

# Holton, Waterperry & Waterstock News

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*APRIL 2026*

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**Waterperry News** - Helen Marshall

**Waterstock News** - Keith Stubbs

Holton, Waterperry & Waterstock News is delivered monthly and free-of-charge to all households in the parishes of Holton, Waterperry with Thomley, and Waterstock.

The magazine is run on a not-for-profit basis, and paid for largely through advertising revenue along with financial support from the three parishes. Its finances are overseen by Waterperry with Thomley Parish Council.

We welcome letters, articles and announcements from individuals and organisations, but reserve the right to edit or to publish or not.

All copy must be received no later than the 18th of the month prior to publication and with its author's name attached.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of the Editor.



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## April Church Services

April 3rd	12 midday Good Friday Meditation St Mary's Waterperry
April 5th	9.30 Easter Sunday St Leonard's Waterstock 11.00 Easter Sunday St Mary's Waterperry
April 12th	9.30 St Helen's Albury 11.00 St Bartholomew's Holton
April 19th	9.30 St Helen's Albury 11.00 St Leonard's Waterstock
April 26th	8.00 St Mary's Waterperry 9.30 St Helen's Albury 11.00 St Bartholomew's
May 3rd	9.30 St Leonards Waterstock

### St Leonard's Waterstock

#### Flowers and cleaning rota

April 5th	Easter Sunday
April 12th	H. MacRitchie
April 19th	H. MacRitchie
April 26th	L. Stubbs

### St Mary's Waterperry

#### Flower rota

April 5th	Easter Sunday
April 12th	Rebecca
April 19th	Helen
April 26th	Jan

## April Birthdays

A very Happy Birthday this month to:

Elodie who will be turning 10  
Arthur who will be turning 11  
Charlotte who will be turning 12  
Yohann who will be turning 13  
Matthew who will be turning 18

(to have a birthday included in the magazine, please email Dominique - [domisqueak@gmail.com](mailto:domisqueak@gmail.com))





A great place to grow

Happy Spring from The Maple Tree!

We have a session every morning for families from Wheatley, the surrounding villages and beyond!

**Mondays:** Messy Monday at 10:00-11:30am and Twins' Club at 2:00-4:00pm

**Tuesdays:** Smart Start at 9:30-11:30am

**Wednesdays:** Maple Babies at 9:30am-12:00pm

**Thursdays:** Time to Rhyme at 9:30-11:30am and

The Maple Tree at Forest Hill Village Hall from 10:30am-12:00pm

**Fridays:** Little Learners at 10:00-11:30am

**Saturdays:** Family Fun at 10:00-11:30am on April 18th, May 16th and June 20th

We will be open every morning that is not a Public Holiday during the Easter holiday – please check our website or social media for details.

Here is an additional date for your diary;

**16th May** – a fundraiser Jazz Concert at St. Mary's Church, Wheatley – details will also be on our website and social media.

The sun is shining, so it is not too early to think about the summer holidays! Did you know that The Maple Tree is open year-round? Watch out for our Ready for School sessions, as well as our outreach sessions in local village halls.

### **Wish List:**

- Volunteers for our Wednesday morning Maple Babies from 9:30-12:00 and for our Friday Morning Little Learners from 10:00-11:30.
- A trustee or two or three – someone who cares about children having the best start in life, and/or someone who is willing to take on The Maple Tree finances or fundraising.

We are here to help if you need advice or support: 01865 236700.

Email: [info@mapletree.org.uk](mailto:info@mapletree.org.uk)

Website: [www.mapletree.org.uk](http://www.mapletree.org.uk)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley](http://www.facebook.com/TheMapleTreeWheatley)

Instagram: [@themapletreecentre](https://www.instagram.com/themapletreecentre)

*Laura Spencer*  
*The Maple Tree Centre Manager*

## *Letter from the Vicarage*

The activities for April in Books of Hours are planting, picking flowers and courting. In the Très Riches Heures of Jean Duc du Berry a couple exchange rings with their apparently worried parents looking on. The lady is distinctly large round the middle which might explain their worries – although the book was published in the early 15th Century so maybe relief is the overriding parental emotion.

April is the month of opening up in nature, the revelation of the treasures that have been hidden in the dormant period of winter. From buds to butterflies, birds to bees, we are surrounded by natural awakenings and fecundity, that should we choose to look, lifts up our hearts in recognition of the unstoppable power of creation to regenerate itself. April provides us with the evidence that no matter what our individual day-to-day activities and challenges, our natural world is in festive mode and the grand design works, especially if left to itself.

Barbara Kingsolver put it well - “Spring is made of solid, fourteen-karat gratitude, the reward for the long wait. Every religious tradition from the northern hemisphere honours some form of April hallelujah, for this is the season of exquisite redemption, a slam-bang return to joy after a season of cold second thoughts.”

The colours of April seem fresh and vibrant after the dullness of the preceding months and the longer days and increasing sunshine (hopefully) give those of us who suffer with the lack of sunlight a mental and spiritual uplift. Beverly Nichols describes those colours of an April day as “...sparkling as a newly-washed lemon...a day when even the shadows were a melange of blue and orange and jade, like the shadows that poured from the tipsy brush of Monet.” Not to get too ‘away with the fairies’ on you, there is a joy and hopefulness inherent in the days of April that can positively infect our own hearts and minds. Something that is reflected in the Books of Hours depiction of courting as a suitable pastime for the month. Courting is the most optimistic of human activities – to experience a period when the pursuit of love dominates personal horizons is to live, momentarily at least, in a blessed state!

This year Easter is right at the beginning of the month. So we start April’s natural opening up with the ultimate in divine opening up. The opening up of the possibility of a new and fulfilled relationship with God. To my mind Easter is the most exciting of Christian celebrations. Christmas is warming at a cold time of year, a time of hope in darkness, which is lovely, reassuring and embracing. But Easter is a bright new day, a glorious shaft of sunlight that has the power to revolutionise our lives if we let it.

Easter takes us on a journey from dark to light, deep despair to permanent celebration. Our hearts are broken by the shattering cruelty of the Cross and then beyond all hope we discover this the beginning of the best news possible as we encounter the empty tomb. The first Easter day changed the world in a way that is irreversible and we live in its light today. If at times the natural optimism and joy of April struggles to hide the darkness of our conflict riven world that seems to hem us in, then I would urge you to lift up your hearts. The shout of Easter Sunday is the loudest greatest news offered to humanity in history.

Stay blessed,

*David*  
Rev David Bendor-Samuel  
dbendorsamuel@btinternet.com

# Holton Village Hall

[www.holtonvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.holtonvillagehall.co.uk)

## Afternoon teas.

The Afternoon teas at the Village Hall continue to be a great success. Many thanks to everyone that helps, for all their hard work. There will be afternoon teas in April on 2nd, 16th and 30th, from 2.30pm until 4.00pm. Come along for Tea, Coffee, Cake and a chat with friends and neighbours.

## Solar Panels

The Village Hall is about to install Solar Panels in order to make us self-sufficient for electrical energy. Preparations are ongoing for installation.

## Litter blitz

Will take place on the 21st at the Hall from 10am starting from the car park.

## Jazz Night

Miller & Spencer are coming to Holton Village Hall on 5th June 2026 for an evening of Jazz. Tickets will be available soon to purchase either on-line or direct from the village hall committee. Further information will follow very soon.

## Village Hall Committee AGM

On the 14 May the Village Hall Committee will hold its AGM in the Village Hall from 7:30 pm. All welcome.

## Future Events

For up to date information on all events at the Village Hall please access the website at [www.holtonvillagehall.co.uk](http://www.holtonvillagehall.co.uk). The noticeboards on the green and at the Hall will also display forthcoming events closer to time.

## Booking the Village Hall

If you would like to book the Village Hall please call 07873 857063 or please E-mail [bookings@holtonvillagehall.co.uk](mailto:bookings@holtonvillagehall.co.uk)

*Mel Ault*

# Advertise in The News

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Fundraising for Holton Village Hall

# JAZZ NIGHT

Holton Village Hall

Friday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2026

7.30 for 8.00 pm

## Millar & Spencer

Saxophone & Piano Duo from Edinburgh

*Melodic improvisations on original compositions and jazz standards*

Tickets - £12

Under 16s (Accompanied) – Free

Purchase on-line

Entry by Ticket Only



Or Ticket Sales No. 07873 857063

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Hall Floor Rejuvenation in 2026***

# *Holton Parish Council*

## Planning Applications

P26/S0308/FUL St Andrews Field, Holton. OX33 1PZ

Erection of a self-build 1.5 storey dwelling with a detached garage and store.

## Planning Decisions

P26/S0214/LB The Hay Barn, Pond Farm, Holton. OX33 1PY Installation of EO mini-EV charger on external wall. Granted

## Holton Litter Blitz Saturday 21st March 10.00 am start from Holton Village Hall

As we go to press the Litter Blitz will be held this coming Saturday – the weather forecast looks good so hopefully there will be a good turnout and the village pristine.

Report in May News.

## Holton Parish Meeting to be held on Thursday 21st May from 7.00 pm in Holton Village Hall

Progress update on the Holton Park (Brookes) development presented by Savills and the Developer. Briefing on the Holton Village Hall Solar Energy Project due to start in August. Annual reports from Village organisations and a chance for everyone to put forward a wish list of village improvements which could be funded through the CIL funds generated from the Holton Park (Brookes) development.

Please let the Parish Council know of any items of general village interest you wish to be discussed by the whole Parish at the Annual Meeting of the village.

## St Bartholomew's Churchyard extension

The final phase of getting the additional land cleared of tree roots and stones in preparation for seeding with a wildflower meadow mix has been completed. The old railings have been taken out and the final phase will be new fencing on the boundary. The Wildflower Meadow Mix is being sown in the next few days and hopefully in a month or so green shoots will spring up all around. The plan is to manage the open area of the churchyard extension land as a wildflower meadow for the time being and the land under the trees to continue with the existing habitat management.

Wildflower meadows do need management/intervention to encourage the wildflowers to flourish and not just be taken over by grass. There will be a need for volunteers to engage in this exciting project at the village church, especially the raking and removing of the meadow cut in September (good hay to take away!!) so everyone welcome when the time comes. The call will go out. Do drop in to the Churchyard and see the progress so far.

## Stocks Tree Removal

Well it has gone - have you noticed? Shall we plant another tree? What do you suggest would make a good replacement? More suggestions please before a decision is made one way or another.

### Holton Orchard Pruning Morning

Thank you to the Smith family, Kieron and Dominique for guiding everyone skilfully through the cutting and lopping of the Orchard trees in March. All the trees have been brought into shape and look healthy and hopefully bountiful for the coming years. Thanks to all your efforts.

The next Parish Council Meeting will be held on Monday 13th April 2026 starting at 7.00 pm in Holton Village Hall Committee Room.

Contact details: Clerk to Holton Parish Council (Sonja Barter). Home Farm House, Holton, Oxford. OX33 1QA.

Email: [clerk@holtonoxford-pc.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@holtonoxford-pc.gov.uk) Tel: 01865 872334

Copies of Holton Parish Council Meeting Agendas, Approved Minutes and copies of HWW News can be viewed on Holton Parish Council website:-

[www.holtonoxford-pc.gov.uk](http://www.holtonoxford-pc.gov.uk)

## Dr Rogers Trust Educational Grants for Young People in Holton

The Dr Rogers Trustees will be meeting in April 2026 to consider applications from apprentices, trainees and students, aged 14 to 21, who are resident in the parish of Holton, for grants to assist in the purchase of books and equipment or towards the cost of educational trips or courses.

A maximum of 2 grants per applicant will be considered, the first whilst at school and the second for undertaking further education up to the age of 21.

If you would like further information, please contact:  
Carol Johnston, Trustee/Clerk, Chance Cottage, Holton  
Email: [carol.johnstonfj@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.johnstonfj@btinternet.com)

Applications must be made in writing to the above by 12th April 2026.

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# Waste and recycling



## 2026/27

**Before you bin it: could you reuse, refill or repair it? If throwing an item away is the only option, please check it before you chuck it!**

**Did you know? Almost a fifth of what's put in recycling bins shouldn't be there.**

These are the most common items that cause confusion - and where they should go instead:

- **Food waste** - always in your food waste bin.
- **Sanitary products, tissues and nappies** - black non-recyclable waste bin.
- **Old clothes** - a tied carrier bag next to your green recycling bin.

Not sure how to dispose of an item?  
Please check it before you chuck it at  
**Recycling – helping you to get it right**



**And NEVER put batteries, vapes or electrical items in any bin - they're a major fire risk!**

Batteries go in a clear bag on top of your green bin.

Small electricals and vapes should go in a tied carrier bag next to your black bin.

**Rinse it, dry it, recycle it**

To help keep recycling free from mess, please try to make sure your items are clean and dry before you pop them in the bin.

**Thank you!**



# Remember to buy your new garden waste permit



If you're a brown bin permit holder, you must buy a new permit if you wish to continue to receive garden waste collections after 31 March 2026. Buy your new permit by this date to make sure you benefit from the full year's worth of scheduled garden waste collections for the next 12 months.

Visit our [garden waste permit page](#) or call **01235 422422**.

## Missed collections

All bins should be presented for collection by 6am with the lid fully closed. To report a missed collection, visit [our missed bins page](#) or call **01235 422123**. Reports must be made by 5 pm on the next working day after your scheduled collection.

## Are your bins overflowing?

Our crews can only empty your wheelie bins if the lids are fully closed, plastic to plastic. If you have:

- 🔄 **extra recycling** - put it in a clear sack or cardboard box and leave it next to your green bin.
- 🔄 **extra rubbish or garden waste** - wait for the next collection or take it to your local household waste and recycling centre.



## Assistance with collections

If you experience ongoing difficulties presenting your waste for collection, please email [waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk) or call **01235 422123** so we can make arrangements to assist you.

## For information about waste and recycling services:

- visit our [waste and recycling section](#),
- email [admin.southoxford@biffa.co.uk](mailto:admin.southoxford@biffa.co.uk), or
- call **01235 422123**

## Do you need this information in another format?

email [waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk](mailto:waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk)  
or call **01235 422123**.

## *Holton News*

After what seemed like at least 30 days and nights, the rain stopped and the sun appeared. Holton residents emerged completely stunned by the strange lights in the sky and the warm air. The resulting blossom and spring flowers were just beautiful to behold. A complete shock to the system – was it really spring? Of course, the English climate is never straightforward and it came back at us a few times, but maybe spring is really here at last.

A small group of hardy individuals attended the orchard pruning on 28th Feb. Kieron Smith led the party and gave some excellent instruction on how fruit trees can be pruned to give more fruit and how to recognise those parts of the tree that are not productive. There are photos on Facebook of the happy band. Thanks to Kieron and all who attended.

We enjoyed a night at the Village Hall on 6th March watching “Bridget Jones mad about the boy”. This is the fourth film of the series and follows the exploits of a widowed (from Mark Darcy) Bridget with two young children, as she attempts to navigate her way out of a self-enforced lockdown, via friend’s advice and dating apps. Of course it all ends happily ever after as rom coms generally tend to do and the second half of the film has a Richard Curtissy feeling (although he wasn’t involved in this one) which wraps it up nicely. Thanks to all who organised and helped on the night.

We had a very good afternoon on Saturday 14th March when we had a fabulous archive and archaeology exhibition at the hall. The layout was very clear with maps at the beginning to clarify where everything was located and then the context of each era was easy to understand. The finds themselves were quite fascinating and the only thing missing (unless I missed it!) was the fossil record as the whole village seems to have been a giant oyster bed during the Cretaceous. The archive was well laid out as usual and the pictures show what our village looked like from the early photos. Shame the Romans didn’t invent photography.

Thanks to all those that helped with the litter blitz on the 21st. You can never quite believe the amount and variety of rubbish that gets dropped through the village.

The ‘Potholers’ have been busy and all the potholes they logged have now been fixed – even the big deep one opposite the fire Station. There might be some tidy-up needed but well done Potholers!

The Village Hall Committee will be holding its AGM on the 14 May at the Village Hall. All are welcome to attend.

Take care

*Mel Ault*

## *Holton Bus Shelter*

Thank goodness the spring version of the Bring and Take is nearly here. That means I can stop trying to clear out the loft and help to sow a variety of seeds and take a few cuttings. Recently I was sent into the attic to clear away some of the things we have accumulated over the last thirty years. I never realised quite how much we decided to keep in case it came in useful one day. Old lamps that needed fixing, chairs that we intended to repair and upholster, suitcases of cushions and then boxes of stuff. In the piles I found schoolbooks, a certificate of second place in an egg and spoon race, a book of Typhoo Tea football stickers, old photos of a holiday in Skegness, a box of prog rock cassette tapes, a broken snooker cue, a crude crayon drawing of what appears to be a giant, speckled tomato and a payslip from 1979.

You can't say I haven't lived life to the full. And it is still getting better because there is a packed programme of events at the Bus Shelter. As I write this Book Week is in full swing. Plenty of people have both brought along books and taken some to read. Thanks for supporting this event.

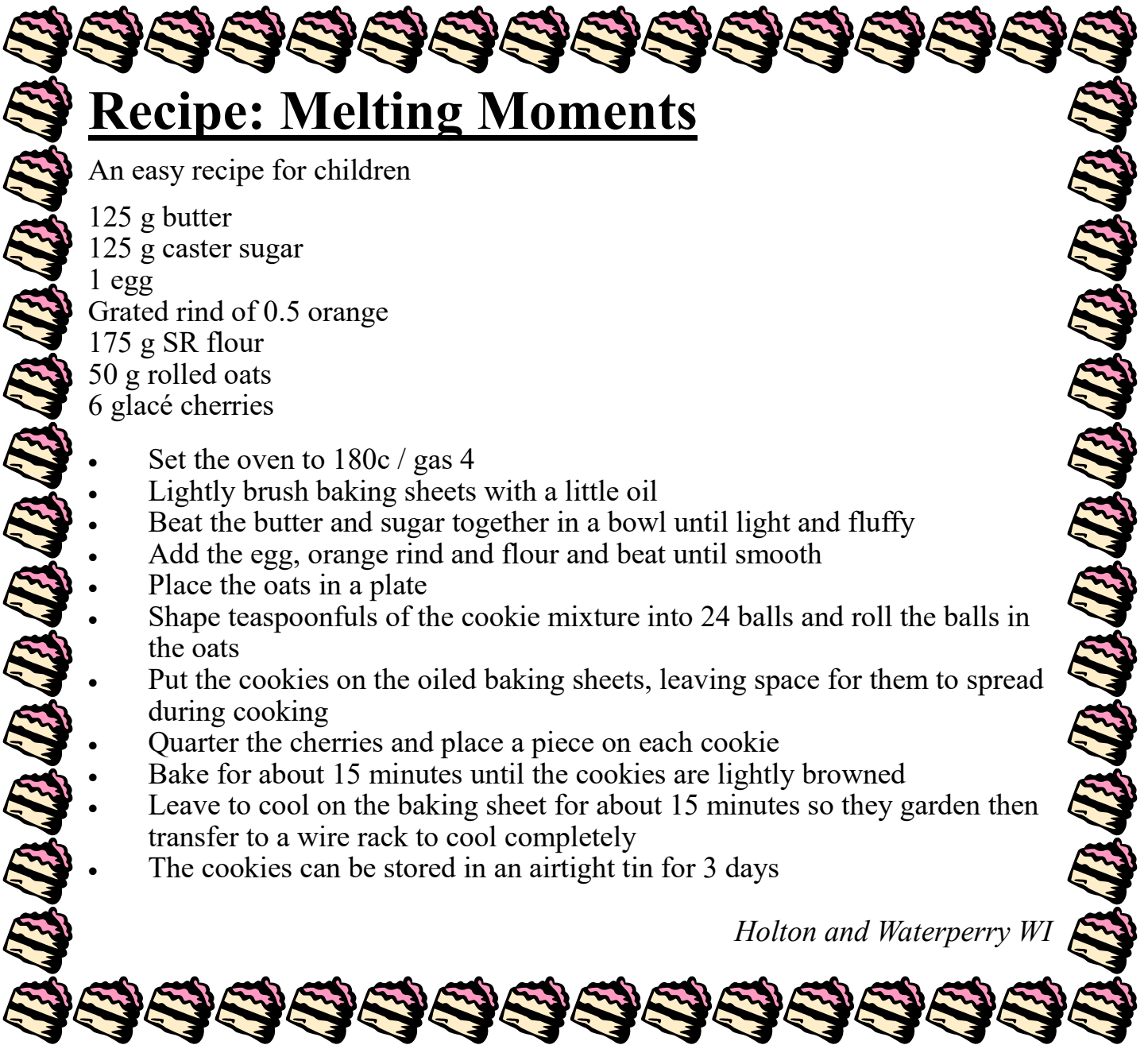
### **Bring and Take, Sunday 26th April, 10am to 1pm**

This is the spring event. As well as the usual books, puzzles, toys and general paraphernalia there will be a chance to pick up a few plants and seedlings ready to plant out. If you have any surplus items from your spring sowings do bring them along. As usual we are expecting good weather. Sadly, there will be no tree to offer shade as it has had to be taken down as it was diseased and becoming dangerous. Hopefully, we will have a new tree in place soon.

### **Art Weeks, 2nd- 16th May**

This event has been very well supported in the last couple of years so we will be running it again. It will take place over two weeks in early May. The theme this year will be 'Celebrating Trees'. You might like to produce a drawing, painting, model of a tree or some leaf rubbings. Contributions from all are welcome - young and not so young (including those whose last artistic creation can only be found in an attic). This is not a competition just a chance to brighten up the bus shelter. Bring your creations along to the bring and take on the 26th of April or pop them into Treetops (near the green). Please put your name and address on the back so that the artwork can be returned to you at the end of the exhibition.

*Allan East*



## Recipe: Melting Moments

An easy recipe for children

125 g butter

125 g caster sugar

1 egg

Grated rind of 0.5 orange

175 g SR flour

50 g rolled oats

6 glacé cherries

- Set the oven to 180c / gas 4
- Lightly brush baking sheets with a little oil
- Beat the butter and sugar together in a bowl until light and fluffy
- Add the egg, orange rind and flour and beat until smooth
- Place the oats in a plate
- Shape teaspoonfuls of the cookie mixture into 24 balls and roll the balls in the oats
- Put the cookies on the oiled baking sheets, leaving space for them to spread during cooking
- Quarter the cherries and place a piece on each cookie
- Bake for about 15 minutes until the cookies are lightly browned
- Leave to cool on the baking sheet for about 15 minutes so they garden then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely
- The cookies can be stored in an airtight tin for 3 days

*Holton and Waterperry WI*

## *Holton Cock and Bull*

Taking a nautical slant this month, April 2nd 2026 is the 225th anniversary of the Battle of Copenhagen. The Danes have generally commemorated the event with a focus on historical reflection as the engagement is remembered as a heroic yet devastating defeat. Their fleet succumbed in just four hours to a ruthless British onslaught during which Lord Nelson famously raised a telescope to his blind eye to ignore a signal to cease hostilities.

On the 200th anniversary, Soeren Mentz, the Danish National History museum curator, stated, 'It may seem strange for Denmark to commemorate a defeat, but we are celebrating three things. Nelson, who was a great man, the courage of the Danes who almost won the battle, and the fact that it took the British fleet as long as four hours to beat us.'

*Name and address supplied*



**Morland House Surgery, Morland Close, Wheatley OX33 1DP**

The usual surgery opening hours are Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm  
Saturday mornings (excluding Bank Holiday weekends) 8am to 10.30am, for **prebooked**  
consultations only

Enhanced access hours are offered outside these times, please speak to one of the care navigators on 01865 872448 for more information.

When the surgery is closed, please contact the Out of Hours service by phoning 111

Visit **Morland House Surgery Website** for a wealth of information and guidance on managing a vast

number of health conditions, symptoms, and treatment: [www.morland-house.co.uk](http://www.morland-house.co.uk)

For example:

**Are you a Carer?** – find help and support if you are looking after someone unable to care for themselves

**Medical Records and Test Results** - guidance on how to access this information.

**Pharmacy First Service (PFS)**, whereby pharmacies can treat directly seven common health conditions.

**Winter Vaccinations** for flu and COVID-19 - information on eligibility and booking

**Expansion of RSV vaccine** to those aged 80 and over

**Online Resources for Clinical Help** via self-referrals

**Faster Access to Help for Joint and Back Pain**

**Group Consultation Clinics** – successful group clinics for menopause and hypertension

**Breast + Cervical Cancer Screening**

**Follow us on Facebook**

**Whooping Cough** infections, symptoms and treatment

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**Childhood Immunisation**

**You and Your General Practice** – a guide downloadable from MHS website

**Ordering Repeat Prescriptions:** Please use the NHS App or log into your account on the NHS website. For more information on ordering, visit the 'prescriptions' page on our website.

**Medicine waste** costs the NHS around £300 million/year. Only order the medicines you need. Once medicine leaves a pharmacy it can no longer be re-used even if unopened.

**Scam NHS cold calls** - beware of fake calls from "receptionists" or "doctors" asking you to update your GP records or risk being removed from the surgery.

## *Holton & Waterperry W.I.*

March 3rd was our AGM and well attended. We watched a short video from the National Federation detailing all the achievements in the WI movement over the past five years - for example, resolutions, the learning hub, campaigns such as those on dental health, safety of women, diversity and so much more.

As is customary at AGM's we heard about our healthy bank balance from our treasurer, our activities over the past year from our secretary and a resume of life in our WI from our outgoing President.

The committee have worked hard over the past year and indeed in previous years to make our WI a huge success. We pay our subscriptions for 11 meetings a year but we have also successfully added the following during the year.

7 walks followed by tea and cake and one with lunch (and more to come)

5 craft afternoons ( more organised)

2 theatre trips

1 summer outing (another soon)

1 bowls afternoon (another in March)

1 evening meal

and have contributed to 4 village events, catering for 3, and also displayed the Remembrance poppies in Holton bus shelter.

This is an impressive list for a small group and we hope it will encourage others to join us from both Holton and Waterperry.

Stella Oakes, our president for the past 3 years is standing down. She has led us admirably for lively and inclusive meetings and we thank her most warmly for her huge commitment of time and expertise. She was presented with some small gifts in recognition of her service. Jan Marlowe is also stepping down as Vice President. She has been an enthusiastic organiser of outings, crafts and meals and a great support to Stella. A small presentation was made to her.

Elaine Gethins has been our hardworking treasurer and Sonja Barter has been our capable secretary. Julia Dobson and Eileen Roerig have been instrumental in organising the programme, the walks, the tech, the meals and much more.

The latter 4 ladies are staying on the committee in a rejigged form but would welcome other ladies to join them and spread the load. Do think about it!

It can be seen that a lot of hard but enjoyable work has gone on to make Holton and Waterperry WI a success. We are grateful to all the committee for all their dedicated work as we look forward to a new year. The new programme will be out in April.

Meanwhile our meeting that month will be a return visit from Karen and Bret Wiles, this time talking and illustrating 'The WI in WW2. Not Just Jam and Jerusalem' and as you can see, it isn't!

We look forward to meeting new members and visitors are always welcome.

*Barbara Martin*

# *Waterperry News*

## Obituary - Gordon Dempster

Gordon Dempster died peacefully at Waterperry on 3rd February 2026.

Known by most as the curator of the Rural Museum at Waterperry Gardens, Gordon was a much-loved local character who will be sadly missed.

Gordon was born on the country Estate of Lee Park in Charlbury on 3rd June 1931, where his father was groom at the hunting stables. As a boy he helped his father with the horses and tending their two allotments, before being taken on as a butchers boy in the village, where he was later taken on full-time to learn the trade.

In 1949 he was called up for National Service where he entered the Royal Navy, serving his time on a submarine depot ship in Scotland. On completing his National Service he returned to his profession as a butcher in London eventually being employed by Harrods who, as part of his advancement in the trade, sent him to Paris to learn about French methods of preparing meat.

He later set up his own shop back in London but after a while felt he needed a change of career and a different direction in life. He joined the School of Philosophy and Economic Science which ran residential retreats at Waterperry House. It was here that he met the ladies of the Waterperry Horticultural College which ran classes and tended the land on the estate. There was a vision to expand the business side, which at the time, was limited to a shop in the Oxford Covered Market as an outlet for their produce.

With his experience in running his own business, he was well-suited to help this vision be realised, and eventually expanded the garden centre side of the business, and the garden shop, which he ran until his retirement.

Many will remember him in this role as well as his retirement project, setting up and running the Rural Museum.

*Helen Marshall*

## *Waterstock and Tiddington WI*

If you live in the Waterstock or Tiddington area and want to meet new people and make friends, then come and join Waterstock and Tiddington WI and meet like-minded people of all ages at our friendly group.

We are delighted with the success of our QUIZ in February where we had a full house and raised money for Thomley Hall in Worminghall.

We meet on the third Tuesday of the month in Tiddington village hall at 7.30. We often have interesting speakers and activities or sometimes just a social evening for all to enjoy. For our next meeting on 21st April we have Lili Shaw from Waterstock coming to give a maker's insight into Stained Glass. In May, Carol from Wheatley Farm Shop is going to show us how to make a hanging basket. You can just turn up and a donation of £2 will include tea and cake!

Please contact us below if you want to know more or have someone to go with. Everyone is welcome.

For more information contact Debbie Millett: Waterstock & Tiddington WI  
waterstockwi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk  
The WI is a registered charity No 803793

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## *Waterstock News*

At last, we are enjoying a brighter, Spring-like spell of weather. As I write this month's entry the UK has experienced the warmest day of the year so far.

Henry reports that with this break in the relentless rain, the river levels have plunged and the wildlife around them at the Mill has come alive. Swans and Grey Wagtails have been mating, obligingly on camera, and kingfishers have returned to fish in the shallow waters. Most exciting of all are five goosanders patrolling the river upstream of the Mill – Waterstock being their only recorded breeding site in Oxfordshire. The otters are back in force too and as Sarah Bell has reported there's a massive red kite nest high up in a poplar tree overlooking the Arthur's boathouse and Sarah's garden. The magnificent Magnolia tree in the Mill garden is looking stunning – so all is good, despite what's going on in the world just now.

And for those who like wildlife, there's a treat in store on Easter Day at 6pm on BBC1 in the 1st episode of Secret Garden narrated by David Attenborough, part of the build up to his 100th birthday on 8 May. And now a spoiler: a duck called Doris is the star.

Continuing the theme of wildlife, please keep your eyes peeled for hedgehogs in the village that will be emerging from hibernation. This is a critical time as they have often lost one-third of their body weight and are extremely hungry and thirsty. Tiggywinkles recommends leaving out a shallow dish of fresh water and meaty cat or dog food. This is a life-saver while their natural prey (insects/worms) are still scarce. We should also look out for them on roads and verges. Lorna has confirmed that we have some more signs that will be going up in the village shortly.

Rosalind reports that we have just escaped a near disaster after David Bendor Samuel discovered, due to church regulations, that he was expected to step down from being our vicar next year on reaching the venerable age of 70 years. This was not what David wished for, and certainly not what the four parishes wanted. So, after lobbying the Bishop we have been granted a three-year reprieve if David is still happy to continue as our Vicar, or officially our House for Duty Priest (unsalaried). We are fortunate to have David, both for himself and all he offers to our four villages. At this time, so many communities have no vicar and if they do, they have to share a vicar with as many as 8 or more villages! We are also pleased to hear that David has been given permission to take a 3-month sabbatical, which is encouraged after several years of service. So hasten forward now with any plans for weddings or christenings before August 1st. Over the three months of August, September and October we will be looked after by Clare Joyce from Wheatley, a very approachable ex-nurse, who is in the process of getting to know our village.

Once again, Helen MacRitchie and Jane Hanson will be opening their studios from 2-10 May for Artweeks. Do look out for signs and drop in to see Helen's wonderful collection of hand dyed and felted wool textiles and Jane's high fired, functional, stoneware pottery. Lili, who used to live in Waterstock, will also be showing her glasswork in Waterperry, where she has her studio.

Finally, I am sure we have all enjoyed watching the amazing work of the thatchers who have now completed the new roof on Orchard End. The cottage has also been repainted and is now looking very beautiful.

*Keith Stubbs*

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What's On this *April*



Waterperry  
Gardens

OPEN DAILY  
10:00AM -  
5:30PM

FRITILLIARY SEASON IN THE GARDENS  
**THROUGHOUT APRIL**

**RETREAT: 3rd - 6th April**  
4-DAY SPRING CLEANSE RETREAT  
– IN THE MAIN HOUSE\*

**TRAIL: until 19th April**  
BIG EASTER BUNNY HUNT – IN THE GARDENS

**EXHIBITION: until 26th April**  
GREEN WORKS, SPRING EXHIBITION  
IN THE GALLERY – FREE TO ENTER

\*Please see our website for more information or to book.

28<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
- 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL



**THE BIG EASTER BUNNY HUNT**