



Newsletter No 79  
Spring 2023  
[www.osa.org.uk](http://www.osa.org.uk)

Spring

## OGBOURNE ST ANDREW, MAIZEY AND ROCKLEY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Parish Newsletter! Inside you'll find:

- ◆ **Parish Council updates**
- ◆ **Village walks and walking festivals**
- ◆ **Coronation Tea Party**
- ◆ **Easter church services in Ogbourne St Andrew**
- ◆ **Summer Plants & Cakes sale**
- ◆ **History Group update & slideshow of old parish photos**
- ◆ **100 Club winners**
- ◆ **Outdoor theatre in Maizey**
- ◆ **Silks on the Downs news**
- ◆ **Updates on the new wetland on the Og and on Bay Meadows**

Please send contributions and ideas for articles to [alexandra.hegarty@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alexandra.hegarty@hotmail.co.uk)



# VILLAGE NEWS

## The Parish Council

Your Parish Council exists to promote the smooth running and well-being of The Parish. Our Parish covers the villages of Ogbourne St Andrew, Ogbourne Maizey and Rockley and a large area of the local countryside. We are here to help with any local issues, so do feel free to contact us.

We have two new members recently appointed to the Council: Carys Gregory and Nicky Place. So the full line-up is:

**John Hetherington** (*Chairman*) *Planning*

**Alan Brown** *Maintenance*

**Brian Dean** *Rivers*

**John Edmunds** *Maintenance*

**Carys Gregory** *Footpaths, Rights of Way and Planning*

**Nick Parsons** *Roads, Signage and Flooding*

**Nicky Place** *Community Engagement and Communications*

Our Clerk is **Jan Whitehead** and she is the expert on all matters financial, legal and procedural.

If you would like to get in touch please approach any of us directly, or email Jan on [ogbourneparishclerk@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ogbourneparishclerk@yahoo.co.uk). Or you can give me a call on 01672514712.

We look forward to hearing from you.

*John Hetherington*

## Join a community run/walk on 4<sup>th</sup> June to keep our local footpaths open



As residents of Ogbourne St. Andrew, Ogbourne Maizey and Rockley we are very fortunate to be living on the Marlborough Downs, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, where we can access footpaths that allow us to explore the countryside.

Many of these routes are ancient rights of way that our predecessors have trodden for hundreds of years, but we are in danger of losing them unless we keep using them. To ensure these routes remain open to us, and our descendants, we must continue to walk these paths and check that they are passable and not obstructed in any way.

Please save **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June at 11am** in your diaries for a community run/walk to keep our local footpaths open. More information to follow.

*Carys Gregory* ([carys.gregory@me.com](mailto:carys.gregory@me.com))



## The Comedy of Errors: this year's Ogbourne Maizey outdoor theatre!

The Rain or Shine Theatre Company will be performing Shakespeare's hilarious fast-moving *The Comedy of Errors* in the garden at Maizey Lodge.

**7.30pm on Wednesday 26 July**

More information to come in due course.



## OGBOURNE ST ANDREW CHURCH NEWS

### Easter Church Services at Ogbourne St Andrew Church

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April, **Palm Sunday**: 11.00am, Parish Communion

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April, **Good Friday**: 2.00pm, Good Friday Service

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2023, **Easter Day**: 11.00am, Parish Communion

Find out about church services, local church contacts, or sign up for the newsletter at [www.ridgewaybenefice.org](http://www.ridgewaybenefice.org).

### 100 CLUB WINNERS

#### January

1<sup>st</sup> prize **Suzie Wray**

2<sup>nd</sup> prize **Chris Barnes**

#### February

1<sup>st</sup> prize **Richard Purchase**

2<sup>nd</sup> prize **Bruce Fox**

#### March

1<sup>st</sup> prize **Richard Gray**

2<sup>nd</sup> prize **John Hooper**

### Why not join the 100 club?

A 100 Club is a form of lottery. Subscribers pay £2 per month and are entered into a monthly draw. All profits go to Ogbourne St Andrew Church.

First prize is 75% of the available pot, while second prize is 25%. There is no limit to the number of shares held by any one person, but no individual can win more than one prize per month. The more shares you own, the greater your chances of winning!

Apply to Ian Gordon-Finlayson, Treasurer, at [iangf@f2s.com](mailto:iangf@f2s.com), to join the 100 Club or to increase your holding.



# Save the Date

Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May - 2pm

King's Coronation Tea Party organised by the Parish Council. Venue to be confirmed in Ogbourne St Andrew. More details to follow.

Including:

- 👑 Bring your own afternoon tea
- 👑 Music
- 👑 Tug of War
- 👑 Welly Wanging
- 👑 Rounders
- 👑 Children's craft activities
- 👑 Cake baking competition
- 👑 Dog Competitions

Everyone welcome!

If you would like to help in any way, please get in touch with Nicky Place

[lloyd\\_nicky@hotmail.com](mailto:lloyd_nicky@hotmail.com)

Tel: 07886690461



## Summer Plants and Cakes Sale

Save the date for the **Ogbourne St Andrew Church Summer Sale of plants and cakes!** **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 10am-1pm** on the Green outside the church.



## Bay Meadows update

The strategically important wildlife corridor at Bay Meadows between Ogbourne Maizey and Marlborough has now been successfully purchased by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Situated on the eastern side of the A346, Bay Meadows covers 1.3km of the River Og and 12 hectares of adjacent water meadows, and is home to otters, kingfishers, and wild brown trout. It is also one of the last refuges of water voles, which have decreased by over 94% nationally and are now extinct in nearby counties.

Work is ongoing to restore the floodplain meadow into a better habitat for species such as water vole and wild brown trout, and for pollinators. Alongside the enhancements will be a comprehensive community engagement programme, and the creation of a nature area for the community and its visitors to enjoy. Community groups have already held activities there, including Marlborough Wellbeing, Building Bridges and Action for Insects, and there are plans for more. An active volunteer group also meets to work on the site. Find out more and sign up at: [www.wiltshirewildlife.org/projects/bay-meadows](http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/projects/bay-meadows).



## Marlborough Gardening Association

Marlborough Gardening Association is a friendly group meeting regularly for talks, garden visits and other activities. New members are welcome at £3 per meeting or £10 to join for the year. Meetings take place on the second Wednesday of the month, 7pm for 7.30, in Marlborough Town Hall, unless otherwise advised.

See the website for the 2023 Programme, which includes, in addition to the regular monthly meetings, talks, trips to gardens, a weekend visit to Norfolk, annual lunch at the golf club, and a plant sale in Marlborough Town Hall.



To join, complete the membership form on the website or just come along to a meeting.

[www.marlbga.org.uk](http://www.marlbga.org.uk)





## Building back wetter: A new wetland on the River Og

The chalk rivers and streams of the North Wessex Downs are a rare and prized feature of the rolling chalk landscape. However, over the centuries the chalk valleys of the Og and the Kennet have changed with the ever-increasing influence of human activity, and the amount of water found in the landscape has diminished significantly as land has been drained for agriculture and development and rivers have been diverted, dredged, and straightened. In the UK it is estimated that we have lost a staggering 90% of our wetland habitats in the last several hundred years and over 10% of our freshwater and wetland species are threatened with extinction. Wetlands are some of the most threatened habitats in the world, yet also the most vital for wildlife and people.

Holding more water in the environment through the restoration of wet ecosystems can have a wide variety of benefits from creating new habitats for wildlife and increasing biodiversity, reducing flood peaks and protecting people from the misery of flooding, helping recharge the aquifers that underpin much of our public water supply and providing spaces for people to enjoy nature. Action for the River Kennet (ARK) are very proud to be working alongside a growing community of farmers, landowners, conservation-minded organisations and statutory agencies who are playing a role in reversing the decline of wetlands in the Kennet Valley.

Here on the River Og, ARK have recently finished building a series of new wetland scrapes at Maisey Farm, close to the perennial headwaters of the river at Bay Bridges. The project has been an opportunity to wet a significant area of land which historically would have had a much stronger connection to the flood plain. In addition to the infiltration and habitat benefits of the new wetland, the works also included the addition of circa 120m of permissive access around the wetland and the replacement of a dilapidated footbridge, to help create inviting and interesting public access to a wetland space. ARK returned to

Maisey Farm in March and, with the help of our fantastic volunteer network, planted thousands of native wetland plants as a finishing touch before the spring.

*Rupert Kelton*

Project Manager, Action for the River Kennet (ARK)

[www.riverkennet.org](http://www.riverkennet.org)

The footpath crossing the wetland is accessible from the road running through Ogbourne Maizey.  
Photo © Rupert Kelton





## HISTORY GROUP UPDATE

**Come and join us in the Silks!**  
**Slide Show of old parish photos**

Open to everyone (bar open)

**Come and learn about the stories behind the photos**

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 7.45pm in the Silks**

Work is still going on in the background during the winter months, pulling together a coherent history of the Wheatsheaf / Silks and the Axe and Compass. It would seem that retired Naval Captain Nehemiah Reed created the Wheatsheaf in the mid 1850s. Based in Marlborough at the 'Anchor Brewery' in the High Street next to what is now the Polly Tearooms, he was instrumental in building a chain of inns and pubs in the area. He and his wife ran a local campaign to purchase and equip a lifeboat (The Royal Wiltshire) which was based for many years at Dover.

Research into the history of some of the village cottages has revealed some interesting leads. For example, there seems to have been a village 'Washpool', although it is not clear where this was situated. Most likely at Wetpits, but if anyone with local connections has any knowledge of it, please let me know! Anyone wanting to revive the old method of washing your laundry in the Og should perhaps contact the Parish Council first!

A darker side of the old days is revealed in the number of buildings burnt down. For example the Marlborough Journal, Saturday 11 May 1771, reported that: *'fire entirely consumed three tenements occupied by William Hawkes, the Widow May, and Harry Lapper, together with their household furniture and wearing apparel, except two beds on which an infirm old man and woman were carried out of the flames, the latter of whom, it is reported, is since dead of the fright. The fire is supposed to have been occasioned by carrying some straw ashes out of one house into an adjoining hovel'*. The dangers of thatched buildings (or 'hovels', as they so gently put it!).

**Notice of Special and Annual General Meeting: Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 7pm in the Silks**

Bruce Fox (01672 512867), Ogbourne St Andrew Parish History Group: [www.osahg.org.uk](http://www.osahg.org.uk)





## Carer Support Wiltshire – volunteers needed

Would you like to learn new skills, or use your existing ones, to help others? Are you looking for a way to contribute positively to your community and to meet new people? If so, have you considered volunteering?

Carer Support Wiltshire are a local charity who support unpaid carers in the county. Someone is an unpaid carer if they support someone who is unwell, has a disability or is elderly. Many people support family members and they do so because they want the best for the person they care for. But caring for someone can be very difficult, emotionally, and physically, and can leave the person caring feeling worn out and isolated. Carer Support Wiltshire are currently looking for volunteers to fill vacancies that directly support people who are caring for someone. If you would like to find out more, or if you have a skill you feel could be put to use, they'd love to hear from you. Vacancies include the following (full training provided):

**Here to Talk Telephone Befriender:** The Here to Talk service provides low level emotional support to carers across Wiltshire. You will be a friendly voice at the end of the phone, a listening ear and someone who will provide reassurance during challenging times. Successful applicants will have excellent listening skills and be empathetic and non-judgemental. You will be able to commit to a minimum of half an hour every two weeks.

**Bereavement Help Point Facilitator:** We are looking for a facilitator for our bereavement help point in Devizes. You would need to be able to commit to a minimum of two hours every fortnight to help run a fortnightly bereavement group, which supports unpaid carers who are recently bereaved. You will welcome, support and listen to people who attend. The ideal people for this role will have an understanding of grief and be compassionate and empathetic.

**Carer Cafe Facilitator:** We are looking for volunteers to help run our carer cafe in Pewsey. You will need to be able to commit to a minimum of two hours per month. The aim of this role is to create a safe and supportive group environment for unpaid carers at a local venue, providing them with a much-needed break from their caring responsibilities.

For more information on volunteering for Carer Support Wiltshire, email [volunteer@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk](mailto:volunteer@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk) or phone 01380 908158.

## £2 bus fares extended

The Government's £2 single bus fare promotion has been extended until 30 June. The fare price reduction, which began on 1 January, aims to get more people to use buses during the current cost of living challenges. If more people choose to leave their car at home and take the bus, it will help to maintain bus routes in Wiltshire, as well as reducing congestion and carbon emissions and improving air quality. Most bus services are included in the promotion, including the Swindon 80 and X5 that run through the village.

You can find bus times online at: [www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/getting-around/bus](http://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/getting-around/bus)





# A year of walking

Look out for these two local walking festivals happening in 2023:

## North Wessex Downs Walking Festival in June

The third North Wessex Downs Walking Festival will take place from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> June this year. The Festival will include over 25 walks across the North Wessex Downs, all in celebration of this stunning landscape. The varied programme will include family-friendly, evening and weekday walks with opportunities for you to seek out wildlife, history or culture, visit a farm or simply soak up the views from the top of the downs. Our welcoming and knowledgeable guides will bring alive some of their favourite places as you explore more of the landscape around you.



Be one of the first to hear when bookings for the festival open by signing up to receive the North Wessex Downs email newsletter at [northwessexdowns.org.uk/walking](http://northwessexdowns.org.uk/walking).

## 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Ridgeway National Trail

NATIONAL TRAILS 

The Ridgeway National Trail is part of a prehistoric track that once stretched about 250 miles across Britain from the Dorset coast to the Wash on the coast of Norfolk, providing a route for travellers over the high ground which was less wooded and drier than routes through the villages below. Often known as Britain's oldest road, the Ridgeway National Trail was created 50 years ago and still follows the same route over the high ground used since prehistoric times.



The trail runs for 87 miles and passes through two distinctive landscapes: the open downland of the west within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the more gentle and wooded countryside of the Chilterns AONB in the east.

It starts close to home at Avebury, running along the top of the open downland behind Rockley, Ogbourne St Andrew and Maizey, passing Barbury Castle and crossing the A346 at Ogbourne St George before running north again up past Liddington Castle. It then follows this ridge of chalk hills in a north-easterly direction to reach Ivinghoe Beacon lying to the northwest of London.

This year marks 50 years since the trail was created, and is a particularly special time to visit the Ridgeway with new activities and events to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Find out more online, including interactive maps, top tips, seasonal wildflowers and animals to look out for, and suggestions for walks: [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/the-ridgeway](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/the-ridgeway)



# SILKS ON THE DOWNS NEWS

## Online booking now available

We're happy to say that online booking is now live on the Silks website, making it even easier to book in for lunch or dinner.

## New chef Lubos

In January we welcomed our new chef Lubos to the Silks – not without our heartfelt thanks to Graham and Penny who ran the kitchen from the launch while we looked for a permanent chef. Lubos joins us from the Bell at West Overton and his new menus feature some great new dishes as well as many of the favourites our customers have already come to know and love. The Spring menu was launched on Friday 17<sup>th</sup> March so come and check out the latest new dishes.

## Baby girl for manager Cameron

Congratulations to Cameron and his wife Sophie on their baby girl, Olivia Mae Thomas, born mid February. Well done to the rest of the team for ensuring the pub continued to trade seamlessly during Cameron's paternity leave.

## Visit from MP Danny Kruger

We welcomed our constituency MP Danny Kruger to The Silks for lunch last month. As a supporter of our campaign to 'Save the Silks' from the start, he was amazed and delighted to see how we have put the community ownership grant to use by bringing the pub back to life and the role it now plays in bringing the community together.

## Help us attract more visitors

Trading conditions continue to be tough and costs are increasing. We still need to increase customers, particularly on Wednesdays and Thursdays; and we know that personal recommendation is always the most effective. So if you enjoy visiting The Silks, please tell friends, families, colleagues, review us on TripAdvisor or Google (we are currently rated 5/5 on TripAdvisor and 4.5/5 on Google) and please do book in your next visit if you can. As the old adage goes, 'use it or lose it'.

## Volunteering and community events

Let us know on [info@octypus.org](mailto:info@octypus.org) if you can help with volunteering, including DIY to keep the pub looking smart, volunteering behind the bar at events or if we are short-staffed, or if you'd like to help or join the Pub Committee.

Our regular community events include:





- **Community Café** held on the first Tuesday of each month (next one is 4<sup>th</sup> April), with our excellent tea and coffee plus pastries and cakes. Meet friends for a coffee or just take the opportunity to work from a different location for a couple of hours.

- **The Silkworms Book Club** is now well established and meets on the first Wednesday of each month from 7.30-9.30pm. If you'd like to become a Silkworm please contact Ruth Fleming on [jonandruthfleming@gmail.com](mailto:jonandruthfleming@gmail.com).

- **The Silks Pub Quiz:** our quiz nights are proving very popular. We've changed the format slightly for the next quiz and will be running it on a trading night, Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March, and will have food available to order from a reduced menu so no need to eat beforehand (we will share details nearer the time). No need to book but arrive early to guarantee your table of choice. We'll be open from 6pm and the quiz will start at 7pm and aim to be finished by 9.30pm, though the bar will be open until 10.30pm for those wanting to stay on. Teams can be 2-6 people, with a donation of £2 (cash please) per person.

To book a table at The Silks, book online at [silksonthedowns.co.uk/contact](http://silksonthedowns.co.uk/contact), email [hello@silksonthedowns.co.uk](mailto:hello@silksonthedowns.co.uk), or call 01672 205604.



## A plea from Maizey Manor Farm

We all enjoy the beautiful countryside around the village. But we would please remind everyone to remember the Countryside Code when using the public rights of way around and across Maizey Manor Farm. Particularly in regard to sticking to these public rights of way and not walking on the private land.

Dogs must be kept under effective control to ensure they stay away from wildlife, livestock and horses. They should be kept on a lead or in your sight, and return to you on command. Your dog should not stray from the path or area where you have the right of access. Please pick up after your dogs and take poo bags home with you. Don't throw them into the hedge or grass!

Cyclists – please don't come up behind horse riders, but let us know you are there.

Thank you for your understanding.

*Debbie Turnell*







# For your Diary

More information on planned events can be found inside this issue, or see the village website: [www.osa.org.uk](http://www.osa.org.uk)

**Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 7pm: Pub Quiz** at The Silks on the Downs

**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> April (Palm Sunday), 11am: Parish Communion**, Ogbourne St Andrew Church

**Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> April, 9am - 11.30am: Community Cafe** at The Silks on the Downs

**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30pm - 9.30pm: The Silkworms Book Cub** at The Silks on the Downs

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April: Making nests and clay egg hunt**, free family event with 'Marlborough Downs: A Space for Nature', Rockley (book via [www.spacefornature.net](http://www.spacefornature.net))

**Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April (Good Friday), 2pm: Good Friday Service**, Ogbourne St Andrew Church

**Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April (Easter Day), 11am: Parish Communion**, Ogbourne St Andrew Church

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 7pm: History Group Special and Annual General Meeting** at The Silks on the Downs (History Group Members only)

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> April, 7.45pm: Slideshow of old parish photos** with the History Group at The Silks on the Downs. Open to everyone, bar open for purchase of drinks etc.

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May, 2pm: Coronation Tea Party**, Ogbourne St Andrew

**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May: Marlborough Gardening Association Plant Sale**, Marlborough Town Hall

**Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 10am-1pm: Church Summer Sale of Plants and Cakes**, on the Green outside Ogbourne St Andrew Church.

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> June, 11am: Community Run/Walk** to help keep our local footpaths open

**Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> July, 7.30pm: Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors*** performed by The Rain or Shine Theatre Company in the garden at Maizey Lodge.



Join the Facebook Community page to stay connected, offer help, ask for help or to simply chat.

Look for 'Ogbourne St Andrew, Maizey and Rockley Community'.

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Please send contributions and ideas for articles to [alexandra.hegarty@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alexandra.hegarty@hotmail.co.uk)