, we don't have this problem today.

Holly

We festoon our homes with decorations and send cards, so often depicting seasonal flora and fauna. Holly is probably top of the list. Why? Not really a Victorian invention, Christmas holly has a much older multi-rooted history. In Celtic mythology, King Holly, a jack-in-the-green figure, ruled the land during the dark, winter days. Although holly was often planted in hedges to stop cattle from roaming beyond the field, it was also grown near to homes to protect against evil forces. However, from medieval times, Christian symbolism took over these pagan customs and gave us Christ's crown of thorns – the red berries representing his droplets of blood at his crucifixion. The evergreen holly, like the fir, was regarded as rather magical when so many other deciduous plants died during the winter months and was given pride of place in houses during the dark winter days. Holly berries of course are toxic and poisonous to humans but birds relish them and provide a valuable source of winter food at this time of the year when other food sources are less easy to find.



*The editor and staff
wish everyone in
Woodchester a*

*Merry
Christmas*

*and a very happy new
year*

All around us - our Woodchester Wildlife

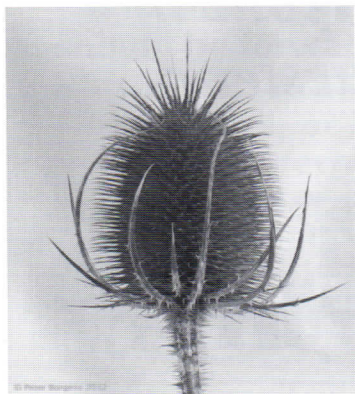
Rude Awakening

Winter is a dangerous time for our garden wildlife. The food for which they depend on for energy is in shortest supply and extreme weather puts them physically at risk. Luckily, most wild creatures hibernate over winter, rather than wasting energy searching for food. Hibernation is their winter survival strategy. Once temperatures fall in mid-autumn and day lengths shorten, they need a safe hiding place. Their body temperature drops and heart and breathing rates slow down, conserving energy and reducing the need for food.

But what if hibernation fails? On warm days, wild creatures may wake early or be disturbed by our gardening activities. This early rousing wastes precious energy, and if they can't find food and warmth or another shelter, they will die. So, keep a good lookout in your garden and while you are out in the countryside at this time of the year. If you disturb a hedgehog, leave out cat or dog food and water until it no longer takes the food. If you dig up or disturb a frog or toad, cover it up again with, for example, a pile of leaves or if this is not possible, place it on your compost heap

The teasel

The first frosts of the year are like a broadsword cutting down vulnerable plants that have survived the autumn. The teasel, however, stands fast – its egg shaped spikey heads and long, sturdy stalks still offer tasty treats to passing flocks of goldfinches. The plant takes its name (as all Woodchester people should know because of our woollen mill history in our Stroud valleys!) from the pre-19th century use of its spiny heads for teasing out the fibres of wool prior to spinning. Of course, in South Woodchester we have one of the most famous of buildings linked with the woollen industry here in the valley, the round Teasel Tower, now a homely and cosy residence, where the teasels were dried before being used in mills such as at Frogmarsh Mill nearby.



A teasel and a teasel carder from the 18th century

Starlings

Once a more than common garden bird, the population of starlings has dropped drastically since the mid-60s and their decline is continuing, although experts are unsure why. Recognised by their dramatic swirling and swooping during dusk, making astonishing patterns in the late afternoon sky when thousands are going to roost, starlings are also known for their noisy chattering, when they mimic other bird calls, car alarms and even chain saws! Starlings winter together at this time of the year in huge flocks but in spring will form smaller colonies, nesting in holes in trees, buildings and cliffs. They usually only lay four or five eggs, and the birds fledge when about three weeks old. Starlings usually live for about five years but the oldest UK born starling was 17! The starlings' strong, straight beak enables it to probe grassland for invertebrates, which are essential in the summer to feed their young. In autumn and winter their diet focuses on fruit, seeds and cereal grains. Look out for starlings in your garden where they will come to feed during the cold winter days of December, January and February.



A beautiful visitor – the Waxwing

Two years ago, the UK (especially the north and east) was host to an invasion of a bird rarely seen in great numbers here – this was the waxwing. They had been forced from their natural winter home in Scandinavia and Siberia by severe weather and lack of food. Flocks of these peach-coloured birds descended on cities, towns and parks, causing great interest. They tucked in to berries on hawthorn, rowans and cherry trees and while they were tucking in their short trills could be heard. No-one knows whether waxwings will appear this winter, but look out for them. They are a very special visitor!



WOODCHESTER COUNTRYSIDE

Wolves, beavers, lynx, wild cats, pine martens, wild boars.....

The discovery of a deer that had been eaten by wildlife in Woodchester some years ago kicked off a huge interest in the possibility that a "Big Cat" lived somewhere in our countryside, and was attacking deer for food. Many of you will remember the meeting held at the school when the case for the remains of the deer having been attacked by a big cat were discussed. There were opposing views - some people were adamant that a big cat was the cause of the deer's demise and others were sceptical. The editor of this magazine walks his dogs twice each day during daylight hours and at night time, along many footpaths, through woods and across many fields and has never seen any evidence of a big cat, so he is one of the sceptics. In fact, this editor was the first person to see the deer on the path in Boundary Court, the National Trust owned fields between North and South Woodchester, so the canine DNA of Kiri would have been on the deer as well as that of foxes and other wildlife!

However, there is a big debate going on at the moment about the rewilding of some parts of the UK countryside. Already, wild boar have been introduced (on purpose or by accident) into the Forest of Dean and these animals have been the subject of much discussion, great to watch in the wild but not good when they destroy your carefully manicured garden! Many conservationists and campaigners have been looking at the feasibility of reintroducing wolves and lynx, both extinct for many centuries in this country, in Scotland. The advantage, say the campaigners, is that the ecosystem is incomplete without them. Stephen Potter, director of the Wildlife Trusts in England said "Britain is a small island with a lot of people and pressure on land use. But lynx, wolf, pine marten, elk, beavers, wild boar, wild cattle, old breed ponies and white tailed eagles are all worthy of consideration." Many of these species died out or were driven out from most areas of the

country because their habitats were destroyed or their presence was seen as a threat. Already beavers have been introduced in a number of places in the UK and farmers, landowners and conservationists are now discussing the advantages and disadvantages of beaver living in our water courses. Lynx would apparently help farmers by keeping deer population down.

What is clear though is that any reintroduction of animals now



extinct must be done with the knowledge and co-operation of farmers and landowners, and with caution, and to respect their financial interests. Now, has anyone seen that cat.....?!



The wild lynx is not a large cat, usually no bigger than 70cms (28 inches) tall to its shoulders and 100 cms (30 inches) long.

WOODCHESTER

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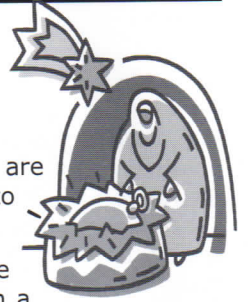


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OUR CHURCHES

St Mary's – Your local Anglican Church



Dear Neighbours

I'm sure you don't need reminding, but Christmas is just around the corner. Children young and old are getting excited, 'Dear Father Christmas' letters are being written and parents everywhere are trying to find the Christmas lights.

Top of St Mary's Christmas list was a new boiler and we are delighted to report that it looks like the new system will be installed, up and running in time for the Christmas festivities to start. It's been a tricky and expensive business sourcing boilers for a building the size of St Mary's and making sure they will integrate with current and future central heating needs – but we have been overwhelmed by your generosity. We needed thousands of pounds and we're within a whisker of collecting the whole amount. THANK YOU – We couldn't have done it without you. Thank you also, particularly, to Churchwarden Alex Stuart and friends who have worked so hard to get the replacement sorted out!!

Another major recent success was the Messy Church Light party – St Mary's alternative to Halloween – which catered for nearly 90 children and 70 adults at the end of October. It was an amazing event with happiness overflowing all around the church and more glitter, paint, pumpkins, hot dogs, ducking apples, doughnuts and cakes than you could shake a stick at. An enormous thank you is due to Liz Hale who co-ordinated the whole thing – but to everyone who contributed in any way with food, craft tables, organising games, or just being there and enjoying yourselves – THANK YOU.

Looking forward, we've got some very special Christmas activities planned – starting with the Christmas **Lunch-with-Friends** at 12.45 in the church on Friday 11th Dec (**contact 872287 or 873481** to reserve your place), the **Christingle service** at 11.00am on Dec 20th and our three main Christmas services:

- **Crib Service** for families with small children at 3.00 on Christmas eve (everyone gets to dress-up),
- the candle-lit **Christmas Eve Carol service** at 6.30 and
- our **Christmas Praise and Family Communion** service at 10.00 on Christmas morning.

Whoever you are and whatever you're going through, it's our hope that you'll find something of the real peace and joy of Christmas at one or more of these services.

Happy Christmas from all at St Mary's

Some of St Mary's regular activities:

- **Lunch with Friends.** All welcome – please join us. See contact details above
- **The 'Woodchester Worms' book club:** Ring Shelagh Goldie on 07941 836477.
- **Messy Church:** – For kids (to year 6) and their carers. Held in church from 3.20 to 5 pm one Wed each month. next dates: Jan 20th, Feb 24th and March 16th.
- **Monday Mums** – a baby-friendly Bible study group that meets for lunch on Mondays. Contact Sue on: 07866 487911
- **Saturday coffee mornings** – 10.30 am in the church Undercroft. Next dates are: Jan 9th, Feb 6th, March 5th.
- **Laser Club** – fun and food for all kids in school years 6-8. Meets second Sunday evening of each month, alternating with Brimscombe. Contact: Nick on 791056 for more details.
- **Christian 'Apologetics'** - Next topic: probably 'God, evil and suffering' starting in Jan. Each module: 1 evening per week for 3 weeks. Contact Rev. Peter Francis

Contact information for St Mary's

If you'd like to get in touch with us to find out more, or to ask for prayer for yourself or someone you care for, please use any of the contact details below or approach one of us over coffee after the 11 am Sunday service.

Website: www.stmaryswoodchester.org.uk

Rev Peter Francis: 01453 882475,
peter@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk
Reader: Richard Spencer: 01453 872686,
richard@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk

Church administrator
Mrs Cathy Adams: 07904 038 132
administrator@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk

Churchwardens:
Alex Stuart: 01453 762702,
alex@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk
Sue Pouncey 01453 756063,
sue@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk

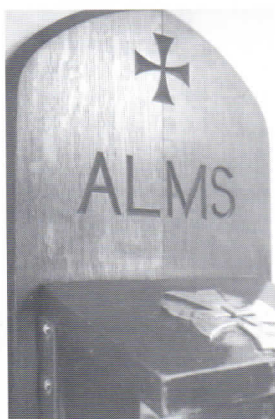
CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS



Wouldn't it be wonderful if Father Christmas could come to Woodchester by steam train, but the line from Stonehouse to Nailsworth was closed and ripped up in the 1960s, and anyway, the cyclists on the cycle path now might not agree. But many say they have seen the ghost train travelling in the mist between North and South Woodchester at midnight on Christmas Eve!!

Boxing Day - why is it called Boxing Day?

Boxing Day in the UK takes place on December 26th and is only celebrated in a few countries. It was started in the UK about 800 years ago, during the Middle Ages. It was the day when the alms box, collection boxes for the poor often kept in churches, were traditionally opened so that the contents could be distributed to poor people. Some churches still open these boxes on Boxing Day.



It was also traditional that servants were given the day off to celebrate Christmas with their families on Boxing Day. Before World War II, it was common for working people (such as milkmen and butchers) to travel round their delivery places and collect their Christmas box or tip. This tradition has now mostly stopped and any Christmas tips, given to people such as postal workers and newspaper delivery children, are normally given before Christmas.

Boxing Day for many of us is the day when we sit back to relax after the hectic activity of pre-Christmas weeks and of Christmas Day itself, or to go to see our relatives. It is also the traditional day that Pantomimes performances began, and there is something special about a family trip to the panto on Boxing Day. Also, of course, the sales start and many sports resume on Boxing Day.

The 26th December is also St. Stephen's Day. Just to confuse things, there are two St. Stephens in history, but the St. Stephen remembered on boxing Day was a very early follower of Jesus. He was the first of Jesus' supporters to die for his faith, thus becoming the first Christian Martyr. He was stoned to death by the Jews who didn't believe in Jesus.

Mince Pies

Mince Pies, like Christmas Puddings, were originally filled with meat, such as lamb, rather than a dried fruit mix as they are today. They were also first made in an oval shape to represent the manger that Jesus slept in as a baby, with the top representing his swaddling clothes.

During the Stuart and Georgian times in Gloucestershire, mince pies were a status symbol at Christmas! Very rich people liked to show off at their Christmas parties by having pies made in different shapes (like stars, crescents, hearts, tears, & flowers); the fancy shaped pies could often fit together a bit like a jigsaw! They also looked like the 'knot gardens' that were popular during those periods. Having pies like this meant you were rich and could afford to employ the best, and most expensive, pastry cooks!

Now they are normally made in a round shape and are eaten hot or cold. I like mine hot with Cornish clotted cream!

A custom from the middle ages says that if you eat a mince pie on every day from Christmas to Twelfth Night (6th January) you will have happiness for the next 12 months!

On Christmas Eve, our family always leaves out a mince pie with a glass of brandy or Scottish malt whisky for Father Christmas, and a carrot for the reindeer. Well, the reindeer work hard and so does Father Christmas and they both deserve a treat! And it's never there in the morning, so it must have been Father Christmas who visited that room that night!

LOCAL NEWS

Woodchester Village Shop and Post Office

Woodchester Village Shop and Post Office Ltd has now been trading for a year as a Community run enterprise. It has been a very successful year for the shop run by volunteers and supported by many and enabling the village to keep a much needed resource whilst also generating a profit. At their recent AGM it was agreed that they would like to support several local organisations through donations – St Mary's Heating Fund £1000, Food Bank Stroud £300, Woodchester Endowed School £300 and St Dominic's School £300. Many Thanks for your continued support in using the shop which has enabled us to support other organisations.

Church of the Annunciation :

The Travelling Crib

The Travelling Crib will once more be on the move.

The crib will be hosted by members of our parish and school community. If you would like to take part in this wonderful prelude to Christmas there is a list of dates to sign in the porch. Once the dates have been filled all hosts will be contacted, preferably by email (or letter) explaining what they need to do.

Please support this delightful tradition and help prepare yourself for Christmas.

Please contact saraharveycraig@hotmail.com if you would like to host the crib and Christmas figures and animals, for a day during advent.

WOODCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The next meeting will be on Tuesday 1 March at 7:30pm in the Undercroft of St Mary's Church, North Woodchester. John Loosley will be speaking on 'Childhood Employment in Gloucestershire'. Admission is £2 for members, £3 for non members. All Welcome. Members please note - Membership fees of £2 are due at this meeting.

In 2016, Woodchester Historical Society will be 20 years old. To celebrate our birthday, we are trying to collect old photographs/postcards of Woodchester and Rooksmoor with a view to having an exhibition at the end of the year. We don't want to keep your pictures - we would just like to scan them and store the electronic versions for future generations. If you have any suitable material, please contact Barbara Warnes Tel 872181 or preferably email barbara.warnes1@gmail.com.

Meetings and visits 2016

Tuesday March 1st 7.30pm

John Loosley
Childhood employment in Gloucestershire

Tuesday June 7th 2.30 pm

Guided tour of Woodchester Mansion. Lasts approx. 90 minutes.
Meet in the National Trust car park at 2.15 to catch the shuttle bus.
Or walk down the rough track and meet at the Mansion at 2.25pm
Speak to Jill or Katharine if you need a lift.

The tea room in the servants hall will be open should you wish to purchase lunch before the visit, or light refreshments afterwards. Toilets available.

WARNING. It can be very cold in the Mansion, even in Summer. Dress warmly!
Sturdy shoes essential too as some of the floors can be rough.

Cost £6.50

Tuesday 5th July 7.30pm

Those were the days, the Fighting 40's!
A return visit from Gillian Morss and Virginia Adsett with their fascinating collection of clothing and household items.

Tuesday September 13th 7.30pm

Old Paths of Gloucestershire. An illustrated talk.
Alan Pilbeam..

Tuesday November 1st

More than just cloth! A look at Stroud's other industries.
Ray Wilson

Followed by **Annual General Meeting** and special refreshments!

This will be the 20th Anniversary of the first Woodchester Historical Society meeting. Were you there?

All meetings are held in the **Undercroft at St Marys Church** unless otherwise stated.
Refreshments are served.

All welcome. Members £2.00 non members £3.00

For further details contact Katharine McNealey, Secretary Tel 01453 873814

CHRISTMAS IN WOODCHESTER

WOODCHESTER CAROLS

with the **Nailsworth Silver Band**

Monday 21st DECEMBER 2015

6.30pm **FROGMARSH**, by the new notice board

6.50pm **OUTSIDE TOWER HOUSE/THE RAM**

7.00pm **OUTSIDE THE ROYAL OAK**

7.15pm On the **CHURCH GREEN**

or in **THE CHURCH** (If wet!)

CAROLS, MINCE PIES AND MULLED WINE/JUICE

(There will be a voluntary collection to off-set costs)

COME AND JOIN US!

(For any other information phone : 873254)



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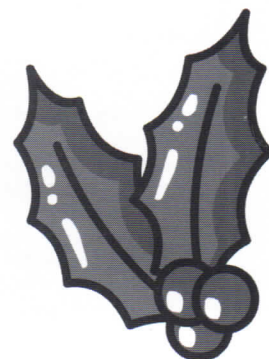


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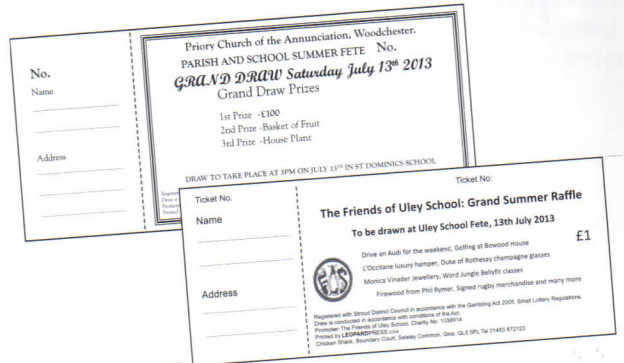
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Time to get moving



The dog days of summer might be a little busier this year...

In recent weeks we've seen many more buyers coming to the market, a significant increase in viewings and a 17% uplift in sales agreed.

Now's the time to speak to us about selling your home and making hay while the sun shines.

To find out how we can help you call 01453 568148 or visit

www.hamptons.co.uk/Sell

Figures from June 2015



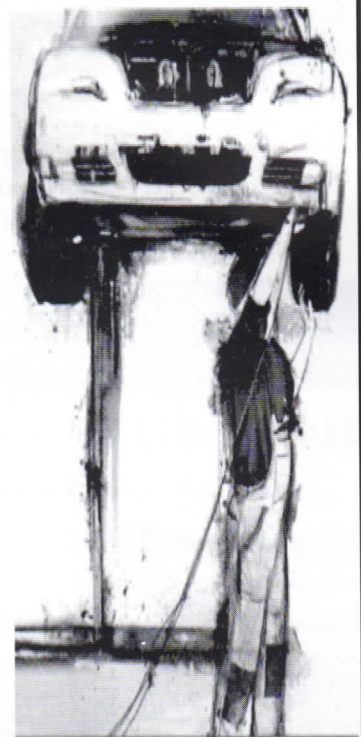
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OUR SCHOOLS

Woodchester Endowed School



It seems quite apt that we have been learning about the Christian Value of Peace, at Woodchester Endowed Primary School. We have reflected upon the importance of Peace in the past as well as in current affairs. St Mary's rang their church bells in remembrance of soldiers from Woodchester who lost their lives in World War 1 and their chimes resonated with our school community. We are always proud of how thoughtfully our children consider the values which guide us.

We have also been learning about the world around us. Our "World in Union" week involved learning about the Rugby World Cup and the countries involved. Children had a nation to learn about and the week culminated in them creating and performing their very own haka. It is only a shame that England didn't perform as well as they did!

Our curriculum has been further enriched by recent trips out of school. Our Key Stage 2 classes all went to visit the Museum in the Park, to learn about our local heritage. All of their learning

is soon to be displayed in a similar way for parents to enjoy. Class Beech visited Waitrose (nothing but the finest!) where they bought ingredients for sandwiches, which they made subsequently. Happily,

they shared a small sample of their culinary delights with their Headteacher!

We are now getting prepared for Christmas, with Nativity on the horizon. The joyous sound of our youngest children's voices are now echoing through the halls as I write this; it sounds like a treat is in store for us all...



St. Dominic's Catholic Primary School

The Elves built a workshop in class 1

The early year's class were so excited when they arrived at school on 1st December as the whole class had turned into a Christmas scene. Mrs Jones our EYFS teacher claims that this was built by the elves overnight!

Honey for Money - The Ghana Project. As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas the children are getting involved fully in all the preparations whilst still focussing on their daily tasks. At St Dominic's we have our Christmas Bazaar and the children have their own 'Made in St Dominic's' stall. This year we have made links with a school in Ghana and all the proceeds from our honey sales will go to this project which is to benefit the education of two children in Ghana. The link has been made through Mr Lead from Stroud Beekeepers and the children are very excited to be part of this.

Christmas Barquettes

The children have also been very inventive with making Christmas 'barquettes'. They were all given a plastic take away box and have filled this with sweets and decorated ready for their own Christmas tombola. There has been a prize for the best decorated ones in each class. The photograph shows how proud they all are with their inventions.

Christmas Art Work

Class 4 have completed some beautiful art work retelling the Christmas story. This is on display in the school hall and will be displayed in the church of The Annunciation during the school holidays.

WANTED : AFTERNOON CHILDMINDER'S ASSISTANT

Long established village childminder needs a local person to help with school runs & play with gorgeous children. 2.45-5.15 approx 2-3 afternoons but this is flexible. Term time only with option of more work if wanted. Email Jude on ju-ju1969@hotmail.co.uk for more info and hourly rate.



VILLAGE MATTERS

Your Village Needs You!

You hopefully recall that in the last Edition of the Woodchester Word, we paid tribute to Bob Ludlow (mistakenly called Bob Lusty*) and Joyce Adamson who were wishing to stand down from being Chairman and Secretary of the Village Hall after some 26 years. During that time they have been ably assisted by Kath Gay, and others at times, to bring the Hall up to the incredibly high standard it is today; and providing the village with a hall that is not only in good repair but is also financially secure.

However our pleas for replacements have sadly largely fallen on deaf ears and we are still in need of two or three people to become trustees of the Hall and help with the overall management and responsibility in the future, and ensure that we keep the future of the Hall secure and as such a useful asset to the Village. This need not be an onerous task as many of the duties can be split between the management team and there would not need to be more than four meetings a year.

You may not realise it, but the Hall is home to a multitude of clubs, societies and classes. The Woodchester Table Tennis Team is, if not **the best**, certainly one of the best in the County. There are currently classes for calligraphy, art, sewing, Pilates, yoga, morris-dancing, senior health and fitness, and more! It is available for hire for meetings e.g. the Parish Council, church events, social gatherings like the WI and private parties too! If you are interested in any of these activities, do check out the notice boards and village web site: <http://woodchesterparish.org.uk>

If you are able to help by becoming a trustee please, contact Malcolm Swait on 873254 or Kath Gay on 873348.

**Editor's typing error for which I have apologised to Bob.*

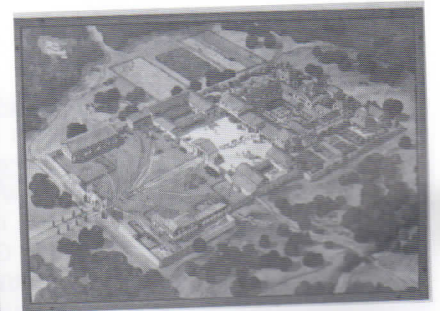
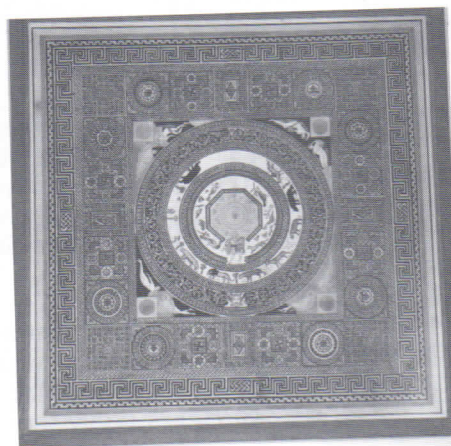
Bob and Joyce

Bob Ludlow and Joyce Adamson have worked as a partnership in caring for the Village Hall for 26 years. There is no question that we would not have such a wonderful village hall facility without their hard work and efforts to keep the hall in tiptop condition. It was Bob who would make sure the hall was clean, arrange for repairs and regular maintenance, ensure that the programme of painting, window cleaning, external repairs and improvements were all carried out on time and to the highest standard.

The Trustees Board, that oversees the running of the hall, is a group of villagers who have been appointed over the years because of their links with the hall as users or as members of a village organisation such as the Parish Council. It is the trustees who now have taken over from Bob and are coming to realise how much Bob has done while he was chairman.



Woodchester Village Hall on a morning when it was not in use. Bob's splendid chairmanship has ensured that the hall has been kept pristine.



Two displays in the hall exemplify the village's historic origins. Here is the picture of the replica Roman Pavement and a depiction of how the Roman Villa probably appeared in the 2nd century.

We are very grateful to Leopard Press who have sponsored the extra cost of coloured printing for this festive Christmas edition. Thank you Mike and co. It has made a huge difference in the Woodchester Word's appearance.

WOODCHESTER ACTIVITIES

Girlguiding Woodchester



Brownies and Guides from Woodchester took part in the Nailsworth Remembrance Sunday parade and Church service. Two new helpers have joined the Leadership team at Brownies: one is a former Guide, now a Young Leader, who the Brownies have voted to call Humming Bird, and the other is a Duke of Edinburgh Award service volunteer who the Brownies have decided to call Squirrel.

A Brownie Promise ceremony has taken place with another one planned in the next couple of weeks and two girls have been awarded their hostess badge. Girls have nearly finished their seasons badge which has involved a range of activities ranging from making toffee apples to planning a summer holiday to make bird seed pudding. We have also found time to play lots of games and practice our singing.

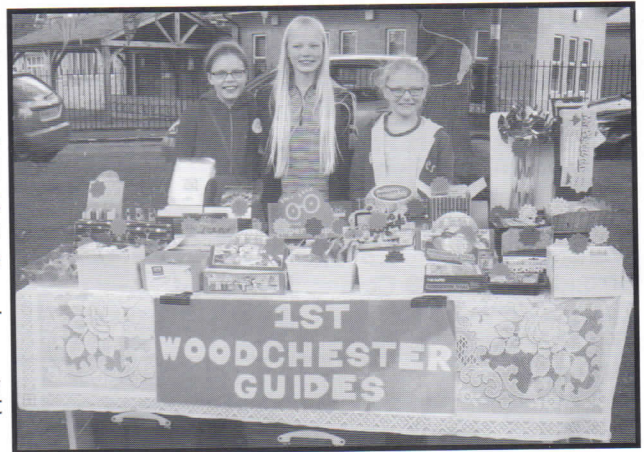
A couple of Woodchester Brownies are looking forward to

joining Brownies and Rainbows from Mid-Glos Division for a Christmas craft day later this month.

The Guides meanwhile have been busy working on their "Top Job" challenge. One of the main clauses they have had to complete, as Patrols, was to plan, organise and run an entire Guide meeting for the other Guides. One Patrol organised a tasting evening which the other girls really appreciated. The other Patrol decided to run a disco, to which they also invited the Brownies to attend. This was enjoyed by all; except possibly by the Dads who were persuaded to get involved with the clearing up! The Guides have also enjoyed a campfire themed evening.

The term will end with our traditional Christmas party for Brownies and Guides together.

Anyone interested in joining Girlguiding, either as a Brownie, Guide or Leader, please visit www.girlguiding.org.uk or contact Jackie on 01453 821258.



Woodchester Park and Mansion Car Park Project 2015/16

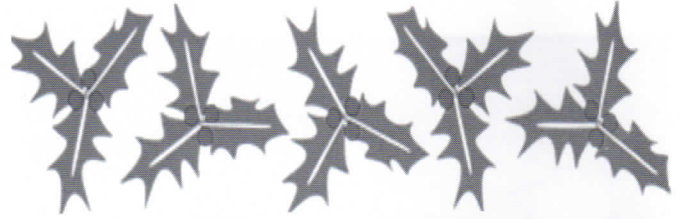
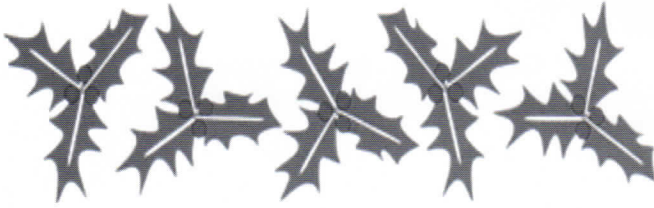
This winter the National Trust is going to be embarking on a car park project at Woodchester Park. The first stage of work will involve installing drainage channels in the main car park which will run to the drainage system at the bottom of the car park. This will reduce the amount of water damage on the main surface. The second phase is to remove the current drainage channels on the track going down to the car park and install new drainage channels. This will improve the track surface as the new channels will be removing the water away from the track more efficiently. The next phase is to re-surface the steep section of the track with a new, finer stone which will compact very tightly, resulting in a much smoother and more-even surface.

As a result of the project going on, the car park will be partially closed from Monday 7th December until Tuesday 22nd December. The car park will be fully open during the Christmas period.

From Monday 4th January until Friday 5th February the whole car park will be closed whilst work on the track down to the car park is carried out. During this time the overflow car park at the entrance close to the road will be available and open to park.

We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause but look forward to you seeing the new improved car park and surface.

PARISH COUNCIL NEWS



Stroud Volunteer and Community Action

This organisation uses both minibuses and volunteer car drivers for a variety of needs of the people of the Stroud and Dursley area.

Some of the needs they presently provide cover such things as doctors, shopping, day centres, and group days out most of which make the use of public transport difficult.

They also have wheelchair transport available.

For more information, please contact:

Ginny Owens
Transport Development Manager
Stroud Volunteer & Community Action
The Old Town Hall
The Shambles
Stroud
GL5 3ET
Tel: 01453 759005
Email: transport@vcastroud.org

Bins and Boards!

Rooksmoor has a new covered notice board which will ensure notices can be read following wet weather! A litter bin has been provided on the corner of Church Road above Southbank and the litter bin at the bottom of Bospin Lane has been replaced with a larger one. Salt bins have been topped up around the village. Just a reminder that this is to be used to keep pavements and public highways clear and is not for use on private paths and driveways.

Parish Council Meetings

The dates for Parish Council meetings in 2016 are as follows: January 7th, March 3rd, May 5th, June 2nd, July 7th, September 8th and November 3rd. The Annual Parish Meeting will take place on the 12th May. All meetings will take place in the Village Hall, except the 5th May (venue to be announced). Residents are very welcome to attend.

Stroud Local Plan

The Local Plan was passed by the inspector on the 2nd November and is due to be ratified by Stroud District Council in the coming weeks. Modifications were made in order to make the plan capable of adoption. The main changes which could affect Woodchester are the overall housing requirement has been increased from 9,500 to 11,400 dwellings (2006-2031) and the capacity for the Stroud Valleys has been increased from 300 to 450 dwellings.

Garden Waste Collection Service

An optional kerbside garden waste collection is now available. A brown wheeled bin will be issued to residents who can accommodate a bin for a one-off £20 charge and an annual charge of £36. This waste will then be collected fortnightly over the 10 month period February to November.

The scheme is optional and residents can still take their garden waste to the Recycling Centre at Horsley.

To sign up for the scheme please visit www.stroud.gov.uk/gardenwaste or ring Customer Services on 01453 754424 or complete the form available to print on the Woodchester website www.woodchesterparish.org.uk.

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



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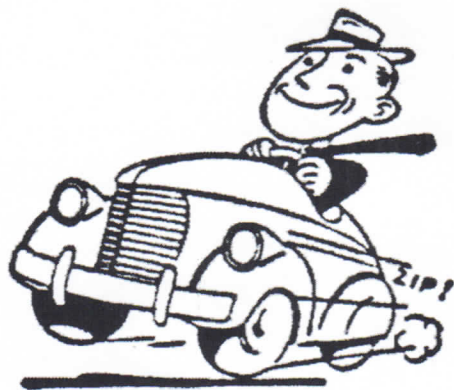
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OUR WOODCHESTER

We are all so fortunate to live in a village surrounded by wonderful countryside, even if days may go by when we don't give it a second thought during our busy days. This writer has lived in Woodchester for 48 years, surrounded by farmland and commons, foxes, badgers and buzzards, and living in a friendly village environment. Living in the countryside gives you spiritual enrichment, giving me a chance to be alone with my thoughts when wanted on Selsley Common with its majestic views across the Severn Vale towards the Brecon Beacons. When there, I happily count my blessings.

