

The **WOODCHESTER** Word

Issue 50 - Spring 2015



Election Countdown

We are so very fortunate to live in a glorious part of the country. Our quality of life overall is pretty good for most Woodchester residents. So with this in mind, and with May's General Election looming closer and closer on the horizon, the Woodchester Word suggests it should issue its own pre-election manifesto, setting out our priorities for the next government.

The Word's core demands are simple :

1. More protection for our countryside in and around Woodchester;
2. The right infrastructure (industrial, housing and transport) for the right reasons;
3. Change the current planning laws so that priority isn't given to developers; Local Council housing targets not allowed to override local concerns; the right housing only to be built in the right place; brownfield land to be developed before green-field sites;
4. Improvements in the control of traffic on the Woodchester roads;
5. Greater support and improved funding for local facilities, e.g. local Post Office and shop, and for schools;
6. Progress towards a greener Britain by reforming the way we use energy, build communities and protect wildlife;

Any more suggestions?

Woodchester Wildlife

Two local residents have reported recently to the Word that they have seen otters in Woodchester. Liz Cole who lives close to the Nailsworth Stream has written the following article.

Night raiders



Woodchester is a wildlife paradise – a little UK Serengeti. At least two kinds of deer graze or laze gently in the sunshine with seemingly very little care in the world and you don't have to wander far to see hares boxing in the early morning light. Buzzards wheel and mew above us. We've a fast-flowing stream full of handsome brown trout with mallards and mandarins pottering about on the muddy banks and frequent flashes of blue as Kingfishers streak from perch to perch. Ponds and puddles are alive with newts and frogs while every dry stone wall and wood pile is home to a hundred little creatures. Striking birds like jays, sparrow hawks & woodpeckers are regular visitors to most of our gardens along with the occasional wallaby

celebrating a successful bid for freedom from Woodchester House.

At night there's a change of guard: Badgers and foxes take over when the deer and hares take cover while owls call hauntingly to each other across the valley. And now, like the ultimate seal of approval of our little Eden, otters are in the neighbourhood!

One of the best loved of our native animals, otters are part of the *mustelidae* family, related to badgers and weasels. They grow up to 90 cm (3 foot) long, weigh up to 10 kg (22 lb) and need up to 1.5 kg of fish each day to keep healthy. By the 1980s polluted UK rivers and loss of habitat had all but wiped out these beautiful creatures, but the concerted efforts of environmental agencies and conservationists, especially to improve the quality of our waterways, has allowed otter populations to recover significantly over recent years. Being nocturnal and aquatic, otters are hard to spot, but signs and evidence has been building up over the last couple of years and they've now been seen by several Woodchester residents.

Have I painted the right picture of rural idyll and wildlife paradise?

It's true that whenever we describe all our furry, feathery and scaly friends to our urban neighbours they are guaranteed to turn green with envy – but if you're reading this as a Woodchester resident – I wonder if you might have slightly different reaction to the news??... The arrival of otters could be the icing on your Woodchester wildlife cake or you could be thinking 'Paradise isn't always everything it's cracked up to be' – at least not in this world!!

Those of us with a love of gardening know that those two graceful species of local deer have an unerring instinct for the most tender (and expensive) new plants. We also know that a hungry badger is only marginally less damaging than a small JCB on a really well manicured lawn. Those of you with prize collections of Koi carp or even ponds full of lazy gold fish may be less sanguine about the news that otters are about – especially when you learn each otter needs 3lb of fish a day!!!!

And you'd be right to be worried. Some of the early 'signs' of otter *presence* here in Woodchester – included the fresh *absence* of several large koi from a local pond. Otters aren't dumb – Why chase fast trout in an open stream when there a smorgasbord of fancy, plump carp in a handy confined space?? They're not easily put off either. Speaking from first-hand experience, our family can tell you that otters will slide brazenly under protective netting in any areas where it's not nailed down tight, even under the full glare of a spot light. These night raiders are smart and if anyone tells you they're shy, take no notice! We found it hard to begrudge the otter his dinner, but the fish were our responsibility and surrender wasn't an option. Nor, if I'm honest, was I willing to be outwitted by a member of the weasel family – however beautiful! Pride was at stake (and our few remaining fish) and it became a bit of an arms race in the end. Every night our pond defences were breached we worked out how to improve them and likewise it felt like the otter spent each day planning its next daring attack in the peace of its holt. At present we're at DEFCON 3 and have reached a kind of balance of power - with our latest defences holding for the last few days and the otter presumably relaxing in the knowledge he's already eaten most of the fish anyway!!

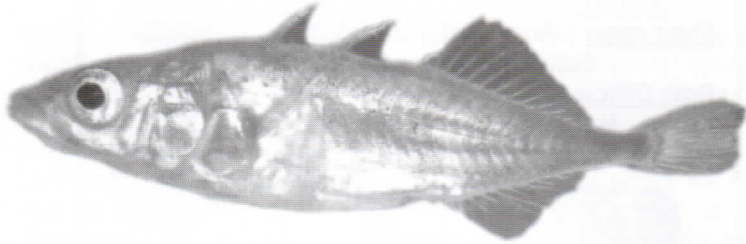
Good luck to him or her. In truth, aren't we some of the luckiest people alive to live here.

Liz Cole

All around us - Our Woodchester Wildlife

Stickly Come Dancing!!!

While it is easy for us in Woodchester to tell that spring is here in our village and countryside around, it's easy to forget that it is in full flow underwater too – especially in our river and ponds. And while many of us may delight in the courtship of the great crested grebe or the embarrassing spectacle of copulating frogs and toads, beneath the surface hidden away in the watery world of the Nailsworth stream is a spring ritual that is the equal of anything you might see above the surface.



At this time of year, one of our most tiddler of fishes is embarking on something astonishing. The male three spined Stickleback (so often caught in the nets of our tiddler children!) is performing its own choreographed stickly come dancing! In spring, it first togs up in a gaudy, colourful attire – a bright red belly, blue eyes and a bright green upperside instead of the usual dull green. Then it becomes fiendishly territorial, ejecting any other males that dare come close to its own patch of river bed. Then excitement peaks – along comes a plump, egg-laden female and he performs a mad dance in which he zigzags to and from the female, a sign that his hormones are buzzing. If the female accepts his performance, she will then follow him to view the nest and having seen it, will swim inside. The male then rubs her back to stimulate her to lay eggs and having got what he wanted, he will chase her away! Having acquired the spoils he will fertilise the eggs, protect them until they hatch and make every effort to keep the fry safe from danger.

A real parliament of Rooks



When much of Woodchester is locked into winter and the trees are starkly leafless, a show of defiance is something rather special. That's why the sight of a rook carrying nest material up to the treetops, even in late December can feel symbolic. For most of us, this is the first signs we see of birds in preparation for the new season of building and breeding. It doesn't stop there. The nests are finished in February and at that time the rookery is already a hotbed of squabbling, rivalry and conversation, not just the brusque caws but also a constant series of high-pitched sounds. In further defiance of convention, rooks lay their eggs in March, well before most other birds are under way. Yes, a flock of rooks is called a parliament and if you have ever watched or listened to Prime Minister's Question time in the House of Commons, you'll realize why!



The Birds in our Woodchester gardens

Five tips for feeding our garden birds:

1. Parent birds will soon be gathering protein-rich insects to feed their young, but they also need to feed themselves. Help them by leaving hulled sunflower seeds so they don't have to waste time and energy removing the husk, niger seed and suet-based products.
2. In cold wet conditions, moths are less likely to breed, so there are fewer caterpillars available for the birds. Leave out a dish of mealworms as a tasty and nutritious alternative.
3. Avoid putting out whole peanuts. If live food is hard to find, parents may choose supplementary foods to their young and whole peanuts could choke the chicks. If you have peanuts, use a fine mesh feeder or grind the nuts so that they can only take small pieces at a time.
4. Don't forget ground feeding birds, such as our favourite blackbirds, robins and thrushes. Halved apples, a little grated cheese and mealworms are ideal.
5. Keep bird baths topped up. Birds drink from them but also use them to preen their feathers – helping them to fly more efficiently on their journeys to and from the nest.

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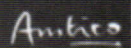
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OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

Chocolate....!!!

On Friday 5th February, an excited Class 4 from St. Dominic's School travelled all the way to Cadburys World in Bournville to enjoy a busy day learning about Chocolate! A fascinating tour of the factory took place with the children gathering information about the manufacturing process and interesting history behind the global brand. The pupils thoroughly enjoyed the trip and developed their understanding of fairtrade and how chocolate products are developed.

A note from Peter Francis: Prayer

We've been thinking about prayer over the last couple of months – in Sunday sermons and through a 'Pilgrim' course held at Woodchester school every Wednesday evening through Lent.

Prayer can sometimes seem the natural thing, when we want to express thanks for something marvellous or when we cry out in desperation. But to many it can also seem a bit mysterious or confusing... Just what is prayer exactly??? And we simply don't know where to start or what to do.

When Jesus's friends asked him how to pray, he started "Our Father in heaven...." and in the run up to Easter we have been especially focusing on the words of the Lord's prayer and what they have to say to us today. Many of us know it by heart, but what does it really mean?

The "prayer tree" we've just introduced at the back of church, is another part of this. It's a great way for any of us to bring the things that are troubling us, knowing they'll be prayed for, and to be able to join in with prayer for the needs of other people in our community. There will be more going on this year on the subject of prayer. If you find yourself not knowing where to start and would like to find out what it's all about – come along.

PF

Doggy Do's and Don'ts

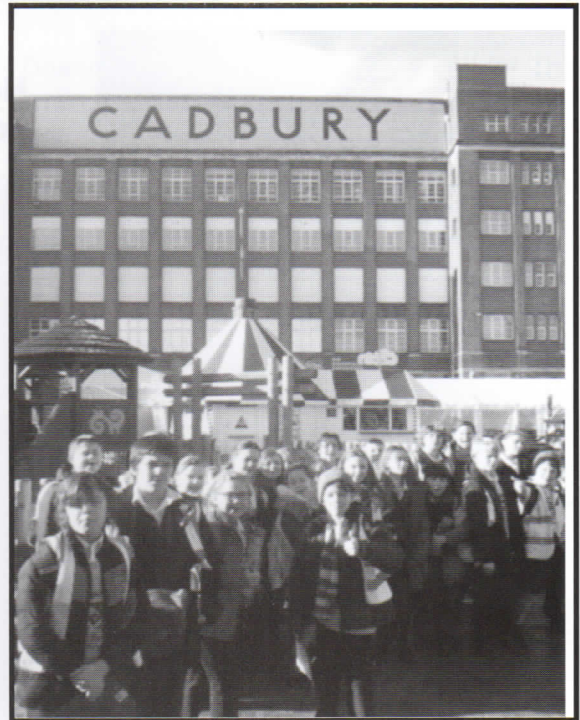
Over the past months there have been quite a few complaints to the Parish Council about dog mess on footpaths and pavements in North Woodchester. The worst affected areas seem to be the little path that runs between Berrymore and the Endowed School, the path between Beech Grove and Pauls Rise, and the driveway leading to Home Ground.

Dog feces are dangerous to public health and can cause serious illness. Dog mess is disgusting and very anti-social. Dog owners are reminded that it is an offence not to clean up after your dog has made a mess in any publicly accessible place. This includes pavements, paths, playing fields, grass verges, and gutters and all of the common land in the Stroud Valleys.

If caught in the act, you could be FINED up to £1,000. Do pick up after your dog and take the "Do" home with you, to be disposed of with your household waste.

Residents can help the District Council Dog Wardens by reporting offending dogs and their owners, or by providing information which could lead to the identification of an offending dog.

Contact SDC Dog Wardens on 01453 754478 or email environmentalhealth@stroud.gov.uk



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OUR SCHOOLS



Antarctica Homework from children at St. Dominic's



The EYFS class have had a very exciting theme this term on Antarctica. They have been incredibly busy looking at the wildlife there and learning about exploration and explorers. The class have also been hoping that it would snow so that they could really investigate this in the playground. The children ended their topic with a 'Frozen' themed party and a project to create something on the theme of Antarctica. The results were astounding and they displayed their work in school and presented it to the whole school in Celebration Assembly.

Woodchester Endowed School

It has been an exciting and enjoyable term at Woodchester Endowed Primary School. Learning of all types has been taking place, with children showing us all just how exceptional they are! This has meant that the term has really raced by.

We have all enjoyed a Maths based "Focus Week", whereby all of the children throughout the school have been looking at mathematics, in all its guises. Class Beech, for example, spent the week at "Spy School" where they used their mathematics skills to solve puzzles and cyphers that were hidden around the grounds. We are fortunate enough to have some excellent mathematicians at Woodchester and teachers who make it fun for everyone.

Looking down from the front of our school hall, currently, is an enormous Frost Giant! This was produced by Class Hawthorn as part of their production of Odd and the Frost Giant. The performance was terrific, with the children performing exceptionally well. There was even a flurry of snow inside the hall! The further learning that culminated in the performance is credit to the talent and dedication of the staff of Woodchester Endowed Primary School.

With the sun starting to peak through the clouds, we have plenty more to look forward to as spring turns to summer.

Glyn Aelfryn Jones, Headteacher

OUR CHURCHES

St. Mary's Church, North Woodchester

Dear Neighbours,

Here we are already with early signs of Spring all around us – Doesn't it make you glad to be alive! There's a lot going on at St Mary's as usual and Easter is just around the corner, but first things first – we want to introduce a very important new member of the church team – our new Benefice Co-ordinator Cathy Adams...

Many of you will know Cathy already from her work with N. Woodchester Village Stores – She played a key role in getting the shop restarted as a sustainable community venture. From January, Cathy has brought her amazing organisational talents and friendly patience to support us at St Mary's and Holy Trinity, Brimscombe. She will be helping the ministry team and acting as a main point of contact for anyone wanting information on church organisational matters such as service times/rotas, bookings for weddings, baptisms, etc., and details of PCC meetings.



Talking to Cathy this morning, she wants to start by making sure people are aware of everything going on at St Mary's and that we are doing all we can to serve the needs of everyone in the community. She'd love to hear from you if you have any ideas or if there is anything we could do to help and her contact details are in the box below.

In other news... Messy church has continued to entertain up to 90 children and their parents/carers one Wednesday every month after school and Lunch-with-Friends has quickly become established every 3rd Friday of the month – offering a warm welcome and a good meal to all, even through the coldest weather. If you have a primary school-aged child and would like to find out more about Messy Church or if you live in Woodchester, perhaps on your own, and would like to hear more about lunch club, we'd love to see you – respective contact numbers are below.

Last but not least we've just introduced a prayer tree (not a pear tree!!) at the back of church. If and when any of us want prayer for things going on in our lives, all we have to do is fill in one of the post-it notes and stick it on the tree. Its completely anonymous,

but we promise people will pray for all requests.

Happy Easter to you all

from everyone at St Mary's

Co-ordinator: Cathy Adams: 07904 038132

Co-ordinator@stmaryswoodchester.org.uk

Love your neighbour?

Ever wondered what Jesus meant when he said love other people as I have loved you?

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist Church summed it up like this: *“Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.”*

Something to aim for.

Here's a quick reminder of some of our activities.

All welcome:

Monday Mums - a baby-friendly Bible study group that meets for lunch on Mondays. Contact Sue Pouncey on: 07866 487911

Saturday Coffee and Chat – 10.30 till 12 in the undercroft (door near front gate) Next dates: Apr 4th, May 2nd and June 6th.

Lunch-with-Friends: Meets in church at noon for a hot 2-course lunch. Next dates Apr 17th, May 15th and June 19th. Call Christina on 873481

Messy church: For primary school children and their carers. Next dates Apr 22nd, May 20th and June 17th. 3.20 till 5pm in church Contact Liz Hale on 01453 765422 for more information.

EASTER TRADITIONS

Hot Cross Buns

Anyone browsing the bakery sections of supermarkets might assume that hot cross buns are a year-round staple food. But during the reign of Elizabeth I, if you had the cheek to bake them at the wrong time of the year, you'd have them confiscated and given to the poor. London bakeries were forbidden to bake spiced buns "except it be at burials, or on the Friday before Easter or at Christmas."



Whether you think hot cross buns should be a Good Friday ritual only or can be consumed at any time of the year, you can't argue that the bun hasn't survived the tests of time. The tradition of eating breads marked with crosses in springtime goes back to ancient times. The pagan Saxons made buns marked with the cross in honour of the goddess Eastre, whose name gave us the word Easter. The cross is thought to have symbolised the four quarters of the moon but later came to represent the crucifixion of Jesus.

According to superstition, hot cross buns cooked on Good Friday never went mouldy and were sometimes kept as good luck charms from one year to the next. It was popularly believed that if a bun was hung in a kitchen, it would protect against fires and improve a cook's baking. In London in the 18th century, the place to buy hot cross buns (as well as the Chelsea bun) was the Chelsea Bun House. Today, if you want non-supermarket - made buns, there are a number of local independent bakeries within reach from Woodchester. Some bakeries make variations such as lemon or chocolate hot cross buns but purists (*such as the editor!*) get hot and cross about this!

St. Tibertius' Day

Long before climate change confused the seasons, and confounded the migrant birds arriving in the UK, 14th April was the day on which tradition tells us you could hear the first cuckoo sing after its arrival from West Africa. It was said to bring good luck too if you followed a couple of conventions. First, you need to turn over any coins you have in your pocket then you had to spit on the ground. Should your spit land on soft ground, you would enjoy good fortune for the rest of the year. But if it landed on hard ground, so did your prospects. The links to Tibertius, a martyr from Rome, who was beheaded for performing the miracle of walking on hot coals without blistering, are unclear and may simply be coincidental. But today, hearing the cuckoo is a relatively rare experience in Woodchester and could be considered to be good fortune alone.



Hearing the cuckoo in spring was once a spring formality but sadly, this is becoming much less common. The editor heard a cuckoo only twice last spring in the Woodchester area (and that at a considerable distance from the heart of Woodchester.) The cuckoo song is usually loud and carries far, proclaims the spring and is an uplifting sound. As spring fades, the cuckoo falls silent, and finally departs in July. Listen out for one before they disappear from the Woodchester countryside for good.

Your community needs YOU

The monthly Lunch-with-Friends club has been a real success, allowing village residents old & new to catch up with people they haven't seen for years and meet neighbours they didn't know they had. Whether you go to church or not, could you spare a couple of hours once a month or once a quarter to help out? You are guaranteed to enjoy yourself. Contact Christina Lewis on 873481 or Liz Cole on 872287

LOCAL NEWS

Woodchester Village Shop

The village shop continues to thrive, and to generate a small profit, thanks to the many community minded volunteers who have helped to keep it up and running since September last year. A particular welcome to new volunteers Fiona and Andrew Jackson, who have been braving the early morning shift which involves wrestling with the newspapers on some very frosty mornings. We also welcome Shelagh Goldie, and Beverley Butler, who have recently undergone till training. A huge thank you is due to local builders Andy Latham and Colin Holder who have cheerfully tackled the plumbing, plastering and woodworking required to install a volunteers toilet, and create new storage space at the back of the shop. We were thrilled when local engineering company **Renishaw** gave a donation towards the cost of a new chiller cabinet, which has allowed us to display a wider range of cheese, bacon, ham, milk and fruit juices. Thanks are due to Cathy Adams and Julie McKenzie for arranging this. New product ranges include a wider range of Dangerfields bread and baked goods and Godsells Cheeses, locally produced just over the common in Leonard Stanley.

Jean Lawton continues to sell her potted bulbs and plants, which help make a splash of colour at the shop door.

The shop is open 7.30 to 5.30 Monday to Friday, and 7.30 to 12.30 on Saturday. Do call in and see what we have to offer.



Photograph shows Julie and Cathy with a selection of chilled white wine, Godsells Cheese, and Woodchester Meat Company ham and sausages.

Woodchester WI

The Village Christmas Concert will be reinstated this year after missing 2014. We have decided upon 4th December. But we need the support of the village. Can anyone offer their services as a pianist for the evening; the pianist is required to accompany the singing of four or five carols only. The concert is in aid of a local charity which is chosen by the WI members nearer to the time.

Also, we require and welcome offers of performers of any skill level to take part, be it playing an instrument, reciting a poem or singing etc., the theme does not have to be Christmassy!

If you can help please contact Val on 873658 or Kath on 873348.

Our 2015 programme is now available on the village website. We meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7.30 p.m. in the village hall. New members are always welcome, or come as a visitor for a modest fee of £3.00 and see what we are about. One meeting not to be missed is on 16 July; we welcome Paul Evans – dubbed a female Pam Ayers - who will provide us with a programme of monologues, anecdotes and humorous stories. This meeting is open to anyone, again at a cost of £3. Interested? Contact details as above.

Buzz Club Spring 2015 Newsletter

"To learn to Bee Kind, know about, and take care of the world of the honey bee"

The Littlebees and The Junior Buzzclub will all take place on Mondays at the allotments just below the Ram Inn, South Woodchester. Park in the bottom car park where you will see our trailer.

Littlebees for 5-7 year olds is from 3.45-4.45

Junior Buzzclub for 8-12 year olds is from 5.15 à 6.15 The dates are:-

13th April, 27th April, 11th May, 25th May, 8th June, 22nd June, 6th July, and a day each for honey tasting and wax modelling will be arranged.

Each group will have a maximum of 10 members and the cost for the 9 sessions for The Littlebees and The Juniors will be £24.

We provide beekeeping suits and do have some wellies, but we recommend each child wears trousers and brings their own wellies.

If you would like to register your child or have any concerns or questions please contact Peter Lead 07768 881950 or email peterdawnlead@aol.com

Girlguiding Woodchester

Woodchester Brownies are currently working towards their Musicians Badge and are looking forward to putting their skills into practise as they plan to provide some entertainment at a Promise ceremony later this term. The end of term party will be organised by the Guides.

Having finished working towards the Culture Badge the Guide activities this term are based around the 5 senses. The Guides are also planning a Promise ceremony.

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 TOPICS

New faces at Woodchester Mansion.

The beautiful and mysterious Woodchester Mansion will open for the season on 1st April and will be open every day except Mondays (open Bank Holidays). The tea room will once again be open to all visitors to Woodchester Park. You do not have to pay to come in and enjoy a refreshing drink, delicious cake or a light lunch.

2015 will see some new faces at Woodchester Mansion. Newly appointed Chief Executive **Katie Howe** came into post in February. Katie has a degree in heritage management and a PhD in History. She has a wide range of experience working in the museums and heritage sector. She will lead the Trustees, staff and volunteers as they strive to raise the profile of the Mansion to raise funds to keep it in repair for the next century.

Also new in post will be catering manager **Joanna Scrivens**, who will be working to develop the catering operations at the mansion and overseeing the training of all tea room volunteers. A new kitchen is currently being installed and a larger café area should be ready for the beginning of the season.

A new Operations Manager is to be appointed to the staff team in the Spring.

The Trustees are hoping to widen the range of events and activities held at the mansion, especially Arts based events and Childrens activities. The mansion is already well established as a venue for weddings, and well known for its annual Halloween party.

Regularly used for ghost hunting weekends, and occasionally used as a filming location, Woodchester Mansion has had some good TV coverage recently. On February 15th it featured in Countryfile on BBC1, when presenter John Craven learned about the importance of the mansion as a home for Greater Horseshoe bats. The dark and spooky wine cellars were also used as a location for a recent episode of CBBC's "The Dare Devil".

Woodchester Mansion, can you help?

As a small independent charity, Woodchester Mansion would not function without the help of its committed and knowledgeable volunteers. Volunteering at the Mansion is a great way to get away from the stresses and strains of everyday life and do something different in a magical location!

We still need new volunteers to help with selling tickets, working in the gift shop, taking house tours and driving the Mini bus which shuttles the less energetic visitors from the car park to the mansion. Opportunities are available during the week and at weekends and training is provided.

If you would like to volunteer at the mansion, visit www.woodchestermansion.org for more information, or telephone 01453 861541. Or phone Katharine on 873814 for a chat.

The following was received from Colin Menendez; Principal/Director of CTM Wildlife Ltd.

Dear Rod,

Once again – thank you for allowing us release the slow-worms at the orchard. It is good to be able to keep them in the locality. The slow-worms should do well in the good mix of habitat on the valley side and food (particularly small slugs). In total 177 slow-worms were released. They came from two gardens at South Bank next to the church where the council are to demolish and rebuild some houses. It is a remarkable number of slow-worms, but it shows how good the local conditions are for them in the Stroud valleys. I have attached below a picture from the project. Slow-worms are in fact leg-less lizards and unlike snakes have eyelids. They have up to about a dozen live-born young in late summer every other year. They can live 20+ years in the wild. They are harmless.

Best wishes,

Colin T Menendez BSc (Hons) CEnv MCIEEM

Principal / Director, CTM Wildlife Ltd (colin@ctmwildlife.co.uk)

T 01453 827272

The Malthouse, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire GL10 3DL



WOODCHESTER HERITAGE

'The Parliamentary Hedge?'

Everyone is no doubt familiar with the Royal Oak and the tale of King Charles II hiding after the Battle of Worcester in 1651 but how many are aware of a Parliamentarian soldier hiding in a hedge in Woodchester?

I am grateful to the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society for the following information.

John Freind was born at Westerleigh near Bristol in 1621 and baptised on 24 June, son of John Freind a mason. He was of a weakly constitution and suffered from smallpox whilst at school. His story is told by his brother, Nathaniel, a schoolmaster.

John was 21 at the outbreak of the Civil War and at Christmas 1642, he, Nathaniel and their father joined the Parliamentarian forces at Cirencester. Following capture by the Royalists in February 1643, they were imprisoned in Oxford for 11 weeks. Some others taken at the same time opted to join the King's forces but the Freinds appear to have not been willing to do so. However, there is no evidence that they took an oath not to fight.

In August 1643, he set off for London, avoiding being taken prisoner at Andover, and became clerk to a Regiment of Horse being raised by Colonel Sir Thomas Stephens. Following their arrival in Gloucester, he became quartermaster remaining until March 1645.

He was with the same regiment, at the raising of the siege of Rowden House, near Chippenham in April where he was shot twice. The first bullet passed between his shirt and skin, and the second went through his pocket taking his handkerchief through his powder horn. He was taken prisoner again and carried to Bristol, where he arranged his release and went to Northampton. There his horse died and he had to return to Gloucester on foot having bought a release for his 'fellowes'.

From Gloucester he went to his fellowes' quarters at Woodchester where he fell ill of the smallpox 'which came out well upon him and hee in a hopeful way of recovery'. Unfortunately, the King's army under General Goring (presumably returning from Oxford to the west country) marched by 'on the hills neare where hee lay', resulting in John leaving his bed, wrapping himself in his cloak and hiding in a hedge! He stayed there for two hours until the army had passed, fortunately not descending into the village. He was scarcely able to get back to bed and died two days later on Friday 16 May 1645, being buried next day by his companions in the churchyard.

In November 1676, Nathaniel, who was acquainted with Mr Joseph Browne, a schoolmaster and 'excellent graver', living in Woodchester, came to visit. A woman who had visited John during his illness told him where his grave was and he arranged to have it turfed. Nathaniel asked Mr Browne to get some gravestones which he was to engrave himself. Would this suggest a head and foot stone?

Nathaniel returned in June 1678 to pay and see the stones. He gives a description of the position of the grave. 'Southwestward of the Church on the left hand side of the way that leads to the south door at some distance from the way towards the west side of the churchyard, north of the tombs belonging to the family of the Cambridges a few paces'.

The Cambridge tombs, still identifiable today are between the wall and the Roman pavement. Immediately north of them is the grave of John Wade. If we assume that the Cambridge tombs still occupy their original position, there are scarcely a few paces of space before the pavement. We know that the pavement was officially discovered when John Wade's grave was being dug in 1795 so was he then squeezed in next to the Cambridges? In which case, was John Freind buried above or through the pavement and subsequently moved?

WOODCHESTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The next meeting of the society will be on **Tuesday 2 June 2015 at 2:30pm** in the Undercroft of St Mary's Church, North Woodchester. David Smith will be giving a talk on "William Tyndale and the origins of the King James Bible".

Admission is £2 for members, £3 for non members. All Welcome.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

The Editor has received two letters for the Word this time, coincidentally both discussing the voluntary 20mph speed limit through the village and with opposing viewpoints!

Dear Mr. Editor,

"20 is plenty campaign"

Through your most excellent publication, may I make the case against the "20 is plenty" campaign instigated by our parish council.

When I first heard that these signs were to be installed, my first impulse was to be suspicious of them as being symptomatic of the ever encroaching nanny state. However, as some people obviously supported them and could see a benefit I went along with it. I thought that the worse that could happen is that they would simply turn out to be yet more unsightly street furniture - which indeed they are. I also couldn't see how they were going to make any difference as they are purely advisory and as such unenforceable. Living near the top of Selsley Road I can absolutely confirm that there has been no perceived impact on the speed of vehicles passing my house.

But it turns out that actually, they are probably doing more harm than good. A recent article in the Times entitled "20mph zones on the rise...and so are accidents" quotes some statistics from the Institute of Advanced Motorists claiming "that the number of serious accidents on 20mph roads had increased by a quarter in the previous year". It is accepted fact that cluttering up our roads with superfluous signage can have the unintended effect of causing more accidents by irritating or simply confusing drivers. In the same article the AA has suggested that cutting the limit "can increase CO2 emissions by more than 10 per cent" as cars slow and then speed back up.

According to the EU we have the second safest roads in Europe (only bettered by Sweden). So just because there might be a speed limit of 30mph through the village doesn't mean we're all going to drive up to that limit all the time. Let's give the motorist some credit and recognise that most of us drive to the conditions of the road. And that those who don't are not going to be dissuaded by a patronising message on an ugly looking piece of cardboard on a stick.

Please councillors, think again on this one. The experiment has failed and these signs should be removed forthwith.

Dave Cliff
North Woodchester

Sir,

As a Stroud resident who, for many years now, spends social time each week in Woodchester, I've been privy to some local debate about the 20 mph speed restriction in Woodchester and would like to counter a few of the more misleading points that I've heard so far.

20 mph zones cause vehicles to produce more CO2: This is not only a questionable assertion, it also demonstrates that the problem has been misunderstood, possibly deliberately. CO2 emissions are a global problem which we have to face and, once the political and economic circumstances are compelling, it will be solved. Meanwhile, the extra CO2 produced by vehicles travelling 10 mph slower through Woodchester, is minimal and will have an imperceptible impact on the greater problem.

No one's been killed by speeding cars in Woodchester.:The point of "20's plenty" is simply that it saves lives everywhere. Driving cautiously through built-up areas, including villages and hamlets, should become as ingrained a practice as obeying traffic lights. There cannot be exceptions merely because no one has been killed in a particular area to date. No sane person would tolerate road traffic legislation that waited for a sufficiency of casualties before it was applied piecemeal to each site. Apart from the moral considerations, the uncertainty would compound the chaos.

At a traffic speed of 20 mph, the pedestrian survival rate is immediately increased to 97%. (Royal Society for Prevention of Accidents, Road Safety Advice, <http://www.rospa.com/roadsafety/>). Children are particularly vulnerable. As long ago as 2007, the Government's Department for Children, Schools and Families published figures showing that lowering the speed limit had reduced child pedestrian deaths in their study zone by 70% (<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/childrensplan/>). So please, don't be persuaded by straw man arguments; reducing speed saves lives, everywhere. Because some people flout speed restrictions, is an argument for enforcement, not for capitulating to the speed merchants. It's an unwise tourist who fails to observe speed restrictions through French towns and villages, for example, because their enforcement is effective.

Woodchester is not being singled out by some bureaucratic nannies, nor does an aluminium sign with '20' on it rob motorists of all common sense, judgement and responsibility.

Faithfully,

Bill Hicks, 118 Folly Lane, Stroud

LOCAL EVENTS

Woodchester open gardens

Are you proud of your garden? Is it interesting, colourful or unusual? The village events committee is hoping to organize another village open gardens in June this year and are looking for people who are willing to open their gardens to the local community. The planned date is Saturday June 6th from 2-6pm.



The owners of Atcombe Court and Woodchester Priory have already offered to join in with the open gardens day. We are now looking for other people who would be willing to let people stroll round their garden. Your garden does not have to be immaculate, just interesting. Wild or carefully cultivated; swathes of perennials or herbs in pots; native or exotic species; fruit and veg: all types of garden are welcome.

For further details or to volunteer to open your garden, please contact Rachel Hemmings on 873297 or email hemming339@btinternet.com

Orchard Pastures

Our wassailing in January was very enjoyable, with villagers making a hullabaloo to frighten any wicked spirits away. We hope for excellent results for the apple crop this year! The young orchard trees are five years old and beginning their fruitful lives.

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



You're invited to come and look round as part of the village open gardens on Saturday 6th June - come and see our allotments and orchard for yourselves!



Pictures of Wassailing at Orchard Pastures

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Caroline Ractliffe T: 07770 450321

Football Team Photo:

The photo of the Woodchester football team in the last edition of the Woodchester Word was taken at Easter 1984. The photo showed a veteran's team that played in a special match. At that time, Jon Peet who was the landlord at the Royal Oak was team manager. Thank you to our reader who contributed this information

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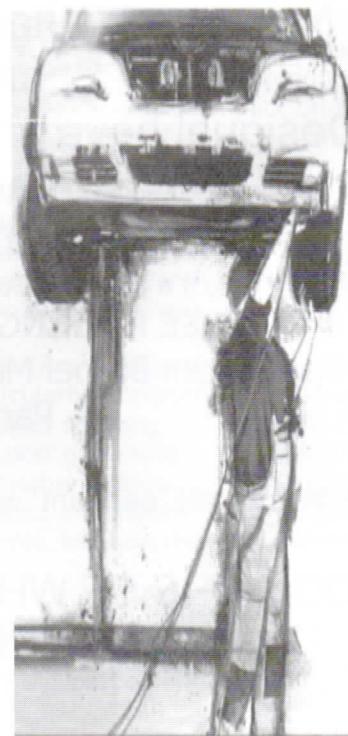
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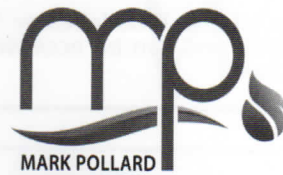


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- Bunions
- Verrucae
- Corns, callus, itchy, flaky or dry skin
- Cracked heels
- Blisters
- Painful foot joints, arches, shins or knees

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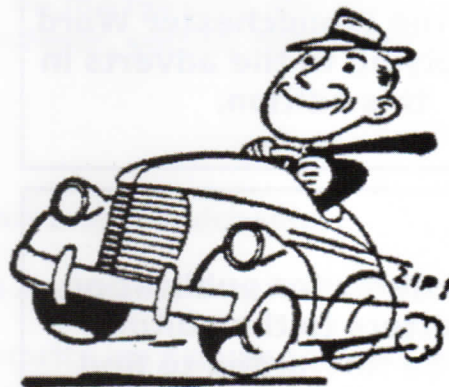
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The Woodchester Website –

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](http://www.woodchesterparish.org.uk)

Heard in school.....

Writing in a history lesson about Egyptian life and early Egyptians, one pupil wrote:

"Early Egyptian women often wore a garment called a calasiris. This was a sheer dress which started beneath the breasts which hung to the floor!"

Heard in the pub.....

One man who has just returned from a holiday in China:
"Chopsticks are one of the reasons why the Chinese never invented custard."

Advert in local paper:

"Large pram for sale with rain cover, sun canopy and mattress. Ideal for Grandparents. £20

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 June 8th 2015.

Dates for your Diary

Spring in Woodchester

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

Messy Church : Wednesdays, monthly, at 3.15 p.m. in the church (details from Liz Hale 765422) Next Messy Church is April 22nd and May 20th

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 for details. Next dates : April 17th, May 15th, June 19th.

Easter services at St. Mary's Church :

Maunday Thursday (2nd April) – Communion: 7:30pm (in The Upper Room, Holy Trinity Brimscombe)

Good Friday (3rd April) – 10:00 am Morning Worship

Easter Day (5th April) – 9:00 am Easter Communion and 11:00 Easter Family Celebration with Communion

Easter Mass at the Church of the Annunciation

See notice boards

Summer concerts in St. Mary's Church:

13th June Capriol Chamber Orchestra

11th July Thames Head Singers

Both concerts at 7.30 p.m.

Further information from Andrew Pemberton, 872813

Woodchester Spring Clean and litter pick: Sunday March 29th, 2pm meet at the layby on A46

North Woodchester Open Gardens : Saturday 6th June

Woodchester Produce Show : Saturday September 12th

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.