

# Finstock News 114

*Serving Finstock, Fowler, Wilcote, Mt. Skippett and Finstock Heath*

Village Shop, Christmas Card Winner .....	1	County and District Council reports .....	7
Village Events, Girl Guides .....	2	Finstock School, Mr Quibell obit. ....	8
Village Hall, Finstock Festival .....	3	Claridge family history, Remembrance Sunday .....	9
Women voting, Parish Council .....	4	Robert Courts, MP on NHS funding, A Potted History .....	10
Toddlers, FoFS .....	5	A Potted History continues .....	11
Countryside Conservation, Walk. ....	6	Gardening, Oxfordshire Museum, Garden waste recycling .....	12

A new year begins with new Chairs elected at the Village Shop (proposed to be renamed The Woodpecker Community Shop) and at the Village Hall. You can read about the planned annual School Fete and Village Festival. Our Parish Council was very productive at the end of last year and our District, County and Parliamentary representatives will update you on their latest news. Finstock Women's voting achievement, a pleasant walk, further information about the Claridge family in WWII, a start to the gardening season and a story about Viv Wightman's midwife career will round out a full issue of news. With the possibility of major changes this year (Brexit?), it might be an idea to focus on local life and wildlife for relief from the confusion and distraction of politics.

## The Village Shop



The Village Hall's Evenlode Room was packed back in November for the Annual General Meeting of the Village Shop. New changes to the Directors were announced, and the revised board comprises Roz Danks, Ed Grant, Nettie Gregory, Robin Hall and Carol Scott, with Rod Ireland serving as Chair of Directors.

The meeting was told that the revenues of the Shop have shown a downward trend for the past five years. This has reached the point where the running of the Shop is being subsidised from its financial reserves. There are several reasons why people may be spending less in the Shop than in the past. One is the growth in home delivery of groceries. Another is that some of the most regular customers are no longer with us; the village has more young busy people who may be at work when the Shop is open. And membership of the 100 Club has dwindled over time to only 80 people.

Yet surveys, both formal and informal, tell us that having a shop and especially a Post Office, is seen as a valuable asset, so something needs to change. On current trends, the Shop would become financially unviable at some point in 2020, and would have to close. The Directors stated their commitment to reviving the fortunes of the Shop. They don't have all the answers yet, but believe there are four areas to explore.

The first is to look at what the shop offers and what it might do differently to attract more revenue, differentiating itself from the growth in online services. Associated with this

is the need to improve its communications so that everyone understands the product range, special offers and additional services. To broaden the Shop's profile across the wider community it's proposed to rename it The Woodpecker Community Shop. Stand by for an exciting competition associated with this change!

The second is to revitalise the 100 Club to the point where it has at least 100 participating members. Do you know that for a donation of only £2 a week, you can win £100 or £50 prizes every month? At the AGM, most attendees indicated that they had won at least one prize in the past. To join, simply enrol at the Village Shop.

The new Board of Directors will also explore what grants may be available. There are a number of organisations who offer financial support to local community initiatives. By being a not-for-profit venture, staffed by volunteers and serving a rural community, we need to find out who can help us.

Finally, an initiative that has helped other organisations not only to survive, but to thrive, is the area of crowdfunding. The directors will investigate what has worked elsewhere and how we might promote the story of our Village Shop to attract further income.

It's that time for resolutions. If you called into the Shop just once a week, you would play a huge part in ensuring its future. Use it, or lose it!

**Rod Ireland**

## Christmas card Competition Winner



The winner of Robert Courts annual Christmas card competition was ten-year-old Josh from Finstock. It was a delight to show Josh and his family around Parliament before I delivered one of Josh's cards to the Prime Minister herself.

Congratulations Josh on your superb winning design!

**Robert Courts, MP**



# VILLAGE EVENTS



## February

**Rugby in the Village Hall on match days**

15th On Two Wheels Local History  
15th School term ends

17th CRAG Tea Concert 25th School  
term begins

## March

**Rugby in the Village Hall on match days**

15th 24 Square Miles Local History

## April

27th FoFS Quiz night

## June

21st-22nd School Fete, Village  
Festival

## Finstock Local History Society

**February 15th -- On two wheels – the fascinating story of the bicycle**, by Bill King A broad non-technical outline of the development of the bicycle and cycling, with an emphasis on the sociological impact of this means of transport. The Bicycle was credited as being a major factor in the emancipation of women and was the forerunner of the motor cycle and motor car.

**March 15th -- 24 Square Miles**, by Dr Kate Tiller A showing of the 1946 film *24 Square Miles* [centred on Hook Norton] with a brief introduction about the film, the related surveys, and the director, Kay Mander, with a discussion on the changes that have occurred. Kate is Emeritus Fellow of the Faculty of History, University of Oxford, and former Director of Local History Studies.

All meetings at 8pm on Fridays unless otherwise stated, at Finstock Village Hall, OX7 3BU. Refreshments available from 7.30pm. Entry £2.50. Follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/FinstockLocalHistorySociety](http://www.facebook.com/FinstockLocalHistorySociety)

**New Yatt Riding for the Disabled** - volunteers needed. Experience with horses useful but reliability, willingness to learn and sense of humour more important. [nyrda\\_helpers@googlegroups.com](mailto:nyrda_helpers@googlegroups.com).

## North Leigh History Society

**February 5th the Lost Villages of Oxfordshire.** Talk by Dr Deborah Hayter.

**March 5th Researching family history** Jessica Feinstein.

There is something very poignant and romantic about the words 'a lost village'. It makes me wonder about the people who once lived there and what it was that caused them all to leave. Who was the very last person who closed their door for the very last time? Where did they go? In the next meeting of the History Society on **Tuesday February 5th** we will be delving into these mysteries under the skilful leadership of Dr Deborah Hayter, who will be taking us through the lost villages of Oxfordshire. Do come and join us on our next magical mystery tour through the byways of history.

Our March meeting is a must for all those exploring their family history, whether you are a beginner or already deep into your own research. Our speaker, Jessica Feinstein has rich experience to set you on your way and suggest new avenues of research to take your own explorations further.

All are welcome. We meet as usual in the Turner Hall, Church Road OX29 6TX at 7.30 pm. Visitors £4, Members free. Further details from Diana Power 882301.

**CRAG Tea Concert: Goldberg Variations** (J.S. Bach). A tribute harpsichord recital by Alastair Ross in memory of Roger Pensom and Maurice Cochrane. Sunday Feb 17th 3-4pm in the Memorial Hall, Charlbury followed by free tea and cake. Alastair Ross was a chorister at Christ Church, and an organ scholar at New College, Oxford, where he gained a First in Music. He has worked as a freelance harpsichordist and organist for thirty five years. He is principal keyboard player of the Academy of Ancient Music and The Sixteen. Tickets £12 from Cotswold Frames or Larcum's nearer the date, or reserve by emailing [charlburyrefugee@gmail.com](mailto:charlburyrefugee@gmail.com). Charlbury Refugee Action Group

## Girl Guiding meeting times

All sections meet on Wednesdays  
Rainbows - for girls aged between 5 and 7 years. This group meets from 4.45pm until 5.45pm. Contact for Rainbows is Amy Fox; 07495 064634

Brownies - this group is for girls aged between 7 and 10 years and meets from 6pm until 7.30pm. Contact for Brownies is Amy Fox; 07495 064634

Guides - for girls aged between 10 and 14 years. This group meets from 6pm until 7.30pm. Contact for Guides is Karen Williams – [phoenixlights@hotmail.com](mailto:phoenixlights@hotmail.com); 07809 724065

## Girl Guides and Boy Scouts celebrate 100th anniversary

**Sunday February 10th at 7pm - ChOC Classic Cinema** returns with a true classic of the silver screen, *Some Like It Hot*, Billy Wilder's acclaimed comedy starring Jack Lemon, Tony Curtis and Marilyn Monroe. (Charlbury's Own Cinema)

**Local Enjoyable Drawing Courses & Workshops** start again in February. For more information please contact Gabriele - [gabrielekern31@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielekern31@gmail.com) or ring 01993 880430

## Centenary of the creation of the Grand Canyon National Park, US



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## VILLAGE HALL EVENTS

### Village Hall

Our previous Chairman, Shaun Morley stepped down at our Trustees meeting in November and I was elected in his place as the new Chair. Shaun is still a Trustee. I and the other Trustees would like to express our heartfelt appreciation and thanks for his enthusiasm, dedication and drive during his time as Chair. Through his leadership we have a wonderful new Village Hall and more recently a new extension to store much of the Hall's equipment.

2018 was another successful year for Finstock Village Hall with bookings going well. Highlights included the Finstock Ale in September and the Good Companions Christmas lunch, which was well attended. Looking forward, we have Rugby in February and March, to be televised again in the Hall on match days.

Although the majority of the booker's of the Hall leave it as they find it after their activities, we would respectfully ask all to continue to do so. This makes it so much easier for the Hall Caretaker and Cleaner to keep it in top condition for all our users.

Mike Ruse

Chair Finstock Hall Trustees Committee

**Editor's note:** Finstock owes a debt of gratitude to Shaun Morley who worked with the Parish Council and Mike Woodfield (in particular), to see a new Village Hall financed, built, supplied

with equipment and furnishings and has left the Village Hall in a strong financial position going forward. Thank you very much Shaun!

Photograph shows:



**Caroline Booth** stood down after six years as Treasurer and Trustee of the charity on November 19th. Caroline had been on the management committee since 1995 running Guiding at the Hall since that time. She has been a Trustee for six years and oversaw the handling of Village Hall finances over the rebuilding period. Gill Peters was appointed as Treasurer.

**Peter Bramley** stood down as Trustee of the charity on November 19th. Peter has been a trustee for 20 years, and was Treasurer and acting Chairman for many years. Peter maintained the charity with just two other Trustees, and it was through his efforts that the issue of a new Village Hall came to the fore. He petitioned the Parish Council and sought advice from an architect that ultimately led to the building of a new hall. **Shaun Morley** stood down as chair, but remains a Trustee.

**FINSTOCK LINK** is the Parish Council response to emergencies, especially heavy snow. A list of volunteers is maintained to help spread salt and grit, clear snow and assist in any emergency. Contact is by email. If you are able to

provide occasional help in the village please contact the Parish Clerk, June Pratley at [junepratley@btinternet.com](mailto:junepratley@btinternet.com) providing your name, address and email together with any specialist skills that would be useful in an emergency, just as first aid, elderly care, 4x4, etc.

### Finstock Festival

I hope you all had a great Christmas and wish you all a Happy New Year!

Finstock Festival 2018, although a great success, is now just a memory. The dates for this year's festival are **Friday June 21st and Saturday June 22nd**. Please put these dates on your calendar and in your diary as we can't wait to see you there!

We have a strong committee at the moment but could really do with a few more proactive people to join our team. Considering there is just one event per year, we meet around once a month at the most, always in the Plough so it's also a fun and social get together!

The busiest period is in the four days it takes to build, run and take down the festival. If anyone can help for any amount of time at all or would like to join the team give me a ring on 868215 or 07768 080994, email me on [colinstringfellow@btinternet.com](mailto:colinstringfellow@btinternet.com) or knock on my door: Riding Hill House, Wilcote Riding.

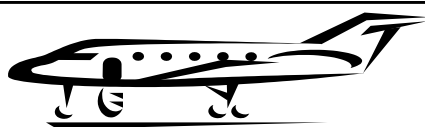
We had our AGM in January and unanimously agreed that making the Finstock Festival a free entry event was a great move and will continue for 2019. The officers will also remain the same for 2019: Colin Stringfellow (Chairman), Julie Stringfellow (Treasurer) and Pete Welply (Secretary). Furthermore, we have agreed that we would make a £500 donation in order to help the Village Shop this year.

Looking forward to next year, a few bands have already been booked. On the Friday we have **Growler** and **Paradox** and on Saturday **The Village Idiots**. So watch this space for any more additions!

Rock on Finstock Festival 2019!

Colin Stringfellow (Chairman)

**The Finstock Craft Club** meets in the Village Hall on Mondays at 7.30pm (except Bank Holidays). We welcome crafters of all levels.



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## On November 16th Finstock women got the vote!



A group of Finstock women decided that the important centenary of (partial) women's suffrage should be commemorated at the Local History Society. Therefore, four of us, with three friends from neighbouring villages, met to discuss, research, drink tea and have fun discovering what went on in Charlbury, Witney and Oxford, news of which must have reached Finstock too.

After a lot of investigation in Record offices and archives, things began to take shape. We agreed to begin the evening with a historical overview of the

work of activists from the late nineteenth century which led to the Suffragists' movement and to the more violent activities of Suffragettes; of opposition encountered and, as the Great War ended, final success.

The second half consisted of the re-enactment of a meeting held in the Corn Exchange in April 1914 and comprehensively reported in the Witney Gazette. To add local colour we wore (approximately) early 20th century dresses and hats, and we made and distributed 'favours' in the colours of the Suffragists and Suffragettes, respectively, crimson or violet, white and green ribbon. We drafted in two pathetic waifs selling matches (doubtless their mother was away, busy with political action!), and two doughty gentlemen who presented opposing points of view.

There was some convincing heckling from the well-attended meeting but finally most people were convinced that it would be **A Good Thing** for women to take their part in voting for the government.

So, sisters of Finstock, next time there is an election: Remember! And have your say.

Barbara Pensom

## News from the Parish Council

The last Parish Council meeting was held at the end of November so this report lacks the vitality of hot news somewhat. Nevertheless, certain decisions taken at the meeting remain important and relevant.

Budgeting for 2019-20 indicated a need to raise the precept by 5% or a £2.40p increase for Band D. This produces a total figure for the year of £20377. The PC attempts to minimise precept increases but our recent assumption of responsibility for the Churchyard and Burial Ground meant there was no alternative. Many residents value the Church and its surroundings as a spiritual haven and keeping

it in good order is an important part of Finstock community life.

The PC was informed that Shaun Morley has stepped down as Chairman of the Trustees of the Village Hall Charity. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to Shaun who has brought a level of enthusiasm and skill to both the actual building of our Hall and the very successful establishment of the numerous activities, many new, that now fill the Hall with life and enjoyment for so many of us. The new Chair is Mike Ruse.

It was decided that the notice boards in the village will be reduced to two: one outside the Shop, the other in the High Street. The other two, both in a bad state would not be worth the expense of repair. It was felt the village was very well served for information sharing via the PC web site and the *Finstock News*.

The PC has decided to initiate a drive to encourage WODC to support a small number of affordable houses in the village. We hope for a standalone development not allied to provision of more expensive houses for sale. This initiative has the overwhelming support of villagers as evidenced through all the surveys undertaken to identify local needs over the past few years.

The present Council's term of office ends this year and elections will be held in May. We are very keen to enlist new people to the Council and exhort those interested in serving to contact the Chairman, Mike Woodfield.

Hywel Davies for the Parish Council

### THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

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Tony Hirtenstein	868600	Proofing
Joy Murphy	868575	Editor
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Photographs thanks to staff members and others.

Read the *Finstock News* online at [www.finstock.org.uk](http://www.finstock.org.uk); join the Finstock Yahoo group – [groups.yahoo.com/group/finstock](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/finstock); or write to us at 63 High Street, Finstock Oxon OX7 3DA.

#### Plan ahead – Know the deadlines

Issue	Deadline
Feb/Mar	First of January
April/May	First of March
June/July	First of May
August/September	First of July
October/November	First of September
December/January	First of November

Please keep articles short. As space is limited, the Editors reserve the right to shorten long pieces in the interest of balance. *Finstock News* does not necessarily share the views expressed in readers' letters.

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## Finstock Baby and Toddler Group

Our group returned after the Christmas break on January 9th. We meet every Wednesday in term-time from 10-11.30am in the Village Hall. It is only £2 per family, which includes a snack for the little ones and hot/cold drinks for adults, plus there is always cake for the adults (kindly donated on a weekly rota basis by parents that attend).

During the autumn term we welcomed a Music Time session each half term, including singing, nursery rhymes and musical instruments, which have proved very popular! We hope to be able to offer these once every half term; look out for further details in our Facebook group. We also had a taster yoga session which was a new experience for many of our toddlers and much enjoyed too!

We offer a variety of toys each week to cater for all ages of our attendees (0 - 4 years) including baby toys/mat area, ride on toys, role play, trains sets, building blocks, books and puzzles. We also have a craft or activity each week, usually themed with the season, for anyone that would like to have a go! Over the next term we'll have some winter themed crafts and sensory play on offer.

If you haven't tried us out before, come along for your first free session! We look forward to seeing you there!

*Helen Fallows*

## Friends of Finstock School (FoFS)

FoFS had a busy late autumn term. We held or supported:

- A mini first aider course where the children learned first aid basics
- Christmas Fayre and raffle
- Eco-friendly bags with each child's own portrait on them
- Bags2school where we raise funds by recycling unwanted clothes

The autumn term also saw us complete our annual accounting and produce a list of how FoFS funds were spent during the last year. It's an achievement to be celebrated, thanks to all our supporters:

- Contributions to reduce the cost of school swimming lessons for families
- Contributions to reduce school trip travel costs for families
- Panto for children at Christmas (and we are pleased to subsidise the December 2018 whole-school trip to Chipping Norton theatre, too!)
- Learning resources including: Maths intervention kit, "No more Marking" comparative judgement subscription, Read Write Inc. phonics books, Bee-Bot Floor Robot Classroom set, EYFSequipment
- Outdoor learning resources including: Reading Shed Outdoor cushions, Sand and water storage, Water trays Ball set, EY builders shed, Toy storage
- Contribution towards the school's new Fire Alarm system
- Contribution towards the school's new interactive whiteboard

Our plans for next term for school children and their families include chocolate bingo and Valentines disco.

For the summer term, two school dads, Rob Barkworth and Paul Coombes, are in the midst of planning for a sponsored walk on June 1st along the challenging Wychwood Way. Joined on the walk by fellow enthusiastic walkers from the school community, the plan is to start and finish this walk at the Plough. At 37 miles it will be a VERY LONG day and big challenge even for experienced walkers. For those who want to take part but don't fancy the full distance, they can join at Charlbury at midday and walk the final 20 miles. All the participants will be raising sponsorship for their efforts. If you know someone taking part please support them. If you would like to sponsor the group as a whole or take part yourself please contact Rob Barkworth ([rbarkworth@finstock.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:rbarkworth@finstock.oxon.sch.uk)).

Dates for your diary, events open to the community:

**April 27th** – Evening Quiz at the Village Hall. Bookings taken via this web link [bit.ly/2siUOMo](http://bit.ly/2siUOMo)

**June 22nd** - School Summer Fete, to run with the Finstock Festival

*Dawn Simpkins*



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The Codfather Fish & Chip van  
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**Thank you for your  
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## COUNTRYSIDE CONSERVATION

*I'm a great believer in luck, and I find that the harder I work, the more I have of it.*  
*Thomas Jefferson*

**The Oxford Green Belt Way** is a fifty mile walk created by CPRE Oxfordshire around the Green Belt of Oxford. A new, updated colour guidebook with maps has just been published. Copies can be purchased from CPRE direct for £9.99 plus P&P. Please contact: administrator@cpreoxon.org.uk or Tel: 01491 612079.

### Walkers crisp packets

A free and simple way to recycle Walkers crisp packets ([www.walkers.co.uk/recycle](http://www.walkers.co.uk/recycle)) Walkers is aiming to make all their packaging 100% recyclable, compostable or biodegradable by 2025. In the meantime, they have partnered with recyclers TerraCycle to make it easier to recycle their crisp packets and reduce the impact they have on the environment. Sign up to TerraCycle where you can help fund charities and schools each time you recycle. Our nearest collection point: Hanborough Manor CE School; Riely Close, Long Hanborough, OX29 8DJ; open Monday-Friday 9am-3pm.

**An Urgent Message** to all who walk out at night, usually wearing black!

**Be seen at night,  
Wear something bright.**

**White clothing reflects light,  
Black clothing absorbs light.**

**Be seen at night,  
Wear something bright.**

**The 50th anniversary of  
Apollo 11's flight and the first two  
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### An interesting walk close to home

(1.25 - 1.5 hrs)

For this walk you need to drive to Ashford Mill and park; there is space for two cars where the Footpath starts, or on the green at the crossroads, also on the bridge. (On the bridge – keep a sharp look-out for Kingfishers.)

Once parked the Footpath is on the left of the road that heads towards East End. Walk in towards the river; this first bit is somewhat restricted, but follow the path along and you will see the river on your left. The banks are steep here, but very soon you come to a bend in the river and here is a super spot for dogs to get a swim, if so inclined. Continue on the path along by the river, watching the river but also the area on your right which climbs steeply upwards. There is much to see of interest here including the girth of

some of the trees and how they have several trunks.

Soon you will arrive at the railway bridge across the river; do stop and admire this incredible bridge in the middle of nowhere. The two extra arches must have been for farm machinery! Also keep a sharp eye on the river here because there are now at least two pairs of otters in this stretch of about a mile of river, and it is just fantastic to see them.

Continue on, slightly branching away and you will find yourselves coming out right at the bottom of Stonesfield Common, that fabulous place. Once through the gate, the walk turns right. Follow the path up (there are sometimes sheep around) through some new farm gates, past the farm track to your left, over the railway bridge, (I always climb on the ledge to look

over – fantastic!) past the entrance to The Roman Villa (go and have a look if you want to). Keep looking backwards because the views behind you are just wonderful. Then there is the last bit between hedges which is not too exciting. When you come out onto the road turn right; now there is about a 15 minute walk back to the car, but it is interesting. Keep looking across to your right, and walk on the right side of the road; there is a good verge to get onto! When you get to that amazing tunnel under the trees, keep looking right. The ground drops away so steeply it's incredible that the trees can grow and you can see the river, way down at the bottom, and how it meanders. Look up to the left also – interest everywhere! Then back to the car at the bottom!

**Viv Wightman**

### NICOLA MORGAN DC FMCA

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## County Council Report

Driving to Woodstock the other day, I counted over 120 separate patches of rubbish on the side of the road and that was while concentrating on driving so I am guessing that I probably missed quite a lot more! For some time now I have been concerned about the state of the verges in our area and beyond. West Oxfordshire is a tourist area and the impression that rubbish on the roadside gives to visitors is not a good one.

I brought the appearance of our roadsides up at WODC's Environment Committee some months ago, but without much success. The responsibility for cleaning the verges lies with WODC and of course, there is a cost involved in keeping them tidy, but that should not be an excuse. Ubico, the company that collects our rubbish and recycling, is jointly owned by WODC and several councils in Gloucestershire, so it ought to be possible to provide a service that keeps our countryside looking clean. The state of the roadsides is particularly noticeable at this time of year because the hedges are so bare, but the rubbish is there all year round.

I plan with my colleagues to ask WODC to consider what several other councils have done, which is to launch a campaign using the sides of bin lorries to remind people that throwing litter out of a car window carries a significant fine. This has been successfully adopted by several other councils across the country – we need to catch up!

On the subject of rubbish, Oxfordshire was recently named as the best performing county in the country for recycling! We recycle 57% of our rubbish, which is way ahead of the national average of 45%. Even better, we put the lowest amount of rubbish by weight into our general rubbish bins, which means less going to incineration or landfill. Nevertheless, there are many items that cannot be recycled, because the facility to do so doesn't exist. I will be following up the work that I did last year with officers, trying to find ways of improving our recycling rates even further.

**Liz Leffman**  
County and District Counsellor

## District Views

Blenheim Palace has been given permission by the District Council to erect a temporary mock Elizabethan theatre for a four month period running effectively from May to August 2019 with performances of our great national playwright William Shakespeare and attracting a wide audience from young people and tourists to our equally great cultural and heritage site in Woodstock.

Whilst, fully supporting and indeed proposing temporary consent be given, it is on the basis of one year only and it may well be that the temporary structure is better sited than the current proposal close to the palace. In addition a traffic management plan will have to be agreed. Historic England must also have no objections, but that aside, we welcome such a

cultural initiative that will attract many schoolchildren as well as support for the tourism industry that many of our towns and villages are reliant upon. This is a trial initiative which will be monitored and reviewed to ensure a win win outcome for everybody.

I want to thank everyone for their kind wishes on the news of my marriage to my wonderful partner, Ivan which will be taking place in early March. We have been together for over 15 years and we have finally decided to make the living partnership official, so to speak.

Needless to say with the coming of Brexit and whatever that brings, may I wish you all the kindest thoughts and good wishes? I am proud to be your councillor and will continue to represent you all of whatever political persuasion for the common good and preserving the Finstock village and village life.

**Cllr. Andy Graham**

*Commemorative coins issued this year: Sherlock Holmes a 50p coin to mark 160th birthday of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle; a £2 coin to mark the 75th anniversary of the D-day landings; a £5 coin to mark Queen Victoria's 200th birthday; and £2 coins to mark Samuel Pepys and, the 260th anniversary of Wedgwood pottery.*

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## Finstock C of E Primary School News

What a term we have had! The Year 6 children took part in Bikeability training over the first few weeks and all passed with flying colours. The roads of Finstock and surrounding areas will now be full of children with excellent knowledge of the Highway Code and how to ride safely.

Finstock opened its doors to prospective parents with an open morning and afternoon so that parents could not only see English and Maths being taught but the more creative subjects and the humanities, which are equally important to us.

The older children in Cedar Class had an amazing time at Warwick Castle where they enhanced their historical knowledge as well as got lost and found in the maze and took part in a falconry display. The Year 5 children from this class also attended a dance training session and then showed their newly-found skills to the rest of the school.

In late November the whole school boarded two buses (shockingly causing a traffic jam in Finstock) and headed to Chipping Norton to attend the pantomime *Aladdin*. The children loved the experience of travelling by coach and thoroughly enjoyed the show. We were very grateful to the volunteers who also came with us.

At the end of term, the key stage one children performed in the annual nativity entitled *Children of the World*. It was a much more ambitious project this year and the children, including our nursery, performed brilliantly – not a dry eye in the house!

Also in December, we invited parents, carers and residents of Finstock to join us for **Carols around the Tree** where all the children sang three beautiful carols in the school grounds. We then had refreshments, activities, stalls and a raffle with numerous prizes in the school hall. This was to raise money for the school and was supported by our brilliant Friends of Finstock School.

Finally, to finish the term, the children made their own Christingles which they took to the church service with our vicar, Paul Mansell. It was a wonderful service and a super way to finish the term.

We are looking forward to the term

ahead with many sporting activities, outdoor learning and exciting learning experiences planned.

*Laura Dodgson-Hatto Headteacher*

Our term ends on Friday February 15th at 3pm and Term 4 begins on Monday February 25th at 8:40am.

## Donald Raymond Quibell 1924 - 2018

Don was born in 1924 in Lincolnshire, and after school he started on his career as a Gamekeeper. When the 2nd World War came along he joined the RAF Regiment and began active service. He received a severe head injury in 1945, and was being treated in the Churchill Hospital in Oxford. He had met Joan the year before, and they had arranged to be married on December 19th. He was allowed out of hospital to marry Joan, have a short honeymoon and be back in hospital on December 27th. Because of the head injury he was demobbed in 1946. They moved back to Lincolnshire, and Don resumed his career in Game-keeping.

They moved to Welcome's Gamekeepers Cottage in 1961 where Don became gamekeeper on the Wilcote Estate. In 1989 Don was presented with a medal by the Queen for long service to Gamekeeping; a medal he was very proud of!

When he retired, they moved to Ridings Cottage half-way between Finstock and Wilcote, but he continued to go 'beating' for many years.

Don had a long and happy life. He and Joan had two daughters, four grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. They enjoyed 73 years of married life!

I just have to mention here that Don and Reg Howse, obituary in the last Newsletter, and their wives are the two couples I wrote about when they were celebrating their Platinum Anniversaries, 70 years of marriage, three years ago. That both should go on for another three years and die within a few months of each other, is incredible. Both wives had worked together at Wilcote House for many years.

*Viv Wightman*

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## **Ernest Claridge continued from December/ January Finstock News issue**

The experiences of Ernest Claridge's two brothers, who both survived the war, had a profound bearing on both their future lives.

Albert, the oldest who joined the army before the war as a boy soldier, also saw much action in the first three years of conflict before being posted to Malta as valet to the Commander in Chief of the Malta Garrison. While there he met and married a local girl.

After the war he continued his army career in the London area. Tragically his wife died in 1928 leaving him with five children to care for. He later remarried, this union producing a second daughter. He eventually left the army and became a policeman in London, settling in the Greater London area.

Albert visited Finstock regularly to see his relatives and his ashes are buried in his parent's grave in the churchyard in what was known as 'Claridge's row'.

His three oldest sons and daughter served with great distinction in World War Two. One, an RAF aircrew member, was killed on a raid on Berlin in December 1943. The daughter of the second marriage was evacuated to Finstock for awhile during the 2nd World War living with her grandmother at No 2 Watney Cottages.

Hubert, the younger brother's war was much shorter, but still quite dramatic. Possibly influenced by that famous recruiting poster depicting Field Marshall Lord Kitchener gazing

sternly at the viewer, with his arm outstretched and pointing finger and those famous words Your Country needs you he advanced his age, as did many other young men – for some a fatal mistake, and in 1917 he was called up.

Initially he was sent to Belfast to join the Royal Irish Rifles. Why a youth from rural

Oxfordshire was sent to join an Irish regiment is anyone's guess! After extensive training, he was transferred to the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, who had suffered heavy losses – and were still engaged in the on-going battle of Passchendaele.

Hubert's time in the front line was very short, he quickly 'stopped a Blighty one' – army slang for a wound serious enough to be sent back to England for intensive hospital treatment. His lower left leg had been shattered by an enemy bullet. By the time he had recovered, the war was over.

After being discharged from the army he emigrated to Australia together with his cousin Ernest Kite another Finstock man to work on a sheep farm. In 1929, on hearing his father had a terminal illness, he returned to Finstock taking his father's place as a forester on the Cornbury Park Estate. He married and started a new life living on Finstock Heath and raising three children.

In 1939 on the outbreak of the 2nd World War, at the age of 39, he volunteered for the RAF, having in his

words 'unfinished business' with the Germans. He was demobbed in 1946, returning to Finstock to carry on life as before.

After retiring from work, he and his wife moved to Witney where members of his family were living. He died in the 1970's. He is thought to be the only Finstock man to have served in the Armed Forces in both World Wars.

*Jim Claridge*

### **Remembrance Sunday**

Sunday November 11th 2018 marked the 100th anniversary of the end of the Great War. Finstock held its annual service with the Rev. Paul Mansell leading, the Brownies and Guides reading out the names of those from Finstock who died in both WWI and WWII; Mrs Stacey read the names of those from Fawler. Five wreaths were laid, Lenny Nicholls read a poem and last post taps was played. Thanks go to Viv Wightman who organised the street closure to ensure the large crowd could safely participate in the service. Thanks also go to Lenny Nicholls for his overall organisation of the service, the decoration of the War Memorial and the various parties who participated.

The Poppy collection in Finstock was £760.62.

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## Our MP reports on the NHS

We all have a personal story of how the NHS has provided help and care when it was most needed. It is an institution that has been there for our family, our friends and for those who have no one else to turn to. The NHS has a special place in our hearts, and it is right that we ensure it is protected and supported for future generations.

In January, the Government launched its NHS Long Term Plan: a 10-year plan setting out how our NHS will continue to help those who need it most, overcoming challenges and making the most of opportunities in the years to come. This Plan has been developed and driven by clinicians, medical experts and perhaps most importantly, patients. I welcome the content of the Plan and its central principle, in particular, that prevention is better than cure. This is what our modern, growing population needs: support to keep people healthy, with a focus on preventing illness as much as curing it.

Of the £20.5 billion that will be injected into the NHS over the next five years, the biggest increase in funding will go to primary and community care. GPs are the bedrock of our NHS

— especially in rural areas such as West Oxfordshire — and it is right that our GPs receive this increased support for the vital work that they do. When I am out and about knocking on doors in the local area, the importance of GP services is frequently raised by constituents, so I know this will be welcome news locally.

Other elements of the plan include — but are not limited to — a flagship ambition to improve cancer survival rates with earlier screening programmes and diagnosis; improvements in the prevention, detection and treatment of cardiovascular diseases; better access to mental health services; fighting inequalities by expanding support for veterans and 'care after custody' services; making digital health services a mainstream part of the NHS; and making the NHS a world-class employer, focusing on the improvement of working conditions for those who have dedicated their lives to helping others.

In the coming months, NHS services will work with communities to shape how this will look at a local level, ensuring each area has the right support according to local needs.

Again, this is welcome news as the needs of West Oxfordshire healthcare services are entirely different to those in, say, Manchester, and it is right that this is reflected in the Long Term Plan.

This new vision for our NHS—along with the management and funding to deliver it—is something to be celebrated, and it is a hugely encouraging step forward for the future of health care services.

*Robert Courts, MP*

## A Potted History!

After passing the Eleven Plus I went to Wokingham County Girl's School where I achieved the six O Levels, plus another in Human Biology to start on my Nursing Career when I became 18. I applied to The United Oxford Hospitals, which consisted of The Radcliffe Infirmary, Churchill, Slade (infectious diseases), Osler and Sunnyside (T.B and T.B Meningitis). We had to cover all these hospitals during our three year training and we had to sign up for a fourth year as a Staff Nurse to repay the hospital for our training. There was not a shortage of nurses back then because there were four intakes of 30 nurses coming in every year and staying for four years. (Why have they got it so wrong these days?)

As an SRN (State Registered Nurse) I completed my fourth year as a Staff Nurse on a Male Surgical Ward. From there I went to Chiswick Maternity Hospital, which is a branch of The West Middlesex to do Part 1 training to be a midwife. This six month course taught us how to examine and manage normal deliveries. I continued my midwifery training Part 2 at Battle Hospital, Reading. You worked three months in hospital, again learning all about delivering, but also all the complications that might occur. After the three months you were despatched to the District. I was stationed in Reading itself. I was given a black Ford Poplar car and sent to join any of the midwives who had their 'districts' in the whole of the Reading Area. *(Continued on page 11)*

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## A Potted History! Continues



At that time most 'first' babies were delivered in hospital, but all other babies, unless any abnormality was discovered, were delivered at home. Before delivery you saw all pregnant women regularly at clinics and anti-natal classes. After delivery, all patients were visited twice daily for five days, then once daily for another five days.

They were all encouraged and helped to learn how to breastfeed. It was just fantastic. There was back-up if you had problems. All GP's could do forceps deliveries, - if you needed more help, you sent the husband to call a number and ask for either the Obstetric Flying Squad - with registrar, houseman, anaesthetist if needed, or the Baby Flying Squad - with paediatrician, houseman, incubator etc., and they came 'flying'! I could tell you some fantastic stories!

I should add here that there was a Central Sterilizing Unit near the centre of Reading. Each midwife had a large round drum that contained sterile forceps, scissors, kidney dish, swabs, towels etc. - basically you had everything you needed for a safe and infection free delivery. This was all packed and sterilized at the centre. We would dash in, dump the used drum and collect a sterile one - or two in my case! It was a fantastic system!

After this second six months you took another exam in London - I became an SCM (State Certified Midwife). I really enjoyed my training on the district very much - this was noted, and I was asked to stay on as a District Midwife after I qualified. I said I would love to, but I couldn't because I would not take a 'District'. My excuse was that at the tender age of 23 years I couldn't make that commitment. All the midwives in the district were spinsters! You were on call 24/7 with one day off a week.

Guess what? They created a new position of 'Relief Midwife' just for me! Up to that point the midwife in the next district would cover for the other midwife on her day-off or holiday. I took the position and of course, was well-used! I was on-call for 1 - 2 midwives every day/night, as well as being called out for deliveries, I covered all their house visits and clinics as well. I covered the whole of Reading, Caversham, Tilehurst, Earley, Woodley; I absolutely loved it. This was all through the winter of '62/'63 so I was always being dug-out, delivering babies with no water or heating, etc. Such an incredible time! I carried on thus for some time, but gradually got completely exhausted - finally collapsed in a house, and was hospitalised with Bornholm's Disease. I wasn't off long, but realized life was flashing by, so after some time and much thought, I decided I had better return to a normal life. I came back to Oxford to work on the Labour Ward at the Nuffield Maternity Home, part of the Radcliffe Infirmary. (Did I say Normal Life?)

I started back as a Staff Nurse, but was quickly upgraded to Sister. On the Labour Ward things were different, not only were you delivering babies you were teaching Pupil Midwives and Student Doctors, you were arranging Caesarean sections, scrubbing-up, organizing forceps deliveries, stitching- up. There was not much of that work in the District!

Of course there wasn't the same relationship with the patient as you didn't know them beforehand and didn't see them afterwards. I made myself go and see every Mum I delivered afterwards on the postnatal ward; otherwise I was just a pair of eyes behind a mask!

A year or so after returning to Oxford, I met Bev on a 'Blind Date' at the Police Ball in The Bear Hotel in Woodstock. It was a memorable evening, and Bev and I were married the following September 11th. I was living in Great Clarendon Street and my friend moved out, the landlord redecorated whilst we were on honeymoon, and Bev moved in! I carried on working on the Labour Ward. They allowed me to work a straight day from 8am to 5.30pm, one weekend a month and I was 'on-call' several times a month for the Flying Squad when you had to 'sleep-in'.

It was still a busy and exciting time. One day in particular springs to mind. I went on duty as usual at 8am. I was the only trained member of staff on that day so had to be at every delivery. (I got home at 11.30pm. Bev was worried sick because there were no 'phones in flats or mobile phones) I was the midwife in charge at 27 deliveries, of which three were Caesarean Sections, 21 forceps deliveries, and three normal deliveries! - I had to organise and 'scrub up' to assist at the caesareans, assist at all the forceps, and teach a pupil-midwife with the normal deliveries - also write up all the notes! Luckily I had an orderly who did all the 'clearing up' for me.

I can say honestly say that that was my busiest day ever! And the most productive!

*To be continued --*

*Viv Wightman*

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## Looking forward to a new gardening year



The morning sparkle of frost or snow on the shrubs brings a magical feel to the garden. This is one of my most favourite times of the gardening year bringing a wake-up call to gardeners with snowdrops, punctuated by pinks of Cyclamen coum and the rich reds of Hellebore flowers. Take a woodland walk in Sherbourne Park with drifts of snowdrops and then through the pretty Sherbourne

village, along the road beside the river and cascade, and enjoy a delicious snack at the PO and shop. Other special walks with snowdrop collections, crocus and cyclamen can be enjoyed at Evenly Wood Gardens or Colesbourne Park.

Some snowdrops started flowering in November, and over Christmas were joined by yellow climbing jasmine. Early growth of *Bergenia* (Elephants ears), produces new green leaves and bright magenta-pink flowers in erect clusters on red stems. I also treasure the witch hazels, covered with trailing red tassels of flowers, and producing their spicy perfume, enriching the winter garden.

The weather being so mild over this Christmas has allowed many pests a longer time to cause more havoc. It confused many more delicate plants into flowering early, only to be caught out by a sharp frost. So covering with fleece when the next frost threatens may save the day.

On wet or cold days, it is a good time to catch up with the jobs that need attention, like checking my trusty Felcro secateurs (some 50+ years old) that I inherited from my mother. Clean the blades with some fine wire wool and use a sharpening stone to get a keen edge, then spray them with some disinfectant to avoid spreading any diseases and finally oil them. Shears are treated in the same way, sharp edges are put on the hoes and spades making them easier to use, and the wooden handles given a wipe with some linseed oil. To ensure no diseases get transferred to new seedlings, it is a good time to wash your seed trays and pots. Repair valuable large clay patio pots, by cleaning the break and using araldite, making them whole again and ready for action.

After the bulbs have flowered I give them time to build up their bulbs, letting the foliage continue and die down naturally.

Why not enjoy the challenge of trying a new seed variety or plant, for the New Year, giving a treat in the coming months.

Robert

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## The Oxfordshire Museum Woodstock

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