

Sponsored by Rosebank Care Home

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the March Lowdown! Like our cover photo, there is colour appearing and - whisper it quietly - things really are looking brighter.

Huge thanks to everyone who sent in stories and pictures, please do keep sending in your thoughts, photos, comments, jokes, tales, we always love to hear from you!

Special thanks as always to our sponsors who keep the Lowdown going and especially to Rosebank Care Home for their support for this March issue.

A very special birthday!!

Rosebank resident Ruby celebrated her 100th birthday on 23rd February!

Happy Birthday Ruby from the Lowdown Team and from all of our readers!!

Thank you for the lovely photos!





We look forward to bringing you more news of businesses, eateries, pubs, shops and more - many old and some new, as they open up!

Please keep in touch via our Facebook page and by email at **thelockdownpress@gmail.com**.

Happy reading!

The Lowdown Team aka Amelia, Alison, Sue, Rhiannon, Maurizio and Adam

Cover Photo: Crocuses at Manor House (with acknowledgement)





Emergency and Health Services

Bampton Surgery

Call first on 01993 850257 Monday – Friday: 8.30am - 6.30pm Saturday and Sunday: Closed

Pharmacy (Bampton Healthcare Ltd)

Tel: 01993 851961 Mon-Fri 9am to 1pm, 2pm to 6pm Sat 9am to 12noon

Bampton Post Office

Mon-Fri 09.00-17.30 Wed CLOSED Sat 09.00-12.30

Bampton Parish Council

Tel: 01993 851870 www.bamptonoxon-parishcouncil.gov.uk

There may be light at the end of the rail tunnel.



On Friday 5th March Oxford Witnev Transport (WOT) filed a comprehensive application for а feasibility study on a possible rail link from Oxford to Carterton (via Evnsham and Witney). The application is

to request consideration for reopening or rebuilding rail links or providing new ones where these did not previously exist. The Oxford/Carterton situation covers a bit of both since parts of the old rail infrastructure still exist, others have long disappeared or have been built over.

The feasibility study (if approved) is just that: a detailed study of the proposal's strengths and weaknesses and its subsequent move from feasibility to planning and so on. Therefore, it's just the start of what - for most infrastructure projects in the UK - could be a very long process. Nonetheless, it is essential to put forward as strong a case as possible, which is precisely what Witney Oxford Transport has done.

In the course of our work, it was gratifying to receive letters of support from virtually all of the



local political representatives, across every party, and other bodies like Oxford University and RAF Brize Norton.

This situation reflects the results of the survey carried out by WOT while showing a 97% approval for a rail link as a transport alternative for the District.

As our work became more public, we were asked specific questions about the final route, to the point that some people even contacted us for fear that we were recommending the demolition of a dwelling! Far from it. The route map is just a way of joining dots so that external assessors can understand the closeness of a possible line to the district's population, other infrastructure and so on. If the proposal (way down the line if you permit the pun) is eventually approved, it will be subject to intense planning from engineers, economists, and the people living in the District. Only if enough people continue to support us, we will have a stronger voice, and a rail line could become a reality.

More information can be found at the website www.witneyoxfordtransport.org.uk

Maurizio Fantato March 2021

The Old Grammar School Our Exciting Future!

After a magnificent fundraising effort, this historic building was completely reroofed in the summer of 2017.

Now thanks to lots more hard work and generous support from the landlords (Bampton Exhibition Foundation), WODC and all our visitors, sufficient funds have been raised to carry out our long-planned improvements to the interior of the building.



The Upstairs Room

A new staircase will create access to the wonderful upstairs space which hasn't been accessible since the early 1960's.

This new space will be used as our main exhibition room. Normally we present three exhibitions every year all with a local interest. We also host exhibitions with West Ox Arts. In addition, we will encourage local groups to utilise the space for community talks, workshops etc.

The Bampton Archive will also install the latest technology to allow individuals and groups to access and research the substantial Bampton Archive: both the database itself, and the wide range of books, exhibition catalogues, audio and video recordings.

The space and furniture will be modular and totally flexible to create a fantastic community space and we will encourage locals to explore, use and get involved in it.

The Robert Vesey Room

A new door to access the ground-floor Vesey Room will be created and the room itself will be sensitively refurbished and fitted out with new storage and display furniture.

We will continue to use this space to sell our fantastic range of Bampton Archive books and catalogues; and the excellent range of local arts, crafts, cards, prints and Downton Abbey memorabilia. We would also like to introduce an enhanced range of items for sale that are made or produced locally.

We will also display some smaller more general exhibition panels designed to be of general interest to all visitors. There will be information on the history of the village of Bampton and related activities.

Bampton Library

The library area, also located on the groundfloor, will also be completely refurbished with a dedicated doorway created beyond the staircase. A modern shelving system is planned which will allow flexible use of the library space and create room for extra book stock. There will be a new counter area and the very latest in computer technology for use by the general public.

A new kitchen area will be created and a stair lift is also planned to allow access for all to the upstairs space.

Talks and Workshops

As well as staging exhibitions, the Archive also plan to use the space upstairs and the space in the newly designed library to hold a wide range of community events.

A regular programme of talks, workshops and small events is being put together. This will include, for example:

- Workshops to encourage youngsters to sign up for apprenticeships for some of the historical trades – for example Dry Stone Walling, Carpentry and Joinery, Thatching and Classic Car Restoration
- Alternative Medicine Exploring the Village Herbal
- Nature and the Natural World
- Environment and Sustainability
- Cycling & Walking

- Health & Fitness
- Wellbeing & Mental Health
- Book readings and signings with visiting Authors
- Recitals
- Creative writing
- Children's events
- Local History
- Arts & Crafts
- IT Access for all
- Film Shows
- and much more

Storage

Part of the project is to create the maximum amount of storage both upstairs and downstairs. We have many items and artefacts that have been acquired or donated to the Archive over the years and we want to be able to store and manage as many of these as possible on site.

Get Involved!

We welcome anyone who would like to get involved with the Bampton Archive, Bampton Library or Bampton Exhibition Foundation. We always need volunteers.

If you would be interested in presenting a talk, holding a workshop or other activity, please get in touch. Be part of this exciting community hub.

For more information or to find out what opportunities there are to get involved, please contact:

Jenny Chaundy jenny.chaundy@gmail.com



Abigail's Worry Journal ~ Win a free copy!



book. decided worries Ι to create a worry track their uses World.

When T vounger, whenever T

as I imagined the worry leaving my body of winning it! through the pencil and onto the page, knowing I could shut the book and leave myabigailsworld.com the worry behind. As part of my ongoing Instagram: mental health, keeping a journal is such an abigailsworldofficial important part of my routine that I still love Facebook: to do, even as an adult.

A colourful and helpful worry journal Following on from for your little ones to fill out when they my children's story feel anxious and want to write their down. They will be able to progress and look back on journal that Abigail what techniques they used when they were in Abigail's feeling worried. I love to leave everyday on a positive note so there is a space for them to draw and write their happy was thoughts before bed.

had worries I To celebrate my new journal, I am always wrote them giving away a copy! Send your name down in a journal, into The Lowdown to be in with a chance

Abigails World



Book available from: Amazon / The Shop - Witney

A poem by Witney poet Linda Stringer specially written for the Lowdown! Thank you Linda!



Bampton an ancient market town A pub is situated called 'The Morris Clown ' 'Bampton-in-the-Bush' was first known On common land it stood alone Famous for Days of Dance Morris Dancers take their chance Bells on their shin Wow! How they spin Excitement of Downton Abbev has arrived The town is revived Residents graced with Lord and Lady Granthams presence Everyone wants to make their acquaintance Will they get invited to a wedding or two? St Mary's church to sit in a pew Every year swifts do nest Bampton love to have them as guest Town or village, pretty to see No one will disagree.

Linda has had her poems published in the local press including the Witney Gazette and in the Cambridge-Hall Poetry Journal. Read more of her poems on Facebook at 'Poems in Linda's world'.

A reader writes ... 'My name is Barry Hudson I live in Bushey Row. On a whim I threw these few hopefully apt words together in the hope that they will resonate with folks. A few year ago I used to write Monthly articles for the Oxford Times and I am also the Secretary for the Oxford Ornithological Society and have included in this email a rather nice photograph of a Jenny Wren that I snapped a short time ago, you are of course welcome to use either for your publication.

Best Wishes, Barry Hudson'

Thank you Barry!



Trying Times

Lock down Shock down Knock down Look up Keep up Raise up No despair no unfair no unaware All together all the other all the brother Beat it greet it defeat it New unseen new has been new Vaccine With hope with cope with soap We Will win put in the bin stand firm as kin Look ahead look no dread look to our daily bread Make it late sell by date and celebrate Streaming light put it to flight future bright Believe in belief grit your teeth British beef Just you see all soon just a memory and back to afternoon tea.

RAF Brize Norton in Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Trial

RAF Brize Norton has been conducting trials of three new Ultra Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) across the Station.

The trial provided the opportunity to assess the potential use of the new vehicles to replace the conventional diesel engine models currently used around the unit. This trial forms part of a series of initiatives as we strive to continue the move towards more sustainable and eco-friendly ways of working, whilst ensuring the Station meets its aspiration of reducing its carbon emissions and providing a healthier environment for those on the base and into the local community.

The three ULEVs delivered by ePowerTrucks where deployed across several areas on the Station including 47 Sqn, 99 Sqn and Ground Engineering Flight. A number of personnel where trained in the use and maintenance of the ULEVs and tasked to assess the vehicles as they undertook normal day-to-day activities and provide feedback on the performance of each.

The trial offered a great opportunity for personnel to see first-hand the advantages that these vehicles can bring over the current Mechanical Transport fleet. These included the employment of new technology to improve safety to both personal and equipment through the ability to programme speed limits and employ collision avoidance systems when operating around aircraft and equipment.

The trial will provide invaluable user input in helping to select the best ULEV to meet the demands of busy Main Operating Bases across the RAF.









James Watt from BBC Radio Oxford with the Lowdown cover from Issue 14 of October 2020 which he drew specially for us!

STATEMENT FROM BAMPTON PARISH COUNCIL

We are delighted to announce that Abdul Bajwa, Bampton's Postmaster since 2010, has signed a new lease with the Parish Council for the Post Office in the Town Hall.

With so many rural towns losing their post offices, to be able to retain ours for the next few years is something we are really pleased about, and we know how important the Post Office is for so many people in the community.

Abdul came to Bampton in April 2010 when the Post Office was then in Bridge Street. Later that year it moved to the Town Hall where we can now see it staying for some time to come. We would like to thank Abdul and his family for the fantastic service they continue to provide to the community.



Memorial bench in Aston for Richard Godwin



In August 2020 Richard Godwin the greatly loved local postman, passed away suddenly and a fundraiser was started by his family, friends and customers to create a memorial to him in the form of a bench in Aston.

The page raised over £1,000 from which the bench was paid and the excess funds were donated to The Oxford Heart Centre in accordance with Richard's daughter's wishes.

The bench is now in place and looks wonderful along one of his many postie routes.

Rest in Peace Richard.



CATCHING UP WITH ...

LOCAL HISTORIAN JULIE ANN GODSON

Over the months in the Lowdown, we've published plenty of fascinating stories and photos from Julie Ann's books. Let's hear more about the lady herself!

Hundreds of years ago I studied history at Oxford university and also trained in journalism, so I suppose I am a perfect storm of history publishing. Shortly after I relocated from Kent to Oxfordshire in 2010, the true Cinderella-story fell into my lap of a local Thames fisherman's daughter who married a viscount, hence my first book The Water Gypsy: how a fishergirl became a viscountess. And what a gift it was, with so much of the action taking place locally. Guardians defied, aristocratic duels, dazzling Court balls, fabulous country houses and revolting peasants – all the greatest hits of the Georgian era are here.





Invitations to speak to history societies soon followed, and this opened up a delightful way of meeting others with an interest in Oxfordshire's past – and that includes you, lovely Clanfield & Bampton Historical Society. I miss you.

There's no way round it: I'm an incomer; I'd soon be caught out if I pretended otherwise. And Bampton has its own local expert in Janet Rouse. I'd like to say right here how grateful I am to this generous lady who knows so much more about the village than I do. Whisper it, but not all established local historians welcomed my sudden appearance on the scene so kindly!

Whilst I continue to write, I have during this last difficult year increased my output on Facebook because, for me and I think maybe for others too, history is a great way to step into another world and forget your troubles.

Well, you've had your year off from my talks, so stand by because the books keep coming, and I'm looking forward to meeting as many of you as possible once things are a bit more normal.

Julie Ann Godson www.julieanngodson.com Facebook @julieanngodson





The small, Chinese muntjac deer was introduced to Woburn Park in Bedfordshire at the start of the 20th century and rapidly spread into the surrounding area.

It is now a common animal across South East England and can be found in woodland, parkland and even gardens. Muntjac deer are notorious browsers, eating the shoots from shrubs, as well as woodland herbs and Brambles.

Male Muntjacs have short, unbranched antlers that slope backwards, and a pair of long canine teeth. They breed all year-round, but females usually only have one kid at a time. Muntjac deer are also known as 'barking deer' because of their dog-like calls.

The deer is pictured in the Shill Brook at the bottom of our garden.



NATURE NOTES with

Annie Jenkin

Enjoying a few spring walks with the dogs I loved the prettiness of the pussy willow and early spring blossom. I was surprised today when walking across the meadow near the base to see 2 butterflies. The first a Peacock, which apparently can create a type of antifreeze in its body to venture out after winter hibernation when a sunny day strikes. The second a Brimstone, an early butterfly which can feed on Alder (there are a few trees by the footpath opposite Cobb house.

Sparrowhawks by Andrew Mann



Many people are shocked and surprised by an unusual and dramatic garden visitor that causes a flurry amongst the local bird populations. Nine times out of ten the most likely bird of prey garden sighting proves to be a Sparrowhawk.

Our garden bird feeding stations attract just the right prey for these stealthy hawks,

which very often dash through the undergrowth on a smash and grab raid looking for unsuspecting victims. The female bird is mainly brown on the back with brown and white barred markings on the underside. The smaller male is blue-grey on the back with rufous-orange barred markings underneath. The tail on both birds is fairly long, and if you are lucky to get a good view you will see its menacing-looking bright yellow eye.

I recently had one visit my garden (see photo) and unusually it wasn't a quick visit but stayed on my fence for over an hour and a half. The local House Sparrow population laid low for a longer than usual time! I'm wondering if anyone can beat this time for a length of garden visit by a Sparrowhawk?

Andrew Mann runs guided birdwatching walks locally and further afield.

See https://www.meetup.com/Magic-Moments-With-Birds/ or email magicmomentswithbirds@gmail.com for more information.





Announcements

FREE ONLINE COVID FITNESS CLASSES

Tom Wattleworth

'Established in 2006, TW-FITNESS has been offering professional personal training for individuals or couples and a variety of fun energetic fitness classes suitable for all'

Currently classes run on a 3 week cycle, 2 weeks of evening sessions 18:30-19:15 Mon, wed & Fri 1 week lunchtime 12:00-12:30. I also run a session 09:00-09:40 every Saturday My group sessions are tailored so any ability can train and enjoy using the free zoom app.

People can contact me for details: 07892945050

Facebook:https://www.facebook.com/TW-Fitness-243069285715863/

Zumba with Eugenie.

Currently offering Livestream & prerecorded sessions.

Forget the world for a while and dance! Whether you're working from home, juggling home schooling or isolating my aim is to bring some fun and awesome music, keep you moving, make you smile, increase your step count and have a great workout. Visit my facebook page or please do get in touch if you'd like to find out more!

www.facebook.com/EugenieZumba; @EugenieZumba;twitter.com/EugenieZumba; EugenieZumba@outlook.com

A & D Garden Maintenance

For all your garden maintenance and fencing needs. Family run business. For a free no obligation quote contact us on 07827 968138 or 07795 570222 Email: donnandy@adgarden.co.uk

Hidden Gardens

Sunday 13 June 2 - 6 pm

Happily we have all been enjoying our outdoor spaces this year, with many hours spent tending our gardens, with this in mind a date has been chosen for Hidden Gardens. Please put this in your diaries, go out and visit the Garden Centres which are open throughout lockdown - and get ready!Further details of the Garage Sale and Hidden Gardens will be delivered to your door in the new year. In the meantime enjoy this winter sunshine and do get in touch if you have any queries.

Hidden Gardens Team Angie 01993 851095 or Jo 01993 850947

Gardening Job Vacancy

Rivermead Gardening is looking for a gardener to join our friendly, professional team in the Bampton/Buckland area. Good gardening skills required. RHS qualification desirable. Please contact me for further details: Salima Mcknight 07554 606569 rivermeadgardening@outlook.com

BELLA BAMPTON PIZZAS

Bampton Coffee House Freshly made pizza and more available for delivery or collection within a 5 mile radius from Bampton. 7 days a week from 2pm-10pm. Tel 01993 850929 and check Facebook @ thebellabampton for full menu.

BAMPTON CHARITY SHOP

Planning to reopen on Monday 12th April

We hope to welcome back customers from Monday 12th April.

Despite not being able to open fully since the original lockdown we want to say a huge thank you to the tremendous support of our customers and volunteers and the amazing donations for stock that we've received. This means we have been able to award grants this March of £23,500 to support many local organisations, groups, schools, projects and sports clubs.

We are so looking forward to seeing all our regular customers and any who have yet to discover this little village gem. There is lots of new stock to tempt you so we look forward to seeing you in April. Mon 10am - 1pm Tues - Thurs 10am - 4pm Fri 10am - 1pm Alt Sats 10am -1pm

NO DONATIONS UNTIL 30th APRIL PLEASE. DONATIONS CAN ONLY BE ACCEPTED ON FRIDAY AFTERNOONS BETWEEN 1pm and 4pm



Childcare

Do you need childcare in the holidays where your child can have lots of fun and make new friends?

Easter holiday club will be open from Tuesday 6th-Friday 9th and Monday 12th-Friday 16th April 8.30-3.30pm

Please email me at vickysholidayclubbookings@ gmail.com to book your space. We have lots of fun activities planned!

Spring is around the corner

Kids back to school, parents getting their lives back, vaccinations being rolled out - all these are happy, positive thoughts; stay safe and focused everyone, the end is getting closer!

Guy Lennon, resident counsellor at the Wellness rooms above Flawless Finish

THE BAMPTON VILLAGE GARAGE SALE & HIDDEN GARDENS OF BAMPTON ARE BACK!

Sunday June 13th 2021

The village wide garage sale will hopefully take place this year with many houses taking part and some great bargains to be found. The event takes place between 10am - 1pm.

In the afternoon explore the Hidden Gardens of Bampton from 2pm usually with over 20 private gardens open to the public. Entry is \pounds_3

There's lots more going on in the village that day with plenty of refreshments and food available during the day. The events raise money for Bampton Library and Bampton Community Archive If you would like to take part in the Garage Sale please email jenny.chaundy@gmail.com or call 01993 850918 for an application form, it's £10 to enter. If you would like to open your garden please phone Angie Bell on 07904 066339 for more details and a form.





Welcome to the first Astonbury Music Festival!

Fri 20th - Sun 22nd August 2021 A family friendly festival in the village of Aston, Oxfordshire

Two stages, a full bar including real ale & cider, and food

Saturday Night Headliner TOYAH WILLCOX

Travel mayhem in Bampton!

If you came to our lovely village for the first time this month, your first impression would be that of a building site. There are building works in the new housing estate on the Aston Road, building works in the heart of the village on the Lavender place flats, with a big crane now adorning the Bampton skyline, temporary traffic lights and at least three collapsed drywalls.

That is, if you made it safely to Bampton, given the parlous conditions of some of the roads leading into it, particularly the B4449 from Aston, not to the mention the now-about-to-collapse Aston Road into the A415.Once you drove into Bampton, you would have a job not just negotiating some of the chicanes, which do nothing now to slow the traffic down except creating another hazard, but also all the cars that are now parked everywhere and have made some of the already narrow roads almost impassable.

Not exactly a great first impression......

What are your thoughts?! Email the Lowdown at thelockdownpress@gmail.com' and join the debate!

FREE children's activities, FREE parking Camping available nearby

Aston & Cote Village Hall, Cote Road, Aston, OX18 2DZ

We shall be making donations to two charities: Cancer Research, Aston & Cote Community Trust and MIND

Volunteers needed - Please see our volunteer page if you are interested

Paintings by Ray Jackson Witney Butter Cross



A 1930s GWR coach on Witney High Street to Cheltenham



News from West Ox Arts WOA Springs into action!

We are excited to say that we can see the end of lockdown as we prepare for Oxfordshire Art Weeks. This county-wide annual show is open to all artists - professional and amateur alike for the whole month of May. If you're visiting, you might see flags or posters outside homes or village halls or, in our case, the lovely Gallery in Bampton. Across the county there will be a total of 250 venues to visit, plus 500 virtual exhibitions. This year there will be a stronger online presence on most social media platforms and virtual catalogue flipbooks replacing the printed version.

At West Ox Arts we will show nine artists with a wide range of 2D and 3D work for sale including paintings, textiles, and ceramics.

You can see more from all our artists on our website and Artweeks page here: www.artweeks.org/festival/2021/west-ox-arts

We look forward to seeing you in May! As a taster, here are a few of the artists and what they will be showcasing ...

Hannah Vickery WOA

Having trained and worked as a graphic designer, Hannah now paints in acrylic and mixed media. Her work is inspired by her surroundings and inner life. Primarily abstract, her work leaves the viewer to engage with each painting on multiple levels.

A Sense of Summer (Acrylic and mixed media)





John Seaton WOA

John returned to painting after retirement and is inspired by pre war poster artists. Like them, he paints in gouache and is inspired by local scenes especially across South Oxfordshire on local walks.

Below: Newquay, Cornwall (Gouache)



Sarah Darby WOA

Sarah studied art and after travelling the world she worked as a children's book designer and art director for an Oxford publisher. Sarah works from life in her attic studio using her travels as inspirational additions to her still life compositions, or en plein air in the Cotswolds.

'Silver sugar bowl with ceramic pot' (Oil on panel)



Bampton Business Centre

Bampton Business Centre was originally the Royal Air Force Bampton Castle or RAF Bampton Castle, a former non-flying Royal Air Force station in Oxfordshire.

The base was established by the Royal Signals Regiment in 1939 and handed over to the RAF in 1969. It was the home of No. 2 and No. 81 Signal Units, which dealt with high frequency radio communications. Day-to-day operations were overseen by RAF Brize Norton due to the larger base's proximity to Bampton Castle and that Brize was the home of No. 38 Group Tactical Communications Wing (and successors until 2006).

In the early 1980's the '81 SU (Signals Unit) built the south site. The MOD compulsorily purchased the land from Mr George Collins, but then leased it back to him for farming purposes. In 2005 the MoD sold the farmland to Simon Collins and Compass Point Estates. In 2014 Simon Collins purchased the Business Centre sites from Compass.

The station closed progressively between 2003 and 2006 when the RAF's high frequency communications system was replaced by the Defence High Frequency Communications Service. Approximately seventy-two masts were removed in December 2003 and the final two removed in 2015.

There are still 10 of the original businesses who moved in during 2014 left and they have since been joined by an eclectic mix of business.

There are now 33 businesses based on the two sites. The units are named after communications terms with Signals House at the North Site and the South Site containing Cypher, Echo, Merlin, Radio and Morse Houses.

Should you be interested in the Bampton Business Centre, contact Simon Collins on 07790 618980 or email simonjhcollins@gmail.com for details.

Below are just a few of the businesses based on the site.

Bampton Business Centre North Site

Plastic Cards Solutions Oxford Data Consultancy Kelmscot Country Pork M&S Windows Cat Stephens Photography Letterbox Sweet Company Oxfordshire Homes and Gardens Ltd

Bampton Business Centre South Site

Power Play Coaching Ltd Gone Visual Productions Ltd Homearama Ltd Sportstrad / Glove Glu Stephen Whipp Upholstery Espressotech Vertical Aerospace Group Paul Bernard - Tailor Made Top Nosh Mint Sportswear MK Construction Oaks Joinery Paul Druce Joinery





NEW RESIDENTS WELCOME

at our outstanding, family-run care homes in Bampton and Cassington, which offer a happy and homely environment for our residents.







We provide residential, nursing and specialist dementia care and welcome enquiries for day care and respite stays.

FIND US ON FACEBOOK





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